

**INDIAN WAR OF
INDEPENDENCE 1857
PART II
THE ERUPTION**

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INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

PART II THE ERUPTION

CHAPTER I SHAHID MANGAL PANDAY

OF all the surprising incidents connected with the Revolution of 1857, the most striking was the secrecy with which the vast movement was organised. The clever English administrators had so little information about the source of the movement, even after the tremendous revolutionary upheaval all over Hindusthan, that, even a year after open mutiny had broken out, most of them still persisted innocently in the brief that it was due to the greased cartridges! The English historians are now beginning to understand that the cartridges were only an incident and they themselves now admit that it was the holy passion of love of their country and religion that inspired the heroes of the war of 1857.¹ We cannot sufficiently admire the skill of the leaders like Nana Sahib, Moulvie Ahmad Shah, and Vizier Ali Nakkhi Khan, who perfected that organisation with such secrecy under the very nose of the English officials in Hindusthan. It is difficult to find a parallel to the capacity for secret organisation

Medley says: "But, in fact, the greased cartridges was merely the match that exploded the mine which had, owing to a variety of causes, been for a long time preparing."

1 Malleon says: "In this lesser sense, then, and in this only, did the cartridges produce the mutiny. They were instruments used by the conspirators, and those conspirators were successful in their use of the instruments only because, in the manner I have endeavoured to point out, the mind of the Sepoys and of certain sections of the population had been prepared to believe every act testifying bad faith on the part of their foreign masters."

"Mr. Disraeli dismissed the greasing of the cartridges with the remark that nobody believed that to have been the real cause of the outbreak." - Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 629.

One author goes further and says: "That the fear about the cartridges was mere pretext with many is shown beyond all question. They have not hesitated to use freely when fighting against us, the cartridges which, they declared, would, if used, have destroyed their caste."

displayed by these men, who successfully taught the necessity of mutual help and united action to the Hindus and Mahomedans, and infused the revolutionary spirit among all classes of the people - sepoys, police, zemindars, civil officials, peasants, and bankers; and who harmonised all these conflicting elements into an army fired with the sacred purpose of freeing the motherland; and all this, without letting the English have any adequate suspicion of this vast upheaval. Just as this secret organisation was becoming ripe, the Government began to force the greased cartridge on the soldiers in Bengal. It appeared probable that the first experiment would be made on the 19th regiment. It was the month of February. Of all the regiments stationed in Bengal, the 34th was most anxious to start the Revolution. This regiment being stationed at Barreackpore, Vizier Ali Nikkhi Khan who stayed near Calcutta had bound the whole regiment by oaths in favour of the Revolution. Some companies of this regiment has been sent to the men of the 19th, and these had brought over the whole of that regiment to the national cause. The English had no notion of this and decided to force the cartridges first on the 19th regiment as an experiment. But the regiment openly refused to accept them and made plain their determination even to draw their swords, if necessary. Seeing this, the English, in pursuance of their policy, began to put down the "natives". But the English officers soon saw that they were not the "natives" of past days. The clashing of swords soon convinced them of that. But they had quietly to pocket this insult, because, in the whole province, they had no white troops with which to overawe the Sepoys. To remove this difficulty, an English regiment was ordered from Burma to Calcutta in the beginning of March. The order went forth that the 19th regiment was to be disarmed and disbanded. It was decided to execute this order at Barrackpore!

But the Barrackpore regiment was not going to see quietly the spectacle of its countrymen being dishonoured. The sword of Mangal Panday positively refused to rest in its scabbard. The 34 regiment wanted to leave the Company's service quite as much as the 19th. Hence all

patriots thought it was best that the Company itself disbanded the 19th. The wiser leaders counselled patience for one month until all were consulted. And letters had already been sent from Barrackpore to various regiments to fix the signal day. But Mangal Panday's sword would not wait!

Mangal Panday was a Brahmin by birth. He took up the duties of a Kshatriya and was a valiant young soldier. Into the heart of this young and brilliant Brahmin who loved his religion more than his life, and who was pure in his private life and undaunted in battle, the idea of the freedom of his country had entered and electrified his blood. How could his sword be patient? The swords of martyrs never are. The crown of martyrdom shines only on the head of those, who, regardless of success or failure, bathe their cherished ideals with their hot blood. But from this apparently useless waste of blood does the sacred image of victory spring forth. The idea that his brethren were going to be insulted before him fired Mangal Panday's heart, and he began to insist that his own regiment should rise on that very day. When he heard that the leaders of the Organisation would not consent to his plan, the young man's spirit became uncontrollable, and he at once snatched and loaded his gun, and jumped on the parade-ground, shouting, "Rise! ye brethren, rise! Why do you hold back, brethren? Come, and rise! I bind you by the oath of your religion! Come, let us rise and attack the treacherous enemies for the sake of our freedom." With such words, he called upon his fellow-soldiers to follow him. When Sergeant-major Hughson saw this he ordered the Sepoys to arrest Mangal Panday. But the traitor-Sepoys whom the English had been used to count upon upto now were nowhere to be found. Not only did no Sepoy move to arrest Panday at the orders of the officer, but a bullet from Panday killed the officer, and his corpse rolled on the ground! Just at this time, Lieutenant Baugh came upon the scene. While his horse was prancing forth on the parade, another

bullet from Panday struck the horse and brought both the horse and the rider to the ground. While Panday was loading his gun again, the officer got up and aimed his piston at Panday; but the latter, undismayed drew out his sword. Baugh fired but missed his mark; he then drew his sword; but before he could use it Panday struck him down rolling again. While another white man was charging Panday, a Sepoy smashed his head with the barrel of his gun; and a shout arose from among all the Sepoys, "Do not touch Mangal Panday!" Immediately, Colonel Wheeler came and ordered Mangal Panday's arrest. Another shout arose,. "We would not even touch the hair of this sacred Brahmin." The colonel, on seeing the blood of Englishmen flowing and the Sepoys in such mood, speedily retreated to the bungalow of the general. On the parade Mangal Panday continued waving his hands full of blood in the air, shouting tremendously all the time, "Rise! Brethren, rise!"

When General Hearsey heard this, he took some European soldiers and rode hastily towards Panday. Seeing that he would soon fall into the hands of Feringhis and preferring death to falling into the hands of the enemy, Mangal Panday turned the gun towards his own breast, and immediately his sacred body lay wounded on the parade ground. The wounded young soldier was taken to the hospital, and the English officers returned to their tents, amazed at the bravery of this Sepoy. This was on the 29th of March, 1857.

Mangal Panday was, then, tried before a court-martial. During the inquiry, attempts were made to compel him to reveal the names of other conspirators. But the valiant youth bluntly refused to do so. He also said that he had no personal malice against the officers whom he shot. If there has been any personal malice, Mangal Panday's name would have been in the list of assassins and not of martyrs. But Mangal Panday's brave deed was done through devotion to a high and noble principle. His sword came out of its scabbard to defend his country and religion, "thinking alike of victory and defeat," as the Bhagavat Gita enjoins. He came out with the firm resolution to die rather than face the insult to his country and religion. In this his bold attempt, his bravery as well as his patriotism are worthy of the highest praise. He was condemned to be hanged. The 8th of April was the day fixed for the execution. Whatever might be the inspiring

splendour in the actual blood of martyrs, the very names of martyrs inspire us with noble sentiments! What, then, must be the power of the martyr over those who believed in him when he was before them in flesh and blood, ready to undergo martyrdom? It is no wonder that a divine love for him inspired all those who saw Mangal Panday. Not even a low-class man could be found in the whole Barrackpore to act as executioner! At last four hangmen had to be brought from Calcutta to do the dirty work! Mangal Panday was carried to the scaffold on the morning of the 8th, surrounded by soliders. He walked with a steady step through the banks and ascended the scaffold. While he repeated once more that he will never give out the names of any of the conspirators, the noose dropped and the glorious soul of Mangal Panday left the body and went to Heaven!

This was the first skirmish of the Revolutionary War, and so died the first martyr. We always ought to remember with pride in our heart the name of Mangal Panday, whose blood was the source of the river of martyrdom! The seed of freedom that had been sown for the three years and more, was first watered with hot blood from the body of Mangal Panday! When the time comes to get its crop, let us not forget who first boldly came forward to nourish it

Mangal Panday is gone, but his spirit has spread all over Hindusthan; and the principle for which he fought has become immortal! He gave not only his blood but his sacred name also to the Revolution! It has become a nickname for all those who fought for religion and country in the war of 1857 whom friends and foes alike called by the appellation of "Panday."² Let every mother teach her son the story of this hero with pride.

² "The name has become a recognised distinction for the rebellious Sepoy throughout India." – Charles Ball.

"This name was the origin of the Sepoys generally being called Pandays"- Lord Roberts's Forty-one years in India.

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CHAPTER II MEERUT

THE seed of revolutionary martyrdom soaked in the blood of Mangal Panday was not long in taking root. The Subahdar of the 34th regiment was charged with holding secret revolutionary meetings at night and beheaded. And when documents were found proving that the 19th and 34th regiments had secretly planned to raise a revolution, they were both disarmed and disbanded. This was a "punishment" in the eyes of the Government, but the Sepoys of these regiments looked upon it as great honour. The European regiments were kept ready on that day, and the English officers were confident that the Sepoys would repent of their disobedience after being disbanded. But thousands of Sepoys willingly laid down their arms like some unholy object, and broke with pleasure the chains of slavery. They tore away their boots and uniforms and proceeded to take a bath in the neighbouring river, as if to wash away the sins of slavery. It was the custom for the Sepoys to buy military caps out of their own money, so the Company allowed them to take them back as their private property. But were they going to do the emblem of slavery again after the purificatory bath in the river? No, no. No one would commit such an impiety! The days are gone when India would don other people's caps! Throw away these slavish caps! Thousands of caps began to fly in the air! But through the obstinacy of the force of gravitation, they fell again on India's soil! The Goddess has been polluted again! Run, Sepoys, run even before the English officers tear those other badges of slavery, and trample these into dust! Thousands of Sepoys began to trample upon the polluted caps; and, seeing the Sepoys dance upon the caps, which was an insult to their authority, the English officers were petrified with astonishment and rage.³

Mangal Panday's blood not only sowed the seeds of freedom in the regiments stationed in Bengal, but electrified also Umballa on the other side of

³ *Red Pamphlet, part I, page 34.*

India. Umballa was the chief headquarters of the English army, and the English Commander-in-Chief Anson stayed there. The Sepoys at Umballa struck upon a new plan, that of burning of house of every officer that went against them! Every night the houses of tyrants and traitors used to receive the unwelcome visit of fire. The work was done so swiftly and secretly that it seemed as if the God of Fire

Himself had become a member of the Secret Society. There were so many fires and thousands of Rupees were offered to discover the culprit, but no revolutionary played the part of a traitor! At last, the Commander-in-Chief Anson wrote to the Governor-General in despair, "It is really strange that the incendiaries should never be detected. Every one is on the alert here, but still there is no clue to trace the offenders." Towards the end of April, he writes further : "We have not been able to detect any of the incendiaries at Umballa. This appears to me extraordinary; but it shows how close are the combinations among the miscreants who have recourse to this mode of revenging what they conceive to be their wrongs, and how great is the dread of retaliation to any one who would dare to become an informer!" The English Empire is based on Indian treachery! So, in Umballa, when not a single man turned traitor, the Commander-in-Chief of the English became helpless and began to thirst secretly for revenge, at the same time wondering at the secret conspiracy of the Sepoys!

These fires had now begun in various places in Hindusthan. It is but natural that there should be sparks blown up here and there before the vast final conflagration broke out. Since the visit of Nana Sahib, Lucknow was in commotion. There also the houses of foreigners and traitors began to take fire! The plan fixed upon was that on the 31st of May the whole of Hindusthan should burst out in a universal conflagration, so that the English should have no room to escape and thus die in the country they wanted to keep enslaved ! Though the Lucknow branch of the Secret Society had consented to this plan, the valiant Sepoys could not restrain themselves. Besides, the exciting speeches every night in the meetings of the Society and the sight of burning houses inflamed them still more. On the 3rd of May, four such uncontrollable Sepoys rushed into the tent of Lieutenant

Mecham, and said, "Personally, we have no quarrel with you, but you are a Feringhi and must die!"⁴. The lieutenant,

frightened out of his wits at the sight of the fierce-looking Sepoys, implored them for mercy and said, "If you like you can kill me in a second. But what will you get by killing a poor individual like me? Some other man will come and take my place. The fault is not mine but of the system of Government. Then why don't you spare my life?" At these words, the Sepoys cooled down and remembered that their real aim was to annihilate the whole system at once, and returned. But this news reached the officers, and Sir Henry Lawrence disarmed the regiment by means of a trick.

But at Meerut, things were taking a more lively turn. Some Englishmen formed the novel idea of testing if the Sepoys really objected to the cartridges. And they decided to force them on a company of cavalry on the 6th of May. It seems only five of the ninety Sepoys there touched the cartridges! Once more the same cartridges were given them to be used. Again they all refused to touch them, and went away to their camps. When this news reached the General, he tried them before a court-martial and sentenced all the eighty-five Sepoys to rigorous imprisonment ranging from eight to ten years!

This heard-rending scene occurred on the 9th of May. These eighty-five Sepoys were made to stand under the guard of European infantry and artillery. All the Indian Sepoys were also ordered to stand by two witnesses the scene. Then the eighty-five patriots were ordered to take off their uniforms were torn away, their arms were snatched off, and all the eighty-five were handcuffed. Those hands which so long held only swords to pierce into the hearts of the enemy, such martial hands were now loaded with handcuffs! This sight inflamed the hearts of all the Sepoys present; but, seeing the artillery on the other side, they did not draw their swords then and there. Then the eighty-five Sepoys were told that they were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for ten years, and these religious martyrs were

⁴ Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 52.

hurried away to their prisons, bending under the heavy prisoners' chains! What sign their compatriots made to these religious martyrs at the time, the future will soon unfold. This sign must have encouraged them! We will destroy the foreign slavery, under which to refuse cartridges mixed with the blood of cows and pigs is an offence punishable with ten years' hard labour! We will soon break not only the chains tightening round your legs but also the chains of slavery riveted for one hundred years round the feet of our dear Motherland! This must have been the meaning of the sign that they made.

This was in the morning. The Sepoys could not possibly control themselves any longer. They returned to their barracks, smarting inwardly under the insult and shame of seeing their brethren being imprisoned by foreigners for what was nothing more than an act of self-respect in defence of their religion. When they strolled out in the bazaars, the womenfolk of the town said to them scornfully, "Your brothers are in prison, and you are lounging about here filling flies! Fie upon your life!"⁵ How could they, already chafing under injury, hear women taunting them so in the open street, and still remain doing nothing? All over the lines that night there was a number of secret meetings of the Sepoys. Were they to wait now till the 31st of May? Were they to sit like dummies, while their compatriots were rotting in prisons? Were they going to wait till others rose, when even the women and children of the town were calling them traitors in the streets? The 31st was yet very far off, and were they to remain till then under the banner of the Feringhis? No, no. To-morrow is Sunday, and before the run of to-morrow sets, the chains of these patriots must be smashed, the chains of the Motherland must be smashed, and the banner of Independence must wave forth! Immediately messengers were sent to Delhi, "We will be there on the 11th or the 12th, keep everything ready."⁶

⁵ J.C.Wilson.

⁶ Red Pamphlet.

Sunday dawned on the 10th of May. The English has so little information about the secret preparations of 1857, that they had no idea about the meetings of the Sepoys at Meerut, much less of their communications with other Sepoys. They began their day with the usual peaceful pursuits. Horse-carriages, cold appliances, fragrant flowers, airing, music and singing, all was going on in full swing. The servants in a few Englishmen's houses suddenly left their services, but this did not cause more than a moment's surprise. But here in the Sepoy's camp the point was being debated, whether there should be a general massacre or not. The 20th regiment said that, when the English were in church, they should rise with the shout of "Har, Har, Mahadev!" and massacre all the English, civil and military, men and women, on the way to Delhi. This plan was agreed upon at last. At that time, the church bells began to toll in the air. The Englishmen with their wives were strolling towards the church. Meanwhile in the town of Meerut, thousands of people even from the villages, were gathering together with old and broken weapons! The citizens of Meerut also prepared themselves for the country's cause. Still the English had not any serious information about this! At five o'clock, the bells were tolling for prayer – only it was the last prayer of the Englishmen before they were despatched to give an account of their sins! There, in the Sepoy lines, however, the air resounded to the fierce shout "Maro Feringhiko!" - "Kill the foreigner!"

At first hundreds of horsemen galloped towards the prisons to free their compatriots. The jailors, also, being members of the revolutionary party, left the prison and joined their brethren, when they heard the cry, "Maro Feringhiko!" In a moment, the walls of the prisons were razed to the ground! A patriotic blacksmith came forth and smashed the chains of all the prisoners. What a wonderful sight when the liberated prisoners embraced heartily their brethren; their deliverers! With a loud war-cry, the heroes rode their horses and marches towards the church along with their brethren, leaving the hated prison behind. In the meantime a company of infantry already started the Revolution. Colonel Finnis of the 11th regiment had approached towards them on horseback and begun to

threaten them haughtily in the usual manner. But the Sepoys rushed at him like death. A Sepoy of the 20th regiment emptied his pistol at him, and both the horse and the rider fell dead on the ground. Infantry and artillery, Hindu and Muslim, were thirsting for the blood of the Englishmen! This news spread to the bazaars of Meerut and Meerut was ablaze; and everywhere the Englishman was killed, wherever he was found. The people of the bazaars took swords, lances, sticks, knives, anything in fact that came to hand and were running about in the lanes. All the buildings that were in any way connected with English domination – bungalows, offices, public buildings, hotels – all were burning in a blaze. The very sky of Meerut wore a threatening aspect; there rose clouds of smoke, terrible flames of fire, and confused shouts from the thousand throats; and, above all of them could be heard the terrible cry, “Maro Feringhiko!” As soon as the Revolution began, according to the plan previously agreed upon, the telegraph wires to Delhi were cut and the railway line was strictly guarded. The night being dark, the English who survived were utterly confused. Some hid themselves in stables, some passed the night under trees; some on the third floor of their houses; some in a ditch; some disguised themselves as peasants, while others fell at the feet of their butlers. When darkness was falling, the Sepoys were already marching to Delhi, and it was the townsmen of Meerut that were accomplishing the work of revenge for the wrongs and oppressions of a century. The hatred towards the English was so violent that stone houses where they resided, which could not be burnt, were pounded down! The bungalow of Commissioner Greathed was set fire to. He was still hiding inside. The rumour went about that the people of Meerut had risen in arms and surrounded his bungalow. Then the Commissioner fell at the feet of his butler and implored him for his and his family’s life. The butler gave the mob a ruse and led them away, and the Commissioner fled away from the crumbling bungalow. The mob dragged Mrs. Chambers out of her bungalow and killed her with knives. Captain Craigie clothed his wife and children in horse clothes to disguise their colour, and hid them all night in an old demolished temple. Dr. Christie and Veterinary surgeon Phillips were battered to death. Captain Taylor, Captain MacDonald, and Lieutenant Henderson were hotly pursued and killed.

Many women and children died in the burning houses. As more and more English blood was spilled, the terrible cry of the Revolutionaries and their spirit became more and more violent. Passersby began to kick about English corpses! If in the middle somebody showed pity in striking down the English, thousands of men used to run there crying, "Maro Feringhiko!" They would point to the mark of the handcuffs round the wrist of any lately manacled Sepoy present in the company and would shout, "We must revenge this!" Then swords flashed out without any thought of mercy.

Meerut was about the last place where the Revolution should have started in the natural course of events. There were only two Sepoy regiments of infantry and one of cavalry, while there was a complete riflemen battalion and a regiment of dragoons of Europeans there. Besides, the whole of the artillery was in the hands of the Europeans. Under these circumstances, the Sepoys had no chance of success. Therefore was it that, immediately after the rising, the Sepoys went away towards Delhi, leaving the work of revenge to the townsmen of Meerut. It was very easy to have stopped the Sepoys on the way and to have crushed them. But even English historians are ashamed of the cowardice, mismanagement, and want of foresight among the civil and military officers there. Colonel Smyth of the Indian cavalry ran away to save his life when he heard that his regiment had risen against the English. When the chief officer of the artillery was getting his guns ready and parading them, the Sepoys were already on the way to Delhi. Even then, the English army, instead of following them, remained inactive all right, as if cowed down. To tell the truth, when Meerut rose, the English were absolutely dumbfounded. They could not form any idea of this unprecedented and sudden rising till the next day! On the other hand, the Sepoys had a clear programme before them. It was this : to rise immediately, to release the prisoners, and massacre the English. Either the English were frightened at the sudden rising or the citizens of Meerut, plundering and burning on all sides, made it impossible for the English to see where the real rising was. When they would be busy taking their bearings, the Sepoys were to have marched towards Delhi. This march towards Delhi was a very cleverly organised plan.

There is not the least doubt that the leaders of the Secret Society showed unexampled skill in taking hold of Delhi at the first heat, thus making the Rising only national in a moment, and destroying the prestige of the English. And the plan was as quickly executed as it was cleverly arranged. Before the English got news of the rising, the telegraph wires between Meerut and Delhi were cut, the road was guarded, the patriotic heroes were liberated from prison, the blood of English despots was flowing on the ground, and two thousand Sepoys, with their drawn swords wet with English blood, raised the significant cry of, "To Delhi, to Delhi!"

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CHAPTER III DELHI

NANA Sahib Peshwa had been to Delhi towards the end of April and all were anxiously awaiting Sunday, the 31st of May, agreed upon as the day of rising. If the whole of Hindusthan had risen simultaneously on the 31st of May, history would not have had to wait longer than 1857 to record the destruction of the English empire and the victorious Independence of India. But the premature rising of Meerut benefited the English much more than the Revolutionaries.⁷ It is true that the spirited and patriotic women of the Meerut bazaars, who taunted the soldiers and goaded them on to release their comrades, have added one more honourable episode to our history. But the Meerut Sepoys, by their rising, unconsciously put their brethren in unforeseen confusion by warning the enemy beforehand!⁸ All the Sepoys at Delhi were Indian. They too had become restless since the heroic martyrdom of Mangal Panday. But the Emperor Bahadur Shah and

7 "It is certain, however, that if this sudden rising in all parts of India had found the English unprepared but few of our people would have escaped the swift destruction. It would then have been the hard task of the British nation to reconquer India or else to suffer our Eastern empire to pass into an ignominious tradition." Malleon, Vol. V. "The calamitous revolt at Meerut was, however, of signal service to us in one respect : inasmuch as it was a premature outbreak which disarranged the preconcerted plan of simultaneous mutiny of Sepoys all over the country, settled to take place on Sunday, the 31st of May, 1857." - White's *History*, page 17.

8 "From this combined and simultaneous massacre on the 31st of May, 1857, we were, humanly speaking, saved by the frail ones of the bazaar. The mine had been prepared and the train had been laid, and it was not intended to light the slow match for another three weeks. The spark which fell from the female lips ignited it at once and the night of the 10th of May saw the commencement of the tragedy never before witnessed since India passed under British sway." – J.C.Wilson's Official Narrative.

the Empress Zinat Mahal had tactfully restrained them. Just at this moment, a message from the Meerut branch of the Society was delivered to the Delhi branch, "We are coming to-morrow; make the necessary preparations!" Hardly had this unexpected and strange message been delivered at Delhi when

two thousand Sepoys were already on the march from Meerut, shouting, "Delhi! Delhi" Night herself was then sleepless. How could she sleep amidst the terrible noise produced by thousands of horses stamping and neighing, the clanging of swords and bayonets, and the fierce shouts and secret whisperings of the marching revolutionaries? When day dawned, the Sepoys were astonished to find that the Meerut artillery had not been following them. The Sepoys forgot all the fatigues of the night and, without losing a minute, marched on with vigour. Delhi is about thirty-two miles from Meerut. At about eight in the morning, the first part of the army was in sight of the sacred Jumna. Seeing the holy Humna which seemed, by its cool breezes, consciously to encourage the heroes bent on the holy work of Freedom, thousands of soldiers saluted her, shouting, "Jai Jumnaji!" Horses began to gallop on the bridge of boats leading to Delhi. But did the river Jumna understand their sacred mission? It was necessary to let her know this and get her blessings before marching on. Then, catch hold of that Englishman there walking along the bridge, and let his blood be poured into the dark Jumna! This blood will tell her the reason why these Sepoys are galloping so hurriedly towards Delhi!

After crossing the bridge of boats, the Sepoys were already at the walls of Delhi. When the rumour reached the English officers, they collected the Sepoys on the parade-ground and began to treat them to lectures on loyalty. Colonel Ripley, with the 54th regiment started to oppose the Meerut Sepoys. The Sepoys of the 54th regiment told their Colonel when starting, "Show us the Sepoys of Meerut and we will then secede." The colonel said "*Shabash*" (Well done!) and the regiment marched towards the Revolutionaries. As they advanced, they saw the Meerut cavalry galloping towards the fort. Just behind the cavalry, there were also coming on, the infantry dressed in red garments and thirsty for English blood. As

soon as the two armies saw each other, they saluted; and the army of Delhi met that of Meerut on friendly

terms! When the Meerut army raised the cries of "Let the English rule be destroyed!" and "Long live the Emperor!", the Delhi army replied by shouting, "Kill the Feringhis!" In a moment, Colonel Ripley, who, in confusion, began to shout, "What is this!", "What is this!", was riddled with bullets and fell down dead. All the English officers of the army of Delhi were similarly killed. After having thus sealed their patriotism with English blood, the horsemen of the Meerut cavalry descended and heartily embraced their comrades from Delhi! Just then the historic Kashmir gate of Delhi opened, and this army of the heroes of liberty entered the town of Delhi with the cries of "Din! Din!"

The second part of the Meerut army was also trying to enter Delhi by the Calcutta gate. The gate was first barred, but at the terrible knock of the Sepoys, it began to open slowly, and soon the watchman at gate joined the Sepoys with cries of "Din! Din!!" The Sepoys who entered by the Calcutta gate turned towards the bungalows of the English at Daryaganj, and the buildings there were all ablaze before long. Those Englishmen who escaped the fire succumbed to the sword. The English hospital was near by and it was found that it had given shelter to the English bottles! It is natural that the Sepoys were engaged at the temerity of this hospital, after it had seen the example of the bungalows of Daryaganj being razed to the ground for sheltering Englishmen! So they broke all bottles and after punishing the hospital, they began the hunt for English blood in all the houses of Delhi! But what is an army without a banner and what are mere cloth banners for an army like this? So, wherever an English head was found, it was stuck at the ends of lances, and with such terror-striking flags did the army push forward at a rapid pace!

In the royal palace of Delhi, Sepoys and townsmen were crowding together, shouting, "Victory to the Emperor." Commissioner Fraser was entering the gates of the palace, wounded. A man called Nuzul Beg standing near him pierced him in the cheek. At the sign, all the Revolutionaries ran up the stair,

trampling Frazer down all the way up. The Sepoys did not stop there, trampling him, but went upstairs to the room in which Jennings and his family were living. An attempt was made by someone from inside to bolt the door, but a furious knock of the Sepoys burst it open. Jennings, his daughter, and a guest fell to the sword in an instant. Where is that Captain Douglas, who was running already dying with terror, all through the street of Delhi? Kill him, too! And this Collector hiding in the corner? Give him also leave of life! Well, now there is not a trace of Feringhi authority left in the palace of Delhi! Now, Sepoys, you can surely rest a while! Let the cavalry pitch their quarters in the palace, and let the Sepoys who had marched all night take a little rest in the palace in the Dewan-I-Khas.

In this way the palace of Delhi came into the hands of the army of the people, and the Emperor, the Empress, and the leaders of the Sepoys held a conference as to future plans. It was now evidently foolish to wait till the 31st of May as previously arranged; so after a little hesitation, the Emperor decided openly to take the side of the Revolutionaries. As this was going on, a large part of the artillery of Meerut, who had also risen, arrived at Delhi. They entered the palace and gave a salute of twenty-one guns in honour of the Emperor and of freedom. The little hesitation that remained in the mind of the Emperor, even after the pleadings and arguments of the Revolutionary Sepoys, now completely disappeared after this thunder of cannon; and the hundred Imperial yearnings in his heart awoke with a flash. The leaders of the Sepoys, with their swords dipped in English blood, stood before the dignified and magnificent person of the Emperor, and said, "Khavind! The English are defeated at Meerut, Delhi is in your hands, and all the Sepoys and people, from Peshawar up to Calcutta, are awaiting your orders. The whole of Hindusthan had arisen to break the chains of English slavery, and to acquire their God-given independence. At this time, take up the flag of Liberty in your own hands, so that all the warriors of India may assemble to fight under it! Hindusthan has begun to fight to get back Swaraj and if you accept her leadership, in a moment, we will either drown all these Feringhi demons in the

oceans or give them as food to the vultures!"⁹ The Emperor grew spirited after hearing this unanimous and exciting eloquence on the part of the leaders, both Hindu and Mahomedan. The memories of Shah Jahan and Akbar rose before his mind's eye, and a divine inspiration inflamed into his heart, that, rather than continue in slavery, it would be preferable even to die, in the attempt of liberating one's country. The Emperor said to the Sepoys, "I have no treasury and you will get no pay!" The Sepoys replied, "We will loot the English treasuries all over India and lay them at your feet!"¹⁰ When the Emperor, at last, declared that he would accept the leadership of the Revolution, there was a thundering roar of applause in the vast multitude assembled in the palace!

While all this was going on in the palace, in the city outside there was terrible confusion. Hundreds of the citizens of Delhi took up any arms they could get hold of, and joined the Revolutionaries and were roaming about to kill any stray Englishmen in the streets. About twelve o'clock, the bank of Delhi was besieged. The family of Beresford, the manager of the bank, was killed, and the whole bank was demolished. The mob then turned to the printing office of the 'Delhi Gazette.' The compositors were busy setting into type the news from Meerut. Suddenly, there was a roar of "Din! Din!!" outside, and in a moment, all the Christians in the building were despatched. The types were thrown away, the machinery was smashed, and everything that was made impure by the touch of the Englishmen was destroyed. The great wave of Revolution then rushed on! But see the yonder church! Is it fair that it should hold its head high in the march of this Revolutionary War? From this very

Church have prayers gone forth to Heaven to perpetuate English dominion in India! Has this church preached once at least to its congregation that their dominion in India is a sin and a crime against liberty? On the contrary, this partisan church has sheltered under her wings these tyrants, to protect them and to look after their material more than their spiritual welfare. We have already got the reward for allowing this den of cruelty to be established in our midst, in the shape

⁹ Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 74.

¹⁰ Metcalfe

of cartridges mixed with cows' and pigs' blood! Run to that church! Why are you looking on? Smash that cross, take away those pictures from the walls, pound down that pew, and shout, "Din!" Every day the bells ring in the church. We shall, also, peal them on our way back. Peal on, bells, peal on! You are pealing so much to-day and still no Ednglishman comes to the church! How do you like to touch of these brown hands? Fall down on the ground! Our comrades are ready to trample you down! When all the bells fell down with a crash, the mob smiled to each other in a ghastly way and said to one another, "Kya tamasha hai!" "what fun!"

But there, on the other side, there was even a more ghastly scene taking place. There was a big arsenal of the English army near the palace. In this arsenal there was a vast quantity of ammunition useful for war. At least 900,000 cartridges, 8 to 10 thousand rifles, guns, and siege-trains were there. The Revolutionaries decided to capture this arsenal. But this work was not at all so easy. If the Englishmen in the arsenal were so inclined, they could kill a large number of the attacking force; they had only to light a match. It was thus very dangerous to attempt to capture the arsenal. Still, without it, the life of the Revolution was not safe for a moment; so thousands of Sepoys made ready to carry out the task. They sent a message in the name of the Emperor to the officers of the arsenal, asking them to surrender. But such paper messages never conquer kingdoms! Lieutenant Willoughby did not even condescend to reply to the note. At this insult, thousands of infuriated Sepoys began to mount the walls of the arsenal.

