

DODD GEORGE

THE HISTORY OF THE
INDIAN REVOLT AND OF
THE EXPEDITIONS TO
PERSIA, CHINA AND
JAPAN 1856-7-8

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China and Japan 1856-7-8

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PREFACE

In the present volume is given a narrative of the chief events connected with one of the most formidable military Revolts on record. These events – from the first display of insubordination in the beginning of 1857, to the issue of the Royal Proclamation in the later weeks of 1858 – form a series full of the romance as well as the wretchedness of war: irrespective of the causes that may have led to them, or the reforms which they suggested. The sudden rising of trained native soldiers in mutiny; the slaughter of officers who to the last moment had trusted them; the sufferings of gently-nurtured women and children, while hurrying wildly over burning sands and through thick jungles; and the heroism displayed amid unspeakable miseries – all tended to give an extraordinary character to this outbreak. Nor is it less interesting

to trace the operations by which the difficulties were met. The task was nothing less than that of suppressing insurgency among a native population of nearly two hundred million souls by a small number of British soldiers and civilians, most of whom were at vast distances from the chief region of disaffection, and were grievously deficient in means of transport.

A chronicle of these events reveals also the striking differences between various parts of India. While Behar, Oude, Rohilcund, the Doab, Bundelcund, Malwah, and Rajpootana were rent with anarchy and plunged in misery, the rest of India was comparatively untouched. Most important, too, is it to trace the influence of nation, caste, and creed. Why the Hindoos of the Brahmin and Rajpoot castes rebelled, while those of the lower castes remained faithful; why the Sikhs and Mussulmans of the Punjaub shewed so little sympathy with the insurgents; why the Hindoos of Bengal were so timidly quiet, and those of Hindostan so boldly violent; why the native armies of Madras and Bombay were so tranquil, when that of Bengal was so turbulent? – were questions which it behoved the government to solve, as clues to the character of the governed, and to the changes of discipline needed. It was a time that brought into strong relief the peculiarities of the five chief classes of Europeans in India – Queen's soldiers, Company's soldiers, Company's 'covenanted' servants, 'uncovenanted' servants, and residents independent of the Company; and it shewed how nobly these classes forgot their differences when the honour of the British name and the safety

of India were imperiled.

The history of home affairs during, and in relation to, that period of struggle, has its own points of interest – shewing in what manner, amid the stormy conflicts of party, the nation responded to the call for military aid to India, for pecuniary aid to individual sufferers, and for a great change in the government of that country.

Although the minor results of the Revolt may be visible to a much later date, it is considered that the month of November 1858 would furnish a convenient limit to the present narrative. The government of India had by that time been changed; the change had been publicly proclaimed throughout the length and breadth of that empire; the British army in the east had been so largely augmented as to render the prospects of the insurgents hopeless; the rebel leaders were gradually tendering their submission, under the terms of the Royal Proclamation; the skilled mutinous sepoys had in great proportion been stricken down by battle and privation; the military operations had become little more than a chasing of lawless marauders; and the armed men still at large were mostly dupes of designing leaders, or ruffians whose watchwords were pay and plunder rather than nationality or patriotism.

The remarkable Expeditions to Persia, China, and Japan are briefly noticed towards the close of the volume – on account of the links which connected them with the affairs of India, and of the aspect which they gave to the influence of England in the east.

Every endeavour has been made, by a careful examination of available authorities, to render the narrative a truthful one. It is hoped that the errors are few in number, and that hasty expressions of opinion on disputed points have in general been avoided. The Work is quite distinct from the History of the Russian War, issued by the same Publishers; yet may the two be regarded as companion volumes, relating to the affairs of England in the east – seeing that a few short months only elapsed between the close of the events of 1854-5-6 in Turkey, Russia, and Asia Minor, and the commencement of those of 1856-7-8 in India, Persia, and China.

G. D.

December 1858.

INTRODUCTION.