Within the walls were nine Englishmen and some Indians. When they saw the flag of the Emperor of Delhi flying on the Fort, the Indians speedily joined their comrades, and the nine Englishmen began to fight with the courage which despair gives. It was evident that the handful of Englishmen could not hold out long before the terrible onslaught of the Sepoys. They had already determined to blow up the arsenal in case all hope of saving it for England was gone; because they were not certain of their lives being spared even if they were willing to hand over the arsenal. On the other hand, the Sepoys also, in spite of a certainty of losing a large number if the arsenal was blown up, fiercely continued the assault. To their air came also hundreds of the citizens of Delhi. Suddenly the terrible

boom and crash, as if of a thousand cannon, which both sides had been expecting every moment, rent the air, and volumes of flame and smoke went up to the skies! The nine English heroes, instead of handing over the arsenal to the enemy, set fire to it themselves and gave up their own lives. With that one crash, twenty-five Sepoys and about three hundred men in the neighbouring streets were literally blown to pieces ! But it was not in vain that the Revolutionaries, at last, got hold of the arsenal at the cost of so many men who fell victims in the blowing up of the arsenal. The Sepoys got a good store of arms, each getting four guns. As long as the vast arsenal was in English hands, the Indian Sepoys in the chief cantonment were under the English officers. True, they had refused to attack their brethren; but they did not also rise against the English, At about four o'clock in the evening, the thundering crash was heard which shook the whole of Delhi. The Sepoys in the cantonment suddenly came together and fell on the Englishmen, crying "Maro Feringhiko!" They killed Gordon Smith and Revelly and, wherever an Englishman was found, he was killed. The national vengeance awakened after a century, crushed down men, women, children, houses, stones, bricks, watches, tables, chairs, blood, flesh, bones - anything that had any relation with the English! In the end, at the strict orders of the Emperor, many Englishmen were saved from massacre and made prisoners in the palace. But such was the popular fury against the Feringhi despots that, after a struggle of four or five days, the Emperor was compelled to hand over the fifty English prisoners to the mob! On the 16th of May, the fifty Englishmen were taken to a public *maidan*. Thousands of citizens, assembled to witness the scene, burst forth in imprecations against English rule and the faithlessness of the English. When the order was given, the Sepoys killed the fifty in a second. If any Englishman attempted to ward off a Sepoy's sword and implored for mercy, loud cries of "Revenge for handcuffs!", "Revenge for slavery!", "Revenge for the arsenal!", would rise up, and the bent English head was soon severed from the body! The massacre of the English began on the 11th and ended on the 16th. In the meanwhile hundreds of Englishmen ran away from Delhi to avoid death. Some blackened their faces and disguised themselves as "the despised" Indians; some died of heat, while running away, in the woods and

forests; some learnt by heart the songs of Kabir and attempted to escape through the villages in the guise of Sanyasis; but were killed by the villagers when the disguise was seen through. Some were cut by the villagers as "Feringhis" when they sat down under the trees in fatigue after walking long, long distances; and a few with the assistance and hospitality of kindly villagers at last safely reached the English camp at Meerut. The hatred against English rule was so great that, at the news of the massacre of Delhi, hundreds of villages determined never to allow an Englishman to set foot within their limits. But in none of these villages, not even in Delhi itself was a single Englishwoman outraged.¹¹ The fact is proved by the enquiries of the English themselves and is universally admitted by the English historians. And still what lies were not circulated in England by the English missionaries at that time? We have no hesitation in saying that nobody has ever dares to make false statements more mean, despicable, or wicked, than the false descriptions given, at the time, by English missionaries "from personal experience," about the events at the time of the massacre! What can one think of the love of truth of a nation which allows its citizens to say falsely that English

11 "However much of cruelty and bloodshed there was, the tales which gained currency of dishonour of ladies were, so far as my observation and enquiries went, devoid of any satisfactory proof." - Hon.Sir Wm. Muir, K.C.S.I., Head of the Intelligence Dept. These five days will be ever memorable in the history of Hindusthan for yet another reason. Because these five days proclaimed by beat of drum the end for the time being at any rate of the continuous fight between the Hindus and Mahomedans dating from the invasion of Mahmud of Ghazni. It was proclaimed first that the Hindus and the Mahomedans are not rivals, not conquerors and the conquered, but brethren! Bharatmata (Mother Ind) who was, in times past, freed from Mahomedan yoke by Shivaji, Pratap Singh, Chattrasal, Pratapaditya, Guru Govind Singh, and Mahadaji Scindia - that Bharatmata gave the sacred mandate that day, 'Henceforward you are equal and brothers; I am equally the mother of you both!' The five days during which Hindus and Mahomedans proclaimed that India was their country and that they were all brethren, the days when Hindus and Mahomedans unanimously raised the flag of national freedom at Delhi. Be those grand days ever memorable in the history of Hindusthan!

women were made to walk about naked in the streets of Delhi, that they were outraged openly, that their breasts were cut, the small girls were outraged, and so on? And these were priests, too! The Revolution of 1857 did not take place because the Indians wanted white women! It was brought about, rather, to remove all traces of white women from India! In this manner, the storm raised by the violent ravings of the women of the Meerut bazaars, dug up, by the roots, in one stroke, the poisonous tree of slavery which had been standing in the country for a hundred years! The chief cause for this extraordinary success of the Revolutionaries in five days was the ardent desire among all classes of the people to get rid of English slavery. From the women of Meerut to the Emperor of Delhi, there was a strong desire in every heart to achieve Swaraj and protect religion. This desire had already been put into shape by the secret societies. Therefore was it that in five days the banner of Swaraj could be won on the historic capital of Hindusthan, Delhi. On the 16th of May, there was not even a trace left, in Delhi of English domination. Such was the hatred against things English that anyone who uttered a word of English was mercilessly thrashed! The rags of the English flag were being trodden down upon the streets; and the flag of Swaraj, from which the strains of slavery had been washed away by hot blood, was flying at the head of the Revolution! The wave of liberty rose so strong that in five days there was not even one traitor in the whole of

Delhi. Men and women, rich and poor, young and old, Sepoys and citizens, Moulvies and Pandits, Hindus and Mahomedans - all attacked the foreign slavery with their swords drawn under the banner of their country. It was on account of this extraordinary patriotism and love of freedom, and a confirmed hatred of the English, that the words of the women of Meerut could raise the throne at Delhi once more from the dust!

INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

CHAPTER IV THE INTERLUDE AND THE PUNJAB

THE news of the liberation of Delhi travelled with lightning rapidity, and by its suddenness absolutely straggled for a moment Indians as well as the foreigners. Englishmen could not even grasp for a time the meaning of what had come to their ears. Lord Canning was fast asleep there in Calcutta, in the certainty that peace was reigning all over India, and Commander-in-Chief Anson was preparing to go to the cool heights of Simla. When first Canning got a scrappy telegram to the effect that Delhi was free, he could hardly believe his eyes. The Indians were in a consternation quite as much as the Englishmen, because this unthought-of rising at Delhi spoiled all the preconcerted plans of the Secret Revolutionary Organisation. And the Englishmen were not, now, likely to repeat the tactical mistakes which they committed while confused at the sudden rising in Delhi. They got an opportunity to retrieve their mistakes, being forewarned of the future great danger by this sudden shock. The throne of Delhi could now be wrested from the Emperor in a couple of days by a sudden onslaught. Whereas, if the rising had taken place simultaneously in all places on the 31st, as arranged previously, the complete success of the Revolution would have been assured in the course of a single day. Though that plan failed on account of the sudden rising at Meerut, the taking of Delhi at once openly gave the Revolution a national character, and the sudden news had brought about an extraordinary awakening in the whole of Hindusthan. Now, the question was whether to take advantage of this awakening and rise at once, or wait till 31st as arranged before. What were the plans adopted by the Centres? Would not a rising without consultation of the rest produce confusion similar to that of the rising at Meerut? Such were the questions which the Revolutionary leaders in other places put to themselves and wasted their time with. There is no other life-killing poison to a revolution than indecision. The sooner and the more sudden the spreading of a revolution the greater are its chances of success. If a delay is made after the first start and breathing time is

given, the enemy gets time to guard himself; those who rise prematurely lose confidence, when they see no one joining them; and a clever enemy, profiting by the past, puts obstacles in the way of those who want to rise later. Therefore, to give the enemy time between the first rising and the spreading of a revolution is always harmful to the Revolution. But that is exactly what happened. This sudden rising in opposition to their previous plans confused the Revolutionary leaders in various places and they could, for the time being, neither hold back nor rise.

The inevitable idleness of the Revolutionary party was of the highest advantage to the English. They never had occasion to hear such terrible news since first they set foot on the soil of Hindusthan. The swords of the very Sepoys who so long maintained and extended their power were now turned against them. English Sovereignty fled from this spectacle at Meerut to Delhi, only to find the old Emperor, who strangled her with the left hand and wrested her crown away with the right! This English Sovereignty full of gory wounds, spat upon even by the women at Meerut, with hair dripped in English blood, with necklaces of bones, with all her ornaments including the crown snatched away by the people - this English Sovereignty now tried to enter Calcutta with a terrible moan! The English dominion in India has not the slightest natural strength! In this month of May, there was only one white regiment, right from, Barrackpore to Agra, a distance of 750 miles. Under such circumstances, if the whole of this region had risen according to the plan of the Revolutionary party, not one but even ten Englands put together could not have been able to hold Hindusthan! This white regiment was stationed at Danapur. There was a considerable number of white troops in the Punjab on the frontier, but it was necessary to maintain them there. Under these circumstances, the first effort of Lord Canning was to bring as many white troops together as possible. Just at the time, fortunately for the English, the war with Persia had come to an end and orders were sent to that army to return at once to India. At the end of the war with Persia, the English had picked up a quarrel with China and had ordered troops thither; but when this storm arose in India, Canning determined to stop the army on its way to China. Besides these two, the English regiments which

were to have gone to Rangoon were detained at Calcutta, and orders were issued to the Governor of Madras to hold in readiness the 43rd infantry and the Madras fusiliers. While this white army was marching towards Calcutta from all directions, Canning made one more attempt to pacify the Sepoys. He issued a proclamation and ordered it to be posted in every town and village. It was worded in the usual manner and contained the usual stuff. It said, "We had no intention to interfere with your religious and caste affairs. We have not the least intention of insulting your religion. If you like it, you can make cartridges with your own hands. It is a sin on your part who have eaten the salt of the Company to rise against it." But who was now going to pay attention to such empty proclamations? Where the question at issue was whether the English ought to have, at all, the right of issuing proclamations in India or not, to issue a new proclamation was not to pacify but to exasperate the people. Hindustan had no time to read these proclamations, for all eyes were turned to the magnificent Proclamation that went forth from Delhi! It was a strange sight, two proclamations at once, one of freedom at Delhi, the other of slavery at Calcutta. Hindustan at that time welcomed the Proclamation of Delhi. And, therefore, Canning laid aside his pen and ordered the Commander-in-Chief to direct his guns immediately towards Delhi.

Commander-in-Chief Anson was at Simla when he got the telegram announcing that Delhi had become free. When he was thinking what he was to do, he got Canning's order to take Delhi at once. The ignorance of the English about the plans and the strength of the Revolution was so extraordinary, that they perfectly believed that they could take Delhi in a week and could quell the rising before a month was over. Sir John Lawrence, Chief Officer in the Punjab, also sent urgent message to Anson to Capture Delhi. But Anson knew better than either Canning or Lawrence what it meant to take Delhi and he determined to wait until sufficient preparations were made. Hardly had Anson left the heights of Simla and arrived at the army headquarters at Umballa, when there was a tremendous uproar at Simla! A rumour was abroad that the Gurkha Naziri battalion had also risen, and at that the English at Simla lost all courage. In that year the head was unsufferable to the English even at Simla! It appeared that the English would now have to pay a

very heavy price for the royal pleasures, which they had so long enjoyed in cool bungalows and beautiful pleasure-gardens. There was a general uproar that the Gurkha regiment was coming, and women and children ran wherever they would get away. In this race, the men, naturally, even with loads on their backs, left the women and children far behind! This exhibition of English courage was open for two days, but it was closed afterwards as no Gurkhas were to be seen. About this time, similar scenes were being enacted, also, at Calcutta. Often the rumour would get about that the regiment at Barrackpore was in arms against the English; and English men, women, and children would be seen running towards the fort. Some booked passages to England, some prepared all their luggage in readiness to run away to the fort, and some would hide in corners in their offices and leave their work aside! Such was the panic created by Meerut and by Delhi - and yet Cawnpore was still to come.

As soon as Anson arrived at Umballa, he began to prepare the siege-trains to besiege Delhi. There was never such a danger to the English in India before; but, now that it appeared, their real weakness came forth into prominence. Their state was absolutely deplorable. It became impossible for Anson to expedite matters. The English officers ordered about Indian soldiers just as they liked, but they could not do the same to their own soldiers! How could the English soldier give up in a day his haughtiness and his luxurious habits? And it was now out of the question to get an Indian to help in everything. Carriages, labourers, provisions, even stretchers and ambulances for the wounded could not be got! Adjutants, quarter-masters, commissaries, medical chiefs- none could get his department ready and every one was in a fix. What a shadowy thing is English Power in India, without the help of the Indians themselves! When once the Indians were roused, the English found it extremely difficult even to march from Umballa to Delhi, because "natives of all classes held aloof, waiting and watching the issues of events. From the capitalists to the coolies, all shrank alike from rendering assistance to those who power might be swept away in a day."¹ If the Indians had always kept aloof like this, then, indeed, as the above writer says, English power might have been swept away in a day. But such a brilliant day had not yet arisen in

1857! The year, 1857, was the dawn after a long night's sleep. Those who saw the vision of the brilliant day to come woke up and left their beds, but others, who thought it was still night, clung to their covers of slavery and went again to sleep. Amongst these sleepy heads, the honour of Rip Van Winkle was very keenly contested between the states of Patiala, Nabha, and Jhind. These states had it in their hand either to establish the Revolution firmly or kill it. These states lay between Umballa and Delhi and without their support the English rear was quite defenceless. Even if these states had remained passive like the others, the Revolution had a great chance of success. But when Patiala, Nabha, and Jhind began to deal blows at the Revolution even more cruel than those of the English, the chain between Delhi and the Punjab was suddenly snapped. These states despised the invitation sent to them by the Emperor of Delhi, killed the Sowars that brought the message, showered money on the English from their own treasuries, mustered their armies, and protected the regions through which the English armies were to pass, and attacked Delhi along with the English; and when the Punjab Revolutionaries left their hearths and homes to defend the national flag at Delhi, these Sikh states, these disciples of Guru Govind Singh, cruelly tortured and murdered them!

When the English were sure of the help of Patiala, Nabha, and Jhind, they mustered up courage. The Raja of Patiala sent his brother with sepoys and artillery and ordered him to guard the Thaneswar Road, and the Raja of Jhind took up the strong position of Panipat. When these two most important stations were thus guarded, the roads from Delhi to Umballa and uninterrupted communication with the Punjab were perfectly secure; and the Commander-in-Chief left Umballa on the 25th of May and marched towards Delhi. But Anson had become quite disheartened since the news of the freedom of Delhi. He had now, besides, to be roasted in the terrible heat of the plains, of which he had a great terror having passed his time hitherto amid the cool shades of Simla. Emaciated by these mental and bodily worries, the Commander-in-Chief succumbed to cholera on the 27th of May, just as he arrived at Karnal. On the same day, Sir Henry Barnard took charge of his office. In This manner, the English army, after burying the old

Commander-in-Chief, was marching under the new one towards Delhi. At that time, the English were so hopeful of victory that they were openly boasting that they would fight in the morning and drink the blood of the enemy in the evening at Delhi! While this army was marching from Umballa, the world saw the secreted poison in the black hearts of these white Sepoys!

The army at Meerut was composed of "heathens!" It is, of course, an example of the savage nature of Indian country and religion that they massacred "harmless" Englishmen at Meerut and Delhi, relying on the "rumours" about cartridges! But let not what is concealed be laid open before the world! Otherwise God will despise truth more than false rumours and civilisation more than barbarity! Ah, it will require pools of blood to wash these blasphemies away!

On the way from Umballa to Delhi, in thousands of villages, all those that could be easily caught were immediately put before a court-martial in rows after rows, and were condemned to be hanged and killed in a brutal and barbarous manner! At Meerut, the Indians no doubt killed the alien English but it was not done savagely enough. They simply cut off their heads with a blow of the sword. But the English, be it said to their credit, corrected this mistake. Hundreds of Indians were condemned to be hanged before a court-martial in a short time, and they were most brutally and inhumanly tortured, while scaffolds were being erected for them. The hair on their heads were pulled bunches by bunches, their bodies were pierced by bayonets, and then they were made to do that, to avoid which they would think nothing of death or torture - cows' flesh was forced by spears and bayonets in the mouths of the poor and harmless Hindu villagers!¹²

Ah! But it still remains to be told to my "barbarous" readers what this court-martial was and is. Hundreds of innocent villagers were herded together, and then they were given "justice". When there was a revolution in the Netherlands, Alva had established a similar court. The inquiry before this court was so thorough that sometimes the judge would go to sleep. When the time of sentence came, he would be awakened, and with a grave look at all the prisoners before me, he would

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say, "Let these be hanged!" This historical death-chamber of the Netherlands was doubtless reformed and improved upon by the English! For, their judges never went to sleep. Not only so, but, before their appointment, they had to take an oath that they would give the death sentence, without thinking of guilt or innocence!¹³ The place, where, after such a holy oath, English officers sit down in order to condemn all "natives", guilty or innocent, to be hanged, is known in the English language as a court-martial!

Wreaking all along the line of his march such a demoniacal vengeance on thousands of innocent men for the handful of Englishmen killed at Delhi and Meerut, Commander Barnard sought to join the white troops at Meerut before marching right up to Delhi. It has already been noted that the English had a considerable force at Meerut. This force was coming down from Meerut to join the army from Umballa. But the national army of Delhi came forth to fight with the Meerut army before the junction could be effected. On the 30th of May, the opposing armies met on the banks of the river Hindan. The right of the Indian army was safe on account of powerful guns, and the English could do nothing against it. While the fight was raging on this side, the left of the Indian army could not stand before the English onslaught. There was confusion in their ranks, and they retreated to Delhi, after leaving five guns in the field. But before the English could take possession of the guns one brave Sepoy of the 11th regiment, rather than leave his place, chose death instead. Others might do their duty or not, but he was determined to do something for his country before he lost his life. With this noble inspiration, this Sepoy of the 11th regiment, seeing that the guns would otherwise fall into the hands of the English, purposely fired into the arsenal, when the English crowded round the captured guns. There was a tremendous explosion and Captain Andrews and his followers were burnt down, and several Englishmen were

¹³ "Officers as they went to sit on the court-martial swore that they would hand their prisoners, guilty or innocent and, if any dared to lift up his voice against such indiscriminate vengeance, he was instantly silenced by the clamours of his angry comrades. Prisoners condemned to death after a hasty trial were mocked at and tortured by ignorant privates before their execution, while educated officers looked on and approved."- Holfes's *History of the Sepoy War*, page 124.

injured. After placing so many heads of the enemy before his Motherland, he then placed before her his own martyr's head! Just as the

English historians are always singing the praises of Captain Willoughby who blew up the arsenal at Delhi, we shall also sing the praises of this brave Sepoy, this martyr for the cause of his Motherland. But, alas, even his name is not known to history! About this hero, Kaye says: "It taught us that, among the mutineers, there were brave and desperate men who were ready to court instant death for the sake of the national cause!"¹⁴

As the English were, thus, completely successful in this first battle, they expected Delhi to fall in a day or two, and used to enquire every time, by post, for news of the fall! But how different were matters in reality! Though, when this unprecedented and sudden revolution first burst out into flames, Delhi had not yet the tact and boldness to lead and guide it, yet every heart in Delhi was full with the intense desire not to rest until the mother-country was free, so long as God gave them life. So, the Depoys, despised by the populace all night on the 30th on account of the defeat they had sustained, came out to fight again on the 31st. When the guns of the Revolutionaries started their havoc, the English also replied with their artillery. Since the guns of the Revolutionaries were directed on this day with good aim and the Sepoys fought with stubborn courage, the loss of life on the English side was considerable. The hot sun of May, also, became unbearable to the English. The English tried the tactics of the previous day, but that would not succeed. The English prepared for a general assault towards the evening. But the Revolutionaries rained a perfect shower of cannon balls on the advancing English and, before the broken ranks of the English could reform to advance, they retired from the field in good order. Never mind, Sepoys, in one day you have shown great improvement. Even if you are so defeated again tomorrow, even then, the English are done for. For now they have not enough strength left even for petty skirmishes. On the first day of June, an army was seen marching towards the rear of the already straitened English camp. The English were utterly confounded when they found this army to be composed of brown soldiers! They were preparing, with

¹⁴ Kaye's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, page 138.

despair in their hearts, to defend themselves, when they soon discovered that this army was not the army of the Revolutionaries, but only the Gurkhas under Major Reid coming to help them. The English army from Umballa was helped by the Sikhs, the army from Meerut was helped by the Gurkhas! Under these circumstances, what were the poor Revolutionaries of Delhi to do? The two English armies, effected a junction on the 7th of June. At the same time, the siege-train prepared with the help of the Raja of Nabha also arrived safely. The Sepoys of the 5th regiment were entreating the Gurkhas to revolt and capture the siege-train as soon as it arrived at Umballa. But the Gurkhas flatly refused to serve their country and their religion, and the siege-train arrived at Delhi. And the united army of the English arrived scatheless right up to Alipur, near Delhi.

Hearing that the English army had arrived at Alipur, the Revolutionaries again came out of Delhi and met the English army near Bundel-ki-Sarai. At this moment, the English army was in a most efficient condition, with all the necessary complement of artillery and other engines of war, good commanders, fresh and numerous soldiers, and an advantageous position. The Revolutionaries had nothing but the goodness of their cause to support them. Their leader was a prince who had never seen a battlefield in his life. Their number was swelled by more camp followers than regular soldiers. And besides, they had become disheartened at seeing their countrymen, the Sikhs and the Gurkhas, helping the enemy. The English on the other hand assured themselves that the battle would only be a great Tamasha (a show). But the glorious ideal of Swaraj had filled the hearts of the Sepoys with a new inspiration and a new courage which discounted all odds. Such was the valour they showed that the English were soon convinced that it was not a Tamasha, but a real, grim, life-and-death struggle. The Delhi artillery was so powerful that the English artillery could do nothing against it. While the artillerymen and officers of the English were falling, the Delhi artillery became more and more fierce. At this, the English ordered their infantry to rush the artillery of the Revolutionaries. The English soldiers came right up to the artillery and the field-arsenal, and still the Revolutionaries would not budge an inch! In the fight for Swadharma and Swaraj, these Sepoys behaved like true heroes and did

not leave their posts till English bayonets pierced them through! But these brave heroes had not, at that time, a proper leader, or one who would, at least stand by them to the end, if not lead and encourage them. For, while they were dying for their country and religion, pierced by English bayonets but still sticking to their posts, their Commander-in-Chief had run away towards Delhi at the first roar of cannon! Just then, the English cavalry charged the left, and Hope Grant with his horse artillery charged the rear of this unfortunate army. The field was lost and this army, harassed by compatriots and foreigners alike, after fighting all day, was routed, and retreated to Delhi. General Barnard in order to follow up the victory ordered the English army to push forward, and it arrived at the walls of Delhi towards evening. The result of this day's fight was that the Revolutionaries lost the control of the territory surrounding Delhi, and the English got an advantageous position to attack the fort itself. It is necessary to record here that English historians applaud the Gurkha regiment under Seymour for conspicuous bravery in this battle. In English eyes, the names of these Gurkhas have become favoured and honoured, for this extraordinary eagerness and unparalleled bravery in cutting the throats of their mother's sons!

The English won the battle of Bundel-ki-Sarai with the help of the Gurkhas, but the battle destroyed all the fancies of their imagination; for, it killed the vain hope of the English soldiers that they would spend the night in Delhi and spill the arch-enemy's blood. The unpleasant truth, that there were not only disorderly camp followers in the Revolutionary army, but that here, on the walls of Delhi, swords flashing with the fire of righteousness were now unsheathed for the protection of Swadharma and Swaraj, was forced upon the notice of the English by this stubborn battle! In this battle, the English lost four officers and forty-seven men, besides one hundred and thirty wounded. But the thing which spread more sorrow and despair in the English army than all these losses, was the death, in the thick of the battle, of Adjutant-General Colonel Chester. It will be seen, later on, how English historians surpass English novelists when they give the losses of the Revolutionaries. But even in this din of the first battle, it is necessary to say that, as regards the number of cannon which the English captured on that day, one gives

thirteen, and the other says they were exactly twenty-six! We should also note that both these were military officers present in the fight!

In this manner, on the evening of the 8th June, the English army encamped outside the walls of Delhi. The work of bringing the armies from Umballa and Meerut safely to Delhi depended solely on the movements in the Punjab. It is, therefore, here necessary to see what were the effects of the Meerut rising in this important province, what the Swadeshi men did there, and how far the plots of the English against them were successful. When the Sikh Edmpire was broken, and the Punjab fell, finally, into the hands of the English, Lord

Dalhousie pursued an administrative policy in that province which was calculated to destroy the two virtues of love of freedom and martial spirit among the Sikhs. When the administration of this newly-acquired province came into the hands of the two officers Sir Henry Lawrence and Sir John Lawrence, they completely disarmed the people, enlisted most of the Sikh Sepoys in the English army, brought the larger portion of the European army in Northern India into the Punjab, and directed everything in such a manner that the mass of the people should attend only to agriculture as the chief means of their subsistence and do nothing else. When people become mere peasants, they lose their martial qualities; they become hungry for "peace" and do not easily give their consent to revolutionary projects which might interfere with their agriculture. This deep and profound statesmanship of the English proved successful in the Punjab and, within ten years of the destruction of the Sikh Empire in the Punjab, the majority of the Sikhs began to take to the plough and left their swords altogether, and those that still retained the sword put it into the hands of the English in order to put down their own countrymen! In these circumstances, the chief officer in the Punjab, Sir John Lawrence, was sure that there would be no trouble there. Like other English officers he had no adequate idea about the impending danger till the beginning of May, and he too had intended to leave Lahore for summer and go to the cool air of the Murree Hills. Just then, the news of Meerut and Delhi electrified the Punjab. The clever Chief Commissioner grasped the grave import of the news and stayed where he was, in order to fight those who were preparing to overthrow the English

empire. At this time, the greater part of the Punjab army was at Mian Mir. As the camp of Mian Mir was very near Lahore, the Lahore fort was allowed to be garrisoned purely by Sepoys. In the camp at Mian Mir, though the Sepoys outnumbered the English soldiers by four to one, the English officers had no suspicion about them until the news from Meerut arrived, and when the news did arrive they found it difficult to ascertain whether they were or were not secretly in communication with the Meerut Sepoys. At this time, the chief officer of the army of Lahore was one Robert Montgomery. This Robert Montgomery and Sir John Lawrence were both trained in the school of Dalhousie. They were gifted with rare coolness and courage and could preserve their presence of mind in the midst of the most unexpected difficulties. It was necessary to find out how far the spirit of national freedom had awakened among the Punjab Sepoys. A Brahmin detective was employed to ascertain the state of mind of the Sepoys. This Brahmin did the work of treachery exceedingly well and reported to Montgomery, "Sahib, they are steeped in revolt- they are so far steeped in revolt"- and so saying he put his hand to his neck. This account of the Brahmin removed the veil from the eyes of Lawrence and Montgomery. They saw clearly that the Revolution was well organised not only in northern India but that the fire was smouldering also in the Punjab, only waiting for the right moment to burst into flames. Thanking the premature rising at Meerut for having enabled him to discover this terrible secret, Montgomery immediately ordered the Sepoys to be disarmed. On the 13th of May, in the morning, a general parade was called out at Mian Mir. To keep the Sepoys confident in their sense of security, a grant ball was given to the English residents. Before the Revolutionaries guessed the secret of this apparent hunting after pleasure, in these conditions, they were suddenly surrounded by English cavalry and artillery. It was impossible for the Sepoys to see through this deceit and, when the usual parade movements were going on, the artillery were ordered to be in readiness to fire, and the confused Indian regiments were peremptorily ordered to give up their arms! The thousand Sepoys, indignant with rage but overawed by the strong force of artillery, threw down their arms and, without a word, walked away to their lines.

While this ceremony of disarming the soldiers, who by their valour, had saved the lives of Englishmen, in Afghanistan, was going on, a battalion of the English force was sent to the fort of Lahore. This battalion, with the help of the English artillery in the forst, disarmed the Sepoys there and turned them out of the fort and occupied it. If there has been the slightest delay or slackness in this manoeuvre, within a fortnight, the whole of the Punjab would have been burning with Revolution; for, the different regiments of Peshawar, Amritsar, Pilhur, and Jullunder were anxiously waiting for the moment when the Sepoys of Mian Mir would attack the Lahore fort. When the news spread that the English had disarmed the Mian Mir Sepoys and taken the Lahore fort, English prestige gained a great deal of ground in the Panjab.¹⁵

But a position of even greater importance than the Lahore fort was the Govindgurh of Amritsar. This latter, being a holy place of Sikhs and there being a probability of the Sikhs being aroused if anything happened there, the Sepoys had their eye on it. The rumour arose that the Sepoys, disarmed at Mian Mir, were going towards Amritsar to take Govindgur. The English perceived the danger and requested the Jat and Sikh peasants to protect Amritsar! This request was acceded to by these loyal traitors, and the fort of Amritsar. Like that of Lahore, fell into English hands. Before the 15th of May, the two towns of Lahore and Amritsar were kept, at least for the time being, from joining the Revolution.

After completing all these measures for the security of the Panjab, Sir. J. Lawrence began to extend his labours to places outside his own province. When the news from Delhi reached him, he said it was not a rebellion but a national

15 "Had the Punjab gone, we must have been ruined. Long before reinforcement could have reached the upper provinces, the bones of all Englishmen would have been bleaching in the sun. England could never have recovered the calamity and retrieved her power in the East." - *Life of Lord Lawrence*, Vol. II, page 335.

revolution. Still he nursed the fond hope that if Delhi could be taken within a short time there would be no rising anywhere else. With this idea, he sent letter after letter to General Anson to take Delhi before June. Not only this, but he began to send contingents from the Punjab to make up the complement of the army of

Ambala, while taking upon himself the responsibility of keeping the Punjab at peace. The first instalment of this assistance was the Guide Corps Regiment under Daly. John Lawrence had great confidence in Daly's bravery, and therefore selected him to lead the Guide Corps and march towards Delhi. Daly marched towards Delhi by forced marches and joined the English army at Bundelki-Sarai the day after the battle. In the siege of Delhi were now two traitor regiments – the Gurkhas were exceedingly fond of these two regiments. And who can say that this love was undeserved? The regiments deserved it fully, considering the measure of their treachery!

Whil Daly's regiment was marching towards Delhi, John Lawrence took a minute survey of the political situation of the Punjab. In that territory, Hindus, Mahomedans, and Sikhs were often at daggers drawn. The Punjabees had not yet felt the common national awakening of the Hindus and Mahomedans as the people of Northern India had. As a matter of fact, it was hardly ten years since they had lost their freedom. But the very Sikhs, who in 1849 fought furiously with the English, were now in 1857, embracing them. The key to this extraordinary historical mystery is to be found in the fact that the Revolution of 1857 came so soon after the loss of their independence. Those brave, illustrious, spirited followers of the Khalsa, who so hated Mahomedan slavery that they fought continuously for one hundred years and made the Punjab free, would certainly not have tolerated the slavery under the English if they had realised the nature of English rule. But before the ignorant Sepoys realised the fact that English rule was nothing short of slavery, before they had time enough to understand it fully, the Revolution of 1857 broke out. The English domination came into India at a time when a revolution was taking place in Indian politics. Various small groups of accumulated waters, divided for centuries, were trying to break the dams that separated each from the rest and unite into a vast river. The vast river is the United Nationality of India. The great united and

compact nations of the world of to-day passed before their unity, or even for the sake of their unity, through an intermediate stage of disorganisation, internal strife, and disorder. If we look at the strife in Italy, in Germany, or even in England under the Romans and the Saxons and the Normans,. If we see the mortal enmity between different races, provinces, and religions, and the inhuman persecutions in the course of mutual vengeance, we shall realise that the strife in India was a very small matter. But who can deny that the above countries have now united their several peoples into strong and powerful nations to-day, because they had been melted in the furnace of internal strife and the fire of foreign despotism?

By a similar process of historical evolution, Bharatabhumi was in the course of creating a great nation out of the heterogeneous elements that inhabited it. The streamroller of English slavery was strong enough to crush out all the differences among the peoples of Northern India and make them unite together to throw it off; but in the Panja, ten years were not enough to make them realise the nature and effect of that slavery, in those days. And, therefore, the Sikhs and the Jats could not conceive the idea and help in the realisation of a United Indian Nation.¹⁶

The men who represented the English Government in the Punjab understood this weak link in the chain of the Revolution and turned it to their advantage. They began the policy of increasing the hatred of the Sikhs and the Jats for the Mahomedans. They were reminded of an ancient prophecy which was current among the Sikhs, that the Khalsa would one day march on Delhi - the spot where the Mogul Emperor formerly killed their Guru -and raze it to the ground. Now the time had come for the prophecy to be fulfilled! But if, according to this prophecy, only the Khalsa Sahib were to march on Delhi and conquer, what would be the gain to the English? Instead of Bahadur Shah, a Ranjit Singh might rule at Delhi. It is natural that those whose interests lay in ousting both Bahadur and

16 Sir John Lawrence in a letter wrote :- "Had the Sikhs joined against us, nothing, humanly speaking, could have saved us. No man could have hoped, much less foreseen, that these people would have withstood the temptation to avenge their loss of national independence." - October, 21st, 1857.

Ranjit from the throne of India should think it advisable to change this one-sided prophecy a little! In this revised and enlarged edition of the prophecy it was so written that Delhi would be razed only when the Khalsa and the Company would join hands! What a prophecy! But the pity is that it turned out true! The English took every unscrupulous advantage of the situation. To fan still further the hatred of the Sikhs for Delhi, a false proclamation was posted that the first order of the Emperor was to massacre all the Sikhs! Poor old Emperor! What an irony! At that very moment, he was every day going about the streets of Delhi and saying that this war was only against the Feringhi and no damage should evermore be done even to the hair of any Indian.¹⁷ Though the Revolutionary party tried their utmost, the Sikhs turned to the side of the English.

But in the Punjab, many regiments were composed of the non-Punjabee Hindustanee people and all of them had prepared their minds to fight against the Engloish, and were waiting for the appointed signal. It was not only Sepoys that vowed for freedom, but some patriotic sections of people outside the camp also were sowing the seeds of revolution everywhere. The English soon discovered that even after the disarming of the Mian Mir Sepoys the solid ground on which they were so confidently relying was being undermined. Though the forts of Lahore and Amritsar were secure, the arsenal at Ferozepore was undefended. On the 13th of May, a parade was ordered to ascertain if the Sepoys there showed any signs of mutinying by endeavouring to take the undefended arsenal. But the Sepoys behaved so coolly at parade as not to give the slightest room for suspicion of the passions that were tearing their hearts. Therefore, their disarming was not thought of; but only the two regiments were stationed apart from each other. One of the regiments was made to march through bazaar in the town. How little the English knew what was being exchanged at their bazaar! The spirit of independence was strengthened among the Sepoys there, if that were possible, by the pleadings of the shopkeepers and the customers and, before the regiment came

17 Metcalfe.

out of the bazaar, they laid aside their doubts and hesitations and made a firm resolve. In the moment, there was raised a war-cry and the English could only blow up the arsenal as they thought it was difficult to save it. The Sepoys then, hurried towards the walls of Delhi, from where the National Flag was calling out to all Indians to rally round it! At the same moment, the town of Ferozepore also rose and burnt to the ground the bungalows, tenants, hotels, and churches of the English. And the people began to roam about hunting for Englishmen. But the latter had been warned by telegrams from Meerut and were, already, hiding in the barracks. The English army which came to pursue the Sepoys, killed everyone they came across, and, after following them for some distance, returned, boasting of their indiscriminate massacres and inhuman cruelties.

The English were as much afraid of the Afghan tribes beyond the border as of the armies of the Indian Revolutionary party. When the secret propagation of the revolution of 1857 was still in progress, the Secret Society of Lucknow had asked the help of the Amir of Kabul. From a letter which fell into the hands of Mr. Forsyth in August 1855, it is abundantly clear that Mussulmans of Lucknow were intriguing with Amir Dost Mahomed. It said, "Ayodhya is now annexed, and when Hyderabad is also swallowed up, even the name of Mahomedan rule will not be heard of! Some remedy must be found to prevent this in time. If the people of Lucknow rise for the sake of Swaraj, Sir, to what extent can we rely upon your help?" To this question of Lucknow, the diplomatic Amir replied enigmatically, "We will see to it." But the Amir of Kabul having recently concluded a treaty with England, the English were afraid of the Mahomedan tribes on the frontier near Peshawar rather than of the Amir himself. Some Mullahs were sent to preach among these tribes and exhort them not to rise against the English. The English officers at that time near Peshawar were all bold, diplomatic, and clever in war. The danger on the side of Peshawar was avoided, though with very great difficulty, by the promptness of men like Nicholson, Edwardes and Chamberlain who were heartily supported by such an able officer as John Lawrence. They found out at the very first stroke how to enlist these Mahomedan tribes on their own side. Their greed for money was exploited and they were bribed

to enlist in the English army. After buying these mountaineers with money, Sir John formed a moving army to put down the unrest smouldering everywhere in the Punjab. In this army were English soldiers and experienced and tested Sepoys in whose disloyalty to the country the English could put implicit faith. Hardly was this corps formed when it found important work to do; for, the news of the disarming at Mian Mir had created a tremendous agitation in the Indian Sepoys stationed at Peshawar.

The bold English officers at Peshawar decided to strike the first blow and they prepared to disarm the Sepoys. But the English commander and other officers felt very much grieved at the impending insult to the Sepoys of their regiments. These English officers, on account of the marvellous secrecy of 1857, would not believe that their Sepoys had secretly joined the Revolution. However, Cotton and Nicholson surrounded them with European troops on the 21st of May and gave the order to disarm. Seeing that it was impossible to escape from this sudden situation, all the Sepoys laid down their arms. And their officers also, unable to look on calmly at that insult threw down their arms and decorations and joined the Sepoys in hurling curses on the Company! When the troops at Peshawar were disarmed, the English found an opportunity to turn their attention to the 55th regiment stationed at Hotimardan. The Government of Panjab was perfectly certain that this regiment was also revolutionary; but the chief officer of the Sepoys there, Colonel Spottiswoode, did not share the Government's suspicions. He was continually insisting that his Sepoys would never rise against the English; still the Government persisted in its order to disarm them. Colonel Spottiswoode felt very much chagrined; and when, on the 24th of May, the Sepoy leaders came to him and asked him if the rumour that the English army was marching against them from Peshawar was true, he gave an evasive reply and the Sepoys went back dissatisfied. The English were really marching from Peshawar to destroy this regiment, as they did at Peshawar. Rather than see the wicked and disgusting affair, Colonel Spottiswoode retired to his room and committed suicide! At this news, the 55th regiment attacked the treasury, took up their arms and flags, looted the treasure, broke the chains of the slavery to the foreigners, and marched on towards Delhi!

But Delhi was not near. The whole of the Panjab, full of English soldiers, had to be crossed and, besides, an English army was pursuing them. Under these circumstances, success was so difficult that they questioned within themselves as to whether it would not be wiser for them to lay down their arms like their comrades at Peshawar and surrender to the English. But the heroes decided that it was better to have the noose of death round their necks than the chains of slavery round their feet, and they made it known by shouts to the English army following them, "We will die fighting!" And, in truth, did the heroes of this 55th regiment lay down their lives on the battlefield fighting for the freedom of their country! The story of this 55th regiment is simply heart-rending. The pursuit had been so hot that Nicholson was often on horse back for 24 hours without dismounting. Hundreds of them died in the fight and others escaped beyond the frontier, fighting as they went. But who would give shelter to the Hindus there? The Mussulman hordes began to receive them in a terrible manner. Isolated Sepoys were forced to become Mahomedans there. Thus these unfortunate Sepoys fighting in defence of their religion turned towards Kashmir for shelter, thinking that Gulab Singh, the Maharaja of Kashmir, would be able to protect them. When hundreds of these Hindu Sepoys were talking through the stony regions, without food, without clothes, without a fire to warm them, towards Kashmir, weeping that there should be no one on earth who would protect their sacred religion, the English organised massacres of these Sepoys at various places, and they were killed like wild beasts! But, still, some of the Sepoys escaped towards Kashmir, in the fond hope of finding a protector of Hinduism. Protector of Hindus! Alas! Sepoys, you will soon be undeceived. When the Rajpur-born Gulab Singh of Kashmir heard that these helpless Sepoys who were ready to jump into the jaws of Death to save the honour of their Hindu religion were coming towards him, he prohibited them from entering his country! Nay more, after giving orders that any of these Hindus found in his territory should be instantly killed, he very proudly let the English Durbar know of his valiant deeds! Now, Sepoys, either you change your religion and surrender to slavery or embrace death! Of these, Martyrs, you have done well in choosing death! The English were so cruelly slaughtering them wherever they

found them that the permanent scaffolds on the maidans began to rot by the flow of constant streams of Hindu blood! Still the English were not satisfied. Scaffolds-permanent scaffolds - were tired of performing executions, and, then, the mouths of guns were opened. And of the 55th regiment which had not spilt a single drop of English blood, every one of the men who had not been hanged was blown from the mouth of the gun! A thousand Hindus were, thus, slaughtered in no time. But, even at this last moment, (says Kaye a little ashamed at this terrible bloodshed), "Brave and sullen they went to their doom, asking only to die like soldiers at the cannon's mouth, not as dogs in the noose of the gibbet."

As regards the massacre of these brave people, in a manner which would bring shame upon even savages, English historians generally say that, though this was undoubtedly cruel, "the severity of the hour would be the humanity of all time!" The cruelty was desired in the interests of humanity! English historians, remember this your own sentence, "The severity of the hour would be the humanity of all time!" As you now know the meaning of this sentence, you will also remember it exactly on a future occasion. It is well that you perpetrate this cruelty for the sake of humanity, but do not forget that the Hindu Nana is there at Cawnpore!

One more thing must be told here. Those English historians who vie with each other in dramatic descriptions of the massacres committed by the Revolutionaries, attempt at the same time to suppress purposely and consciously the inexcusable, unprecedented, and inhuman atrocities committed by their own countrymen. Before the massacre of this unfortunate but patriotic regiment, Heaven alone knows what brutal tortures they were subjected to by the demoniacal English! For English historians have clean wiped off from history this incident and left no trace of it at all. Kaye himself says, "Though I have plenty of letters with me describing the terrible and cruel tortures committed by our officers, I do not write a word about it, so that this subject should be no longer before the world!" Here is a historian, indeed! What proof have we that the ruffians, who stuffed cow's flesh in the mouths of harmless inoffensive peasants on the road to Delhi, did

not also cram the throats of these brave Hindu Sepoys of the 55th regiment in the same manner before blowing them from guns!

While these inhuman atrocities were going on in the direction of Peshawar, here, in Jullunder, the smouldering fire of the Revolution was bursting into flame. John Lawrence had started the policy of disarming Sepoys wholesale in the Panjab; and Jullunder and Pilhur would have been so treated long ago but for the admirable selfrestraint and organising power of the Pilhur Sepoys. The Sepoys in the Jullunder Doab, like their comrades all over the Punjab, had made preparations for a rising. It was clearly given out by a patriotic Hawaldar, taken prisoner in the assault on Delhi, and the Government reports have recorded the same, that, all over the Jullunder Doab, it has been decided to rise simultaneously. The plan was that when the Jullunder army should send a corps to Hoshiarpur, the 31st infantry should rise and march to Pilhur; on their arrival, the 3rd regiment at Pilhur was to rise and all together were to march to Delhi. Similar plans had also been made in other places; but, before the time of putting them into execution, the secret leaked out and the English were forewarned. The Pilhur regiment, however, observed great secrecy till the last moment. When the siege-train was being taken to Delhi, they could easily have broken it up, but not to spoil the general plan, this regiment kept outward peace till the right moment. At last, on the 9th of June, the signal agreed upon was made at Jullunder - the bungalow of the colonel of the Queen's Regiment was set on fire. At this signal, the Jullunder Sepoys rose in revolt at midnight. As a matter of fact, the English had European soldiers and artillery there, but the rising of the Sepoys was so unanimous and sudden that, at their terrible war-cries, the English lost their nerve. English men, women, and children began to run away to places of safety. But the Jullunder Sepoys had no time to waste in massacres. Since the English guns were aimed at the flag of freedom in Delhi, every heart was drawn towards that place. When Adjutant Bagshawe began to interfere unnecessarily, one horseman galloped towards him and shot him dead. The English military officers of the place had, to the end, confidence in the Sepoys and informed the higher authorities that they need not be disarmed; and they really did trust the Sepoys. For this, the Sepoys not only refrained from massacring them

wholesale but spared the life of those also that had not yet left the place. Thus, the Jullunder army kept its plan well and the officers who trusted them were spared their life. In this, the Sepoys showed great magnanimity.¹⁸ And yet, although the perpetrator himself has confessed to. "In the Panjab, near Ajnala, in a small island, many a Sepoy who had simply fled away from a regiment, which was working under the reasonable fear of being disarmed and shot by the Government for suspicion, was hiding himself. Cooper with a loyal body of troops took them prisoner. The entire number, amounting to two hundred and eighty-two, were then conveyed by Cooper to Ajnala. Then came the question what was to be done with them! There was no means of transporting them to a place where they could be tried formally. On the other hand, if they were summarily executed, other regiments and intending rebels might take warning of their fate, and thus, further bloodshed might be prevented. For these reasons, Cooper, fully conscious as he was of the enormous responsibility which he was undertaking, resolved to put them all to death. Next morning, Government and their officers had treated them kindly and they were thankful to them for their trust, they did not allow these private relations

18 The English have circulated a myth and have called it the Black Hole of Calcutta and the whole world is execrating the memory of Siraj-ud-daulah for this wild invention of an English forger's brain. Here is a blood curdling story of a real black hole which the accordingly, he brought them out in tens and made some Sikhs shoot them. In this way, two hundred and sixteen perished. But, there still remained sixty-six others who had been confined in one of the bastions of the Tahsil. Expecting resistance, Cooper ordered the door to be opened. But not a sound issued from the room; forty-five of them were dead bodies lying on the floor. For, unknown to Cooper, the windows had been closely shut and the wretched prisoners had found in the bastion a second Black-Hole. The remaining twenty-one were shot, like their comrades. 1-8-'57. For this splendid assumption of responsibility, Cooper was assailed by the hysterical cries of ignorant humanitarians. But Robert Montgomery unanswerably vindicated his character by proving that he had saved the Lahore division."- Holmes's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, page 363.

to come in the way of the national cause, and they gave up their body and soul to the cause, when the war-bugle for country and freedom sounded.

Before beginning the revolt at midnight, they had despatched a horseman to inform their Pilhur comrades. As soon as this messenger of freedom from Jullunder arrived, the Pilhur regiment also rose. Now it only remained for the Jullunder men to march to Pilhur! It was not an easy task, for it was necessary to avoid the English artillery and cavalry; but such was the tumult and confusion among the English and so clear was the map drawn by the Revolutionaries that, at last, all the Jullunder Sepoys arrived at Pilhur in perfect order. Seeing thousands of their comrades coming to meet them, the Sepoys of Pilhur marched in a body to receive them. The comrades heartily embraced each other, and the vast army under the leadership of Swadeshi Jamadars and Subahdars marched towards Delhi. On the way was a river and beyond the river was the city of Ludhiana awaiting to kiss the dust of these heroes' feet. The very morning, the English officers of Ludhiana had received a telegram announcing the rising at Jullunder. But it was too late. The officers had no hope of keeping the Sepoys there under control. For, before the Government telegram arrived, the Sepoys had got the information that their comrades had already left Jullunder! The English officers at Ludhiana resolved to bar the way of the army coming from Pilhur on the river Sutliji which flows between the two towns. The bridge of boats on the river was destroyed and the English, the Sikhs, and the auxiliary troops of the Raja of Nabha were protecting the bank of the river.

When the Revolutionaries got this information they began to cross the river at night, four miles up the river. Some of their number had just crossed the river in boats, some were still crossing, while some were yet on the other bank. In this state, the English and the Sikhs began their artillery-fire on them. It was about ten at night and the Revolutionaries could not find the whereabouts of the English army. Besides, their guns had not yet crossed the river. In this difficult situation, the English and the Sikhs, with their artillery, fell upon them. But when the shock of the first attack was passed, the Sepoys, without moving an inch, kept up a steady fire on the enemy. The ranks of the Sepoys, though disordered for a moment on

account of the sudden attack of the enemy defended their position for about two hours. Just then, a Sepoy's bullet went right into the chest of the English commander, Williams, and he fell dead on the field. Now, the moon had arisen to dispel the midnight darkness and to throw her cool rays on the heads of the devotees of freedom. In this moonlight, the Revolutionaries saw the whole strategy of the English, and they left their position and attacked the English boldly. Not being able to hold out before this attack, the English army as well as the loyal Sikhs took to their heels!

Proud of victory that they had just won against the combined forces of the English and the Sikhs, the Sepoys entered the town of Ludhiana about midday. In the city, there was a certain Moulvie who always used to preach to the people to break away from English slavery and establish Swaraj. On account of the Moulvie's lectures, this town had become a powerful centre of the Revolutionary part in the Panjab. When the sign came that the time had come to deal the last blows at the chains of slavery, the whole town rose. The Government stores were looted and burnt. Churches, the houses of Englishmen, the presses of English newspapers, all were burnt. There was rivalry among the citizens to accompany the Sepoys and show them the stations of Englishmen and especially the houses of "native dogs" who used to wag their tails under the protection of the Englishmen! Prisons were broken. Whatever belonged to the Government and whatever was English was burnt down. That which could not be burnt down was razed to the ground. In this manner, Ludhiana also began to glow with the Revolutionary fire.

But it was desirable for the Revolutionaries to go to Delhi. It would have been a great strategic and moral advantage if the Sepoys could have held Ludhiana fort, as it was the key to the Panjab; and if Ludhiana had also been a centre of the Revolution, like Delhi, it would have been a terrible shock to the English power. This was, no doubt, known to the Sepoys. But it was impossible for them to remain in Ludhiana under the circumstances. They were all more Sepoys, without a leader. They had no ammunition. If, at such a juncture, there had been at Ludhiana a Nana Sahib, or a Khan Bahadur Khan, or a Moulvie Ahmad Shan, they would never have left Ludhiana. Now, they could do nothing but march

towards Delhi. And so they proceeded towards Delhi, crying that they would now decide, at the walls of Delhi itself, the question of slavery or Swaraj. The English were so much demoralised then that, though the Sepoys used to march in procession by day, yet no one dared to suggest pursuit!

But the enforced idleness of the Revolutionary party at other places for three weeks after the Meerut rising, was completely taken advantage of by the English in the Panjab. Because there were large forces of European troops in the Panjab, it became easy either to disarm the Sepoys, or compel them to revolt under odds of time and place, and then destroy them. Seeing that the Sikh princes and people were joining them instead of the Revolutionaries, the English expelled all the Hindusthanees in the Panjab from the frontier up to the Sutliij and crushed the seeds of the Revolution in that part of the country. At this time, not only the Sepoys, but thousands of peaceful and well-to-do non-Punjabee Hindusthanees in towns and villages, were deported at the mere will of the authorities. And when the Panjab was, thus, completely in hand, the movement of European troops towards Delhi began on a large scale. There were two chief reasons why the Panjab remained in English hands. One was that the Sikhs sided with the English. If they had even been indifferent, the English could not have retained the Panjab for a single day. The Revolutionaries, naturally, spared no pains to bring over the Sikhs to their side. As soon as Delhi was free, a devoted servant of the Emperor sent him a long, detailed, and very interesting account of the state of feeling in the Panjab. In it, the faithful servant Taju Din says, "The Sikh Sirdars in the Panjab are all idle and cowardly, and unlikely to join the Revolutionaries. They have become the playthings of the Feringhis. I saw them personally in private, had conversations with them, and spoke to them most earnestly. I asked them, 'Why do you join the Feringhis and become traitors to Swaraj? Won't you be better off under Swaraj? Therefore, at least for your own gain, you ought to join the Emperor of Delhi!' To this they replied, 'See, we are all waiting for the opportunity. As soon as we get the order of the Emperor, we will kill these Kaffirs in a day ' But I believe they are thoroughly untrustworthy.'" So when horsemen came, with the order from the Emperor to the Sikh kings, they were assassinated! This was the first and most

important reason why the English found it so easy to keep their hold on the Panjab; yet we cannot say that it was impossible to drive the English away from the Punjab, in spite of the opposition of the Sikhs. If advantage had been taken of the laxity of the English till the month of May, and if there has been a simultaneous rising according to the original plan, then, the Sikhs too would have been terrorised to join a division among them; and, whatever else might have happened, the English could not possibly have taken hold of thousands of Sepoys separately and put them down. It cannot be maintained that in the Punjab there was no desire for Swaraj. The Brahmins of Thaneshwar and the Moulvies of Ludhiana, the shopkeepers of Ferozepore and the Mussalmans of Peshawar, were wandering about, preaching everywhere a holy war for the sake of Swadharma and Swaraj. The writer of the above-mentioned letter says, "If a Sirdar from the Emperor together with an army can be sent thither, the Panjab will be free in a moment. The Sepoys at different places will rise and rally round your banner. The English will have to leave in haste. And I am certain that all Hindus and Mahomedans will bow to your glorious throne. Besides, it is desirable that the rising should be made in this month of June, for English soldiers find it hard to fight in the sun. They die quickly even before fighting begins. As soon as you see this letter, you should send a Sirdar with an army into the Panjab," etc. etc. Though popular sympathy in the Panjab was with Delhi, the Revolutionaries could not take advantage of it. The reason is that the wave of Revolution was inevitably checked for three weeks after the freedom of Delhi. If, according to the prearranged plan, there had been universal and simultaneous risings, the English could not have moved anywhere; solitary and helpless regiments could not have been disarmed in the Panjab; the wave of Revolution would have daily gained in volume, and undecided and hesitating people like the Sikhs would have been carried away with it; and, seeing a glorious and successful beginning, those who sympathised but dared not throw in their lot with the Revolution would have become emboldened and, - India would have been free.

In short, on account of the treachery of the Sikhs and the premature rising at Meerut, the roots of the Revolution in the Panjab were all weeded out.

And the Panjab being the backbone of Delhi, the news was very discouraging to the Delhi patriots.

We have given, above, the movements of the Revolutionaries and of the English in Delhi and the Panjab during the three weeks. The English had been making all possible preparations during these three weeks and large contingents of European troops were constantly being sent from Calcutta to Allahabad. In Bombay and Madras, in Rajputana and Sind, a minute inquiry was made as to the sympathisers of the Revolutionary movement, and great efforts were being made to crush it in time, as was done in the Panjab. And, thanking God for this previous warning of the Revolution, they began to be confident that they had extinguished the flames in various places. While these preparations were going on during these weeks on the side of the English, on the side of the Revolutionaries all possible outward quiet was maintained in general, except for some small risings that took place here and there. This was the state of affairs, on both sides, on the 30th of May. We must now turn to the succeeding events- how this was immediately altered, how the growing confidence of the English was dashed to the ground, how the flames of the Revolution burst again with redoubled vigour in spite of the great losses it had sustained during these three weeks. Revolutions are not regulated by fixed laws. They are not accurately working machines like clocks or watches. They have their own way of marching. They can only be regulated by a general principle; but they brush away minor rules by their very shock. Revolution has only one watchword- "Dash on!" All sorts of new and unthought of circumstances might arise during its progress, but one must stop; one must overcome them and press forward.

Tell us now, O Mother of History, how Nana Sahib the Moulvie of Lucknow, the Ranees of Jhansi, and other grand heroes clung to this principle with such extraordinary persistence! And fail not to tell, also, O History, how all Indians could not cling to it as these heroes did! Come and sing the songs of glory and of raise with us in the first part, and, also come and weep with us later on!

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CHAPTER V ALIGARH & NASIRABAD

JUST as the tremendous shock was shaking the whole of North-Western India, towards Umballa and the Panjab, so also in the South, another part of the country was trembling through another of its waves. In the town of Aligarh, below Delhi, there was the regiment called the "9th Native Infantry." Some detachments of this regiment were stationed at Minpur, Itawa, and Boland. The Government had such confidence in this regiment, that they thought that it would never revolt even though all the Sepoys in India should rise against them. Though the officials heard rumours that, in the bazaars of Boland, secret revolutionary societies were rife, they believed that the 9th regiment was sure to stand aloof from them, and remained idle in this sense of false security.

About the month of May, the places about Boland selected from amongst them a revered, faithful, and freedom-loving Brahmin, and deputed him immediately to Boland town. The Brahmin walked away with quick steps, his heart overwhelmed with conflicting emotions of hope of success and fear of failure of the errand on which he went, towards the military station of Boland, which on the one hand was relied upon by the English for loyalty, and, on the other, was looked upon with hopeful eyes by the Mother-country. Will my compatriots listen to my pleadings for the freedom of the Mother-country and for the protection of religion? Or will they cling again to the dread and dark narcotic of slavery? And draw their swords against me for having disturbed their sleep, when I wanted to wake them and show them the brilliant vision? With such feelings surging in his heart, but with his face beaming with a quiet light of peace, this Brahmin entered the station with his extraordinary message. He was well received and his message was welcomed. As to the plan of rising, the Brahmin said that they should all rise suddenly amidst the noisy jollity of a great of a great marriage procession, massacre the English, and proceed to Delhi. Of course there was nobody there against the principle of overthrowing English dominion, but a discussion began as

to the fitness of this mode of realising the principle at Boland. Just then the Brahmin was arrested on the information of three Sepoys of the regiment. He was immediately sent from Boland to Aligarh, the chief station of the regiment, and sentenced to be hanged in the presence of all the Sepoys. While this was happening at Aligarh, the three loyal Sepoys were being disgraced and spat upon at Boland. The whole camp of Boland heaped curses on them and went, without the permission of their officers, to Aligarh where the Revolutionary messenger had been taken. On the evening of the 20th May, the Brahmin was to be hanged. The whole regiment was made to attend at the execution. What was to be done now? If they were to wait till the 31st of May, the Brahmin would be hanged. As they whispered to each other. "He is going!" , and looked up, they beheld that the Brahmin's body was hanging on the scaffold, delivering a terrible oration of REVENGE! What an oration! Instead of strings of words, streaks of blood were flowing incessantly! The dead Brahmin could never in his life have delivered such an oration as he was delivering from the scaffold without uttering a single word! For, in an instant, a Sepoy broke forth from the ranks and, pointing his sword towards the body of the Brahmin, he exclaimed, "Friends! This martyr bathes in blood!" This shaft from the mouth of that brave Sepoy, entered the heart of the thousands of Sepoys quicker, even, than it takes for a spark to explode a powder-magazine! They, at once, drew out their swords; and these thousands of Sepoys, mad with rage, began to dance with delirium, thundering, "Death to the Feringhi rule!"

It is no wonder that the English officers were at their wits' end after this scene. Not only did the "most loyal" 9th regiment rise, but it spoke out that, if the English wanted to save their lives, they should leave Aligarh at once! Taking advantage of this generosity, the officers at Aligarh with their wives and children, and all the other Englishmen and women there, including Lady Outram, left Aligarh quietly. Before midnight not a trace of English rule remained at Aligarh!

The news of the freedom of Aligarh arrived at Minpur on the evening of the 22nd May. It has been said above that a detachment of the 9th infantry was stationed here. Anybody can imagine from the account of their brethren's doings at

Aligarh, what the thoughts of the Sepoys of this detachment would have been. The officers at Minpur got information that a certain Raje Nath Singh, who had fought against the English at Meerut, had gone to a place called Jivanti. They, therefore, sent some Sepoys to arrest him. But these Sepoys of the 9th regiment, instead of arresting him, took him safely out of Jivanti and reported to the officers that no one of that name stayed there. A Sepoy called Ram Din Singh was sent by the officers under guard to Aligarh, for disobedience. When he was halfway, the Sepoys on guard released him, broke his chains and quietly returned to Minpur! This regiment, fired with patriotism, was only waiting for the signal to rise. But in order that the enemy might not cripple them before the simultaneous rising, they apparently kept such good behaviour that the 9th regiment was regarded as the "most loyal" regiment in the whole of India! But since the above-mentioned tour of the Brahmin, not only the Sepoys, but the whole mass of the people of the Aligarh district also, were in a rage. The Minpur detachment of the 9th regiment had been sent to the Aligarh district to quell the growing discontent, and, when it returned to Aligarh, the butchers, and even loafers in the bazaars, asked them questions like "When are you going to kill the Feringhis?" , "When are you going to rise for freedom?", How would Sepoys have liked to postpone a work for which even butchers and loafers were impatient? Just then came the news of Aligarh. Seeing that their comrades had risen, they thought it disgraceful to wait any longer, and so they rose that same day. They, also, spared the life of all Englishmen who fell into their hands, took plenty of arms and ammunition from the arsenal, loaded it on camels, and started on the 23rd to Delhi.

At the same time, a similar movement was going on amongst the garrison of Itawa. The chief magistrate and collector at Itawa, Allen O.Hume, as soon as he heard the news from Meerut, formed a select corps to guard the roads round about Itawa, with the help of the assistant magistrate Daniell. On the 19th this corps met a handful of Sepoy coming from Meerut. The few Sepoys surrendered and were ordered to lay down their arms. The Meerut Sepoys pretended to obey the order, disarmed the enemy of his suspicion, and then suddenly took up their arms and massacred their captors! Before this news got about, the Sepoys entered a

Hindu temple near by, and his themselves there with all their arms. When the collector of Itawa, Mr.A.O.Hume, heard this, he and Baniell took some Indian soldiers and marched to attack the temple. At first, Mr.Hume was confident that the handful of Sepoys must have been killed by the populace even before his little corps attacked them! But, when they came

near the temple, they discovered that the townsmen, instead of killing them, were singing their praises and giving them provisions. Though the villagers thus belied his expectations, Daniell thought that at least his Sepoys and police would stand by him. With immense confidence, he gave the order to attack the temple and himself rushed forward. But who followed him? Only a single Sepoy was inclined to obey his order! But this white commandant and his black slave were both despatched in an instant by bullets from the Sepoys in the temple, and Mr.Hume, who was proudly coming up, left the Sepoys in peace at the temple and took to his heels!

On this day, the 19th of May, a rumour was afloat that the army at Itawa was going to rise. But the head-quarters were at Aligarh, and, as the order to rise had not yet come, the Sepoys at Itawa remained quite. And it would have remained so till the 31st of May but for the fact that in the meantime the self-sacrifice of the Brahmin martyr set the Revolutionary flames glowing. When, on the 22nd, the news came that Aligarh had risen, Itawa rose also. On the 23rd of May, the whole army rose, shouting, "Har! Har! Mahadeo!" , sword in one hand and a lighted torch in the other. The Sepoys then attacked the English camp. They looted the treasury, broke prisons, and told the English that, unless they left the place instantly, they would be indiscriminately massacred. In this terrible plight, the English took their wives and children with them and ran wherever they found a way! Mr. Hume himself, profiting by the magnanimity of the Sepoys, disguised himself as an Indian woman and ran away.¹⁹ When Hume ran away, it was proclaimed by beat of drum that Itawa was independent, and all the Sepoys went away to join the chief division of the regiment marching towards Delhi.

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Thus the regiment rose like one man. In places so far apart as Aligarh, Boland, Minpur, and Itawa, the programme was perfectly carried out- looting the treasury, announcing freedom, sparing the life of the English when at the mercy of the sword, and after securing a good supply of provisions and ammunition, marching to Delhi. The regiment which the English thought would be the last to rise, thus rose sword in hand long before the others. The English, thereafter, could not feel themselves secure of anything!

There is a small town called Nasirabad about twelve miles from Ajmere. In this town there was a company of English soldiers and the 30th native infantry, besides the artillery. There were, also, the 1st Bombay Lancers and the 15th regiment which had been lately brought from Meerut. In the last regiment, the hatred of the English and the desire for driving them out were strongest. And it would have been a wonder, if the thousand political preachers from

Meerut would have let go this opportunity of explaining personally to the Nasirabad Sepoys the resolutions of the Secret Society at Meerut. Excepting some men of the Bombay Lancers, the whole Sepoy army was unanimous, and resolved only to wait a suitable opportunity. This came on the 28th of May, for, on that day, the discipline in the artillery was very lax. Thus, at the appointed signal, the 15th regiment from Meerut took possession of the artillery. To take it back the English officers together with the Bombay Lancers marched upon them. But, in a very short time, the Lancers retired with wisdom, and the English officers fell dead on the ground. Newbury was not only killed but his body was blown to pieces! Colonel Penny and Captain Spottiswoode also fell in this skirmish. Then, leaving all hope of the city, the English ran away to Biau. The Revolutionaries took the treasury, and their unanimously elected commander gave presents to the Sepoys in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. The houses of the Englishmen were burnt. Then that army composed of thousands of Sepoys marched towards Delhi brandishing their arms to the tune of enthusiastic military airs!

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CHAPTER VI ROHILKHAND

BAREILLY was the capital of the province of Rohilkhand. The English had wrested the kingdom away from the Rohilla Pathans who had been ruling the province. There was a population there of brave, strong, and spirited Mussulmans, biding their time to take revenge for this insult. Rohilkhand and its capital must also be counted among the places where the Revolutionary propaganda against English rule was spreading fast about the year 1857. In Bareilly, at this time, were stationed the 8th Irregular Cavalry, and 18th and 68th regiments of infantry, and a battery of Indian artillery. Over this force, the chief officer was Brigadier Sibbald. About the month of April, some Sepoys had expressed their doubt about the cartridges, but the Government did not pay any serious attention to them, and forced the Sepoys singly to accept them. Once or twice again there was some tumult and growing disaffection among the Sepoys, but the Government could not see its danger.

The news of the Meerut rising reached Bareilly on the 14th of May. Thereupon, the Englishmen sent all their families towards Naini Tal and ordered the cavalry to be in readiness. The cavalry was also Indian, but it had the Special and complete confidence of the English. All the Sepoys, including the cavalry, were called on parade on the 15th of May, and the chief English officer preached to them loyalty and good behaviour. He said that the new cartridges were thenceforth to be stopped, and that the Sepoys should use the old cartridges to which they had no objection. Nay more, he said he would himself trample into the dust any new cartridges which he saw on the field and thus tried to remove the Sepoy's fear about the cartridges. As a matter of fact, to dilate upon cartridges now was superfluous. The Commander-in-Chief had issued an order that throughout Hindusthan, the new cartridges were, thenceforth, to be stopped. When the Government thus drew back immediately after the Meerut rising, and stopped, of their own accord, the use of the cartridges upon which they insisted so much before

the month of May, the people and the Sepoys saw in the new order nothing but a sign of fear and weakness. The error of the theory that the Sepoys revolted solely on account of the cartridges, was now to be clearly proved at Bareilly. The Grigadier told the Sepoys that he would himself smash these cartridges, and tried to reassure them; but the days were gone when such words could pacify them. What was the use of giving orders about cartridges? Where the question at issue was whether the English should any longer have the power of giving any orders whatsoever in the land, to give further orders was to inflame the quarrel. To lecture now about good or bad cartridges was an unpardonable digression!

For the people of Rohilkhand had now received an urgent and pressing invitation from the Swadeshi throne of Delhi to hold aloft the flag of Indian freedom. Was this invitation one that could be lightly treated?

"From the commander of the army at Delhi to the commander of the army at Bareilly, hearty embrances. Brothers, there is a fight with the English proceeding at Delhi. By the grace of God, even the first defeat that they have received at our hands has demoralised them more than ten defeats would have done them at other times. Innumerable Swadeshi heroes are coming to Delhi. At such a time, if you are dining there, come here to wash your hands. The Padishah of Shahs and the Home Splendour, our Emperor of Delhi, will give you a great welcome and fitly reward your services. Our ears are anxious for the second of your cannon and our eyes are thirsting to see you. Come! Come at once! For, Brethren, how will the rose- tree flower without spring? How will a child live without milk?"