INDIA IN 1856: A RETROSPECT

Scarcely had England recovered from the excitement attendant on the war with Russia; scarcely had she counted the cost, provided for the expenditure, reprobated the blunderings, mourned over the sufferings; scarcely had she struck a balance between the mortifying incapacity of some of her children, and the Christian heroism of others – when she was called upon anew to unsheath the sword, and to wage war, not against an autocrat on this side of the Caspian, but against some of the most ancient nations in the world. Within a few months, almost within a few weeks, China, Persia, and India appeared in battle-array against her – they being the injurers or the injured, according to the bias of men's judgments on the matter. It may almost be said that five hundred millions of human beings became her enemies at once: there are at the very least this number of inhabitants in the three great Asiatic empires; and against all, proclamations were issued and armaments fitted out. Whether the people, the millions, sided more with her or with their own rulers, is a question that must be settled in relation to each of those empires separately; but true it is that the small army of England was called upon suddenly to render services in Asia, so many and varied, in regions so widely separated, and so far distant from home,

that a power of mobility scarcely less than ubiquity, aided by a strength of endurance almost more than mortal – could have brought that small force up to a level with the duties required of it. Considering how small a space a month is in the life of a nation, we may indeed say that this great Oriental outbreak was nearly simultaneous in the three regions of Asia. It was in October 1856 that the long-continued bickerings between the British and the Chinese at Canton broke out into a flame, and led to the despatch of military and naval forces from England. It was while the British admiral was actually engaged in bombarding Canton that the governor-general of India, acting as viceroy of the Queen of England, declared war against the Shah of Persia for an infringement of treaty relating to the city of Herat. And lastly, it was while two British armaments were engaged in those two regions of warfare, that disobedience and disbanding began in India, the initial steps to the most formidable military Revolt, perhaps, the world has ever seen.

The theologian sees, or thinks he sees, the finger of God, the avenging rod of an All-ruling Providence, in these scenes of blood-shedding: a punishment on England for not having Christianised the natives of the East to the full extent of her power. The soldier insists that, as we gained our influence in the East mainly by the sword, by the sword we must keep it: permitting no disobedience to our military rule, but at the same time offending as little as possible against the prejudices of faith and caste among the natives. The politician smitten with

Russo-phobia, deeply imbued with the notion, whether well or ill founded, that the Muscovite aims at universal dominion in Europe and Asia, seeks for evidences of the czar's intrigues at Peking, Teheran, and Delhi. The partisan, thinking more of the ins and outs of official life, than of Asia, points triumphantly to the dogma that if *his* party had been in power, no one of these three Oriental wars would have come upon England. The merchant, believing that individual interest lies at the bottom of all national welfare, tells us that railways and cotton plantations would be better for India than military stations; and that diplomatic piques at Canton and at Teheran ought not to be allowed to drive us into hostility with nations who might be advantageous customers for our wares. But while the theologian, the soldier, the politician, the partisan, and the merchant are thus rushing to a demonstration, each of his favourite theory, without waiting for the evidence which can only by degrees be collected, England, as a nation, has had to bear up against the storm as best she could. Not even one short twelvemonth of peace was vouchsafed to her. The same year, 1856, that marked the closing scenes of one war, witnessed the commencement of two others; while the materials for a fourth war were at the same time fermenting, unknown to those whose duty it was to watch symptoms.

Few things in the history of our empire are more astonishing than the social explosion in India, taken in connection with the positive declarations of official men. Historical parallels have often been pointed out, striking and instructive; but here we have