Was this an invitation to be rejected? While the invitation was on its way, Khan Bahadur

Khan, the descendant of Hafiz Rahmat, the last independent Rohilla chief, was weaving the nets of the secret society. Khan Bahadur Khan used to get two pensions from the English, one as the descendant of Hafiz Rahmat, and the other as a judicial officer under the English. He was known throughout the province as a great favourite of the English. The Government also

had great confidence in him. And he was the life and centre of all the secret societies of Bareilly! But, though this invitation asked the people of Bareilly to come at once, they decided to wait till the 31st of May, in accordance with the plans originally arranged. All the Sepoys were doing their duties without, in the least, disobeying the English officers. A few days before, a hundred of the revolted Meerut Sepoys came and lived secretly in the "lines" themselves, and stirred up the revolutionary spirit by the narrative of the events at Meerut, and then left. Still, the Sepoys kept the peace outwardly. The Subahdars of the regiments even went so far as to request the Europeans to bring their families! But before this request was fulfilled, a rumour arose on the 29th of May that the Sepoys had taken oath, at the time of the morning bath in the river, that they would massacre the English at two o'clock! Immediately the English got ready the loyal cavalry regiment. They, also, came together and formed without murmur. But the whole day passed and the Sepoys never rose. The English retired at night, saying that though the rumour was false, it at least incidentally proved that the cavalry could be relied upon. Just then, sure and certain information came that the cavalry had sworn, long before, never to lift their swords against their comrades or help the English! The English now could not make up their minds what to believe. Not only the 29th, but also the 30th passed away without any incident. And on the latter day the conduct of the Sepoys was so good - if anything, it was more loyal than ever - that the civil and military authorities made up their minds that the danger was surely past and that there was no longer any reason for fear!

The 31st of May dawned. Early in the morning, the house of Captain Brownlow was set on fire. But the English had not much reason to be particularly fearful of anything serious. The day was Sunday. The Sunday military parade passed off smoothly, as well as the reports of native officers. The English officers even observed that the Sepoys were more than usually quiet that day. The English prayed in their churches. There was not the least sign of trouble anywhere. The clock struck eleven. A gun was fired among the Sepoy lines. Hardly had the echo died out, when a noise of clanging rifles and shrill shouting rent the sky! The rising at Bareilly was so carefully planned, that it was arranged beforehand who was to

kill which Englishman. As soon as it was eleven, the 68th regiment attacked the Englishmen near their lines. Small detachments quickly went to the various bungalows, and the rest attended to the straggling Englishmen, to go to their hosedds and burn them. On heaving this noise and tumult, the terror-stricken Englishmen ran towards the cavalry lines. All the civil and military officers

had decided to come together there for refuge. As soon as they arrived there, they ordered the cavalry regiment to march on the Revolutionaries. But the Indian head of that regiment was also a Revolutionary. Mahomed Shafi galloped towards the Revolutionaries and ordered the horsemen to follow him. They followed him, shouting, "Die for religion, come, the green flag is calling you!" Still the English tried to collect together a few that remained, and attempted to come near the parade ground, but finding it impossible to stand before the terrible onslaught of the Revolutionaries, they all turned their back and began flying towards Naini Tal. Brigadier Sibbald was killed in the first affray. Captain Kirby, Lieutenant Fraser, Sergeant Walton, Colonel Troup, Captain Robertson - all the Englishmen that fell into the hands of the Revolutionaries were killed. Only thirty-two officers escaped the massacre and safely reached Naini Tal. In this way, the English power at Bareilly was made to end in six hours!

When the English flag was hauled down and the flat of freedom began to fly at Bareilly, the Subahdar of the Sepoy artillery, Bakht Khan, accepted the commandership of all the Sepoy troops. We will hereafter have occasion to refer to him at the time of siege of Delhi. He delivered an enthusiastic oration to all the Sepoys as to their conduct after acquiring freedom and their duties in sustaining the newly established Swaraj.²⁰ And now, this Swadeshi brigadier went through the town in the carriage of the English brigadier. Behind him followed the new officers seated in the carriages of their English predecessors. Khan Bahadur Khan was accepted by acclamation as the ruler of Rohilkhand in the capacity of Subahdar of the Emperor. After all the houses of the English at Bareilly had been burnt down

and looted, Khan Bahadur Khan ordered the imprisoned Englishmen to be brought before him. Hew had acted as judge under the English administration and knew English justice thoroughly. So, he appointed a court for the trial of the English criminals. Among them were the Doctor, the son-in-law of the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western provinces, the principal of the Government college at Bareilly, and the District Judge of Bareilly. Only the day before, loyal Khan Bahadur Khan had been sitting beside them as a friend. Today, one was on the throne and the others in the prisoner's dock! The jury took their oaths as usual, and took their seats on the bench. The prisoners were charged with various crimes involving treason and were all sentenced to be hanged, and the six Englishmen were forthwith executed. As the Commissioner of Rohilkhand has escaped with his life, Khan Bahadur Khan issued a proclamation that the Feringhi commissioner had absconded, and a reward of one thousand rupees was offered to anyone who would bring him, dead or alive. After having thus firmly cemented his authority with English blood, Khan Bahadur Khan sent word to Delhi that

Rahilkhand had become free. The Revolution began that morning at eleven, and, before sunset, the messenger announcing Rohilkhand's freedom set out for Dselhi!

The announcement that the whole of Rohilkhand had become free was not a vain boast. While the artillery at Bareilly was shaking the English power to pieces, English blood had already begun to flow at Shahjahanpur. This latter town is about forty-sevel miles from Bareilly, and was the headquarters of the 28th infantry. The news of Meerut reached Shahjahanpur on the 15th of May. But since the Sepoys gave no indication whatever of their plans to the authorities, the 31st of May dawned there like other days, in peace and happiness.

It being Sunday, the English were in church; but before their prayer was half-finished, the Sepoys ran towards the church! When the chaplain came out to see what the matter was, his hand was cut off and the massacre began. The city magistrate, Ricketts, fall while running. Labadoor was killed in the churth itself. Only one batch of the Sepoys had come to the church while the other had been sent

to the English cantonment. The latter had already started killing and burning. The assistant magistrate ran into the verandah for life, but was killed. Doctor Bowling began to address a few words to the Sepoys. The Sepoys, also, were listening to his words, but, unfortunately, he called them, in the course of his speech, "seditious." In reply to this "charge," a bullet came whizzing and he dropped dead. The Revolutionaries who had gone to the church had only swords and sticks with them; so, now, they returned to the lines to take their rifles. In the meanwhile, some Englishmen, together with the women and children, with the help of some Sikh Sepoys and the native cooks and servants, ran to the house of a neighbouring Raja for safety. But the Raja explained to them his helplessness and asked them to "move on." The fugitives then went away towards Mahmadi. Thus, before the evening of the 31st of May, Shahjahanpur also became free.

To the north-west of Bareilly, at a distance of about forty-eight miles, is the district town of Moradabad. Here was stationed the 29th infantry regiment and half a battalion of native artillery. A fine opportunity came to test their loyalty, after the news from Meerut had gone there. The English authorities got information on the 18th of May that some of the Meerut Sepoys had camped near Moradabad. The 29th regiment was ordered to make a night attack on them. In obedience of that order, the Sepoys attacked the Meerut Revolutionaries while

they were asleep in the woods, but, however, in some ways or other, in spite of the determined attack under these conditions, all but one of them succeeded in escaping. The night was so dark! The English officers also thought that the darkness helped the Meerut Sepoys to escape, though attacked under such odds. It has now transpired, however, that the attack was a mere sham; may more, some of the Meerut Sepoys, said to have escaped in the forest, actually slept that night in the Sepoy lines at Moradabad! However for the time being the English had entire confidence in the 29th regiment on account of the loyal night-attack which it made. And nothing in its conduct was calculated to dispel it till the end of May.

On the morning of the 31st, however, all the Sepoys began to form on the parade-ground. The English were about to ask the reason of their assembling thus without permission, when the Sepoys spoke authoritatively in the following

manner:- "The rule of the Company is at an end! Therefore, you should leave this country immediately and go away, or else you will be massacred! If you cannot go at once we will allow you two hours to prepare for departure. But you must vacate Moradabad as soon as the two hours are over." The Moradabad police also announced that thenceforth they would not obey the orders of the English, and the citizens supported them! When these three simultaneous notices were given, the English people at Moradabad - the judge, the collector, the magistrate, the surgeon, and others - with their families, ran away from Moradabad without the least attempt at remonstrance. Any Englishmen who were found in Moradabad after the time limit had expired were killed. Commissioner Powell and others became Mohamedans and thus saved their lives. The Sepoys took possession of the treasury and all government property, and before sunset the green flag began to fly on Moradabad.²¹

There is also another district town, called Budaun, between Bareilly and Shahjahanpur. Mr. Edwardes was then collector and magistrate of the district. Since the English government came into Rohilkhand, the old Zemindars were being frightfully oppressed with heavy taxes and otherwise. Therefore, the big Zemindars and their tenants were very much disaffected. In fact, the land-tax in Budaun was so oppressive, that Edwardes himself knew that Budaun was perfectly ready, and only waiting for a chance to drive out the English; and for this reason he asked military help from Bareilly. But the situation in Bareilly, as has already been described, was not such that help could be sent to Budaun. However, a message from Bareilly came that troops under European officers would be despatched on the 1st of June. At this news Edwardes felt happy and on the 1st of June sat with his eyes towards the road from Bareilly. He soon saw a government man coming galloping on towards Budaun. In the hope that he

would be the forerunner of the succour which he expected. Edwardes hastily interrogated him. But in reply, instead of an assurance of help from

21 Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*.

Bareilly, he got the message that, at Bareilly itself, the English power was at an end! There were Sepoys kept at Budaun to guard the treasury, and Edwardes asked their head, "Bareilly was become independent; what about Budaun?" The head replied that the Sepoys under him were loyal and that there was no cause for anxiety. But in the evening, the town of Budaun rose in revolt! The Sepoys at the treasury, the police, and the leading citizens announced, by beat of drum that the English rule was at an end. Thus, the whole district went willingly into the hands of Khan Bahadur Khan.

The Sepoys took the treasure and marched towards Delhi and all the English officers at Budaun began to run about in the forests at night. Under privations of food and clothing for weeks, hiding everywhere, sometimes in the stable of some villager, sometimes in deserted houses, English collectors, and magistrates, and English women, were running about to save their lives. Some of them were killed, some died, and some lived under the protection of kindly "natives!"

In this manner, the whole province of Rohilkhand rose in a day! In Bareilly, in Shahjahanpur, in Moradabad, in Budaun, and other district towns, the military, the police, and the citizens issued Proclamations and deported the British Power in the space of a few hours! The English power was smashed and the Swadeshi government was put in its stead; British flags were torn down, and green flags began to fly in the court-houses and police-stations and offices. India assumed the role of ruler and England was put in the prisoner's dock! This extraordinary transformation took place in a whole province in a few hours! What wonder that not a drop of Swadeshi blood was shed in freeing the whole of Rohilkhand? Instead of saying "Rohilkhand is dependent", all said "Rohilkhand is free," and the thing was done! On one day, unanimously, everywhere and at once, the police, the Sepoys, and citizens rose and drove away the few English officers in the district towns. No more pains than this were required to make the province free! A strong organisation of secret societies, and the swift and clever execution of the plan proposed, these were the two things which enabled Rohilkhand to free itself from the English and accept the rule of Khan Bahadur Khan.

All the Sepoys went away to Delhi to fight under the leadership of Bakht Khan, the head of the Bareilly artillery above-mentioned. Then, Khan Bahadur Khan formed a new force to keep order in the province and the capital. Almost all citizens were formed into a militia. The civil departments were also organised and almost all the previous holders of offices were confirmed in their posts. And the chief posts, occupied previously by Europeans, were now given to Indians. The government land-tax was assessed in the name of the Emperor of Delhi. Courts of justice were opened as before and the former officers were retained. In short, there was no break in any department or its work on account of the Revolution, except that instead of Englishmen, the chief officers were Indians. Khan Bahadur Khan personally wrote an account of the doings in his province to the Emperor, and the following Proclamation was posted throughout Rohilkhand. "Residents of Hindusthan! The long-looked-for festival of Swaraj has arrived! Are you going to accept or refuse it? Are you going to take advantage of this great opportunity or are you going to let it go out of your hands? Hindu and Mahomedan Brethren! Be it known to all of you that, if these English are permitted to remain in India, they will butcher all and put an end to your religion! The residents of Hindusthan have so long been deceived by Englishmen, and have cut their necks with their own swords. So, now we must repair this sin of treachery to our country! The Englishmen will try, now also, their old work of deception; they will try to incite the Hindus to rise against Mussalmans, and the Mahomedans to rise against the Hindus. But, Hindu Brethren! do not fall into their nets. It is hardly necessary to tell our clever Hindu brethren that the English never keep their promises. They are adepts in the art of trickery and deceitful imposture! They have all along been trying to root out all other religions on earth but their own! Have they not pushed aside the rights of adopted children? Have they not swallowed up the countries and kingdoms of our Kings! Who took away the kingdom of Nagpur? Who took away the kingdom of Lucknow? Who has trampled under foot both Hindus and Mahomedans? Mussulmans, if you revere the Koran, and Hindus, if you revere the cow-mother, forget now your minor differences and unite together in this sacred war! Jump into the battlefield fighting under one banner, and wash away the name

of the English from India in streams of blood! If the Hindus will join hands with the Mahomedans in this war, if they will, also, take the field for the freedom of our country, then, as a reward for their patriotism, the killing of cows will be put a stop to. In this holy war, he who fights himself, and he who helps another to fight, by means of money, will attain earthly and spiritual freedom! But, if anyone will oppose this Swadeshi war, then, he will strike at his own head and be guilty of the sin of suicide!"

Leaving Rohilkhand for the present to make its preparations for defending the Swaraj which it has got back, we shall go to Benares and Allahabad to see what is taking place there.

INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

CHAPTER VII BENARES & ALLAHABAD

ABOUT four hundred and sixty miles from Calcutta lies the ancient city of Benares, on the banks of the sacred Ganges, shining in all her historical glory. Benares is surely the queen of all the cities that have been built by the sides of the cool, clear, and holy waters of the Bhagirathi. The rows of houses mounting higher and higher from the banks of the Ganges, the domes of tall temples with golden steeples glittering in the sun, the thick rows of trees gracefully raising heads to the sky, the grand harmony of the innumerable bells sounded in the temples, and, above all, the sacred temple of Vishweshwarfa, all these give a unique splendour to the city of Benares. The pleasure-seekers go there for amusement, the devoted for prayer, the Sanyasis for contemplation, and the holy of salvation. All these achieve their various purposes in the holy city. For people who are satiated with the pleasures of the world, holy Benares is a place of retirement, and for those unfortunates whose hopes and desires of happiness in this world are shattered by the jealousy and spite of cruel and wicked men. Benares and the sprays of the cool Ganges are a haven of rest.

Thanks to the English, there was no want of such unfortunate men in 1857 coming to end their days of toil in that haven of refuge and peace. Several Hindu and Mahomedan nobles, helpless since the palaces of Delhi and Poona and Nagpur etc. were closed to them, and the plundered royal families of Sikh and Mahratta princes, were telling their tale of woe in Benares in every temple and every Musjid. In this holy city, it is no surprise that the degradation of Swadharma and the destruction of Swaraj were being hotly discussed among both Hindus of Mahemadans. The military station of the province was Sikroli, which was a short distance from Allahabad. There was the 37th infantry, the Ludhiana Sikh regiment, and a cavalry regiment; the artillery was purposely kept in the hands of Englishmen. Among the Sepoys, the desire to rise for Swadharma and Swaraj had

been secretly fomented by various means. As the year 1857 approached, signs were evident that there was a tremendous agitation among the populace at Benares. The chief commissioner at the city, Tucker, Judge Gubbins, Magistrate Lind, and other civil officers, as well as captain Olpherts, Colonel Gorden, and other military officers had from the first taken great precautions for the safety of the English at Benares. For, in that city, the popular agitation often outstepped the limits of secrecy and sometimes became almost uncontrollable. Purbhayyas openly shouted prayers in the temples, "God, release us from the rule of the Feringhis!"²² Secret societies were formed to ascertain the strength of the movement in other places. When the month of May came, there was quite a number of Mahomedan preachers in the Sepoy camp, proclamations were affixed to the city walls and public squares asking the people to rise,²³ and at last, things went so far, that Hindu priests began holding public prayer-meetings in the temples to pray for the destruction of the English and the victory of Swaraj. About the same time, the prices of grains went up enormously, and, when English officers went about explaining how, according to the laws of political economy, the grain merchants would, in the end, be the losers if prices rose any more, people said boldly to their very faces, "It is you who have made everything dear in our country; and now you come to lecture to us!" The English were so much terror-struck at this ugly manifestation of popular fury, even before the rising, that Captain Olpherts and Captain Watson themselves insisted that the English should vacate the place! At last Gubbins said, pathetically, "I will go on my knees to you not to leave Benares!" , and the plan of evacuation was temporarily postponed! And, indeed, why should it not be so? For have not the Sikh nobles established a volunteer corps, now, to protect the English? And has not the descendant of Chet Singh whom Warren Hastings trampled down, also joined the English? When there is so much "loyalty" yet, there is no reason why the English should leave Benares!

22 Report of the Joint-Magistrate, Mr. Taylor.

23 Red Pamphlet.

But, while the English of Benares, relying on the strength of this loyalty, had given up the idea of leaving Benares, terrible news began to come from the direction of Azimgarh. Azimgarh is situated about sixty miles from Benares, and the 17th native regiment was posted there. In this regiment, a tremendous agitation commenced since the 31st of May, and the magistrate, Mr.Horne had been delivering sweet speeches to pacify the Sepoys! But the days were gone when such empty lectures would have pacified soldiers. The 31st of May dawned, and the Barracks at Benares were set fire to, the sign for the other Sepoys in the province to rise. So, the rising must take place in the first week of June. To-day is the 3rd of June and a good day. For, don't you see that the treasure of Gorakhpore, together with the treasure of Azimgarh - altogether seven lakhs of Rupees - is being sent to Benares? What better opportunity can you desire or expect?

The twilight of the 3rd of June was slowly changing to the darkness of the night at Azimgarh. All the English officers of Sepoy regiments were dining together at the club, and the women and children were playing and frolicking near by. Immediately the party heard a tremendous noise. The English had by the first week of June learnt by heart the meaning of these sudden crashes. Even the sudden hush in the midst of their jollity looked like a mutual whisper of "The Sepoys have risen!" Just then followed a thundering noise of drums and clarionets! Not a moment passed before the white people, with the picture of the Meerut events before their mind's eye, started running for dear life. Officers, women and children despaired of life. But theAzimgarh Sepoys, seeing this unfortunate people suffering a worse agony of death, relinquished all thought of revenge. They took charge of them in order to protect them from being harmed by stray Sepoys, and ordered them to leave Azimgarh at once. But what about some of the over enthusiastic Sepoys who had sworn to shed English blood on that day?²⁴ Well then, Lieutenant Hutchinson and Quarter-Sergeant Lewis, at least your bodies must fall a prey to our bullets! Enough, let the rest run away alive. If they cannot run, we

²⁴ *Narrative*, p.58

have no objection to their leaving in carriages! But the officers and their wives complained, "Who will give us carriages now?" But the Sepoys replied gallantly, "Do not be anxious; we will give you carriages." With such extraordinary magnanimity, the Sepoys brought carriages, took away the handcuffs of the English, put them in carriages, and even gave a few Sepoys as guard; and thus, the whole caravan, including all the flags and other signs of English rule, started forth for Benares! On the other side, the treasure of seven lakhs, the English store of

ammunition, the prison bearing the stamp of British rule, offices, roads, barracks - all fell into the hands of the Sepoys. And who was foremost in all this work? It was the police, the police whom the English trusted for information about a possible rising in order to save their lives! The police were as well undermined and as harmless on the surface as the Sepoys. When the appointed time came, they began by hoisting the flag of Swaraj on the English houses and prisons. Some Englishmen who did not find room in the carriages going to Benares ran away in the night of Ghazipur. When the sun rose the next day, it gazed in admiration at the marvellous transformation that had taken place during its short absence, and shone delightfully on the revolutionary flag flying at Azimgarh. The Sepoys, in the flush of victory, drew up a great military procession; and, to the strains of martial music and banners unfurled marched away to Fyzabad.

Although the news of the freedom of Azimgarh reached Benares, there were hopes amongst the English that Benares at least would be safe. Since the news of the Meerut rising, John Lawrence in the Punjab and Lord Canning in Calcutta had been straining every nerve to send English troops to the chief centres of the Revolution. Since the northern army was busy in the siege of Delhi, there was perfect helplessness in the parts south of Delhi, and English officers sent pathetic requests to Calcutta, saying, "For God's sake, send us Europeans!" We have already described how, by this time, Lord Canning had called European troops from Bombay, Madras, and Rangoon, and had retained in India the army destined for the now abandoned invasion of China. Out of these troops, General Neill, with the Madras fusiliers had, about this time, arrives at Benares. The first succour of European troops, and that too under a bold, able, and cruel general like

Neill, restored the confidence of the English at Benares. Just then, the English army at Danapur also came to Benares. As there was extraordinary unrest in Benares and there was clear evidence that the Sepoys were also concerned in the Revolutionary propaganda, the English thought that they should make an attempt to crush the Revolution in its embryo. From the first, the English were confident that this could easily be done by the combined strength of General Neill's troops, the Sikh nobles and soldiers, and the artillery. The news of Azimgarh reached Benares on the 4th June and it was decided after considerable discussion that the Sepoys should be disarmed before they rose. Accordingly, a general parade was ordered that afternoon.

Hearing this order, the Sepoys guessed the rest. They also got the secret information that the English held the artillery in readiness. When on the parade *maidan* the English officers gave them the order to lay down their arms, it was clear to them that they would be first disarmed and then blown from the mouth of guns. Therefore, instead of laying down their arms, they attacked the neighbouring arsenal and fell on the English officers with fierce cries. Just then, there arrived on the scene the Sikh regiment intended to overawe them. The Sikhs were at the time possessed of such a spirit of loyalty to England, that they fell at the feet of the English and prayed to be given a chance of fighting the Sepoys, at least for a short time! A Hindu Sepoy attacked their commander Guise and he dropped down dead in an instant. Hardly had Brigadier Dodgson arrived to take his place, when a Sikh Sepoy, at the inspiration of the moment, shot him! But the other Sikhs, unable to forgive this great crime, hacked him to pieces! The Sikhs were waiting for the reward of this loyal deed, when the English artillery opened fire on them all! Seeing the confusion going on between the Hindu and the Sikh Sepoys, the English authorities must have suspected that the Sikh regiment also had deserted them. On account of this misunderstanding, they opened fire on all indiscriminately. Now the unfortunate Sikhs had no other way left but to join the Revolutionaries! All the Indians, together, attacked the artillery thrice. This was about the only prominent occasion in the history of 1857 when Hindus, Mahomedans, and Sikhs, unitedly fell upon the English! But, at that very moment,

the Sikhs were making extraordinary efforts to expiate this sin! While the battle between the English and the Sepoys was raging near the barracks, there was a fear that the townsmen would also rise. In this fear, English officers, women, and children were running about in the streets. Then the Sikh Sirdar, Surat Singh, rushed forward to protect them. The treasury at Benares, besides containing lakhs of Rupees, also contained the most valuable ornaments wrested by the English from the last Sikh Queen. And this treasury was guarded by the Sikhs! It was here impossible that the Sikhs would not entertain the idea of taking hold of the treasury and taking back the ornaments belonging to their Queen who had been deported by the English. But their leader, the loyal Surat Singh, came forward and arranged that his co-religionists should not touch any of them! And, soon, the treasure was transferred to the guard of English soldiers. At this time, a Pundit, called Gokul Chand, had also joined the side of the English. Even the Raja of Benares placed his all - his influence, his wealth, and his power - his everything at the feet of his lord - not Kashi Vishweshwara, but - the English! The Sepoys alone did not surrender in spite of the hot fire, but retired fighting out of the field and spread all over the province.

No doubt, the English, following John Lawrence's plan in the Panjab, crushed the Benares rising in embryo; but the news that Benares had risen spread with lightning rapidity all over Northern India, and the different Revolutionary centres, which were waiting with their eyes directed towards Benares, began a series of risings. Javanpur rose on the 5th of June. When the news arrived at Javanpur that the Sepoys from Benares were coming there in all haste, the English officers began to deliver lectures on loyalty to the Sikh Sepoys stationed there. But these lectures had hardly ended when the tramp of Benares Sepoys was heard rapidly approaching! The few Sikh Sepoys at Javanpur who belonged to the Sikh regiment at Benares at once joined the Revolutionaries, and the whole was ablaze in the flames of the Revolution. Seeing this, the joint magistrate, Cuppage, again stood up to lecture, but, from the audience, came a whizzing bullet instead of applause, and the magistrate sahib fell down dead! Commanding officer Lieutenant Mara also fell shot by a bullet. After this, the Revolutionaries attacked the treasury

and ordered all the English to clear out the Javanpur. Now, the Benares cavalry too entered the town. They had taken terrible oaths to kill every Englishman they met. Seeing an old deputy collector running, the Sowars ran after him. Some Javanpur men tried to mediate, "Give the poor man his life, he has treated us very kindly." But the Sepoys replied. "Can't help it; he is an Englishman and must die!"²⁵

Even in times of such excessive hatred, the Revolutionaries gave permission to Englishmen who surrendered, to lay down their arms and run away quietly. Making use of this permission, most of the Englishmen vacated Javanpur and departed in a short time. They hired boats on the banks of the Ganges to go to Benares. But, when in the middle of the stream, the boatmen looted them and left them on the sands! There, at Javanpur, the whole town came out, looted and burnt English houses, and mixed into dust all the signs of their power. The Sepoys took as much treasure as they could carry and marched towards Aydhya. Then, the old women of the town and paupers who had never had a Rupee in their lives, were placed in charge of the remaining treasure. They helped themselves with it plentifully, and showered blessings heartily on Swaraj and the Revolution!

In this way rose Azimgarh on the 3rd of June, Benares on the 4th, and Javanpur on the 5th. The whole province of Benares was in flames. If the chief town of a province falls to the enemy, the Revolution, as a rule, loses strength in that province. For the whole province to depend on the capital in times of Revolution is regarded as a most dangerous fault in Revolutionary tactics. Mazzini says, 'Wherever our flag flies, that is our capital.' The capital must follow the Revolution and not vice versa. However, accurately the map of a Revolution might have

been drawn in the beginning, it is impossible that events will happen in a settled order during its course; therefore, though it fails in the capital, the province must never give it up. Undoubtedly, Benares gave a very good illustration of this principle. For though the capital of the province, the city of Benares, fell into the grip of the English, in the province itself, the cyclone of the Revolution

²⁵ Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 245.

arose at once and enshrouded the whole atmosphere. Zemindars, peasants, Sepoys, - all began to consider English rule as unholy as cow's flesh! Even small villages, if they heard that an Englishman was within their boundaries, would beat and drive

him out!²⁶ Especially the people were so disgusted not only with Englishmen but with everything they had done, that they could not bear to see anything connected with the English before their eyes! They drove away Zemindars appointed by the English – good or bad – and put the old hereditary Zemindars instead. In one week disappeared, completely, English methods of taxation their prisons, and their courts of ‘justice’! The telegraph lines were cut off; the railway lines were dug up; behind every hillock and every bush were hidden villagers thirsting for English blood and money; and most of all, in village boundaries, warders were parading so that the English should get not only no provisions but not even any information! In these circumstances, the mystery of the English knew no bounds! And still, the city of Benares had been frustrated in its attempt at freedom, and the Sepoys who rose had marched to Oudh! When the attempt of the 4th of June at Benares failed and wholesale arrests followed, an important fact came to light.²⁷ Only from such incidental events it is possible to understand how the machinery of the Secret Organisation had been worked. Three of the most active agitators and a millionaire banker were arrested at Benares. When their houses were searched, some very violent letters written in cipher and received from the chief centre of the Revolutionary organisation, fell into the hands of the Government. The most important of these letters came from “a head leader”. Their substance was as follows:- “The Benares citizens should rise at once. Kill Gubbins, Lind, and other Englishmen. The money for this work will be given by

²⁶ At every successive stage of this military revolt, the fact of a deep-seated and widespread feeling of hatred and an unappeasable revengefulness for an assumed wrong is more plainly developed. The desire for plunder was only a secondary influence in producing the calamities to which the European residents of various places were exposed.” – Charles Ball’s *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 245.

²⁷ “No sooner had it been known in the districts that there had been an insurrection at Benares, than the whole country rose like one man. Communications were cut off with the neighbouring stations and it appeared as if the Ryots and the Zemindars were about to attempt the execution of the project which the Sepoys failed to accomplish in Benares.” – Red Pamphlet, page 91.

the banker.....” When the house of this banker was searched, a store of 200 swords and rifles was discovered!

This is a short account of the rising of the province of Benares. Here the people never massacred Englishmen as at Meerut or Delhi. In the whole province not a single English woman was killed. May more, when national anger in the heart was demanding “Revenge!”, the people cordially bid farewell to the English there, themselves assisting sometimes to yoke the animals to their carriages. Look on this picture and on that which will now follow!

We do not say that the English should have sympathised with Benares in its attempts to attain Swaraj. But we do maintain that the English could never be justified in the atrocities that they committed in the Benares province, so totally incommensurable with the provocation they received either from the Sepoys or the people in that province. The English have never spread to hurl the most vile and lying abuses on the heads of the Revolutionaries, and hence, on all Indians, for their “cruelties.” Now, when we shall have described below how a brave commander of the “civilised” English army treated the people in the Benares, and when it is said that all the facts that we shall give are from the accounts of the English themselves, it will be superfluous and unnecessary to add anything to it. Let the imperial world judge for itself. After the Benares rising, General Neill organised detachments of the English and Sikhs to keep ‘order’ in the neighbouring villages. These bands used to enter villages occupied by defenceless peasants. Anybody whom they met was either cut down or hanged. The supply of those to be hanged was so great that one scaffold was soon found to be insufficient, even though worked day and night; therefore, a long line of permanent scaffolds was erected.

Though, on this long range, people were half killed and thrown away, still, there was a crowd of waiting candidates! The English officers gave up as hopeless the silly idea of cutting down trees and erecting scaffolds; so, thenceforth, the trees themselves were turned into scaffolds. But if only one man were to be hanged on each three, what has God given so many branches to a tree for? So, “natives” were left hanging on every branch, with their necks tightly roped to them.

This "military duty" and this Christian mission went on incessantly night and day. No wonder the brave English got tired of it. So the necessary seriousness in this religious and noble duty was mixed with a little humour for the sake of amusement. The rude manner of catching hold of peasants and hanging them on the trees was altered to suit the taste of art. They were first made to mount on elephants. Then the elephants were taken near a high branch, and after the necks were tied tightly to it, the elephants would be moved away.²⁸ Still, when the elephants were gone, the countless unshapely corpses used to hang on the branches

Englishman says in his letter, "We set fire to a large village which was full of them. We surrounded them, and when they came rushing out of the flames, we shot them!"^{29,30}

But in spite of these various efforts in different directions, there were still hundreds of thousands of 'black' men living! Now, to hang all these would require an amount of rope that could not easily be had! The "civilised" and "Christian" nation of England was landed in this unthought-of difficulty. By the grace of their God Himself, they hit upon a new plan, and the first experiment was so successful that, thenceforth, hanging was abandoned for the new and scientific method. Village after village could thus be razed to the ground! After setting villages on fire, and keeping the guns in position to overawe them, how long will it take to burn thousands of natives? This setting fire to villages on all sides and burning the inhabitants, was so amusing to many Englishmen that they sent letters to England giving a humorous description of these scenes. The fires were so quickly and skilfully lighted that no villager had any chance of escape at all! Poor peasants, learned Brahmins, harmless Mussalmans, school children, women with

28 Narrative, page 69.

29 Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, pp. 243,244.

³⁰ "Volunteer hanging parties went out into the districts and amateur executions 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 as drops, the victims of this wild justice being strung up, as though for pastime, in "the form of a figure of eight". – Kaye and Mallsen's *History of the Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, page 177.

infants in their arms, young girls, old men, blind and lame, all were burnt in the mass of flames! Mothers with suckling babes also succumbed to these fires! Old

men and women, and those unable to move away even a step from the fire, were burnt in their beds!³¹ And if a solitary man were to escape the fire, what then? One Englishman says in his letter, "We set fire to a large village which was full of them. We surrounded them, and when they came rushing out of the flames, we shot them!"³²

And was it only a solitary village that was thus treated? The English sent various detachments to the various parts of the province to burn villages. Out of the many batches, one officer, out of the many officers of a batch, says of one of his many outings, "You will, however, be gratified to learn that twenty villages were razed to the ground!"

And all this account is only a summary of what has accidentally appeared in the works of English historians, who openly swear, "it is better not to write anything about General Neill's revenge!"

Enough! To add even a word more of our own to it, is to spoil this naked picture of the inhuman barbarity of the English!

And, therefore, you terror-struck eyes, look now towards the love-waves of the happy union of the Bhagirathi and the Kalindi rivers. The city of Allahabad, eternally laved by the calm, noble, and graceful waters at the union (Sanhama), is situated about seventy miles from Benares. To the holy purity of the Prayaga-Kshetra, the vast fort built under the reign of Akbar, gave an additional beauty. Allahabad is the key to all the important roads leading from Calcutta towards the Punjab and Delhi. Here, the fort of Allahabad has the imperial grace of a tall, strong, and great commander appointed to guard over the movements of these provinces. In the Revolution of 1857, he who held this fort held the key to the whole province. Such being the case, both sides made extraordinary efforts to

³¹ Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, pp. 243-244.

³² Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, pp. 243,244.

acquire or retain the command of this most important fort. The plan of the Revolutionary party was that the

Sepoys as well as all the citizens of Allahabad should rise simultaneously. While the secret organisation was working up towards this goal, the Prayaga Brahmins had been of the greatest use in inspiring into the cities the ideals of Swaraj. These influential Hindu priests had been long sowing the seeds of the Revolutionary War, not only among the citizens of Allahabad, but also among the Hindu population in the whole province. With the traditional Hindu prayer at the time of the bath, was coupled the holy and religious prayers of the Revolution. Also, among the vast Mussalma population of the town, the Mullahs were very busy. Thousands of Mussalmans were only awaiting the signal with a firm determination to offer their blood on the battle-field in the cause of country and religion. The English, at the time, quite expected this. They seem to have been firmly convinced that all Mussalmans were their mortal enemies. The well-known writer of the *Red Pamphlet* says, "The Mahomedans too, have shown that they cherish in their hearts the proselytising doctrines of their religion and that, as Christians, they will ever detest and take advantage of every opportunity of destroying Feringhis." True as this is in general, it was more true still in this city. At Allahabad, the Moslems were more advanced than the Hindus. They were most prominent in the management of the machinery of the secret society. The efforts of Hindus and Mahomedans for the freedom of their country became, at last, so great that the very judges and Munsiffs of the Government joined the secret society!³³

Allahabad being the chief station of the province, the English should have taken extraordinary precautions to guard the fort. But, on account of the ignorance till the beginning of May about the internal agitation in the whole country, the military preparations at Allahabad had been very bad. At Allahabad itself, the men who were spreading all around the fire of Revolution had kept such skilful secrecy that the Government did not think it necessary even to keep a single English soldier there! When the news from Meerut came, this important station had

33 Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 268

only the 6th Sepoy regiment and about two hundred men of a Sikh regiment from Ferozepur. Soon after, the Oudh cavalry was brought there, and the forst, together with the vast store of arms and ammunition, was kept entirely in the hands of the Sepoys. The English officers at the head of these Sepoys were strong in the belief that their Sepoys were very loyal. Especially the 6th regiment was undoubtedly the first in loyalty! One day, after hearing the news of Delhi, they sent word to their officers, "Khavind, give us the order to go to Delhi and cut those mutineers to pieces. We are anxiously waiting." This extraordinary symptom of loyalty was admired everywhere. From the Governor-General himself came the order to give public thanks to the 6th regiment, "for this unparalleled faithfulness and loyalty." Just then a citizen brought the information that the 6th regiment was secretly hand in glove with the

Revolutionaries! Seeing this, the 6th regiment caught two revolutionary preachers and handed them over to the officers as a tangible proof of their loyalty. Now, why base suspicions? But, if the Government still suspects our loyalty, then the officers should come amongst us and see for themselves how pure our hearts are! The English officers came on the 6th of June into the lines and saw that their heart was indeed full to the brim with loyalty everywhere. Nay, some of the Sepoys actually ran up to the officers, embraced them heartily, and affectionately kissed them on both cheeks.³⁴

And the same night, everyone of the Sepoys of the 6th regiment rushed out, sword in hand, shouting "Maro Feringhiko!" (Kill the Feringhis!).

While the Sepoys were moving heaven and earth in order that their plans might not be frustrated and they themselves might not be disarmed as at Benares, the English were

removing their families into the fort for protection under the charge of the Sikhs and the cavalty. The news from Benares came to Allahabad on the 5th. On that day, there was so much agitation in the town that the English pointed some guns in the direction of the bridge towards the Benares side and closed the castle-

34 Narrative.

gates. At night, the English officers whom the Sepoys had only then affectionately kissed had assembled at the mess for dinner, when at a distance the terrible bugle began to blow! The sounds of the bugle, as it were, conveyed the information that the loyal 6th regiment had also risen!

That evening, the order had been given to the Sepoys to take the guns which were on the Benares bridge into the fort. But it seemed that the hitherto traditional loyal practice of obeying all the orders of the English was suddenly discontinued that evening; for, the Sepoys themselves issued an order that the guns shall be taken not to the fort but to the cantonment! The officers called the Oudh cavalry to punish the Sepoys for this extraordinary disobedience. The young and promising officers, Lieutenant Alexander and Lieutenant Harvard, got the cavalry in order and marched on the Sepoys. At this time the morning was just rising. When the cavalry was brought face to face with the insolent Sepoys, the English officers gave the order to attack and rushed boldly forward, hoping that thousands of horses would gallop behind them and trample down the handful of Sepoys. But, behold! the cavalry refused to draw their swords against their own countrymen and did not move! At this, the Sepoys raised a tremendous shout of applause. Lieutenant Alexander was hit in the chest and fell down, his body was cut to pieces, and then all the Indian Sepoys embraced each other and marched to the camp. Two horsemen had already galloped to the camp and given the news to their brethren in the camp. The scene that followed on the parade ground was unparalleled! Whenever an English officer gave a word of command, whiz came a bullet! Plunkett, Adjutant Steward, Quarter-Master Hawes, Pringle, Munro, Birch, Lieutenant Innes, - all fell down dead! The excited mass of humanity on the parade ground was now going about setting fire to the houses of Englishmen. When they heard that there were many Englishmen at the mess-house, an attack was made and every Englishman there was killed! It has been already said that the most important thing in Allahabad was the possession of the fort. In it were the English women and children and a vast store of ammunition, and it was entirely in the hands of the Sikhs. All the Sepoys were now waiting for the firing of the gun, the settled sign

that the Sikhs and the few Sepoys with them had also risen and driven out the English.

But within the fort, the Sikhs showed their true treachery! They not only refused to take away the English flag from the fort but helped the English officers to disarm and drive out the few Sepoys that had found their way inside. The English express even now a sense of astonishment as to how the Sikhs stuck to them at that juncture. In half an hour, the extensive fort of Allahabad would have fallen into the hands of the Revolutionaries. That, is to say, in half an hour, the backbone of English rule would have been smashed! But the Sikhs spent that half an hour in hacking their own countrymen and their mother country! Though the Sepoys in the fort rose again and again, the Sikhs instead of joining them, disarmed them and drove them out at the orders of the English. And thus, the fort continued to be in English hands.

But Allahabad did not fortunately consist of these four hundred Sikh traitors alone! As the time for the Sepoy rising in the fort approached, the city of Allahabad rose also. The terrible shouts on the parade-ground were echoed from the town itself. At first, the houses of Englishmen were destroyed; then, Sepoys and the people together broke the prison. No hearts could be more full to hatred against the English than those of the hundreds of prisoners there. So, as soon as they were released, they shouted hoarse cries and ran first to the quarters where the English resided! The Revolutionaries had a special eye on railways and telegraphs! The railway officers, the lines, the telegraph poles and wires, engines, were all crushed to pieces! In spite of all the precautions taken by the English, some Englishmen fell into the hands of the Revolutionaries. They despatched them quickly! Then, the half Feringhis, who, relying on the protection of the English, used to treat the "natives" with insolence, came in for their turn. Those who had been against the Revolution had their houses attacked. The lives of only those were saved who took oaths, "We will fight against the English!" On the morning of the 17th, the Revolutionaries captured the treasury containing nearly thirty lakhs of Rupees. Then, in the afternoon, a great Revolutionary flat was taken in procession

and hoisted on the police station. And while the town and the fort were thus involved in the flames of Revolution, all the Sepoys and the citizens saluted it!

Almost at the same moment, the whole province of Allahabad rose like one man! Everywhere, things were altered so quickly that, after a short time, no one would have believed that the English had ever been ruling there! In every village the embroidered flag was hoisted and a stray Englishman was beaten away or killed and the roots of English rule were, as it were, uprooted! Oh, how superficial really are the roots of slavery in spite of the centuries of efforts made to drive them in! And, especially, an unnatural seed like that of slavery, how can it take root?

Most of the Talukdars in the Allahabad province were Mahomedans and their tenants were Hindus. Thus, the English had considered it impossible that these two would unite and that the whole mass of the people would rise against them. But, in this memorable first week of June, how many of such impossibilities were realised! Without even waiting to hear about the rising of the city of Allahabad, all the villages of the province rose simultaneously and declared their independence! Hindus and Mahomedans, because they fed on the same Mother's milk, rose together to strike blows at English rule! Not only the able-bodied Sepoys, but also old military pensioners enrolled themselves as national volunteers. Twisting their moustaches, they would organised bands. Those who were too weak and old to do anything themselves would explain to younger men important points in military strategy and give advice on knotty points of tactics. Can we wonder that the noble ideals of Swadharma and Swaraj which thrilled youth even in superannuated Sepoys had thoroughly permeated all classes of the population?³⁵ Shopkeepers, Marwaris, and Banias, even, took such an important part in that popular agitation that General Neill in his report makes a special

35 "And with them went on not only the Sepoys who, a day before, had licked our hands, but the superannuated pensioners of the Company's native army who though feeble for action, were earnest in their efforts to stimulate others to deeds of cowardice any cruelty." - Kaye's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, page 193.

reference to their hatred of the English! "The majority of the chief merchants and others have shown the worst spirit towards us. Many of them have taken active part against us." But, even after this, the English were boasting that the peasants would take their side. But Allahabad shattered this vain delusion to pieces! The peasants took a leading part in the Revolutionary War of 1857, as, perhaps, they never had done in any political agitation before. Under the banner of their old Talukdars - not the new ones appointed by the English - the peasants threw their ploughs and ran with lightning speed to join the war for freedom. They had compared the English Company with their old kings; and they were firmly convinced that their own Swaraj was a thousand times better than the Feringhi Company's rule. Therefore, when the hour of consummation arrived, they began the work of revenge for the wrongs of decades. Everywhere, Swaraj was hailed with shouts of delight and even the children in the streets began to spit on slavery! It is true; even children spat, for children of twelve or

fourteen would organise processions in the streets with the Revolutionary flag. The English arrested such a procession and sentenced the little boys to death! Hearing this sentence, an English officer felt so ashamed that, with tears in his eyes, he came to the chief commandant and requested him to release the children. But it was of no use! And the children who committed the crime of raising the flag of independence were all publicly hanged! Will not the murder of these little angels fall back on the head of the assassins? The whole province shook with tremor; peasants and Talukdars, old and young, men and women, all arose with the cry, "Har, Har," to smite the chains of political slavery. "For not only in the districts beyond the Ganges but in those lying between the two rivers, the rural population had risen and, soon, there was scarcely a man of either faith who was not arraigned against us."³⁶ And, for the success of these huge efforts of the whole populace and for the freedom of the Motherland, the Prayaga Brahmins and Mullahs began to send forth prayers unto Heaven!

³⁶ Kaye's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, page 195.

It is difficult to find in Indian history another Revolution, so exciting, so quick, so terrible, and so universal! It was almost an unheard to thing in India that the powers of the people should awaken with a start and begin to shed pools of blood for the freedom of the country, even as thundering clouds shed rain. Besides, the sight of Hindus and Mahomedans fighting side by side for Hindusthan realizing their true interests and natural comradeship, was truly magnificent and inspiring. After having set up such a terrible whirlwind, shall we wonder that Hindusthan could not firmly keep it under control? The wonder is that Hindusthan could raise such a whirlwind at all. For, no nation has been able to control a Revolution suddenly. If we compare the Rising with the French Revolution, we will find that the inevitable incidents of any Revolution - like anarchy, confusion, outrage, selfishness, and looting, were not fewer there than in India. This was a vast experiment made by India. So we need not be surprised if, in the province of Allahabad where the experiment was so successful, there were, also, some mistakes and confusion. The hereditary feuds of Zemindars, the excessive poverty - the corollary of long slavery, and the enmity of centuries between Hindus and Mahomedans and the natural occasional misunderstandings during the efforts to extinguish it, all these made it impossible that there should not be anarchy for some time, when the first shock of the Rising was sensibly felt. After the Creation, there comes often the Deluge. Whoever wants a Revolution must be prepared to meet these difficulties in carrying it out!

However, when the week of looting and burning was over, all the dangers of anarchy melted away and the Revolution assumed some organised form in Allahabad. In that province, as in all places where a Revolution due to popular agitation takes place, the difficulty after the rising is that of finding capable leaders. This difficulty was soon got over in the city of Allahabad; for, an ardent lover of liberty, called Leakat Ali, soon became the leader of the Revolution. The only information we have about this extraordinary man is that he was a religious preacher among the weavers. Before the Rising, he had worked as a teacher in a school. He was adored by all people for the holy purity of his life. When the province of Allahabad became free, the Zemindars of the Chauvis Parganas

brought this Moulvie in a few days to Allahabad and appointed him chief officer there. And he was proclaimed in great ceremony as the representative of the Emperor of Delhi. This Moulvie established his head-quarters in a fortified garden called Khusru Bagh and began the work of organising the Revolutionaries in the province. He soon put all the affairs of state in good order. He did not stop with merely saying that he was the Subahdar of the Emperor but he continued to send, to the last, reports of the events in Allahabad to the Emperor of Delhi.

The first thing that Moulvie Leakat Ali had to do was to capture the fort of Allahabad. He had begun the attempts to organise and prepare the army that collected under him and direct an attack on the fort, when the news came that General Neill was marching from Benaras towards Allahabad. Even now, if the four hundred Sikhs in the fort had come to their senses, the whole fort, together with the guns, arms, and ammunition, would have fallen to the Revolutionaries without a shot being fired! General Neill was so afraid of this that he marched with his English troops in haste to Allahabad. He arrived there on the 11th of June. He had no hope that the Sikhs would protect the fort and its English occupants till his arrival. He was, therefore, overjoyed when he saw the English flag still flying on the walls of the fort. He, immediately, kept the English soldiers to garrison the fort and sent the loyal Sikhs out to do the fighting. It is clearly seen from this how little faith Neill had in the Sikh Sepoys. Though Neill had no faith in the Sikhs, the Sikhs had complete faith in him; for, they refused to join the Revolutionaries even after this insult, and consented to burn the neighbouring villages. On the 17th of June, the English army began to push its way into the town. Describing the incidents, the Moulvie, in his report to the Emperor, says, "Of the traitorous sinners who have joined the enemy, some have spread the rumour that the English are going to blow up the whole town. The people have left their homes and have announced that they are going away in order to save their lives! Therefore, the whole town is being deserted in spite of assurances of protection." As this unfortunate report of the Moulvie had set out on its way to Delhi, the English attack on Khusru Bagh began. The Revolutionaries defended the place that day; but the Moulvie soon saw that it was madness to attempt to hold Allahabad from

a dilapidated garden while the fort was in the hands of the enemy. So, on the night of the 17th, he left for Cawnpore with all his followers. The next day, on the 18th, the English reentered Allahabad together with the 'loyal Sikhs'.

Though Allahabad followed the example of Benares and fell into the English hands, the Revolutionaries did not lose courage at all. Seeing the enemy thus safely protected in the chief forts, the people of the province were all the more enraged and every village put up entrenchments and prepared to make a stand. The days were gone when such determined people could be seduced by bribery. There was a war of principle, and though Neill offered rewards of thousands of Rupees for the heads of even minor leaders, the penurious peasants themselves were unwilling to help him. An English officer of the time has expressed his surprise at this noble stand for the sake of principle. He writes of one village: "The magistrate offered a reward of one thousand rupees for the head or the person of the leader of rebels who is well-known to the natives; yet, such is their hatred towards us that no one would give him up!"³⁷ Let alone betraying the leaders, it was considered, at that time, a great sin even to sell for money any commodity to the English. If anyone did commit that offence, he was immediately given a harsh punishment by the community. "Any one who had worked for the Europeans, these murderers killed. So, if the population is to a man against us, we should stand but a bad chance. A poor baker was found with his hand cut off and his nose slit, because he had sent in bread to us." This is the report of the 23rd of June. Simply because the baker gave bread to the English, the villagers cut off his hands and nose. When this national and armed boycott was proclaimed, the misery of the Feringhis knew no bounds. It is true they had taken the fort of Allahabad. But, they found it impossible to move even a step one way or the other. They could get neither oxen, nor carts, nor even medicine! No *dolies* for sick soldiers and no men to lift them! There were sick men lying about in various places. Their shrill cries were so fearful that some English women died by hearing them. The days were hot. And the trick of the Revolutionaries in rising in June, so that the Englishmen

37 Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I.

might die of heat also, now came to be understood. All Englishmen were busy bathing their heads in cold water! Besides, the provisions always fell short. Nobody could be found who would sell even a grain of corn to the English. "Up to to-day, we have had little to eat; indeed, I could not have fed a dog with my yesterday's breakfast!" So writes an officer from Allahabad! This heat and this starvation brought on cholera in the English camp. To add to the troubles, English soldiers regularly started getting drunk! All discipline was gone. These drunkards began to disobey Neill's orders to such an extent that he wrote to Canning that he had decided to hang a few of them! The English army, beset with these numerous difficulties, was chained to Allahabad city. Though urgent messages requesting help were coming frequently from the English of Cawnpore, a dashing warrior like General Neill, had to see the first of July dawn in Allahabad itself!

It is important to note that General Neill and his fusiliers had been brought from Madras. If, at this time, there has been even a slight tremor of a Revolution towards Madras, the English would have been unable to bear the strain even for a day. For, though the resolute Indians of Allahabad had all but succeeded in the cleverly organised plan of shutting up English soldiers in the forts, the English had no real reason to be disheartened. For Madras, Bombay, Rajputana, the Punjab, Nepal, and other parts were still lying like dead weights hampering the national movement. When some of these parts did begin to move, they fell on their own countrymen, like demons. Were not thousands of Sikh Sepoys ready to help the English in Benares itself? However, whatever the others might do, the Brahmin priests and Mullahs of Prayag, Talukdars and peasants, teachers and students, shopkeepers and customers - in spite of various difficulties, in spite of the want of a great military leader who could lead them to battle, in spite of defeat, discouragement, and anarchy - showed a confirmed and inveterate hatred of slavery. Of the great sacrifices, including the sacrifice of life itself, made by these noble patriots for the lofty ideals of Swaraj and freedom. History will ever be proud!

For, all these patriots were actually paying a very heavy price for rising against English slavery. It is difficult to find a parallel, even in the history of

savages, to the cruel brutality which Neill showed in the provinces of Benares and Allahabad! We do not write this as a figure of speech; any one will be convinced that what we have said is nothing but the bare truth, if he reads the accounts given by the English themselves. We had given some account of the inhuman conduct of the British in Benares. Here, we extract a letter of a brave and generous Briton to describe his achievements in Allahabad. "One trip I enjoyed amazingly; we got on board a steamer with a gun, while the Sikhs and the fusiliers marched up to the city. We steamed upthrowing shots right and left till we got up to the bad places, when we went on the shore and peppered away with our guns, my old double-barrel bringing down several niggers. So thirsty for vengeance I was. We fired the places right and left and the flames shot up to the heavens as they spread, fanned by the breeze, showing that the day of vengeance had fallen on the treacherous villains. Every day, we had expeditions to burn and destroy disaffected villages and we have taken our revenge. I have been appointed the chief of a commission for the trial of all natives charged with offences against the government and persons. Day by day, we have strung up eight and the men. We have the power of life in our hands and, I assure you, we spare not. A very summary trial is all that takes place. The condemned culprit is placed under a tree, with a rope round his neck, on the top of a carriage, and when it is pulled off he swings."³⁸ Neill burnt old men; Neill burnt middle-aged men; Neill burnt young men; Neill burnt children; Neill burnt infants; Neill burnt babies in cradles; and Neill has burnt babies suckling at the breasts of their mothers! Kaye admits that six thousand Indians were done to death at the place above mentioned! Hundreds of women, young girls, mothers, and daughters have been burnt alive by Neill, without even counting their number. We make the statement in the presence of God and in the presence of all humanity! If anyone has the slightest proof against it, let him come forth boldly and stand for a moment at least before the world and God!

38 Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 257.

And what was the crime all these had committed? The crime was that they were ready to bear all these for the sake of their country's freedom!

Still the massacre of Cawnpore has to come! Neill's barbarities were not a revenge of Cawnpore, but the Cawnpore bloodshed was the result of and revenge for Neill's inhuman brutalities!

Neill has killed as many people in Allahabad alone as all Englishmen, women and children who had been killed throughout India in the Revolution, put together! And tens of such Neills were conducting such massacres in hundreds of places! For every Englishman, a whole village has been burnt! God will not forget this and we will, also, never forget this!

And what do English historians say about this? They generally omit this, and that too, ostentatiously! If they do give some of the details, it is to prove how bold and brave Neill was. What greater mercifulness than such timely cruelty? Some say that this cruelty on his part shows the great love of humanity in Neill's heart! Kaye, no doubt, suspects that the Cawnpore massacres were a result of this barbarous revenge; but, he says, it is natural that the leonine qualities of the British people should come out on account of the insolence of the 'natives'. Kaye does not write a single word against Neill for this cruelty. But, instead of allowing man to discuss this question, he leaves it to God! When talking of Nana Sahib, his pen puts even Obscenity to shame! Charles Ball praises Neill inordinately. But what does Neill himself say?

He says, "God grant I may have acted with justice! I know I have acted with severity but, under all the circumstances, I trust for forgiveness. I have done all for the good of my country, to re-establish its prestige and power, and to put down this most barbarous, inhuman insurrection." The definition of Patriotism in England is unique indeed!

Another historian, Holmes, says: "Old men had done us no harm; helpless women, with suckling infants at their breasts, felt the weight of our vengeance no less than the vilest malefactors. But, to the honour of Neill, let it be

remembered that, to him, the infliction of punishment was not a delight but an awful duty.”³⁹

We fervently hope that impartial history, by examining the above extracts, and the true God - not Neill's God - will look more sympathetically and forgivingly at the few massacres by the Revolutionaries than at these wholesale slaughterings by the English. Are massacres in the cause of freedom justified? This question "should be left to God!" "Let God forgive me, for what I am doing, I am doing to win national independence for my country!" - this sentence would fit the mouth of Nana far better than that of Neill! It was the Revolutionaries who were "fighting for their country," not Neill! And, if anyone performed a "duty" in massacres, it was the Revolutionaries alone, fired with the desire of fighting for Swaraj and Swadharma and burning for vengeance for all the oppressions that the Motherland suffered for a hundred years!

But, of what use is all this philosophy now? Neill has sowed the seeds of cruelty and horror in Allahabad. Their abundant crops are already rising in the fields of Cawnpore. Let us, then, go towards Cawnpore to reap them in their full harvest!!

³⁹ Holmes's *Sepoy War*, pages 229-230.

INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

CHAPTER VIII

CAWNPORE & JHANSI

LET us now leave aside, for a moment, the bloody streams of the Revolutionary Ganges flowing about violently on the fields of Northern India with the holy desire of saving our forefathers from the bottomless pit of slavery, and turn to the events happening at its source at Haridwar. About the time of the Meerut rising, there were assembled a larger number of Revolutionary leaders in the palace of Nana Sahib than could be found, at the time, in the palace of Lucknow, in the Subah at Bareilly, or even at the Dewan-I-Khas palace at Delhi. The Revolution of 1857 was conceived in the palace at Brahmavarta. It was there that the embryo also took a definite shape. And, if the birth also had taken place at Brahmavarta, the Revolution would surely not have been so short-lived. But, before complete development, the thunder at Meerut brought the Revolutionary child into being, unfortunately before its time; it was not, however, left to its fate; but strenuous preparations were made in the palace at Brahmavarta to sustain and nourish it even under such adverse circumstances.

At the place of honour sat the proud and noble form of Nana Sahib, the very incarnation of the Revolutionary Spirit. His brothers, Baba Saheb and Bala Sahib, and his nephew Rao Sahib, were there, ready to sacrifice their lives, wealth, and comfort for the fulfilment of their leader's noble objects. Besides these sat the man who, from the low station of a menial servant, had risen in his master's favour by means of his industry and ability, the man who had studied the politics and warfare of Europe, determined to utilise that knowledge in the holy war of liberating his country from slavery. This was none other than Azimullah Khan. There also sat the lightning Queen of Jhansi, aiding now the experience of the Revolutionary leaders with her magnificent intuition and inspiring them with her own unbounded love of country and honour. But in this historical meeting, who is the warrior over there, sharpening his sword in the direction of the armoury?

Readers, that hero in the armoury is the celebrated Mahratta Tatia Tope. He is the last valiant Mahratta warrior of the School of Shivaji. There are many people who are brave, but the valour of this last Mahratta hero was the sword incarnate drawn by the Mother herself for her freedom.

Tatia Tope was born in about 1814. His father's name was Pandurang Bhat. Pandurang Bhat had eight sons and of them, the second was called Raghunath. It is this Raghunath who shines as the brilliant star of liberty in the galaxy of the heroes of Hindusthan. Pandurang Rao Tope was a Deshasth Brahmin and was the head of the charity department, under the late Bajirao Peshwa at Brahmavarta. In the verandah, Nana Sahib, the Jhansi Ranee, and Tatia Tope played the games of their childhood! Nana Sahib and Tatia Tope were intimate friends from childhood. In childhood, these two were trained in the same school, fitted to perform the heroic deeds which they did in the great event of their later life. They had read the Ramayana and the Mahabharata together; they had read together the accounts of the war-like deeds of the Mahrattas, and their young hearts had throbbed together at the noble inspiration which the stories of Hindu heroism awoke.

Towards the end of April, Nana Sahib and Azimullah Khan had travelled through all the chief towns in Northern India to give the necessary unity to the work of the secret organisation. They were now waiting for the appointed time. Suddenly on the 15th of May, the news of the rising at Meerut and the subsequent freedom of Delhi came to Cawnpore. At this news of the premature rising, there was not the least apparent agitation in the palace of Brahmavarta. In a Revolutionary organisation are bound up together thousands of separate parts; it is unavoidable that some should move too quickly and others too slowly, some at the appointed signal and others at the sudden impulse of the moment. The palace at Brahmavarta at once understood the situation and decided to turn the Meerut rising to advantage. But, to take such an advantage, which was the better course? To follow Delhi at once or wait till the first week of June according to the original plan? Of these two alternatives, the latter seemed preferable and, accordingly, the machinery at Brahmavarta continued to work secretly.

Cawnpore was, for a long time, an important military station of the English. In Cawnpore, there were the 1st, 53rd and 56th Sepoy infantry, and a regiment of Sepoy cavalry - altogether three thousand Indian soldiers. The cavalry was wholly in the hands of the English and, besides, they had about a hundred English soldiers. The chief officer of the whole army was Sir Hugh Wheeler. Sir Hugh Wheeler was an old and very popular commander among the Sepoys. He had done good service in the Sikh and in the Afghan campaigns. The Government knew full well that the Sepoys were very much attached to him and nobody entertained any serious suspicion that secret societies were working among the Sepoy lines at Cawnpore.

About the 15th of May, a peculiar agitation was to be seen in the whole of Cawnpore city. At the news of the doings of the Meerut Sepoys, their Cawnpore comrades had lost their usual stolidity and looked perturbed. But, the English authorities heard the news only on the 18th. As the telegraph communication to Delhi was cut, Sir Hugh Wheeler sent scouts to obtain correct information as to the extent of the disaffection. These scouts met on their way a Sepoy coming from Delhi, but he flatly refused to give any information to the Feringhis! It is a great mystery to English officers how, in 1857, the Sepoys quickly got from distant points news of which the English authorities, with their telegraph system, were ignorant.⁴⁰ The Sepoys had no necessity of learning of the Meerut rising after it took place; for, even a day before the events, human telegraphs had conveyed to them all detailed information! It is only after the English, at last, got the news of the Meerut rising that they began to think seriously about the secret agitation among the Cawnpore Sepoys. But Sir Hugh Wheeler was still confident that the agitation was due to the extraordinary nature of the news that arrived from Meerut and would gradually subside. But there in the city of Cawnpore and in the Sepoy lines, everyone saw clearly that the days of English

⁴⁰ “Indeed one of the most remarkable features of the mutiny has been the certain and the rapidity with which the natives were made aware of all important movements in distant places. The means of communication is chiefly by runners who forwarded messages from station to station with extraordinary celerity.” – *Narrative*, page 33.

rule were over. Hindus and Mahomedans held big meetings; the Sepoys held secret conferences; school-masters and students discussed the rising; and everyone in the shops of the bazaars openly thought out plans. The fire of popular indignation, so far kept secret, now burst forth openly. People openly discussed in the streets about driving out the English and the Sepoys refused to obey all orders except those given by their Swadeshi superiors.⁴¹ When an English lady went to the bazaar to make purchases, in the usual proud and haughty manner, a passer-by came up to her and said with a frown, "Enough of this haughtiness now! You should understand that you will soon be driven out of the bazaars of Hindusthan!" This was the rude awakening first experienced by the English. Seeing that it would be folly to keep quiet under these conditions, Sir Wheeler began to make preparations for the defence.

His first thought was to select a place of refuge in case of danger. He selected one near the Sepoy lines, to the south of the Ganges. He fortified it by entrenchments, erected places for mounting guns, and even ordered a supply of provisions to be stored there. But, it is said that the Indian contractor, without Sir Wheeler's knowledge, put a far smaller quantity of provisions than ordered for. Sir Wheeler and the English officers believed that, even if the Sepoys rose, this place would save them from any material damage. For they would follow the example of their comrades in other places and march towards Delhi and would leave the English quietly to go down the Ganges and join the army at Allahabad! Sir Wheeler did not rest with the preparation of this fortified place as a protection for the English in case of a rising but he also sent urgent letters to Sir Hentyr Lawrence at Lucknow to send reinforcements! But such was the strength of the Revolutionary propaganda at Lucknow that Lawrence was crying for reinforcements himself! However, he immediately sent towards Cawnpore eighty-four English soldiers, the English artillery under Lieutenant Ashe, and some cavalry. There was nothing special in these preparations which Sir Wheeler made for the defence of the English. But the third remedy which he sought for removing

41 Nanak Chand's Diary.

the danger to the English power was one which now appears very extraordinary and yet gives a true idea of the skill in the Revolutionary organisation of the time. This was the request made by Sir Wheeler to the Raja of Brahmavarta to come to save Cawnpore! The news of Meerut had produced an extraordinary agitation among the ranks of the Sepoys and the common people in the bazaars, but the palace of Brahmavarta appeared as quiet, peaceful, and unruffled as before. It was impossible to have discovered even a ruffle on its surface that would betray the tremendous internal agitation. The movement among the Cawnpore troops at least put Sir Wheeler on his guard. But, he never for a moment entertained any adequate suspicion that the Raja of Brahmavarta would go against him. The man whose crown the English had trampled under foot only a short time before, the Naga snake whom they had only just before enraged by wilfully treading on his hood, from that man the English now asked for protection in their hour of need! The English were not altogether mistaken in this procedure. Nana Sahib was "a gentle Hindu", and how many cowardly Hindus are there not in India who are harmless and cringing even when trodden under foot by the English? In the pious belief that Nana Sahib was also one of them, Sir Wheeler invited his help. What better chance could there be for the Prince of Brahmavarta! He entered Cawnpore on the 22nd with two guns, three hundred private Sepoys, infantry and cavalry! There was a large number of civil and military officers of the English at Cawnpore. Nana encamped in the very midst of these English people. Now it was certain that, if there was a revolt at Cawnpore, the treasury would be attacked. How best to guard it? Of course by entrusting it to Nana Sahib! Soon two hundred of Nana's Sepoys began to keep guard over it. Collector Hillersden profusely thanked Nana Sahib and Tatia Tope and it was even proposed that the English women and children should, if necessary, go for safety to the Nana's palace at Brahmavarta!

Here was Mahratta policy! That Nana should be invited with his troops to Cawnpore to 'protect' the English and to fight against his countrymen rising for freedom, that he should take his head-quarters in the English camp, that a treasure of lakhs of Rupees should be entrusted to him for better keeping and, above all this, that the English should thank him for his services! Here is Mahratta

policy! Nana paid the English in their own coin. And all this, only a week before the great upheaval! From this it is evident how in 1857, the English were long left groping in the dark and then pushed down the precipice! The knowledge that Independence was the goal and War the means was clearly given to the general populace at that time; but, as to who were the leaders, what was the day of rising, what were the chief centres, all this was kept so secret that not only the English but even the rank and file of the Revolutionary society knew not much about it. The heads of the Central Secret Society and their faithful servants were the only men who had detailed information. This brings out the meaning of what we have said before that there was a secret committee in every regiment. The letter which fell into English hands at Benares was signed only "From a great leader".

The responsible leaders conducted themselves in a manner suited to the work of the Secret Society. Even on the day before the rising, the English had not any adequate inkling about the plans of Emperor Bahadur Shah, Nana Sahib, or the Queen of Jhansi! And, amongst all these the palace of Brahmavarta kept the closest and strictest secrecy. The historian Kaye says: "Nana had not studied in vain the history of Shivaji, the founder of the Mahratta Kingdom!"

The chief rendezvous of the secret societies of Cawnpore was the house of Subahdar Tikka Singh. Another place of meeting for the secret societies was the house of the Sepoy leader Shams-ud-din Khan. At these secret meetings, two faithful severants of the Brahmavarta palace household, Jwala Prasad and Mahomed Ali, used to attend on behalf of Nana Sahib. Subahdar Tikka Singh and Jwala Prasad - both bold, freedom-loving, and passionately sincere patriots - soon got a hold on the assembly and the whole army had unanimously sworn to obey their orders. So, the voice of Subahdar Tikka Singh was the voice of the whole army. It was extremely necessary that such a leader and Nana Sahib should personally meet and settle important points. Besides, the settled programme had become useless on account of the Meerut rising and the consequent confusion. It was therefore necessary to alter that programme to suit the changed circumstances,

and for this it was decided that Tikka Singh and Nana should meet.⁴² In their first meeting, a long discussion took place. The Subahdar gave assurances that both Hindus and Mahomedans were ready to rise unanimously for Swadharma and Swaraj and were waiting only for Nana's orders. After this, it was settled that another meeting, more secret and of longer duration, should be arranged to settle the minor details, and the Subahdar returned. On the evening of the 1st of June, Nana Sahib, accompanied by his brother Bala Sahib and his minister Azimullah Khan, came down to the banks of the sacred Ganges. There stood Subahdar Tikka Singh and the heads of the Secret Society awaiting him. The whole company then got into a boat. They entered the waters of the holy Ganges; everyone there took an oath, with the holy water of Ganges in his hands, that he would participate in the bloody war for his country's liberty. Then followed a deliberation of two hours in which the whole of the future programme was definitely decided upon, and the company returned. Their secrets were known to the sacred Ganges along and in her hands they were safe! But this much is well known that, on the following day, Sham-su-ddin came to the house of his beloved Azizan and told her that within two days the Feringhis would be destroyed and India would be free! Sham-su-ddin did not give this news of freedom to her as empty bravado; for, the heart of this beauty yearned as much for India's freedom as that of her brave lover. Azizan was a dancing girl very much loved by the Sepoys; she was not one, however, who sold her love for money in the ordinary market, but in the field of freedom it was given as a reward for the love of country. We will soon show further on how a delightful smile from her beautiful face encouraged fighting heroes and how a slight frown from her dark eyebrows hastily sent back to the field cowards who had come away.

While the plans of the Revolutionaries were thus ripening, the terror in the English camp was beyond all description! Sir Wheeler sighed with relief when he got reinforcements from Lucknow and when the treasure and the arsenal had been put under the charge of Nana Sahib. But the English population had lost all courage. The 24th of May was the great *Id* festival of the Mahomedans. The

⁴² Forrest's *State Papers* and Trevelyan's *Cawnpore*.

English in every town apprehended a rising on that day. But the leaders in 1857 were not such fools as to rise on such an easily marked day. To keep peace ostentatiously on a day when a rising is expected by the enemy as certain and to burst forth on a day when the enemy thinks there is no chance whatever to trouble, in one of the chief means of carrying a Revolution to success. Therefore, even in Cawnpore, on the day of the *Id*

festival, there was not the slightest disorder. The English were so much frightened that morning that Sir Wheeler telegraphed to Lucknow, "There will be a rising to-day inevitably!" But when, on the evening of the festival, the Mahomedans paid and received visits as usual, Sir Wheeler was reassured. On the day of the birth of Queen Victoria, the usual salute of guns was not fired in the apprehension that the Seoy's would be unnecessarily disturbed by the noise! Some English officers were heartily grieved that, on the birth-day of, Victoria, a salute dared not be fired in her honour; but what could the poor fellows do? If we look at the place erected by the English as a refuge in case of a rising as has been said before, we shall at once understand how helpless the condition of the English had become! Someone would purposely set up a rumour that the Sepoys had risen, as in the story of the wolf and the shepherd-boy, and caravans of the English would begin to run through the street with all possible speed! AN English officer writes : "Whilst I was there, buggies, palkies, gharries and vehicles of all sorts drove up and discharged cargoes of writers, tradesmen, ladies, women suckling infants, ayahs and children – and officers, too! – In short, if any insurrection took or takes place, we shall have no one to thank but ourselves, because we have shown to the natives how very easily we can be frightened, and when frightened, utterly helpless!" The cowardice exhibited in this conduct of the English, as this officer says, was thoroughly understood by the populace. When the entrenched place was being erected, had not Azimullah said the same to a Lieutenant in a jocular vein? Azimullah Khan, in his usual sweet voice, asked the lieutenant, "Well, Sahib, what are you going to call this new building which you are constructing here? The lieutenant replied, "Really, I have not yet thought about it." The smart Azimullah, with a wink in his eye, retorted, "Well, you can just call it 'the castle of despair'."

One day towards the evening, a young gallant Englishman, under the influence of drink, shot a Sepoy. The shot missed but the Sepoy brought a case against the culprit. According to usual custom, the soldier culprit was declared not guilty and released, the reason given being that the gun went off while the accused was *intoxicated*! This decision was the customary one, but alas! the times had changed!⁴³

At this insult, the whole Lashkar began to mutter among themselves, "Alright, our guns will also soon go off!" This became an exciting catch-word among the Sepoys. When they saw each other, they would say, "Well, now our guns are to go off, aren't they?" The sarcastic greeting became common in the army. However, they decided to suppress their anger for the time and not to be hastened into a premature rising as at Meerut.

To add fuel to the fire, the dead bodies of an Englishman and his wife were carried down the Ganges to Cawnpore. This testimony of the rising, in a city somewhere up the river, began to hold a terrible conversation with the city of Cawnpore. Oh! Ganges, how many more of the impure loads have you to carry before you send them to their ocean home! The English had now been so often deceived by the cry of "The wolf! The wolf!!" that they were frequently slumbering when the wolf was really to come. On the 1st of June, Sir Hugh Wheeler wrote to Lord Canning, "Unrest and danger are no more. Not only is Cawnpore safe, but I am soon going to send help to Lucknow!" And the white troops which had come from Allahabad actually started for Lucknow! And that, on the 3rd of June! What a wonder that the plot – in which three thousand Sepoys and

43 Trevelyan says :- "The Sepoys, familiar as they were with the brutality of low Europeans and the vagaries of military justice would at a less critical season have expressed small surprise either at the outrage or the decision. But, now, their blood was up and their pride awake, and they were not inclined to overrate the privileges of an Anglo-Saxon or the sagacity of the military tribunal." - *Cawnpore*, page 93.

the whole city of Cawnpore, not excluding the dancing-girls, participated – should be kept sealed from the English and their auxiliary dogs like Nanak Chand!

The seal was finally broken on the night of the 4th of June. According to the general programme, by dead of night, three shots were fired and the buildings already agreed upon were set fire to! This was the sign that the time for bloodshed, destruction, and death had begun. In the beginning, Tikka Singh's horse leapt forth and, immediately, thousands of horses started galloping at a smart pace. Some started to burn English houses and stables, some ran to fetch other regiments, and some went to capture the military flags and banners. When the old Indian Subahdar-Major, in whose charge the flags were, began to dispute with the Revolutionaries, a blow of the sword on his head sent his corpse rolling on the ground.

"Subahdar Tikka Sing's Salaams to the Subahdar of the 1st infantry regiment. He asks the reason why the infantry is delaying when the cavalry had already risen against the Feringhis? Two galloping cavalymen gave this message, and the whole of the 1st regiment came out with the cries of *Victory!* and *Country! - Din!* and *Desh!* At this, their officer, Colonel Ewart, said, "Oh! my children (Babalogs), what is this? This disgraces your loyal character! Wait, children, wait!" But the Sepoys did not waste their time in listening to him. In a moment, the whole regiment marched in military order to join the cavalry, and then the whole army together marched to the music of war-songs to the Nana's camp at Nabobganj! Nana's Sepoys were ready at the Nabobganj treasury. They embraced their comrades and, at once, the enormous treasure and the great arsenal fell into the hands of the Revolutionaries! While this was going on at Nabobganj, there were still two regiments left behind at Cawnpore. The English immediately called them on parade in order to keep them in their hands. As the English had the artillery in their hands, the two regiments together with their officers stood in arms on the parade ground all night. At daybreak, the English officers satisfied themselves that these regiments at least were not rebellious. They were permitted to go back to their lines and the officers also began to leave. Now, the Sepoys saw a good chance. A couple of officers whispered something from a corner, and suddenly, one of them

rushed forward and shouted, "God is on the side of Truth! Brethren, come arise!" At this order, swords began to flash on all sides, and, seeing the crisis coming, the English artillery opened fire. But the Sepoys had already gone beyond its range! It was quite possible for the Sepoys to have killed their officers at the time, but, without going so, they went away to join their comrades at the first opportunity. Thus, three thousand Sepoys encamped near Nana Sahib at Nabobganj, on the 5th of June. Sir Wheeler had one satisfaction - that not a single Englishman was killed. He thought that the Sepoys would, as usual, march towards Delhi, and the danger to Cawnpore would be over.

And if there had been a lack of able leaders in Cawnpore as there was in other places, the Sepoys, would, indeed, have gone to Delhi as Sir Wheeler surmised. But, at Nabobganj, at the time, there was no such lack of bold and able leaders. Nana Sahib was there; his brothers, Bala Sahib, Baba Sahib, and his nephew Rao Sahib were there; Tatia Tope was there; and Azimullah Khan too was there. When such brilliant and intellectual leaders were there, what need had the Sepoys to go to Delhi to seek one? The best interests would not be served by shutting up all the available forces in Delhi alone. The successful plan would be to harass the English in various places. Above all, as Cawnpore to a great extent commanded the line of communications between the Panjab, Delhi, and Calcutta, it was necessary to strike a blow at Cawnpore and capture it. When the Subahdar's and Nana's men had explained all this to the Sepoys, it was unanimously decided to turn back towards Cawnpore. The three thousand Sepoys elected Nana Sahib their King and expressed an ardent desire to see him. When he appeared, he was hailed with tremendous enthusiasm and they saluted him with all royal honours. When the election of the King was over, with his consent, the Sepoys proceeded to elect their officers; Subahdar Tikka Singh, the very life of the Revolutionary centre at Cawnpore, was elected the chief commander of the cavalry and was given the title of "General". New army regulations were issued. Jamadar Dalganjan Singh was made the colonel of the 53rd regiment, and Subahdar Ganga Din of the 56th regiment. Then, there was a grand procession of the flag of freedom on the back of

an elephant, and on the same day it was proclaimed by beat of drum that Nana Sahib had commenced to reign.

After these elections, Nana Sahib did not waste even a second. When the English received the information that the Sepoys did not go to Delhi but had stopped on the way, they entrenched themselves in the new fort and had their artillery ready. Their number was about one thousand, men, women, and children all told. It was of the first importance to capture this fortified place, and Nana Sahib ordered the whole army to march thither. The English were not certain that the Revolutionaries would attack them; but, early on the morning of the 6th, Sir Wheeler received a note. It was from Nana Sahib and was couched in the following terms:- "We are going to begin the attack. We want to warn you, and therefore send this previous notice to you." When he received this invitation to fight, Sir Wheeler got ready all his officers and soldiers and artillery men, and made all necessary preparations for the fight.

The fact that, before beginning the battle, Nana Sahib gave a previous written note to the English when it was in no way called for, is of the greatest importance. The English would certainly not have shown this generosity had they been in Nana's place. Those, who always try to pour foul disgrace on Nana Sahib's name, should bend their heads with shame at this act of natural gallantry! If we remember these two facts, the saving of the lives of all English officers at the time of the rising and the twelve hours' previous written notice given by Nana Sahib, and then read the final scenes, we will appreciate better the real situation at Cawnpore.

Soon after sending the notice to battle to the English Subahdar (now General) Tikka Singh went towards the arsenal and was busy, all the morning, arranging the arms etc. and sending them to the place of attack. Guns were pointed against the English fort from the side of the river as well as from land. The plan of the attack was formed with true military skill. At the same time, the Cawnpore town was also in a tumult! Spinners, sword-smiths, and people from the bazaar, Mussalmans, and the influential silver-merchants - everybody took anything that came to hand and were looking for Englishmen. Offices, courts, and all English

records, old and new, were burnt, and those Englishmen that forgot to betake themselves to the fort were killed. It was now mid-day. At about one the English fort began to be besieged, and, about evening, the guns began to boom and the attack commenced.

The English had about eight cannon and plenty of ammunitions which they had already kept buried in the fort. The Revolutionaries, also, had captured the arsenal and the big buns and they too were not hard up for ammunition. General Tikka Singh had from the first kept the artillery in excellent condition. Nana Sahib's guns played great havoc on the English buildings within the fort. When, on the 7th of June, the artillery of the Revolutionaries began to do its terrible work, English women and children, who had never been in such a plight before, began to run about here and there crying frantically. But habit took away the terror even of death, and balls flying over the heads created no greater surprise than birds flying in the air. Two days after the attack was commenced, the supply of water in the fort began to fall short. There was only one well within the fort which was of any use but the Revolutionaries had a keener eye on it than the English soldiers themselves. The heat of the sun was so strong that the soldiers would die of sunstroke. All hearts became hardened like stone. The difference between the sexes, and modesty, vanished. Children died for want of milk and sorrow killed the mothers. Let alone burying the dead, but it even became impossible to inquire who was dead and who was alive. For even while making a list of the living, some name would have to be scored off. To draw a true picture of such situations, the best way is to describe the events of a typical hour. Captain Thomas, relating his experience, says: "While Armstrong was lying wounded, Lieutenant Prole came to see him. Just as he uttered a few words consolation, a bullet from the Sepoys struck him in the thigh and he fell down. With his hand on my shoulder and mine round his waist, I began to lift him to take him to the sergeant. Before I had gone many steps, there was a buzzing noise and a bullet entered my shoulder. I and Prole both fell dying on the floor. Seeing this, Gilbert Bucks came running towards us. But the enemy's bullet came after him, pierced his body through, and he fell at once in the jaws of Death." This account of one hour gives a good idea of the history of

those twenty-one days! When Sir Wheeler's son was wounded, his two sisters and his mother were giving him medical assistance in a room. But, before he could take the medicine, there was a fearful explosion and a cannon ball carried away the young man's head. While Magistrate Hillersden was talking to his wife in the verandah, a twenty pound cannon ball burst on his head and he was blown to pieces. A few days later, the wall on which the widow was leaning collapsed and she met her death. There were seven women in a ditch near the fort. A bomb exploded and not only killed them all, but it also killed the English soldier who, before the rising, had shot the Sepoy and had been acquitted as not guilty. So at last the guns of the Sepoys also went off! And, when they did go off, it was in such a manner that succeeding English soldiers will remember it for ever, even when under the influence of drink!

In this terrible siege, there were, also, some foolish Indians who thought it their duty to be faithful to the English. They were there, in the jaws of death, simply for the sake of "loyalty"! An Indian nurse in the employ of the English lost both her arms by a bomb explosion. Butlers running about here and there to give hot food to their masters also fell dead frequently by shells. Indian *bhishtis* often risked their lives to give water to the English. Water was so scarce that children would suck the leather bags containing water! Cholera, dysentery, and typhoid also did not fail to take their revenge on the English. Sir George Parker, Colonel Williams, and Lieutenant Rooney died through illness. Those that did not succumb to shells or sickness went insane from the terrific fright of the ghastly living cemetery. Such was the pandemonium there. So, in return for the cruel wrongs of a century, Revenge incarnate was crushing everyone she found in her terrific jaws for twenty-one days, and was dancing with a ghastly smile!

While such was the state within the fort, the English guns placed outside did great service in the fight. Chief officers of the artillery, Ashe, Captain Moore, Captain Thompson, and other brave soldiers fought with a splendid valour. The English had great hopes of speedy succor from Lucknow or Allahabad. On account of the strict scouting of the Revolutionaries, it had become impossible to carry on correspondence. Still, an Indian messenger had carried as far as Lucknow

a letter by Siur Wheeler, partly in Latin, partly in French, and partly in English, and packed in the quill of a bird. It said only, "Help! Help!! Help!!! Send us help or we are dying! If we get help, we will come and save Lucknow!" But, the vigilance of the Revolutionaries was usually so good that hardly any such messenger from the English camp could get back there safe. The English often sent scouts, empowering them to promise lakhs of Rupees if they could find any traitors in the Revolutionary camp. But not one lives to return and give information! For example, we will give an account given by one of the scouts himself. "When Mr. Shepherd lost his wife and daughter, he undertook the task of getting information from the Revolutionaries' camp and sowing dissensions in Cawnpore. He set out in the disguise of an Indian cook. Hardly had he gone a short distance when he was arrested and brought before Nana Sahib. When he was asked about the state of the English, he began to give false and glowing descriptions as agreed upon. But seeing that two women, captured just before he was caught, had told the true story of despair, he got confused. He was first put in a prison and, on the 12th of July, he was brought before a court and sentenced to three years' rigorous imprisonment." From this will be seen the regard for justice which Nana had, even in the heat of the war. Though English scouts were thus balked, the scouts of the Revolutionaries did their work exceedingly well. One day, a *bhishti* (water-carrier) stood, on a high piece of ground near the English fort and cried, "Even disregarding the fear of death, since I love the English so much, I have come to convey to you a piece of joyful news. An English army with guns has come up on the other bank of the Ganges. It will start to-morrow to relieve you. This news has created a perfect consternation among the rascally rebels and we, all loyalists, have become ready to join the English!" At this news, the English imagined that their scouts must have successfully sowed discord among the Revolutionaries and, also, that the English army from Lucknow must have arrived. On the next day, the same *bhishti* came up and cried, "Victory to the English! The English army was late on account of floods in the Ganges; but, now, all is accomplished and they are coming. Before the end of the day, my masters will be victorious." That day passed, and so also the next; but the strained eyes of the English could see neither

the army of succour nor the loyalist *bhishti*! Azimullah, now, knew enough of the misery of the English camp, and it was not again necessary for the *bhishti* to risk his life. The English were often taken in by such resourceful tricks of the Revolutionary scouts.

After giving notice of the siege on the 6th of June to the English, Nana Sahib had brought his camp close to the besieging armies and near by the tent of General Tikka Singh. When

Cawnpore became free, the whole province became flooded by a great wave of Revolution. Every day, new Zemindars and princes came with their retinues and joined Nana Sahib's camp. Nana had now about four thousand troops under him; but, of these, the artillerymen were the most active in their duties. Here in one quarter Nanhi Nabob took his stand. When the rising began, his house and property were ordered to be confiscated for his fanatical Hindu hatred. But soon, a compromise took place and he joined that war of freedom. The artillery in Nana's charge were manned by the finest marksmen and old pensioners. While the Revolutionaries were making efforts to set fire to the English buildings within the fort, an amateur artillery man discovered a new explosive. The first experiment was so successful that the barracks, which were of immense value to the English and against which it was thrown, were soon burnt to ashes! There was so much competition amongst the people to join in firing the batteries that women helped men, and old men helped young men in the work. One quotation will show how, in that season of noble ideals and inspiration, the masses had risen up. A native Christian says, "While I sat on a mat disguised as a Mahomedan, I saw men returning to supply waters to those who were fighting. Suddenly, one of them came up to me and said, 'While our countrymen are fighting there, it is a shame that a young Mahomedan like you should sit here killing flies! Come there to help at the artillery.' He also told me that the young son of the one-eyed pensioner Karim Ali had done a great deed that day. He had made some discovery and set fire to the English buildings. For this bravery, he was rewarded with ninety rupees and a shawl." To sit idly, instead of fighting for the country, was considered a disgrace not only to a young man but even to a woman; so, the women of Cawnpore had left

their Zenans and jumped into the battle-field. But all these young soldiers and heroic women were put to shame by the ardour of a beauty which was no other than the dancing girl Azinan, above-mentioned. She had now put on a heroic garb. With her rosy cheeks and smiling lips, she was there on horseback, fully armed. And the artillery Sepoys would forget all their fatigue at the sight of her. Nanak Chand says, in his diary, "Armed Azinan is flashing everywhere like lightning; often she stands in the streets giving milk and sweetmeats to tired and wounded Sepoys."

Even while the fight was going on in this manner, Nana Sahib was making all possible arrangements for the civil administration. Though it is always a difficult task to introduce order in the revenue and police departments at a critical time like that of a Revolution, Nana Sahib first began the work of giving justice and protection to the inhabitants. The prominent citizens of Cawnpore were called together and the man elected by the majority of them, Holas Singh by name, was given the office of chief magistrate. Nana Sahib gave strict orders that Holas Singh should protect the citizens from disorderly Sepoys or bandit villagers. The work of supplying provisions to the army was entrusted to a citizen, called Mullah. A court was appointed to settle civil and criminal disputes. Jwala Prasad, Azimullah Khan, and others were made judges and Baba Sahib was made the President. From the few documents of this court that are extant, it is abundantly clear that those guilty of oppression or disorder were severely punished and that great care was bestowed on the maintenance of order. A man convicted of a very heinous theft had his right hand cut off. A Mahomedan butcher was given the same punishment for killing a cow. Vagabonds without any profession and people convicted of small thefts were publicly disgraced in the streets on the back of a donkey.⁴⁴ Like the Committee of Public Safety established during the French Revolution, this court gradually encroached upon all the other departments. To supply ammunition in case of shortage, to supply clothes to the army, to try the arrested English scouts, to

44 Thomson's Cawnpore.

punish rogues who wanted to escape - all these were done by this court. It also gave rewards to those who discovered English refugees.

The attack of the Revolutionaries on the English fort took place on the 12th. Rather than take it by a general assault, the general plan of the Revolutionaries was to reduce it by harassing the English on all sides by artillery. They also directed assaults now and then. After both sides had lost some men the Revolutionaries would retire. The vigour and courage of the artillery was not equalled by the cavalry and the infantry. This fault will also be prominently noticed in the sieges of Delhi and Lucknow; but, in the siege of Cawnpore also, more importance was attached to the artillery than to hand-to-hand sight. Not that the Sepoys were, at all, afraid of death. The valour and bravery the Sepoys displayed in the assault, on the 18th of June, on the fort were remarkable. On this day, disregarding the cannon-fire of the enemy, they ran straight, like arrows, at the enemy's camp, mounted the walls, took an English gun, and turned its mouth, and it seemed for a moment that the flag of freedom would never be set back. Instead of helping such brave Sepoys, some had, on the other hand, sworn as it were to create disorder without reason and bring confusion in all the ranks. This weakness compelled the whole army to return. Like the brave Sepoys of Oudh, some brave hearts at Cawnpore did their duty, as heroes always do, without waiting to see what the others did. One day when the assaulting party was retiring, one Sepoy lay down there, pretending to be dead. When Captain Jenkins, renowned for his bravery and a bold fighter, came up there galloping confidently, the Sepoy jumped suddenly at his prey and shot him dead in the neck in an instant!

The 23rd of June came. One hundred years before, on this day, the English had laid the foundations of their power on the battle-field of Plassey. On that 23rd of June, the English got their first decisive victory in Hindusthan. The sting of the insult of that unfortunate day was burning in the heart of Hindusthan so much that, even after a hundred years, that evil day and its evil memory was fresh in the heart of all Indians. The terrible wound of slavery inflicted on that day had not been healed even after a hundred years. No balm had yet been found that could heal it! What a righteous hatred was rankling in the heart even of the peaceful and

forgiving India? In the last breath of every dying generation and in the first breath of every new one being born, she has been mixing in the spirit of revenge for Plassey! This went on for a hundred years, and the morning of the 23rd of June, 1857, had risen. Astrologers had foretold that at last on this day the Mother would be avenged. Nana Sahib! Though the fulfilment of the prophecy is in the hands of God, you are to do your duty towards achieving the end!

And not to lose the chance of that auspicious day, the 23rd of June saw the whole of Nana Sahib's camp in a terrible commotion. All the divisions, if not every man of the army, had got ready to direct an assault as had never been directed before. The artillery, the cavalry, and the infantry - all, inspired by the memory of that historical day, came down into the battle-field. The bravest of them assembled together and took oaths - the Hindus with Ganges water and the Mahomedans on the Koran - that, on that day, they would either acquire freedom or die fighting! The cavalry rushed forward and came up to the walls without heeding the enemy's artillery. The infantry, under cover of big bags of cotton which they pushed along, showered bullets on the fort, from the other sides. People from the neighbouring villages had also come to join the Revolutionaries. From within the fort, the English also kept up an incessant fire. Though they could not check the forward movement of the Revolutionists, they prevented them from breaking into the fort that day.

Nevertheless this last attack at Cawnpore did not go in vain. After that day's fight the English lost all hope. They were full of despair and saw clearly that it was thenceforth impossible to hold the fort against Nana Sahib. Though not on the 23rd, yet on the 25th of June, they hoisted on their wall the flag of truce! On seeing this flag, Nana Sahib ordered the fighting to stop and sent to General Wheeler a letter by the hand of a captive English woman. The note ran: "To the subjects of Queen Victoria. Those who have had no connection with Dalhousie's policy and those who are ready to lay down arms and surrender will be safely conveyed to Allahabad." This note was written by Azimullah Khan at the order of Nana Sahib.

When General Wheeler received the note, he gave authority to Captains Moore and Whiting to consider it and the two officers resolved upon a surrender to Nana Sahib. The next morning, on the 26th Jwala Prasad and Azimullah Khan, on behalf of Nana Sahib and Moore, Whiting, and Roche, on behalf of the English, met near the walls. First, the conversation began in English, but soon Jwala and Azim forced them to carry on the conversation in Hindusthani - the language of the nation. The terms settled were that the English should hand over all the artillery, arms and ammunition, and the treasure to Nana Sahib, and Nana Sahib should give provisions to and convey the party to Allahabad.⁴⁵ The agreement was drawn up raised the flat of freedom at Cawnpore, a constant flood of heroes was pouring in thither. Young national volunteers from every place were repairing towards Cawnpore. A town, which could not send men, sent money. But, alas! it was not only these volunteers that were now crowding into Cawnpore. Day and night helpless people, who had been unsuccessful in their efforts and who were tired of English slavery, also came to the camp in large numbers. Thousands of Sepoys from Allahabad and Kashi had come to Cawnpore in the preceding week with the news of the cruel vengeance which the English had taken on their comrades and their wives and children. Hundreds of young Indian sons, whose fathers had been hanged in shapes of the figures - "8" and "9", also had come there. Husbands whose wives and infant sons in the cradle had been burnt by Neill also came. Fathers whose daughters had their hair and clothes set fire to by English soldiers amid shouts of applause, also crowded the place. Men whose properties were burnt to ashes, men whose religion was trampled under foot, men whose nation had been enslaved, such men created a tumult round the banner of freedom with shouts of "Revenge! Revenge!!" And, when the day of victory had arrived, Nana Sahib's promise to convey the English to Allahabad dispelled all the hopes of the Sepoys and the people, and they began to grumble aloud. The English officers who came to look after the preparation of boats distinctly heard whispers of "Massacre" (Katal) among the Sepoys lounging about on the banks of the Ganges!

45 Red Pamphlet.

It is also said that a palace Pundit had explained to the Sepoys how, in the eyes of religion, there was no sin in beheading men who had broken faith with a nation and had enslaved it!⁴⁶

On the 27th of June, the sun rose on this disturbed atmosphere. The English were to be seen off from the Sati Chowda Ghat. The cavalry and the infantry stood round the Ghat and the artillery was also in position. Thousands of the citizens of Cawnpore had also assembled at the Ghat, since the morning, to witness the scene on the banks of the Ganges, each with his own mental picture of it. Azimullah Khan, Bala Sahib, and the Commander Tatia Tope, also stood on the terrace of a temple near the Ghat. The name of the temple too was fitting to the occasion. Inside was the image of "Har Dev" and it appeared as if the lordship of the whole region was vested for the time being solely in the hands of Shiva, the Terrible! Nana Sahib had sent the best conveyances to take the English from the fort to the Ganges bank. For Sir Wheeler, a beautifully decorated elephant, with Nana Sahib's own *mahut*, came and stood at the gate of the fort. Sir Wheeler did not like the idea of being taken in such a melancholy procession on an elephant; so, he seated his family on it and betook himself to a palanquin. The English women had also palkees allotted to them. The procession started. The English flag at the fort was hauled down and the flag of freedom and religion flew in its stead! Instead of having heart-burnings at this insult to English prestige, the prisoners expressed joy at being released from the jaws of death. In the flush of joy of a renewed life, they left the fort and proceeded hastily - but whither?

However, it is useless to discuss that question at this stage. The Ganges ghat is still a mile and a half afar. When this procession, after going through the mile and a half, got down on the sands, the Sepoy lines closed from behind and guarded the way. While embarking on the boats from the palkees and elephants, no Indian came forth that day to help the English. Yes; but there were exceptions. In one or two cases, they did get help when they were getting down but, then, the

46 Trevelyan's *Cawnpore*. "Get away! A woman? Yes. But she is a Feringhi! Cut her to pieces!" Before he finished the sentence, the thing was done!

Sepoys offered their swords, not their hands. The wounded Colonel Ewart had been put in a *doli*. A Sepoy stopped his *doli* and said: "Well, Colonel, how do you like this parade? How are the regimental uniforms?" With these words, he dragged him down from the Palkee and cut him to pieces. His wife was near by. Some said to her : "You are a woman and your life will be spared!" But, one frightful young man rushed forward, shouting,

"Get away! A woman? Yes. But she is a Feringhi! Cut her to pieces!" Before he finished the sentence, the thing was done!

The English committee itself has admitted after enquiry that all the boats on the river contained ample provisions on board. The English waded through the water and took their seats in them. Everywhere there was a dead silence and calm. The boats were almost crowded. The boatmen were ready with their oars. At last, Tatia Tope waved his hand backward and forward in the air as the sign for the boats to start. Suddenly, in one corner, some one blew a bugle to break the terrible silence. As soon as the shrill sound of the bugle was heard, a crashing noise started —the noise of guns, rifles, swords, kukris, and bayonets. The boatmen jumped from the boats and came to the bank, and the Sepoys rushed into the water with a jump! No other sound was heard but "Maro Feringhiko!"

Soon all the boats caught fire, and men and women and children all jumped hastily into the Ganges. Some began to swim, some were drowned, some were burnt and most succumbed to bullets sooner or later! Lumps of flesh, broken heads, severed hair, chopped-off arms and legs, and a stream of blood! The whole Ganges became red! As soon as anyone took up his head above water, he was shot by a bullet; if he kept it under water, he would die of asphyxia! Such was the wrath of Har Dev! Such was the one hundredth anniversary of Plassey!

It was ten o'clock in the morning. It is said that, at this time, Nana Sahib was quietly pacing a hall in the palace. What wonder that he was uneasy in that palace, while an account of the century's wrongs was being settled! Such moments are epochs in history. They are the final strokes of a period, the summary of an age. Heaven knows his thoughts, at that time, when he was pacing the hall! But he was not allowed time to think much longer; for, a cavalryman came

galloping fast and informed him that the Sepoys had commenced an indiscriminate massacre of the English on Sati Chowda Ghat. Hearing this, Nana Sahib remarked that there was no necessity of molesting the women and the children and made the same man gallop back fast with the stringent order, "Kill the Englishmen! But no harm is to be done to the women and children!"⁴⁷ We must notice, while passing, that the second part of Nana Sahib's order is conspicuous by its absence in Neill's orders! When Nana Sahib's order reached Sati Chowda, the Sepoys were in the height of their dread work. Some Englishmen were burning in the heap of tottering boats, while some were attempting to swim across the river. The Sepoys also jumped into the water and followed them like wild dogs, shouting and foaming with rage. With their swords in the teeth and revolvers in the hand, the Sepoys began the terrible hunt in the water. General Wheeler was killed in the first rush. Henderson also fell. But it is easier to give a list of those that survived than of those that died! As soon as Nana Sahib's order arrived, the massacre was at once stopped and one hundred and twenty-five women and children were taken alive out of the water. They were taken as prisoners to Savda Kothi. The remaining Englishmen were made to stand in a line and the order for their execution was read to them. One of them asked to be given time to read to his comrades some sentences from a prayer-book, and the request was granted.¹⁰ When the prayer was finished, the Sepoys quickly cut off their heads with swords! Out of the forty boats, only one boat escaped; and out of the Englishmen in it, only three or four were saved from the attacks of the villagers, and that too, because a Zemindar, called Durvijay Singh, took pity on them! This Zemindar kept the naked and dying Englishmen for a month and then sent them down to Allahabad.

In short out of one thousand living Englishmen and women, on the 7th of June at Cawnpore, only four men and one hundred and twenty-five women and children survived on the 30th. The women and children were in the prisons of Nana Sahib and the four half-dead men were partaking of medicine and hospitality in the

47 Forrest's *State Papers*. Almost all English historians admit that Nana sent this order as soon as he heard the report. Also Kaye and Malleeson's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, page 258.

house of Durvijay Singh. It is here necessary to record briefly the arrangements made by Nana Sahib as regards the imprisoned women and children. We would have had no occasion to refer to this at all, had not English writers published a series of "reliable information" and most shameless accusations that the women were violated, that they were insulted in the streets, that Nana Sahib himself attempted to violate them, etc., and had not the English nation been so blind and wicked as to believe these despicable and diabolical falsehoods! It is distinctly stated by the special commission appointed by the English in this behalf that all these accusations are false.⁴⁸ Still this does not end the question. Not only did Nana Sahib save these women from massacre and thus put to Shame Neill, Reynold, and Havelock, but, in that conflagration of 1857, Nana Sahib did not show to the treacherous enemy who ruined individuals, the nation, and religion, even a hundredth part of the severity and cruelty which, in similar conditions and under similar provocations, England herself has shown to India, Austria to Italy, Spain to the Moors, or Greece to the Turks. And this is proved by the histories of the English themselves.

In the first confusion of the massacre at Cawnpore, four English women and some half-caste women had been taken away by some cavalymen. At this news, Nana Sahib had the Sepoys immediately arrested and disgraced. He compelled them to restore the women at once.¹² The prisoners were given chapatees, and meat occasionally.⁴⁹ They were not forced to do hard labour in any sense. The children were given milk. Over them was kept a chief wardress, called Begum. Since cholera and dysentery broke out in the prison, they were brought out to take fresh air, thrice every day.⁵⁰ It would not be here out of place to give a

48 Muir's Report and Wilson's Report, See also, Kaye and Malleeson's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. II, page 2.

49 *Narrative*, page 113.

50 Neill himself says in his report: At first they were badly fed but afterwards they got better food and clean clothing and servants to wait upon."

small anecdote to show how the people were furious even at the name, "English". One morning, a Brahmin peeped over the prison wall and saw English women who would never go out except in a

palanquin, wash their clothes. Moved at this sight, the Brahmin remarked to his neighbour, "Why do they not allow them a washerman?" As a check to this excessive humanity, the neighbour slapped the Brahmin hard in the face! A few of the women in the prison used to grind corn and each of them was given flour for one *chapatee* free. This showed them what it meant to work for one's living! What was the end of this imprisonment and what was the reason for that end will appear at its proper time. We will leave the women and children in prison and now turn to more important matters.