a historical contradiction. At the time when the plenipotentiaries of seven European empires and kingdoms were discussing at Paris the bases for a European peace, the Marquis of Dalhousie was penning an account of India, in the state to which Britain had brought it. A statesman of high ability, and of unquestioned earnestness of purpose, he evidently felt a pride in the work he had achieved as governor-general of India; he thought he had laid the foundation for a great future; and he claimed credit for England, not only in respect to what she had done, but also for the motives that had dictated her Indian policy. It was in the early part of 1848 that this nobleman went out to the East; it was in 1856 that he yielded the reins of power to Viscount Canning; and shortly before his departure from Calcutta he wrote a minute or narrative, formally addressed to the East India Company, but intended for his fellow-countrymen at large, giving an account of his stewardship. Remembering that that minute was written in March 1856, and that the Revolt commenced in January 1857, it becomes very important to know, from the lips or the pen of the marquis himself, what he believed to be the actual condition of the Anglo-Indian Empire when he left it. The document in question is worth more, for our present purpose, than any formal history or description of India; for it shews not only the sum-total of power and prosperity in 1848, but the additions made to that sum year after year till 1856. A parliamentary paper of fifty folio pages need not and cannot be reproduced here; but its substance may be rendered intelligible in a few paragraphs.

This we will attempt at once, as a peculiarly fitting introduction to the main object of the present work; for it shews how little the Revolt was expected by him who was regarded as the centre of knowledge and influence in India. The marquis said: 'The time has nearly come when my administration of the government of India, prolonged through more than eight years, will reach its final close. It would seem that some few hours may be profitably devoted to a short review of those eventful years; not for the purpose of justifying disputed measures, or of setting forth a retrospective defence of the policy which may, on every several occasion, have been adopted; but for the purpose of recalling the political events that have occurred, the measures that have been taken, and the progress that has been made, during the career of the administration which is about to close. I enter on that review with the single hope that the Honourable Court of Directors may derive from the retrospect some degree of satisfaction with the past, *and a still larger measure of encouragement for the future.*' The words we have italicised are very remarkable, read by the light so soon and so calamitously to be afforded.

The minute first passes in review the proceedings of the Indian government with the independent native states, both east and west of the Ganges. How little our public men are able to foretell the course of political events in the East, is shewn by the very first paragraph of the governor-general's narrative: 'When I sailed from England in the winter of 1847, to assume the government of India, there prevailed a universal conviction

among public men at home that permanent peace had at length been secured in the East. Before the summer came, we were already involved in the second Sikh war.' Be it observed that public men *at home* are here adverted to: of what were the opinions of public men in India, the English nation was not kept sufficiently informed. There had been British officers murdered at Moulton; there was a rebellion of the Dewan Moolraj against the recognised sovereign of Lahore; but the renewal of war is attributed mainly to the 'spirit of the whole Sikh people, which was inflamed by the bitterest animosity against us; when chief after chief deserted our cause, until nearly their whole army, led by sirdars who had signed the treaties, and by members of the Council of Regency itself, was openly arrayed against us;' and when the Sikhs even joined with the Afghans against us. It was not a mere hostile prince, it was a hostile nation that confronted us; and the Indian government, whether wisely or not, declared war, put forth its power, maintained a long campaign, defeated and subdued the Sikhs, drove back the insurgent Afghans, and ended by annexing the Punjaub to the British territories. Scarcely had the Anglo-Indian armies been relieved from these onerous duties, when war called them to the regions beyond the Ganges. Certain British traders in the port of Rangoon had been subjected to gross outrage by the officers of the King of Ava, in violation of a pre-existing treaty; and the Marquis of Dalhousie, acting on a high-sounding dictum of Lord Wellesley, that 'an insult offered to the British flag at the mouth of the Ganges should

be resented as promptly and as fully as an insult offered at the mouth of the Thames,' resolved to punish the king for those insults. That monarch was 'arrogant and over-bearing' – qualities much disapproved, where not shewn by the Company's servants themselves; he violated treaties, insulted our traders, worried our envoys, and drove away our commercial agent at Rangoon; and as the government of India 'could never, consistently with its own safety, permit itself to stand for a single day in an attitude of inferiority towards a native power, and least of all towards the court of Ava, war was declared. After some sharp fighting, the kingdom of Pegu was taken and annexed, 'in order that the government of India might hold from the Burman state both adequate compensation for past injury, and the best security against future danger... A sense of inferiority has penetrated at last to the convictions of the nation; the Burman court and the Burman people alike have shewn that they now dread our power; *and in that dread is the only real security we can ever have, or ever could have had, for stable peace with the Burman state.*' These words are at once boastful and saddening; but the notions conveyed, of 'sense of inferiority' and 'dread of power,' are thoroughly Asiatic, and as such we must accept them. Another independent state, Nepaul, on the northern frontier of India, remained faithful during the eight years of the Dalhousie administration; it carried on a war of its own against Tibet, but it was friendly to England, and sent a bejewelled ambassador, Jung Bahadoor, to visit the island Queen. The mountain region