When all the emblems of English rule had been wiped out of Cawnpore, Nana Sahib held a great Durbar, about five o'clock on the afternoon of the 28th. In honour of the Durbar, there was also a military parade of the whole army present. Six regiments of infantry, and two of cavalry, besides bands of Revolutionaries, with their banners, who had come from various places to join in the war, were present at the ceremony. The artillery by whose power Cawnpore was conquered was deservedly given the place of honour. Bala Sahib was, from the first, very popular in the army and got a splendid ovation when he arrived. At first, there was a salute of 101 guns in honour of the Emperor of Delhi which shows how, in 1857, Hindus and Mahomedans had forgotten all their animosities. Next when Nana Sahib arrived in the camp, he was acclaimed with shouts and received a salute of twenty-one guns. Some said the twenty-one guns represented the twenty-one days of the siege. Nana Sahib thanked the army for the great honour and said, "This victory belongs to all of us. All have an equal glory therein." It was then announced that Nana Sahib had ordered one lakh of Rupees to be distributed to the army as a reward for its victory and, when he presented himself on the parade, another salute of twenty-one guns was fired. Then, Nana's nephew – Rao Sahib, and brothers – Baba Sahib and Bala Sahib, each got a salute and seventeen guns in their honour. Brigadier Jwala Prasad and Commander Tatia Tope were given the honour of eleven guns each. In this manner, the evening sun heard the

martial song of freedom through the din of cannon, and then the whole army returned to the camp. After the military review, Nana Sahib, in company with his brother Bala Sahib, proceeded to the historically famous palace of Brahmavarta. The 1st of July was fixed as the day of coronation. On that day, what splendour there was in the palace! The old historic throne of the Peshwas was brought with great ceremony into the Durbar Hall, and Nana Sahib, with the royal *Tilaka* on his forehead, amidst the booming of guns and the thundering applause of thousands, ascended the throne which was independent, earned by his prowess, supported by the populace, and blessed by religion. On that day, hundreds from Cawnpore sent presents to Nana Sahib.⁵¹ The Mahratta throne which the English hurled down from Raigarh thus re-emerged out of the Ganges flowing red with English blood. The Hindus all over the land hailed it with "Raja Ramchandra ki Jay!!!"

But while Nana Sahib was straining every nerve to regain freedom in childhood, Rani Lakshmi Bai, a fellow competitor with him in childhood at Brahmavarta in horse-riding and elephant-riding, did not keep idle. When Nana Sahib cast the die on the battlefield for independence at Cawnpore, she did the same at Jhansi. She was as close an associate to him in the game of Revolution as she was in the games of childhood. On the 4th of June, on the same day that Cawnpore was suffused with the clouds of fiery fume of cannonade, the Rani of Jhansi too dashed out like lightning and joined the battle of freedom. On the 4th June, Jhansi rose. Before this rising, a few letters fell into the hands of the British commissioner at Jhansi from which it appeared that Lakshman Rao, a Brahmin in the Ranee's service, was organising a Revolution and, as a preliminary, intended to kill the British officers in command of the army. But while the English were discussing amongst themselves as to what precautions were to be taken, on the same day, the Revolutionists took possession of the fort. Finding this, the English sent to take shelter in the city fort. The Revolutionaries made an attack upon that also, and took it. On the 7th, Rasaldar Kala Khan and Tahsildar Mahomed Hussein

51 Trevelyan's *Cawnpore*, page 293.

of Jhansi and other valiant soldiers led the attack and the flag of Revolution was hoisted on the fort of Jhansi. The English, on the other hand, hoisted the white flag and craved for peace. Hakim Salay Mahomed, a prominent citizen of Jhansi, promised to spare the lives of the English, if they surrendered unconditionally. The English laid down their arms, and the doors of the fort were opened. But when the English came out of the gates, the soldiers shouted, "Maro Feringhiko!" The Sepoys had known how the English had massacred their women and children and how Neill had burnt whole villages and were infuriated beyond measure. On the 8th, a procession was led through the city and the English were made to march in the procession as prisoners of war. The very English people, who were wielding the highest authority at Jhansi only a week before, were, to-day, parading as captives. As they were approaching Johan Bagh the Sepoys asked the general, "Rasaldar Sahib, what further orders?" The Rasaldar ordered that the Feringhis who were guilty of treason in having dared to dethrone the Ranee and annex the country should not be spared and that, therefore, they should be drawn up in three separate rows of men and women, and children and, as soon as the jail Daroga decapitated the commissioner in the line of men, immediately the rest of the lines of men, women and children should be beheaded. In a second, blood began to flow in streams. Thus, they died as victims of the merciless annexation policy of Lord Dalhousie refusing to recognise the adoption made by the queen.

About seventy-five men, twelve women, and twenty-three children were decapitated by the Revolutionaries and, there being no legal or adopted heir of the English to represent them, the Revolutionaries annexed the Kingdom of Jhansi to the Ranee's crown as the guardian of her son, Damodar Rao. They declared : "The Universe belongs to God, the country to the Emperor, and the authority to Ranee Lakshmibai!"⁵²

⁵² There is an authoritative work on the life of the Queen of Jhansi by a well known Marathi historian, and there the able author has established by an incontestable array of proofs that there was not the least incitement to this massacre from the young Queen. This work has a wide circulation and is translated in other vernaculars in India, and so we think it unnecessary to repeat the argument once more.

INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

CHAPTER IX O U D H

SINCE Dalhousie annexed Outh, the people of that province had been sinking deeper and deeper in misery. After Oudh lost her independence, all the offices of honour, power, and wealth in the Nabob's Kingdom were given to Englishmen, and the Swadeshi men had to go to the well. The Nabob's army was disbanded, his nobles were driven into poverty, his ministers and other officers lost their positions and were pushed to the low ranks of wage-earners; and all of them entertained a rankling hatred of the slavery which destroyed their country and reduced them to such a state. The sting of slavery was felt not alone in the capital and among the palace officials. The traditional rights of properties and Inams (fiefs) of the big Zemindars and Rajas were also confiscated by the English. So, all these Rajas and Zemindars saw how, between even a bad Swaraj (national rule) and subjection to a highly developed foreign rule, the former was to be preferred and was infinitely more agreeable and honourable. The increase in the land-tax produced discontent among the peasants. Most of the Hindusthanee Sepoys in the English army were from Oudh, and the misery and slavery of the place of their birth soon made them intensely disaffected. Every one put his hand to the sword when he remembered how the English ruined Nabob Wajid Ali Shah with their cruel treachery and deceit. The big Zemindars of Oudh, were descendants of Rajput heroes. They were intensely excited when they heard of the perfidious cruelty of the English towards their King. After the annexation of Oudh, the English asked them to come and accept services under the new regime. Hundreds of the freedom-loving and valiant men replied, at that time: "We have eaten the food of Swaraj! We will not touch the foreigner's food!"

Sir Henry Lawrence was made the chief officer of the new Oudh province. He was the elder brother of Sir John Lawrencde by whose alertness and statesmanship the seeds of the Revolution in the Panjab were smothered before

taking root. Just as the Chief commissioner of the Panjab had saved that province, so also his brother in Oudh had begun his preparations to save this. If anyone deserves the credit of having materially helped to perpetuate British power in India in this Revolution, it is the Lawrence family. Sir Henry Lawrence, as soon as he stepped into Outh, really grasped the situation there and had expressed the fear of a Revolution, long before any other Englishman thought of it. Lucknow being the capital of Oudh province, Sir Henry had his headquarters there. He started the policy of pacifying disaffected Zemindars by sweet speeches. He took pains in organising a Durbar at Lucknow and in giving various honours, titles, and rewards, in order to make the people forget their late Swaraj. He was not unwise enough to rest content merely with applying pacificatory means, but also began to think out various plans for opposing a possible popular rising. For, though Sir Henry Lawrence was a better officer than his predecessors, the people in Oudh were heartily disgusted with English rule as such, whether good or bad. Their ambition could be satisfied with nothing less than the restoration of Swaraj and the reinstallation of Wajid Ali Shah on the throne. They had no other desire but to break the English chains and make Hindusthan free again. Their religion was yesterday the religion of the free. But yesterday, it was the religion of the state and the kind. Today, it had fallen to a secondary and a servile place. These were their chief complaints, and the remedy was not good rule by the English but the end of all English rule. Powerful Hindu chiefs, like Man Singh, and leaders of Mahomedans, like Moulvie Ahmad Shah, resolved to sacrifice their all in this war for freedom and the Hindu and Islamic religions. Thousands of Moulvies and Pundits began to wander all over Oudh, preaching sacred war, openly and secretly. The army took the oath; the police took the oath; the Zemindars took the oath; almost the whole populace joined in a vast conspiracy to fight the English and the fire or popular agitation spread everywhere. It has been already told how sparks of this agitation would come forth, now and then, unintentionally. Moulvie Ahmad Shah himself was convicted of sedition and was given the death sentence which was later commuted. The 7th regiment was disarmed. Sir Henry Lawrence held a great Durbar on the 12th of May, in order to keep control over the Sepoys as far as

possible. He then delivered there an eloquent oration in Hindusthanee. He fully dilated upon the importance of loyalty, the insults offered by Ranjit Singh to the Mahomedan religion, Aurangzeb's insults to Hinduism, and the protection accorded by the English to both Hindus and Mahomedans against mutual injury. He then personally presented swords, shawls, turbans, and other presents to those Sepoys who had shown their loyalty; while, on the other side, the 7th regiment was being disarmed and disbanded. What an irony time had in store for him! In a very short time, these loyalists who got rewards had to be sentenced to be hanged on proof of their complicity with the Revolutionaries.

The loyal Durbar was held on the 12th. On the 13th, the news came that Meerut had risen and, on the 14th, the people heard the joyful news that Delhi had fallen into the hands of the Revolutionaries and that a Proclamation had been issued of the freedom of Hindusthan.

Sir Henry Lawrence now selected two places near Lucknow city, Machi Bhawan and the Residency, and began the work of fortifying these as places of refuge. The English women and children were taken there and all Englishmen, clerks, civil officials, and merchants were taught military drill, discipline, and the use of the rifle. At Meerut too, after the rising, all the civil Englishmen there had been given such training and made ready for the field in ten days. Sir Henry Lawrence was made the chief military officer of the province. Oudh being close to Nepal, Sir Henry Lawrence sent a mission to Nepal requesting help from there. He asked Jung Bahadur to come down into Oudh with an army. While these precautions were being taken, Sir Henry would get "reliable" information every day that there would be a rising that day. Daily, on receipt of the news, he would take special precautions; but the day would pass and no rising would take place. He was often thus deceived. On the 30th of May also, an officer informed Sir Henry that there was to be a rising that evening at nine o'clock.

The sun set on the 30th. While Henry Lawrence was dining with his subordinates, the nine o'clock gun went off. Seeing that the man who had brought information this time was one who had proved a false prophet before, Henry Lawrence bent forward and said sarcastically, "Your friends are not punctual!"

Not punctual! Hardly had he finished the sentence, when he heard the crashing noise of the rifles of the 71st regiment. As previously settled amongst themselves, at the nine o'clock gun, a detachment of this regiment attacked the bungalows of the English. The mess-house of the 71st regiment was set on fire and the Englishment were fired at. Lieutenant Grant who was attempting to escape was hidden under a mattress by some one; but someone else gave the information to the Sepoys. He was dragged out and killed. While Lieutenant Hardinge was guarding some streets with his cavalry, he also received a sword-cut. The cantonment was on fire. Brigadier Handscomb was also killed. The English soldiers and a few Sepoys who stuck to the English flag were under arms all night, trying to check the spread of the rising as much as possible. On the morning of the 31st of May, Henry Lawrence marched on the Revolutionaries with the English soldiers under him and a few Sepoys who were still loyal to the English. But, on the way, the 7th cavalry regiment that was with him also rose. He left them to join the Revolutionaries and returned. Though the English had the whole of the 32nd regiment stationed at Lucknow, besides the artillery, before sunset, the 71st infantry, the 48th infantry, and the 7th cavalry regiment, together with the irregular troops, hoisted up the flag of freedom.

At a distance of fifty-one miles to the north-west of Lucknow is the town of Sitapur. There werestationed here the 41st infantry and the 9th and 10th irregular infantries. At Sitapur also stayed the commissioner of the province and other big officials. On the 27th of May, some English houses had been set fire to. But the English had not yet the experience to know that those fires were the premonitory symptoms of the rising. They, therefore, did not give any special attention to it. Nay, more, even the Sepoys made great efforts to put down the flames! This fire served two purposes. One was that the members of the secret society got notice that the time had come. The other was to test the credulity and confidence of the English. On the 2nd of June, an extraordinary incident occurred. The Sepoys complained that the flour bags given to them contained power of bones and refused to take them. They also insisted that they should be instantly thrown

into the Ganges. The English quietly threw the bags into the river! In the afternoon of the same day, the Sepoys suddenly rushed into the gardens of the English

and everyone helped himself to whatever fruit he liked and as much as he likes. The English officers protested vehemently, but the Sepoys did not stop in their repast to listen to the remonstrance! After the terrible feast, they began an equally terrible exercise in order to digest the food! On the 3rd of June, a batch of Sepoys went up to the treasury and captured it, and the rest went and attacked the house of the Chief Commissioner. On the way they met Colonel Birch and Lieutenant Graves and killed them. The 9th irregulars, also killed their officers. All the Sepoys would shout, "The Feringhi rule is at an end!" and fall upon any Englishman they met. The commissioner and his wife were running towards the river. He, his wife, and a boy were killed while crossing the river. Thornhill and his wife, also, fell a prey to bullets. The Sepoys in their rage killed about twenty-four English. Many others among the English, however, ran to the Zemindars of Ramkote, Mitavali, etc., enjoyed their hospitality for eight to ten months, and then were taken safely to Lucknow. All the Sepoys of Sitapur then went to Farrukabad. The fort there, in which the Englishmen had taken refuge, was taken after severe fighting and the Englishmen were massacred. Habob Tafuzar Hossein Khan was re-established on the Gadi which had been wrested away from him by the English. The Nabob, also, caught and killed every Englishman in his state. Thus, on the 1st of July, there was not a single Englishman left in the province of Farrukabad. In the town of Malan, about forty-four miles to the north of Sitapur, the English officers had heard rumours of a conspiracy among the Sepoys and the people. When they also got the news of the rising at Sitapur, they ran away on their horses and, thus, the whole district became free without even a drop of blood being shed.

The third district was Mahmadi. The English here had sent their families to the Raja of Mithauli. The Raja saw them and told them that they must live secretly in his jungles, as he had no power to protect them openly. For, the Sepoys in the whole province of Oudh had taken oaths to rise. After sending away their wives to the Raja, the English officers at Mahmadi took themselves to the fort. On the same day, the English fugitives from Shahjahanpur in Rohilkhand

arrived at Mahmadi. But there was not even a moment's safety at Mahmadi and the officers sent a message to Sitapur to help these helpless Englishmen. Sitapur had not yet risen then and some Sepoys were sent with carriages to Mahmadi to fetch the refugees. But, the Sitapur Sepoys brought with them the seeds of the Revolution. They put all the English in carriages and took them safely till half-way to Sitapur; but there, they suddenly told them to get down and killed them. In this massacre, there were eight women, four children, eight lieutenants, four captains, and many others. The officers remaining at Mahmadi immediately ran away and the whole district was free from British rule on the 4th of June.

Another district near Sitapur is Barhatch. The chief officer here was Commissioner Wingfield. There were four administrative centres- Sikrora, Gonda, Barhatch, and Melapore. Out of these, at Sikrora were stationed the 2nd infantry regiment and a battery of artillery.

When there were signs of a rising here, the English women and children were sent to Lucknow. On the morning of the 9th of June, many English officers voluntarily repaired to the Raja of Balarampur for refuge. Only the chief officer of the artillery, Bonham, retained his faith in the Sepoys and would not leave his post. But, in the evening, the Sepoys plainly told him that they did not wish to injure him personally but that they would not fight against their countrymen, because the English rule was at an end. At this, Bonham had to leave the station. The Sepoys showed him the safest way and he reached Lucknow safely. When the news of Sikrora's independence reached Gonda, that town also rose for freedom. Then the commissioner, Wingfield, together with all the Englishmen ran for safety to the Raja of Balrampur. This Raja protected nearly twenty-five English people and sent them to an English camp at a suitable opportunity.

The news of the liberty of Sikrora and Gonda soon reached Barhatch. The English officers there, without waiting for a rising, left the chief town of the district and ran towards Lucknow, on the 10th of June. But, since the Revolutionaries had their out-posts at various places all over the province of Oudh, they disguised themselves as Indians and tried to cross the river Gogra in a boat.

First, they did not attract any attention; but when half-way, there was a sudden cry of "Feringhi! Feringhi!!" The boatmen jumped away out of the boats and the English officers were killed. With these officers vanished the British power in Barhaitch.

Though there was no military station at Melapore, still the popular outburst compelled the English officers to run away from the district. A Raje helped them as far as possible in their fight. But, soon, they fell victims partly to the swords of the Revolutionaries and partly to the hardships of the forest.

Fyzabad was the chief town of the eastern part of Oudh and was also the residence of Commissioner Goldney of the province. In the province of Fyzabad, there were three districts, Sultanpur, Saloni, and Fyzabad. In the city of Fyzabad were stationed, at the time, the 22nd infantry, the 6th irregular infantry, some cavalry, and some artillery, all under the command of Colonel Lennox. In the district of Fyzabad, the oppression of the English government was at its worst. Sir Henry Lawrence himself writes, "The Talukdars have also, I fear, been hardly dealt with. At least in the Fyzabad district, they have lost half their villages, some Talukdars have lost all."⁵³ Immediately after the news of Meerut, the English officers at

Fyzabad were afraid that this oppression would soon be avenged, and anxiety to save themselves took possession of their minds. They could not send their families to Lucknow, because the road was thoroughly guarded by the Revolutionaries. They could not prepare to fight at Fyzabad, because the whole army there was composed of Indians. Finding themselves in this dilemma, these officers at last went to Raja Man Singh for protection. Raja Man Singh was the great leader of all the Hindus in the province of Oudh. His sword was always drawn to protect the Hindu religion under the Nabobs. In the may of 1857, this proud Raja had been imprisoned by the English for some begatelle about revenue. But, since the English had been weakened by the Meerut rising, they had released him in order to curry favour with him and gain him to their side.

53 Kaye and Malleeson's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, p. 266.

With very great difficulty, he consented to give refuge to English women and children in his castle. He still said that the people would not like his action and would not even scruple to attack his castle for it. On the 1st of June, however, the families of the English Officers went to Man Singh for refuge and lived safely in his Shahganj Castle. While the English were

taking these measures of precaution, the Revolutionary fire began to burn brighter at Fyzabad. Moulvie Ahmad Shah, a name which finds a place now in Indian history, was one of the several Talukdars whose property had been confiscated by the English. He had taken the vow not only to get his Talukdari back but to free his country. Since the English annexed the kingdom of Oudh, Talukdar Ahmad Shah had given his all-in-all for the service of his country and religion. He became a Moulvie and set out on a tour through Hindustan to preach Revolution. Wherever this political saint went, there was seen an extraordinary awakening amongst the people. He personally saw the great leaders of the Revolutionary party. His voice was law in the royal family of Oudh. He formed a branch of the Secret Society at Agra. At Lucknow, he openly preached the destruction of the British power. He was beloved by the masses in Oudh. With his body, his mind, his speech, and his intelligence, he worked incessantly in preaching freedom and weaving a perfect net of secret societies. He then took up the pen also. He wrote Revolutionary pamphlets and began to spread them broadcast in the province of Oudh. In one hand the sword and in the other the pen! Seeing this, the English ordered his arrest. But the Oudh police did not help to arrest the popular leader! So, a military force was sent to fetch him! He was tried for sedition, sentenced to be hanged, and detained for a time in the Fyzabad prison.⁵⁴ The race began between the Moulvie and the English power to hang each other! While the Moulvie was preparing to hand the

⁵⁴ “ Before the mutiny broke out, the Moulvie travelled through India, on a roving commission, to excite the minds of his compatriots to the steps then contemplated by the master spirits of the plot. Certain it is that, in 1857, he circulated seditious papers throughout Oudh; that the police did not arrest him; and, to obtain that end, armed force was required. He was then tried and condemned to death. But, before the sentence would be executed Oudh broke into revolt and, like many a political criminal in Europe, he stepped at once from the floor of a dungeon to the footsteps of a throne!”- Malleon, Vol. IV, page 379. Says Gubbins:- “The

English power, the latter was hurrying to erect a scaffold to hand the Moulvie. But, in the hurry, they retained the Moulvie in the Fyzabad prison and thus erected scaffolds for themselves. For the Moulvie's arrest was the spark that set fire to and exploded the Revolutionary magazine at Fyzabad. The whole town, including the army, rose at once.

When the English officers went to the parade ground to keep the Sepoys in order, the Sepoys on their part informed them boldly that thenceforth they would only obey the orders of Swadeshi officers and that their leader was the Subahdar Dhuleep Singh. Subahdar Dhuleep Singh then imprisoned the English officers; they were prohibited from going beyond a distance of twelve steps. Then, the townsmen and the Sepoys ran to the prison which had been sanctified by the feet of the popular hero. The door of the prison creaked and amidst the loving shouts of the populace, the Moulvie Ahmad Shah threw away the chains which had now been broken to pieces and walked up to the crowd! This was the Moulvie's rebirth! The English power which was about to hang him was itself hanged by him at last! As soon as he was released, he accepted the leadership of the Revolution at Fyzabad, and the first thing which he did in revenge for the sentence of death passed on him, was to send a message to Colonel Lennox, now kept under guard, thanking him for his permission to allow the use of a Hookah while he was in prison.⁵⁵

After thanking for the gift of a Hookah the man who gave him the death sentence, the noble-souled Moulvie warned the English officers to leave Fyzabad immediately. To prevent looting and disorder at Fyzabad, as happened in some other places, detachments of Sepoys were sent out as guards. The arsenal and other public buildings were also guarded by Sepoys.

Moulvie of Fyzabad was released from jail by the mutineers. He came from Madras and was of a respectable Mahomedan family and had traversed much of upper India, exciting the people to sedition. He had been expelled from Agra for preaching sedition." Etc. etc.

⁵⁵ Charlkes Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I, page 394.

The Sepoys of the 15th regiment elected a committee of war which resolved that the English officers should be killed. But the chief officers decided that the first promise should not be broken and so they let them go away alive. They were even informed that they might take with them all private property, but no public property as that belonged to the King of Oudh! Thereafter, the Revolutionaries themselves got boats ready for the English and gave them some money; then the officers took leave of all the Sepoys and went away along the Gogra in boats. On the morning of the 9th of June, a Proclamation was issued that Fyzabad had become independent, that the Company's rule was at an end, and Wajid Ali Shah had recommended to rule!

While the English were floating along in the boats, the Sepoys of the 17th regiment saw them. They had received a letter from Fyzabad Sepoys asking them to kill all the Englishmen coming from there. The attack on the boats commenced. The chief commissioner, Goldney, was killed; so also Lieutenant Thomas, Ritchie, Mill, Edwardes, Currie and others. Those that went to the town of Mohadaba were killed by the police themselves. Only one boat and its occupants concealed themselves successfully till the end and reached the English camp safely with the help of the boat-men. While Raja Man Singh's household was anxious about the safety of English women and children given in his charge, many more men came there again for refuge. Man Singh was, at the time, at the chief city of Oudh. He wrote home that he had just made an agreement with the Revolutionaries by which they allowed him to give shelter to women and children, provided that he did not take there any Englishmen, and that it had been decided that his house should be searched to see whether he observed the conditions. Therefore, the Englishmen in his fort, with their families, left to cross the river Gogra. They encountered many dangers and hardships on the way and those of them that survived arrived safely at the house of the Raja of Gopalpur. That, Raja entertained the twenty-nine English with great hospitality, for some days, and then sent them safely to the English camp. Most of the Englishmen who escaped in the trials of 1857 have written long accounts of their experiences. They are all very instructive and are a living monument to the nobility of sentiment of the people of

our nation. Though there was so much hatred all over Oudh against the English, they were entertained hospitably, when they surrendered, even in the houses of those Rajas who fought on the side of the Revolutionaries. And such examples are not isolated. Busher writes “ Now, I alone remained. Running on, I came across a village on the way. The first man I was there was a Brahmin. I asked of him some water to drink. He saw my misery and took pity on me and told me that that village consisted of Brahmins and that my life was safe... Buli Singh came up in pursuit. I ran into a *gully* when an old woman came up to me and pointed out a cottage. I went in and hid myself in the grass. Shortly after came Buli Singh's men and began to pierce everywhere with the ends of their swords to find me. They soon found me and dragged me out by my hair. The people in the village began to heap curses on the Feringhis! The, Buli Singh conducted me to another place, amidst the hootings of the village crowd. My execution was postponed everyday. I fell on my knees and craved for mercy. In this way, I was taken, at last, to Buli Singh's house." After a long time, he was sent away to the English. Colonel Lennox writes : "While we were running, the men of Nazim Hossein Khan caught us. One of them drew out his revolver, gnashed his teeth and said that his hands were throbbing to despatch the Feringhis away in an instant but that he could not do it! We were next taken up to Nazim. He was sitting in the Durbar leaning on a cushion. He told us to drink a little sherbet and rest, and not to be frightened. When the question arose as to what quarters should be given to us, an angry servant suggested the horse-stables near by. Nazim rebuked him for this, but immediately another broke forth, 'Why all this trouble? I will just kill these Feringhi dogs!' Nazim thundered against them all and promised us our lives. We hid near the Zenana through fear of the mutineers. We got good food, clothing, and rest." Then, Nazim disguised all these as Indians and sent them safely to the English camp.

As soon as the English officers left the city of Fyzabad, the other districts in the province also hoisted the flag of freedom. Sultanpur rose on the same day, i.e. the 9th of June. The third district town, Saloni, rose on the 10th. The officers of the latter place were running for their lives. The Sirdar Rustom Shah saved some of them, and Raja Hanumant Singh also saved some. The gallant and

brave princes of Oudh did not rest content merely by sparing the lives of those who surrendered but also entertained the English most hospitably. As a matter of fact, the English had inflicted terrible losses on, and offered great insults to, almost all these Zemindars. Not that the Zemindars ever forgot that their Swaraj had been destroyed and their religion was trodden under foot. Followed by their Sepoys, they were openly warring against the English and many had taken oaths never to rest until the English were out of the country. But, to match this heroic patriotism and love of freedom, they all showed equally heroic gallantry. While the common people were massacring the English in a fit of rage and revenge, they treated the English women and children hospitably and showed them clemency! Even those officers who had but now persecuted them were given their lives,

when they came to surrender! Though the mass of the people insisted that it was not desirable to leave the officers, for they might again come to fight - as the officers did in the latter part of the war - they did not shrink from showing them generosity! In how many other countries except in India can be found, in Revolutionary times, this gallantry and this nobility of heart, even when it enraged the masses?

Raja Hanamant Singh was the chief of Kala and, though not behind anybody in his anxiety to fight in the cause of his nation, his nobility forced even his enemies to speak of him in the following terms: "This noble Rajpur had been dispossessed, by the action of the revenue system introduced by the British, of the greater part of his property. Keenly as he felt the tyranny and the disgrace, his noble nature yet declined to regard the fugitive chiefs of the nation which had nearly ruined him in any other light than as people in distress. He helped them in that distress; he saw them in safety to their own fortress. But when, on bidding him farewell, Captain Barrow expressed a hope that he would aid in suppressing the revolt, he stood erect, as he replied, 'Sahib, your countrymen came into our country and drove out our king. You sent your officers round the districts to examine the titles of 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. You came to me whom you had deploiled. I have saved you. But now, - now I

march at the head of my retainers to Lucknow to try and drive you from the country."⁵⁶

This generosity on the part of the people of Oudh was not a sign of weakness. Between the 31st of May and the end of the first week of June, the whole province rose in Revolution like a big machine suddenly setting to work! In the whole province, the Zemindars, Jagirdars, and Rajas; the thousands of Sepoys under the British - infantry, cavalry, and artillery; all the servants of the civil departments; peasants, merchants, and students; in short all, whether Hindu or Mahomedan, rose like one man for freeing their country. Private enmity, differences of religion and caste and rank were all forgotten. Every one felt in his heart that he was jumping into the battlefield for a war of justice. It was the masses who re-established Wajid Ali Shah on the throne of Oudh in ten days. What a statesmanlike answer this to Dalhousie's contention that he deposed Wajid Ali Shah for the good of the people! At the end of the first week of June, there was scarcely a village in the whole Oudh province that had not given such a statesmanlike reply to Dalhousie, by tearing to pieces the English flag!

After giving a true picture of this state of things, the famous historical researcher, Forrest, says in his preface, "Thus in the course of ten days, the English administration in Oudh vanished like a dream and left not a wreck behind. The troops mutinied, the people threw off their allegiance. But there was no revenge, no cruelty. The brave and turbulent population, with a few exceptions, treated the fugitives of the ruling race with marked kindness, and the high courtesy and chivalry of the people of Oudh was conspicuous in their dealings with their fallen masters who, in the days of their power, had, from the best (?) of motives, inflicted on many of them a grave wrong."⁵⁷ If the experienced and able English officers had not been thus spared by the heroic nobility of the people of Oudh, Oudh could not have been reconquered merely by the English novices! For, as we shall see later on these were English officers and were returned with the new forces sent by

⁵⁶ Malleeson's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. III, page 273 (foot-note)

⁵⁷ Forrest's *State Papers*, Vol. II, page 37.

the English and wreaked terrible vengeance on the Revolutionary leaders and followers who had, through misplaced generosity saved their lives as shown above!

About the 10th of June, the whole province of Oudh became independent and all the Sepoys and volunteers marched towards Lucknow. In that city, the great English leader, Henry

Lawrence, was moving heaven and earth to inspire life into the dying English power. Though he had lost the whole province, he had still kept his hold on the capital. He had smelt the Revolution from afar and had fortified the two places, Machi Bhawan and the Residency, as has been already mentioned. When the Sepoys revolted on the 31st of May and went away, Lawrence formed a splendid regiment of Sikhs and another of the “most loyal” Hindusthanees. The remaining division of the old Sepoy army had rebelled before the 12th of June. This revolt pleased Sir Henry in a way, for now he had with him a select and faithful army consisting of the English regiment and artillery and the two regiments of Sikhs and Hindusthanees, whose loyalty to the English had been proved by severe tests. Sir, Henry was now waiting, ready to give battle.

The Sepoys and young fighting men of the province of Oudh were collecting together around the city of Lucknow. Both sides, before commencing the fight, were awaiting the issue of another struggle. The siege of Cawnpore was at its height, and neither the English nor the Revolutionaries started the battle until the final news from Cawnpore came. Each party based its hopes on the result of Cawnpore. Sir Henry wrote hopefully to Lord Canning, on the 23rd of June, “If Cawnpore stands, it is doubtful whether Lucknow will be besieged at all.” On the 28th, the news came to Lucknow that not a single Englishman was left alive at Cawnpore! The Revolutionaries were flushed with the victory and marched up to Chinhut to attack the English.

The terrible defeat of the English at Cawnpore shook the basis of English prestige everywhere. Sir Henry Lawrence thought that, unless this defeat were counteracted, not only the Residency at Lucknow but even Fort William of Calcutta would not be safe, and resolved to wash away the insult of Cawnpore with

the blood of the Revolutionaries. The English army assembled near the iron bridge, on the 29th June. Sir Henry left Lucknow with four hundred English soldiers, four hundred traitor Sepoys and ten guns. He marched a long distance without seeing any sign of the enemy. At last, he came across the front rank of the Revolutionaries. Sir Henry, then, ordered his sepoy to take a very important village on his right. The sepoy attacked that village and it fell into the hands of the English. The English soldiers, also, took the village of Ismailganj on the left. The Indian and English officers of the guns rained such a fire against the guns of the Revolutionaries that the latter was silenced. The English almost won the day at Chinhut. But, suddenly the cry arose that the Revolutionaries had entered unobserved the village on the left; the English soldiers were suddenly attacked and driven out, and the village was captured by the Revolutionaries, who now attacked the English centre and rear. As the English soldiers retired, the Revolutionaries rushed on. There was confusion in the English ranks and Sir Henry, seeing that a further stand would result in the ruin of the whole army, sounded a retreat! During the retreat the English suffered excessive hardships; for, the Revolutionaries did not stop with the victory of Chinhut but started a hot pursuit. The Sepoys manning the English artillery now began to slack. But the rest of the Indian cavalry and artillery showed even greater bravery than the English soldiers and ably covered the retreat. But, in a short time, the retreat ended in a rout! The despairing English army began to run towards Lucknow. Out of the four hundred English soldiers, nearly one hundred and fifty died that day. We need not count the Indian loyalists! The English left on the field two guns and a big howitzer. They had in this manner, Sir Henry re-entered the Residency at Lucknow. Still the Revolutionaries were following him. When the English and the Sikhs and other loyalists came within the shelter of the guns at the Residency, the battle of Chinhut came to an end. But, its results still remained. The Revolutionaries now surrounded both Machi Bhawan and the Residency. Sir Henry, therefore, decided to vacate Machi Bhawan in order to render his defence more effective. The arsenal there, containing a large quantity of ammunition, was blown up, and all the Englishmen now came into the Residency. This Residency had enough stores of provisions, arms, and ammunition

to stand a siege. There were now, in the Residency, about a thousand Englishmen and eight hundred Indian sepoy. They prepared to defend themselves against the vast number of Revolutionaries collecting outside. Seeing the preparations of the English general to defend the Residency after the battle of Chinhut, the Revolutionaries commenced a regular siege. Thousands of the Revolutionaries were mustering strong and chafing to put an end to the slavery and foreign domination.