of Cashmere, stolen as it were from the Himalaya, was under an independent chieftain, Maharajah Gholab Sing, who, when he visited the Marquis of Dalhousie at Wuzeerabad, caught the vice-regal robe in his hand and said; 'Thus I grasp the skirts of the British government, and I will never let go my hold.' The governor-general expresses a belief that Gholab Sing 'will never depart from his submissive policy as long as he lives;' while Gholab's son and anticipated successor, Meean Rumbeer Sing, is spoken of as one who will never give 'any cause of offence to a powerful neighbour, which he well knows can crush him at will.' The Khan of Khelat, near the western frontier, was brought into close relationship, insomuch that he became 'the friend of our friends, and the enemy of our enemies,' and engaged to give us temporary possession of such military stations within his territory as we might at any time require for purposes of defence. At the extreme northwest of our Indian Empire, the Afghans, with whom we had fought such terrible battles during the Auckland and Ellenborough administrations of Indian affairs, had again been brought into friendly relations; the chief prince among them, Dost Mohammed Khan of Cabool, had been made to see that England was likely to be his best friend, and 'had already shewn that he regards English friendship as a tower of strength.'

Thus the governor-general, in adverting to independent states, announced that he had conquered and annexed the Punjaub and Pegu; while he had strengthened the bonds of amity with Nepaul,

Cashmere, Kelat, and Cabool – amity almost degraded to abject servility, if the protestations of some of the chieftains were to be believed.

Having disposed of the independent states, the marquis directed attention to the relations existing between the British government and the protected or semi-independent states, of which there are many more than those really independent. The kingdom of Nagpoor became British territory by simple lapse, ‘in the absence of all legal heirs.’ In bygone years the British put down one rajah and set up another; and when this latter died, without a son real or adopted, or any male descendant of the original royal stock, ‘the British government refused to bestow the territory in free gift upon a stranger, and wisely incorporated it with its own dominions’ – a mode of acquiring territory very prevalent in our Eastern Empire. The King of Oude, another protected sovereign, having broken his engagements with the Company in certain instances, his state was treated like Nagpoor, and added to British India. Satara lost its rajah in 1849, and as no male heir was then living, that small state shared the fate of the larger Oude: it was made British. Jhansi, a still smaller territory, changed owners in an exactly similar way. The Nizam of Hyderabad, owing to the Company a sum of money which he was unable or unwilling to pay, and being in other ways under the Company’s wrath, agreed in 1853 to give up Berar and other provinces to the exclusive sovereignty of the British. Early in 1848 the Rajah of Ungool, a petty chieftain in the Jungle

Neehals, resisted the authority of the government; his raj was taken from him, and he died in exile. The Rajah of Sikim, a hill-chieftain on the borders of Nepaul, 'had the audacity' to seize a Company's official at Darjeling; as a punishment, all the territories he possessed within the plains were confiscated and annexed. In Sinde, Meer Ali Morad of Khyrpore, having involved himself in an act of forgery concerning the ownership of territory, 'the lands were taken from him, and his power and influence were reduced to insignificance.' The Nawab Nazim of Bengal having committed a murder by bastinado, 'his highness's peculiar jurisdiction and legal exemption were taken away from him; and he was subjected to the disgrace of losing a large portion of the salute of honour which he had previously received.' The Nawab of the Carnatic died suddenly in 1855; and as he left no male heir, and his relations lived very disreputably, the title of nawab 'was placed in abeyance:' that is, the Carnatic was made British territory, and the several members of the nawab's family were pensioned off. About the same time, the Rajah of Tanjore died, in like manner without male issue bearing his name; and the same process was adopted there as in the Carnatic – sovereign power was assumed by the Company, and the ex-royal family was pensioned off.