In this manner, the enraged Ayodhya beat and pursued and imprisoned the English Power in this little Residency of Lucknow.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The well-known writer of the *Red Pamphlet* says :- "All Oudh has been in arms against us. Not only the regular troops but sixty thousand men of the army of the ex-kind, the Zemindars, and their retainers, the two hundred and fifty forts- most of them heavily armed with guns - have been working against us. They have balanced the rule of the Company with the sovereignty of their own kings and have pronounced, almost unanimously, in favour of the latter. The very pensioners who have served in the army have declared against us and to a man joined in the insurrection."

INDIAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE 1857

CHAPTER X THE SUMMING UP

WHAT effect had this spirit of freedom which inspired life in the dead or dying thrones of Delhi, Cawnpore, Lucknow, and Bareilly on the other states which were still, more or less, living?

The mass of the people, in 1857, had thoroughly understood that, so long as foreign domination over Hindusthan remained, the living states were as useless as the dead ones were lifeless. The Revolution in 1857, inspired by the holiest and the highest ideal of freedom, was not fighting furiously for the sake of this king or that heir. Individuals - peasants or kings - may live or die, but the nation should not die, must not die. The ideal was the establishment of the country's freedom by breaking the dreadful chains of slavery, and the universal war was sounded for the attainment of this noble end, even though the way to it was over the ashes of cottages and of thrones. He is a king who would free his country. The other kings were as well dead as alive.

The people in the states like Gwalior, Indore, Rajpootana, and Bharatpur were, also, full of the spirit of the Revolutionary War, as much as those in territories which had completely lost their independence. None of them entertained the sordid idea of keeping away from risk and danger, because his own native state was safe; nor looked upon his own tiny state as the whole nation, and upon the annexed provinces as people having exclusive interests and belonging to a foreign system. Foreigner! One son of the Mother, a foreigner to another! No; 1857 has come and all India is one; one in life; one in destiny!

Now, then,. You Scindia of Gwalior! Give us the order to fight against the English. Give us not only the order but come and be our leader; Raise the holy cry of "Swadesh" and "Swadharma" on the battlefield and march on with the army to complete the half-done work of Mahadaji. The whole country is hanging on the one word of Jayaji Scindia! Say "War!", and Agra falls, Delhi is liberated, the Dekhan rises amidst thunder, the foreigner is expelled from the country, the land is

free, and you are the man who shall give it the gift of freedom! The lives of two hundred millions of men depended on the tongue of one man. Such an occasion is verily Historical!

But, the one tongue of the Scindia first would not move at all and, when it did move, it said "Friendship!" instead of "War!" The Scindia resolved to preserve his friendship - not with the country but with the English! At this, the people rose in a fury. If the Scindia does not wish to fight, we shall fight! If you do not run to save the Motherland, we will run to liberate her without you, and, if it comes to that, in spite of you. To-day is Sunday, the 14th of June. We have waited for the Scindia till to-day. We will only wait for the sun to set to-day; when the sun sets - *Har! Har, Mahadev!* Who is there driving in that carriage? Mr. And Mrs. Coopland. How dare anyone salaam to them? Salaam a Feringhi after the 14th of June? Not only this Feringhi but, see there, the brigadier is coming, and no one raises his hand or moves his head to salute him! Brigadier, indeed! But who made him brigadier? Is it not the Feringhis? A crow, though standing at the top of a palace, does not become an eagle. So, march on right in the face of the brigadier and pay no attention to him. And so, the Sepoys of the Gwalior contingent passed the brigadier without saluting him.⁵⁹ Still there was no disturbance till the evening. In the evening, one bungalow took fire. Yes; now comes the time of rising. Artillery! rise in revolt! Infantry! Take burning torches in one hand and shining swords in the other and dance about in all directions, roaring like lions. See the colour of every man you meet in the street; if he is dark, embrace him; if white, kill him.

Maro Feringhiko! You are hiding in the house; all right, we will set fire to it! Who is this running out of the bungalow to save himself from the fire? Is he a white man? Cut his head off! Who is this again? A white woman "Mat Maro! Mat Maro!" (Don't kill!) "We do not want to kill women!"⁶⁰ The whole night, the ghostly dance is going on. There must be no Englishman in Gwalior,

⁵⁹ Mrs. Coopland's *Narrative*.

⁶⁰ Mrs. Coopland's *Narrative*.

Contingent forces revolted, split the blood of their officers, drove out English women, the English flag, and English power out of the limits of Gwalior state and made Gwalior perfectly independent. They next began to order the Scindia : “Come and be our leader; come out with the whole army towards Agra, Cawnpore and Delhi to liberate Hindusthan!” Scindia kept them quiet for many days by constant promises. Until Tatia Tope comes secretly to Gwalior and leads them, the troops are to remain thus inactive.⁶¹

And, therefore it is that the English at Agra have still some hope. For the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Province Mr. Colvin, is at Agra, standing in terror of death every minute. He had previously delivered a lecture on “loyalty” to Sepoys, agitated by the Meerut news. He had issued a proclamation of pardon! But there was not even a single Sepoy weak-minded enough to come to beg his pardon; nay, more, as a reply to the proclamation of pardon, they attacked Agra on the 5th of July. The revolted regiments of Nasirabad and Neemuch marched on Agra; so, the “loyal” troops of the rulers of Bitauli and Bharatpur were sent against them! The troops sent by these states declared that though they would refrain from rising against the English, for such were the orders of their rulers, they would not lift their swords against their own countrymen!” The English were thus deceived and disappointed. The native states were “loyal”; but their people and armies “would not lift their swords against their countrymen!” So taking with him the English troops alone, Brigadier Polwhele marched upon the Revolutionaries coming to attack Agra. Both armies met near Sassiah and the battle lasted the whole day; at last, the English force found it impossible to stand the attack of the Revolutionaries, and retired. The Revolutionaries, flushed with victory, pursued

⁶¹ “It was a most favourable moment for recovering his lost authority. It was merely necessary to accede to the proposal of the mutinous contingents and to revenge himself on the British. Had he so acceded, had he put himself at their head and, accompanied likewise by his trusty Mahrattas, proceeded to the scene of action, the consequences would have been most disastrous to ourselves. He would have brought at least twenty thousand troops, one half of them drilled and disciplined by European officers, on our weak points. Agra and Lucknow would have at once fallen. Havelock would have been shut up in Allahabad; and either that fortress would have been besieged or the rebels, giving it a wide berth, would have marched through Benares on to Calcutta. There were no troops, no fortification to stop them.” – *Red Pamphlet*, page 194.

them hotly. When the army entered Agra, the Revolutionaries were at their heels with shouts of victory. Agra got the opportunity it wanted. It was the 6th of July. The town of Agra rose in revolt, headed by the police. The police officers were all in concert with the Revolutionary society. The religious leaders of both Hindus and Mahomedans organised a great procession. The Kotwal and other police officers walked in the front line. They raised shouts of victory for Swadharma and Swaraj and proclaimed that the English rule was at an end and that the authority had been transferred to the Emperor of Delhi!

When Agra thus became free, Mr. Colvin, together with all the English there – ashamed of the defeat and anxious for the future – retired into the fort. He had now one great fear, and that was about the side that the Scindia would take. The mere news that the Scindia had joined the Revolutionaries would have made Mr. Colvin surrender that impregnable fort! But as it was clear that the Scindia was not against him, as was proved by his “loyal” letters and help, the English flag at Agra seemed to revive. But the weight of supporting it was too much and Mr. Colvin died on the 9th of September, 1857, to the deepest sorrow of the English government in India.

The Revolutionary spirit that exhibited itself among the masses and the Sepoys at Gwalior had also burst forth in a terrible manner at Indore. Secret communication was established between all the troops in the English camp at Mhow and the troops of Holkar, and a rebellion was decided upon. On the 1st of July, Saadat Khan, a Mahomedan nobleman at the Indore court, ordered the army to fall upon the English at the Residency. He declared that the Maharaja Holkar had given him the order. But the Indian troops did not need any such declaration, even. They raised the flag of freedom and, at once, marched with their guns on the Residency. The Indian troops at the Residency refused to fire on their countrymen on behalf of the English. The English lost all hope; they quietly packed their bag and baggage and fled from Indore. The Indian troops at the Residency had guaranteed them their lives and protected them till the end. English authors always try hard to find out exactly whether the Maharaja Holkar sympathised with the English or with the Revolutionaries. But one who minutely studies the history and

the conditions of 1857 would see at once that during the Revolution, most of the states had purposely observed a dubious attitude. The desire of freedom is innate in man. Most of the states intended to raise the flag of freedom as soon as there was reasonable prospect of the success of Revolution. They did not join the English, because they did not want to aid in the failure of the Revolution. On the other hand, they did not want, by actively helping the Revolutionaries, to give a handle to the English, if they should be able to overpower the Revolutionaries, to confiscate their estates. Thus, they provided for the other alternative of the Company coming out victorious. Fools that they were, not to be able to see that, if they joined the Revolutionaries, there was absolutely no chance for the English to succeed; while, if they remained neutral, the chances of the success of the Revolution were greatly lessened! This is the real explanation of the conduct of most of the states in this critical period. If the people and the troops drove out the English from the Residencies, they were permitted to do so; because, it meant the freedom of the states. Notwithstanding this, the rulers would continue to declare their friendship for the English, so that, in case of English success, they should not lose what they had. It would seem that Cutch, Gwalior, Indore, Bundela, Rajputana, and other states - all behaved in this manner.

And it was this selfish conduct on the part of the princes which, in the end, strangled the Revolution. If they had boldly come forward, crying "Freedom - or Death!" , they would certainly have obtained freedom. But they played a double-game - the result of mean selfishness. Their good intentions, being weak, achieved nothing and their baseness was conspicuous! They were not open and bare-faced traitors to the country like Patiala and others; but they played, indirectly, the part of traitors: they let base selfishness take possession of their souls, even while hoping for the noble goal of freedom and, hence, they are cursed for their sin. When will they wash it away?

But these selfish motives which mastered the minds of the princes did not enter for a single moment the hearts of the people. And it was by their glorious onslaughts from Peshawar up to Calcutta that the fire broke forth and blood began to flow, in order to reduce to ashes and wash away the terrible curse of slavery

which had smitten the land. And it was by their united strength and unselfish fight that English power collapsed and was grounded into dust, for some time at least.⁶²

How little Calcutta and England understood the nature of this terrible earthquake! In the opinion of the Government, there was perfect peace before the Meerut rising. Even when Meerut rose and the Proclamation of freedom was issued from Delhi, Calcutta could not understand the real meaning of the eruption. Seeing that no wave of the rising appeared between the 10th and 31st of May, Calcutta was confirmed in its idea that there was no serious trouble in Hindusthan. On the 25th of May, the Home Secretary proclaimed openly: "There is perfect peace within a radius of six hundred miles from Calcutta. The momentary and isolated danger is passed. And it is strongly hoped that, in a few days, perfect peace and safety will reign."

The "few days" passed; the 31st of May dawned. "Peace and safety" reigned everywhere! Around the Lucknow Residency, in the Cawnpore Maidan, in the Jogan Bagh at Jhansi, in the bazaars of Allahabad, on the Ghats of Benares, everywhere "peace and safety" reigned! Telegraph wires cut to pieces, railways and iron bridges smashed and mixed into dust, English corpses floating in rivers, pools of blood in the streets - everywhere "peace and safety!"

It was then, that the fog at Calcutta cleared. On the 12th of June, all the English residents began to organize a corps of volunteers. English shopkeepers, clerks, writers, civil officers, - in short, all Englishmen were hastily enrolled in the military list; they were taught drill and rifle practice. The work was done so quickly and energetically that, in three weeks, a whole brigade of the newly-drilled

62 Wherever the chiefs of the native states hesitated to join the revolution, the people of the states became uncontrollable and tried to throw off the yoke even of their own chief, if he would not join the nation's war. Seeing this extraordinary upheaval of the populace, Malleeson says : "Here, too, as at Gwalior, as at Indore, it was plainly shown that, when the fanaticism of the oriental people is thoroughly roused, not even their king, their Raja - their father, as all consider him, their God, as some delight to style him - not even their Raja can bend them against their convictions." The Sepoys of the Rajas of Jaipur and Jodhpur refused point blank to raise their hands against their countrymen who were fighting for the nation, even when asked by their Raja to do so. Malleeson's Indian Munity, Vol. III, p. 172

volunteer recruits was formed. The brigade consisted of cavalry, infantry, and artillery; since they were thought capable of protecting Calcutta, that work was given to them; and the Government got the opportunity of sending the professional English soldiers to parts where the Revolution was in full swing.

On the 13th of June, Lord Canning called a meeting of the legislative council and got a law passed against newspapers. For, as soon as the Revolution began, the Indian newspapers of Bengal had begun to write articles openly sympathising with and encouraging the Revolution.

On Sunday, the 14th of June, a carnival of "pease and safety" was celebrated at Calcutta, also. We shall describe that day's scenes best through an English pen. "All was panic, disorder, and dismay. The wildest reports were in circulation. It was all but universally credited that the Barrackpore brigade was in full march on Calcutta, that the people in the Suburbs had already risen, that the kind of Outh with his followers was plundering Garden Reach. Those highest in office were the first to give the alarm. There were secretaries to Government, running over to Members of Council, loading their pistols, barricading the doors, sleeping on sofas; Members of Council abandoning their houses with their families, and taking refuge on board the ship; crowds of lesser celebrities impelled by these examples having hastily collected their valuables, were rushing to the fort, only too happy to be permitted to sleep under the fort guns. Horses, carriages, palanquins, vehicles of every sort and kind were put into requisition to convey panic-stricken fugitives out of the reach of imaginary cut-throats. In the suburbs, almost every house belonging to the Christian population was abandoned. Half-a-dozen determined fanatics could have burned down three parts of the town...."⁶³

In the very capital of the English, merely at a bazaar rumour, so much "pease and safety" began to reign. Therefore, the Government prepared to destroy the Barrackpore Sepoys and the Nabob of Oudh, who were the cause of so much

"peace and safety". They got, from one amongst the Sepoys, the information that the Barrackpore Sepoys would rise on the night of the 14th. So, before they could rise, they were brought before the English artillery and disarmed. And, on the 15th of June, the Nabob of Oudh and his minister were arrested for the "safety of the realm", and their houses, including the Zenana, were thoroughly searched. And, though nothing of an incriminating nature was found, the Nabob and his Vizier were incarcerated in the Calcutta fort. Thus, the gradually accumulating powder-magazine of the city of Calcutta itself was emptied, only just before the spark fell on it.

The Vizier Ali Nakkhi Khan was the man who, residing in a harmless garden-house at Calcutta, had set on foot the Revolutionary secret organisation among the Sepoys all over Bengal and had woven the terrible net in order to re-establish his master on the throne of Oudh. When he was imprisoned in the Calcutta fort, the Revolution lost, as it were, its head. While in the fort, he once spoke plainly to the English who were cursing the Revolutionaries: "The terrible Revolution created in India is in my opinion just. It is a proper revenge for the annexation of Oudh. You have consciously left the royal road of justice and have entered the thorny path of deceit and selfishness. What wonder, then, that your feet are bleeding by the self-same thorns? You were laughing when you sowed the seeds of revenge; why do you,

then, blame the people when the self-same seeds have borne fruit in due course?" ⁶⁴

When Calcutta itself had such a hazy and misty idea of the extent of the Revolutionary movement, we can easily understand how England, which depended for its information solely on the main news from India, at first slept the sleep of ignorance, and then, when suddenly awakened, became possessed by terror and behaved like a madman. When the news of Barrackpore, Berhampore, Dum-Dum, and other places reached England, all eyes were turned towards India. But soon, everything became quiet and all began to feel safe again. On the 11th of

⁶⁴ *Red Pamphlet.*

June, the President of the Board of Trade said, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, "There is now no reason for anxiety as regards the late unrest in Bengal. For, by the dexterity, firmness, and quickness of my honourable and noble friend, Lord Canning, the seeds of unrest sown in the army have been completely rooted out." These are the sentences which the Parliament heard on the 11th of June. On that date in India, eleven cavalry regiments, five field-batteries of artillery, at least fifty regiments of infantry, and

nearly all the sappers and miners had risen in open revolt! The whole of Oudh was in the hands of Revolutionaries! Cawnpore and Lucknow were besieged! The Revolutionaries had taken more than ten millions of Rupees from Government treasuries; and all this, at the moment when, owing to the dexterity, firmness, and quickness of Lord Canning, "the seeds of unrest had been completely rooted out."

But soon, the news of the extraordinary and sudden growth of these seeds of Revolution again disturbed England's sleep. The news about the Cawnpore massacres somehow reached the people and on the 14th of August, 1857, the unhappy, terror-stricken, and agitated masses caused a question to be put in the Parliament, in the House of Lords, "Is the rumour about Cawnpore true?" Earl Granville replied : "I have received a personal letter from General Sir Patrick Grant that the rumour about the massacres at Cawnpore is altogether untrue and is a vile fabrication. A Sepoy first set up the rumour. Not only in his baseness discovered but he has been hanged for spreading the false rumour."⁶⁵ While the rumour about Cawnpore was being discussed in the House of Lords, a month had already passed since the "truth" had been written in grim letters of red blood! While English politicians were resting a little in safety, after hanging the Sepoy who started the rumour, the truth came in person to the shores of England. And the whole of England became mad and hysterical with anger, fury, wounded pride, and this malicious fury continues up to this day. And England is shouting, even to-day, in every line of her own histories, that the massacres committed by the

⁶⁵ Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*.

Revolutionaries are demoniacal in their cruelty and are a blot on the fair name of Humanity!

And this loud shouting by the English at the top of their voice has made the whole world deaf! The very name of 1857 brings a shiver and horripilation and shame to everybody! The very mention of the name of the Revolutionaries of 1857 creates disgust and loathing in the minds not only of their enemies, not only of innocent and indifferent third parties, but even of those for whose sake the Martyrs shed their blood! Their enemies give them choice epithets like 'demons', 'goblins', 'blood-thirsty and hellish vermin'. The strangers call them savage, inhuman, cruel, and barbarous. Their own countrymen are ashamed even to own them. Such is the cry everywhere even today. And this incessant cry has deafened the ears of the whole

world so that they should not any more listen to the voice of truth! The Revolutionaries are demons, goblins, murderers of women and children, blood-thirsty vermin of hell, inhuman. Oh World! When will you forget this and understand the truth?

Any why all this? Why? Because, the Revolutionaries rose against the English, rose for their country and religion, and, with shouts of "Revenge!", massacred some of them. Indiscriminate massacre is a heinous sin. When Humanity will reach the goal of universal justice, of ultimate beatitude, when the millennium preached by the incarnations, by the Messiahs, and by religious preachers will be an accomplished fact on earth, when the resignation taught by Christ in the glorious words - "Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other, also" will be impracticable, because, there will be no one to hit on the right cheek, in such a divine age if anyone revolts, if anyone sheds a drop of blood, if anyone even whispers the word "Revenge!", then, at once, the sinner, by this act, by his very utterance, would be eternally damned. For, when Truth reigns in every heart, revolt must be a heinous sin. When everyone abhors killing, to shed a drop of blood must be a sin. In a time of such unchallenged justice, to punish a man even for uttering a sinful word would be altogether blameless.

But so long as that divine age has not arrived, so long as the highly auspicious end remains only in the lines of saintly poets and in the prophecies of the divinely inspired, and so long as, even to make that state of universal justice possible, the human mind has to be busy eradicating sinful and aggressive tendencies, so long, rebellion, bloodshed, and revenge cannot be purely sinful. As long as the word "rule" is used for "authority" both just and unjust, so long its antonym "rebellion" can, also, be just as well as unjust. And till then, before passing judgment on the history and the authors of any revolt, bloodshed, and revenge, there must be a full and minute inquiry of the circumstances under which they took place. Revolt, bloodshed and revenge have often been instruments created by nature to root out injustice and introduce an era of justice. And when Justice uses these terrible means for her salvation, the blame of it does not lie on Justice but on the preceding cruel Injustice, the power and insolence of which called forth the means. We do not hold the justice which gives the death sentence responsible for bloodshed but rather the injustice which is taken to the gallows. Therefore, the sword of Brutus is holy. Therefore, the *waghnakh* of Shivaji is sacred. Therefore, the bloodshed in the Revolutions in Italy is of fair fame. Therefore, the beheading of Charles I is a just deed. Therefore, the arrow of William Tell is divine. And the sin of brutality falls heavily on the heads of those who committed the provoking injustice.

Moreover, had the world no fear of revolt, bloodshed, and revenge, the earth would have bent under the devil-dance of unchecked robbery and oppression! If Oppression were to be secure from the fear that Nature would, sooner or later, create the Avenger of Temporary Injustice, the whole world would have swarmed to-day with Tsars and robbers! But because very Hiranya-Kashipu has his Narasimha; because every Dushshasana has his Bheema; because every evil-doer has his avenger, there is still some hope in the heart of the world that Injustice cannot last. Such a revenge, therefore, is nature's own reaction against Injustice. And, therefore, the sin of the cruelty of that revenge rebounds on the original evil-doers.

And it was the fire of such a divine vengeance that was burning in the heart of the sons of Hindusthan in 1857. Their thrones were broke, their crowns smashed, their country taken away, their religions trodden under foot, their lands confiscated, their properties robbed, and laws despised; they had been cheated with promises made only to be broken; insults and outrages had reached a climax. Life itself had lost all its charms for them on account of the dire dishonour in which they had sunk. Requests were in vain; so, also, were petitions, complaints, wailings, and cries; all in vain. Then the natural reaction began and everywhere could be heard the whispers of "Revenge!" India had been subjected to innumerable,. Cruel oppressions each of which, individually, would have justified the revenge. If there had been no revolution even after all this we would have had to say "India is dead!" That revenge, therefore, was only the inevitable reaction against the English injustice and oppression. And when once the whole nation rose up in a rage, we should wonder not that there were indiscriminate massacres in one or two places, but that there were not such massacres in every place! For, the excited logic of those who committed the massacres naturally began to say, "O"pose illegal force by righteous force!" Before the Sepoys who were caught in the battle of the river Kali were mounted on the scaffold, the English asked them why they had massacred their women and children. They at once retorted, "Sahib, does anyone kill a snake and let its offspring alone?" The Sepoys at Cawnpore used to say: "To extinguish the fire and leave the spark, to kill a snake and preserve its young is not the wisdom of the wise." "Sahib, does anyone kill a snake and leave its offspring alive?" How are the Sahibs going to answer this blunt question asked by the Sepoys at Kali-nadi? And this blunt question has not been asked by the excited masses of India alone, or the masses of Asia alone, as some English writers have been charitable enough to suggest. Wherever national wars are proclaimed, national wrongs are avenged by national killing alone. When the Spaniards won back their independence from the Moors, to what state did they reduce them? The Spanish are neither Indians nor Asiatics. Then, why did they fall on the Moors who had stayed in Spain for nearly five centuries, and why did they massacre indiscriminately whole helpless families - men, women, and children -

simply for the fault of belonging to another race? Why did Greece, in 1821, massacre twenty-one thousand Turkish peasants - men, women, and children? The secret society, Hetairia, which is looked upon as patriotic and heroic in Europe - what explanation does it give of the massacre? It is only this, that the Turkish population in Greece was too small to be kept in the country and too big to be removed outside and that, therefore, to kill them all was "a necessary measure of wise policy." Was this not their answer? The idea that no one kills a snake and leaves his offspring alive, also, came into the minds of the Greeks and burnt away the natural feelings of mercy in their heart! And the whole of the responsibility rests on the black poison of the snake.

Indeed, if there was no propensity in human nature towards a terrible revenge for an horrible injustice suffered, the brute in man would have been still the dominating factor in human dealings. Is not one of the most important functions of law - the punishment of crime?⁶⁶

History bears testimony to the fact that whenever, in the human mind, the passion of vengeance - as a consequence of injustice, carried to a climax - rages with uncontrollable strength, wholesale massacres and other inhuman atrocities take place in the life-evolution of every nation. Instead, therefore, of being

⁶⁶ Sir W. Russell, the famous correspondent of the London Times, remarks: "We who suffered from it think that there never was such wickedness in the world; and the incessant efforts of a gang of forgers and utterly base scoundrels have surrounded it with horrors that have been vainly invented in the hope of adding to the indignation and burning desire for vengeance which hatred failed to arouse. Helpless garrisons surrendering without condition have been massacred ere now. Risings, such as that of Pontus under Mithridates, of the Irish Roman Catholics under Protestant settlers in 1641, of the actors in the Sicilian Vespers, of the assassins who smote and spared none on the eve of St. Bartholomew, have been over and over again attended by inhuman cruelties, violations, and tortures. The history of Mediaeval Europe affords many instances of crimes as great as those of Cawnpore. The history of more civilised periods could afford some parallel to them in more modern times and amidst most civilised nations. In fact, the peculiar aggravation of the Cawnpore massacres was this - that the deed was done by a subject race, by black men who dared to shed the blood of their masters and that of poor helpless ladies and children. Here we had not only a Servile War and a sort of Jacquerie combined, but we had a war of religion, a war of race, and a war of revenge, of hope, of national determination to shake off the yoke of a stranger and to re-establish the full power of native chiefs and the full sway of native religions." - Russell's *Diary*, page 164.

surprised at the cruelties and massacres in four or five places during the Indian Revolution, our wonder should be that such cruel massacres took place on such a modest scale and that this terrible vengeance did not run riot more extensively and in all places. All Hindusthan had been scoarched to the bone by the terrible oppression of the English, and a most grim reprisal did Indian humanity take when the oppression became unbearable - so unbearable that the massacres became not more but rather much less than the necessities of national punishment would have required in any other

country. But Hindusthan did not, in 1857, - for the just removal of its wrongs - give that punishment, take that vengeance, cause that bloodshed of which the English nation, led by Cromwell, was guilty in the massacres in Ireland. Does not history record how he was veru much enraged at the sturdy patriotism of the Irish, how his sword cut to pieces not only those who fought but also the helpless, impoverished masses, how rivers of blood flowed in that unfortunate country, how helpless women were butchered along with the infants in their arms and were weltering in pools of blood, and how, in this manner, Cromwell, for the guilty objecdt of conquering and subduing Ireland, committed cruel oppression, took more cruel vengeance, and, cruellest of all, caused terrible bloodshed? But, in 1857, in Hindusthan, Nana Sahib and the Begum of Oudh, Bahadur Shah and Lakshmi Bai, tried to the last to save women and children, though the fierce Sepoys were wild with fury. But how did the English women reward Nana for saving their lives at Cawnpore? Why - by playing the spy on him! And - how did the European officers return the kindness of the Indians who spared their lives? History has to record with shame that they returned it by poisoning the minds of the ignorant English soldiery with lying stories of vengeance, by marching at their head against the Revolutionaries, by betraying the strategic weakness of the Revolutionaries, and by butchering those very Sepoys and villagers who spared their lives. Strange indeed - immensely strange it is - that the Hindu people allowed not their constitutional magnanimity to be disturbed even by such gross ingratitude! What a number of roofs of the poor agriculturists have been instrumental in saving the lives of the hunted English ! Many and many a woman

and child amongst the English fugitives has been tenderly protected by village women, painting them black with their own hands and giving them Indian clothes. Raw English officers - insignificant English youths - have again and again been brought back to life by Brahmins giving them a sip of milk in time, while they lay by the roadside exhausted by running day and night! Read Forrest, and he acknowledges that Oudh - Oudh into whose body the knife of oppression had been driven most ruthlessly - treated with incomparable generosity the English while they were flying everywhere unprotected. Did not the leaders of the Revolution warn their followers bent on vengeance, again and again, by issuing proclamations in various places that their sacred cause would become unsuccessful through child-murder and woman-murder? The "mutineers" of Neemuch and Nasirabad spared the lives of the whites. While some white people were running for very life everywhere, even the villagers on the way shouted, "Feringhis, Feringhis, kill the Feringhis!" Then, one family came forward and said that they had just dined with Rajputs, and to kill them, therefore, - heartless enemies though they were - was out of the question.⁶⁷ If the Hindusthanee who is by nature kind and magnanimous, whose villages, up to this very day, are full of humanity, respect, and regard for life - human and animal, sanctioned and took part in the massacres of 1857, then the cruelty of these massacres, instead of reflecting discredit on the morals of the nation, proves only the immense hideousness of the Alien oppression to which it was now intended to put an end. The famous truth enunciated by Macaulay is here well exemplified : "The more violent the outrage, the more assured we feel that a Revolution is necessary."

And who have the right of sitting in judgment on the people of Hindusthan for the offences they are alleged to have committed? The English? If there is anyone in this wide world who have the least right to condemn the conduct of the Revolutionaries, it is these English! Is it England that is to declare to the world that Hindusthan was guilty of one or two massacres? - the England which produced Neill? Or the England which devastated by the sword and destroyed by

67 Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I.

fire villages after villages with the women and children in them? Or the England which bound to the stakes and burnt, actually burnt, those brave fellows with the spirit of Panday in them, fighting for their country - deeming hanging not a sufficient punishment? Or

the England which seized the innocent Hindu villagers, sentenced them to be hanged, and then pierced them with bayonets, and then, Heavens! thrust beef dripping with blood - the blood of the cow - down their throats, at the point of the bayonet - a desecration to which they would have preferred being hanged and, even, being burnt alive? Or the England which ordered, under the very nose of the commander-in-chief, that the body of the Nabob of Farrukabad should be smeared all over with the fat of the pig, before he was hanged?⁶⁸ Or that England which sewed the forehead of Islam in the skin of a pig before killing him?⁶⁹ Or the England which advocated these and hundreds of other similar crimes as justifiable revenge on the "mutineers" ? Justifiable vengeance! Whose was the justifiable vengeance - that of the Panday party enraged and vowing vengeance because their mother - the Country - was being ground down under oppression for a hundred years, or that of the Feringhi party which was guilty of that National oppression?

Not one individual, not one class, alone had been moved deeply by seeing the sufferings of their country. Hindu and Mahomedan, Brahmin and Sudra, Kshatriya and Vaisya, prince and

pauper, men and women, Pundits and Moulvies, Sepoys and the police, townsmen and villagers,, merchants and farmers – men of different religions, men of different castes, people, following widely different professions – not able any longer to bear the sight of the persecution of the Mother, brother about the avenging Revolution in an incredibly short time. So universal was the agitation! This fact alone shows that, at this time, the utmost had been done as far as oppression went. Not even the class of Government officers – the class that were individually benefited by the foreign domination – were on the side of the

⁶⁸ Charles Ball's *Indian Mutiny*, Vol. I.

⁶⁹ Forbes-Mitchell's *Reminiscences*.

Government. An English writer says that to give the list of Government officers who were seduced would mean the drawing up a list of all the Government officers in the disaffected provinces. Exceptions were rare. He gives the following names as instances :- Kazi Abul Fazul, Chief Judge of the N.W.P., the Principal Sudder Amin of Agra, the Munsiff of Agra, the Principal Sudder Amin of Delhi, the then Government Pleaders in the Sudder Diwani, the Chief Kotwal of Agra, two of the Munsiffs of Delhi, the Principal Sudder Amin of Calcutta, the Deputy Collector of Cawnpore, the Deputy Collector of Fatehpur – the man who killed Robert Tucker – the rest of the native officers of Fatehpur, the Munsiff of Allahabad, another Munsiff of the same province, the Principal Sudder Amin of Bareilly, the Deputy Collector of

Azimgarh, the Principal Sudder Amin of J - , the Principal Sudder Amin of G - . This is only a select list!⁷⁰ So all-embracing was the Revolutionary fire. The worst abuse that one could use towards another, in those days, was to call him "loyal"! Anyone who showed such "loyalty" and any who obtained service under Government were classed as traitors to their country and their religion! Those who persisted in Government service were excommunicated by their caste; no one would eat with them; no one would marry among them; the Brahmin refused to do Puja for him; none would set fire to his funeral pyre. The service of the foreigner, of the Feringhi, was considered as sinful as matricide! Are not these indications that the climax of oppression has been reached?⁷¹

70 Rev.Kennedy, M.A., page 43.

71"Revolt had, in consequence, swept before it, in many cases, all regard to personal interest and all attachment to the former master. The imputations of remaining faithful to the Government, in such circumstances has been intolerable. It is well known that the few Sepoys who have remained in our services are deemed outcastes, not only by their caste people in general. These even say they cannot venture to go to their homes; for, not only would they be reproached and denied brotherly offices, but their very lives would be in danger." - Rev. Kennedy.

And hence this volcano – supremely quiet externally – was boiling inside and had reached the bursting point. On the back of this volcano, Oppression was stalking about reckless and without fear. But as soon as the psychological moment came and Tyranny stamped on the green surface with all the more reckless vehemence the Volcano burst! Behold, the Revolution in Eruption! Fountains of fire are surging up – blood is raining upon her – piercing shrieks are mingled with the clashing of swords – ghosts are dancing – heroes are shouting! The cool green tract of the volcano has split in twain – now it bursts into a hundred parts – aye, it has burst in a thousand places – it has deluged the earth with fire and sword!

In Kathiawar, there is a curious kind of stream, known as the Vitharoo, in some places. The surface of the stream has the appearance of hard ground. Strangers, ignorant of this, step on to it confidently. When the hard layer moves a little, they try to steady themselves by firmly pressing on the surface. No sooner is this done than the surface yields and the poor wayfarer is drowned in the deep waters. The Revolutionary stream had spread over India like the Vitharoo. Oppression believed, deceived by the dark colour on the face, that it was only earth that suffers without complaint every wrong (as the Sanskrit name for it signifies).

Oppression stepped on it. The black surface showed agitation. Then Oppression, in the pride of its power, pressed harder on this deceptive earth. But, behold! the ground has yielded and up surges the bottomless pit of blood, foaming and raging, waves on waves! Doomed Oppression! step where you will, no solid ground meets your feet! Know, now at least, and know well that below the dark face flow streams of blood, red blood. And hear, even yet, the deafening roar of the Volcano's Eruption!

THE END OF THE SECOND PART.