Counting up his treasures, the governor-general was certainly enabled to announce a most extraordinary accession of territory during the years 1848 to 1855. The Punjaub, Pegu, Nagpoor, Oude, Satara, Jhansi, Berar, Ungool, Darjeling, Khyrpore, the

Carnatic, and Tanjore, all became British for the first time, or else had the links which bound them to England brought closer. While, on the one hand, it must be admitted that the grounds or excuses for annexation would be deemed very slight in any country but India; so, on the other, there can be no doubt that the Marquis of Dalhousie, and the directors with whom he was acting, believed that these annexing processes were essential to the maintenance of British power in the East. He takes credit to his government for having settled certain family quarrels among the petty royalties of Gujerat, Buhawalpore, Jummoo, and Mumdote, without paying itself for its services: as if it were a virtue to abstain from annexation at such times. The mention made of Delhi must be given in the governor-general's own words, to shew how much the descendant of the once mighty Mogul was regarded as a mere puppet – yet maintaining a certain hold on the reverence of the people, as was destined to be shewn in a series of events little anticipated by the writer of the minute. ‘Seven years ago the heir-apparent to the King of Delhi died. He was the last of the race who had been born in the purple. The Court of Directors was accordingly advised to decline to recognise any other heir-apparent, and to permit the kingly title to fall into abeyance upon the death of the present king, who even then was a very aged man. The Honourable Court accordingly conveyed to the government of India *authority to terminate the dynasty of Timour*, whenever the reigning king should die. But as it was found that, although the Honourable Court had consented

to the measure, it had given its consent with great reluctance, I abstained from making use of the authority which had been given to me. The grandson of the king was recognised as heir-apparent; but only on condition that he should quit the palace in Delhi in order to reside in the palace at the Kootub; and that he should, as king, *receive the governor-general of India at all times on terms of perfect equality.* How strange do these words sound! A board of London merchants sitting in a room in Leadenhall Street, giving ‘authority to terminate the dynasty of Timour;’ and then, as a gracious condescension, permitting the representative of that dynasty to be on terms of ‘perfect equality’ with whomsoever may be the chief representative of the Company in India.

The Marquis of Dalhousie pointed to the revenues derivable from the newly annexed territories as among the many justifications for his line of policy. He shewed that four millions sterling were added to the annual income of the Anglo-Indian Empire by the acquisition of the Punjaub, Pegu, Nagpoor, Oude, Satara, Jhansi, and Berar – increasing the total revenue from about twenty-six millions in 1848 to above thirty millions in 1855.

The extreme importance of this official document lying in the evidence it affords how little dread was felt in 1856 of any approaching outbreak, we proceed with the governor-general’s narrative of the augmentation and stability of British power in the East, power of which he was evidently proud – presenting, of course, as a mere outline, that which his lordship fills up in

more detail.

Credit is claimed in the minute for the improved administrative organisation both of the old and of the newly acquired territories. Able men were selected to administer government in the Punjaub; and so well did they fulfil their duties that internal peace was secured, violent crime repressed, the penal law duly enforced, prison-discipline maintained, civil justice administered, taxation fixed, collection of revenue rendered just, commerce set free, agriculture fostered, national resources developed, and future improvements planned. Not only did the marquis assert this; but there is a general concurrence of opinion that the Punjaub fell into fortunate hands when its administration came to be provided for. In Pegu the administration, less brilliant than in the Punjaub, is nevertheless represented as being sound in principle; tranquillity was restored; effective police had secured the safety of all; trade was increased and increasing; a fair revenue was derived from light taxation; 'the people, lightly taxed and prosperous, are highly contented with our rule;' and, when population has increased, 'Pegu will equal Bengal in fertility of production, and surpass it in every other respect.' At Nagpoor the assumption of supreme authority by Britain was 'hailed with lively satisfaction by the whole population of the province;' no additional soldier had been introduced thither; the civil administration was introduced everywhere; the native army was partly embodied and disciplined in British pay, and partly discharged either with pensions or

gratuities. In short, 'perfect contentment and quiet prevail; beyond the palace walls not a murmur has been heard; and in no single instance throughout the districts has the public peace been disturbed.' In Berar, we are told, the same phenomena were observed; as soon as the cession was made, our numerous disputes with the nizam ended; the civil administration was brought into working order; crime, especially the violent crime of *dacoitee* (gang-robbery without murder) was diminished; the 'admirable little army,' formerly called the Nizam's Contingent, was made available as part of the British force; the revenue rapidly increased; and the public tranquillity had 'not been disturbed by a single popular tumult.' The kingdom of Oude had only been annexed a few weeks before the Marquis of Dalhousie wrote his minute; but he states that a complete civil administration, and a resident military force, had been fully organised before the annexation took place; that the troops of the deposed native king were contentedly taking service in British pay; that no zemindar or chief had refused submission to our authority; that the best men who could be found available were selected from the civil and military services for the new offices in Oude; and that no popular resistance or disturbance had occurred.

Nothing could be more clear and positive than these assertions. Not only did the governor-general announce that the Punjaub, Pegu, Nagpoor, Berar, and Oude had been completely annexed, bringing a large accession to the British revenues;

but that in every case a scheme of administration had been framed and established, conducive to the lasting benefit of the natives, the honour of the British name, and the development of the natural resources of the several districts. Not a whisper of discontent, of spirits chafed by change of rulers, did the marquis recognise: if they occurred, they reached not him; or if they *did* reach him, he passed them by as trifles.

Nor was it alone in the newly acquired territories that credit for these advantageous changes was claimed. Improvements in the government of India were pointed out in every direction. The governor-general had been relieved from an overwhelming press of duties by the appointment of a lieutenant-governor for Bengal. A Legislative Council had been organised, distinct from the Supreme Council: the public having access to its deliberations, and its debates and papers being printed and issued to the world. The Indian civil service, by an act passed in 1853, had been thrown open to all who, being natural-born subjects of the British sovereign, should offer themselves as candidates for examination and admission. Young cadets, who previously had been allowed nearly two years to 'idle and loiter' at the presidencies while studying for examination as civilians, were by a new regulation required to complete their studies in a much shorter period, thereby lessening their idleness and rendering them sooner useful. Periodical examinations of the civil servants had been established, to insure efficiency before promotion was given. A board of examiners had been founded, to conduct

examinations and superintend studies. All officers of the Indian government had been formally prohibited from engaging in banking or trading companies; and any bankruptcy among them entailed suspension from office. In many of the civil offices, promotion, before dependent on seniority alone, had been made dependent on merit alone. A pension or superannuation list had been established in many departments, to insure steady and faithful service. Three boards of administration for salt, opium, and customs had been replaced by one board of revenue, simpler in its constitution. The annual financial reports, transmitted to the home government, had gradually been made more clear, full, and instructive. All the salaries throughout India had been placed under the consideration of a special commissioner, for equitable revision; and the authorities had determined that, in future, no salaries, with a few special exceptions, shall exceed fifty thousand rupees (about five thousand pounds) per annum.

Nor had legislative reform been wholly forgotten. During the eight years under review, laws had been passed or rules laid down for the punishment of officials guilty of corruption, or accountants guilty of default; for allowing counsel to prisoners on their trial; for abolishing the semi-savage custom of branding convicts; for rendering public officers more amenable to public justice; for vesting a right of pardon in the supreme government; for improving the procedure in all the civil and criminal courts; for rendering the reception of evidence more fair and impartial; and, among many less important things, for 'securing liberty of

conscience, and for the protection of converts, and especially of Christian converts, against injury in respect of property or inheritance by reason of a change in their religious belief.' For the amelioration of prison-discipline, inspectors of prisons had been appointed in all the three presidencies, as well as in Oude, the Punjaub, and the northwest provinces.

Equally in moral as in administrative matters did the Marquis of Dalhousie insist on the manifold improvement of India during the eight years preceding 1856. Schools for the education of natives had been established; the Hindoo College at Calcutta had been revived and improved; a Presidency College had been founded in the same city, to give a higher scale of education to the youth of Bengal; similar colleges had been sanctioned at Madras and Bombay; grants-in-aid to all educational establishments had been authorised, subject to government inspection of the schools aided; a committee had been appointed to consider the plans for establishing regular universities at Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras; a distinct educational department had been formed at the seat of government, with director-generals of public instruction in all the presidencies and governments; and the East India Company had, by a dispatch framed in 1854, sanctioned a most extensive educational scheme for the whole of India, to be rendered available to all the natives who might be willing and able to claim its advantages. The delicate subject of female education had not been forgotten. Instructions had been given to the officers of the educational department to afford all possible

encouragement to the establishment of female schools, whenever any disposition was shewn by the natives in that direction. There is a peculiar difficulty in all that concerns female education in India, arising from the reluctance which has always been shewn by the higher classes of natives to permit the attendance of their daughters at schools. Mr Bethune commenced, and the Marquis of Dalhousie continued, a delicate and cautious attempt to overcome this unwillingness by establishing a Hindoo ladies' school at Calcutta; and the minute gives expression to an earnest hope and belief that the female character in India will gradually be brought under the elevating influence of moral and intellectual education. As the native mind was thus sought to be ameliorated and strengthened by education; so had the prevention or cure of bodily maladies been made an object of attention. Additional advantages had been granted to natives who applied themselves to the study of the medical sciences; the number of dispensaries had been greatly increased, to the immense benefit of the poorer classes of Hindoos and Mohammedans; plans had been commenced for introducing a check to the dreadful ravages of the small-pox; admission to the medical service of the Company had been thrown open to natives; and, as a first-fruit of this change, one Dr Chuckerbutty, a Hindoo educated in England, had won for himself a commission as assistant-surgeon in the Company's service.

In so far as concerns superstition and religion, the minute narrates a course of proceeding of which the following is the

substance. Among the extraordinary social customs – atrocities they are unquestionably considered in Europe – of India, those of Suttee, Thuggee, Infanticide, and the Meriah Sacrifice, are mentioned as having undergone much amelioration during the eight years to which the minute relates. The *suttee*, or burning of widows, had been almost suppressed by previous governor-generals, and the marquis had carried out the plans of his predecessors: remonstrating where any suttees occurred in independent states; and punishing where they occurred in the British and protected territories. *Thuggee*, or systematic murder of travellers for the sake of booty, had been quite suppressed east of the Sutlej; but having unexpectedly made its appearance in the Punjaub in 1851, it was thoroughly put down there as elsewhere; those who turned approvers or king's evidence against their brother Thugs now form – or rather did form in 1856 – a peaceful industrious colony at Jubbulpoor, where they spun and wove muslins of exquisite fineness, instead of cutting the throats of unsuspecting travellers. *Female infanticide*, the result of pride of birth and pride of purse – parents murdering their infant daughters either because they cannot afford the marriage expenditure which must one day be incurred on their account, or because they see difficulties in marrying them suitably – had been greatly checked and discouraged. In the Punjaub a most signal and singular conquest had been achieved; for the British representative, calling together the chiefs of tribes in 1854, unfolded to them a plan, 'the observance of which would

effectually secure that no man should feel any real difficulty in providing for his daughter in marriage;’ whereupon the chiefs, as well as those of the Cashmere tribes, promised that, as the motive for infanticide would thus in great measure be removed, they would cheerfully aid in suppressing the practice. Lastly, the *Meriah sacrifice*— a horrible rite, in which young human victims are sacrificed for the propitiation of the special divinity which presides over the fertility of the earth – had been nearly rooted out from the only district where it was practised, among the hill and jungle tribes of Orissa. In religious matters, the ecclesiastical strength of the established church had been largely increased; clergymen had been occasionally sanctioned, besides those acting as chaplains to the Company; places of worship had been provided for the servants and soldiers of the Company; Protestant churches had been built in places where the worshippers were willing to contribute something towards the expenditure; Roman Catholics serving the Company had been provided with places of worship; salaries had been granted to three Roman Catholic bishops, one in each presidency; the salaries of the priests had been revised and augmented; and a wish was manifested to observe justice towards the Catholic as well as the Protestant who served his country well in the East.

Thus – in the acquisition of territory, in the augmentation of revenue consequent on that acquisition, in the administrative organisation, in the spread of education, in the provision for religious services, and in the plans for improving the moral

conduct of the natives – the Marquis of Dalhousie claimed to have done much that would redound to the honour of the British name and to the advancement of the millions under British rule in India. The problem still remains unsolved – Why should India, or the native military of that country, have revolted from British service? Let us see, therefore, whether the governor-general says aught that throws light upon the matter in connection with trade and commerce; and in order to understand this subject clearly, let us treat separately of Productive Industry and Means of Communication.

Cotton is destined, according to the ideas of some thinkers, to mark a great future for India; but meanwhile we are told in the minute that, by the acquisition of Nagpoor and Berar, many fertile cotton districts were brought under British rule; and that since the acquisition of Pegu, an examination of the cotton-growing capabilities of the northern part of that kingdom had been commenced. The tea-culture in Assam had prospered greatly during the eight years from 1848 to 1856; the plant had been largely introduced into the upper districts of the northwest provinces; plantations had been established at Deyrah Dhoon, Kumaon, and Gurhwal; Mr Fortune had brought large supplies of Chinese seeds and Chinese workmen to India; many of the native zemindars had begun the cultivation on their own account in districts at the foot of the Himalaya; and every year witnessed a large increase in the production of Indian tea, which was excellent in quality, and sold readily at a high price. In

agriculture generally, improvements of all kinds had been made; an Agricultural and Horticultural Society had been established in the Punjaub; carefully selected seeds had been procured from Europe; the growth of flax had been encouraged; the growth of the mulberry and the rearing of silkworms had been fostered by the government; and a grant had been made in aid of periodical agricultural shows in the Madras presidency. In relation to live-stock, plans had been formed for improving the breed of horses; merino and Australian rams had been introduced to improve the breed of sheep; and sheep had been introduced into Pegu, to the great delight of the natives and the advantage of all; 'for the absence of sheep leads to a privation in respect of food, which is severely felt, not only by European soldiers in the province, but also by all of every class who are employed therein.' The forests had been brought under due regulation by the appointment of conservators of forests at Pegu, Tenasserim, and Martaban; by the careful examination of the whole of the forests in the Punjaub; by the planting of new districts, hitherto bare; and by the laying down of rules for the future preservation and thrifty management of these important sources of timber and fuel. The inestimable value of coal being duly appreciated, careful researches had been made, by order of the government, in the Punjaub, Pegu, Tenasserim, Bengal, Silhet, and the Nerbudda Valley, to lay the groundwork for careful mining whenever and wherever good coal may be found. Practical chemists and geological surveyors had been set to work in the Simla

Hills, Kumaon, Gurhwal, the Nerbudda Valley, Beerboom, and Jubbulpoor, either to discover beds of ironstone, or to organise ironworks where such beds had already been discovered; and an experimental mining and smelting establishment had been founded by the government among the Kumaon Hills, to apply tests likely to be valuable in future.

Next, in connection with means of communication, the channels by and through which commerce permeates the empire, the governor-general had a very formidable list of works to notice. Surveys, irrigation and canals, rivers and harbours, roads, railways, electric telegraphs, and postal communications – had all been made the subjects of great engineering activity during the eight years of the Dalhousie administration. A few words must be said here on each of these topics; for it becomes absolutely necessary, in order to a due appreciation of the narrative of Revolt about to follow, that we should, as a preliminary, know whether India really had or had not been neglected in these elements of prosperity in the years immediately preceding the outbreak.

Measures, we learn from the minute, had been taken for executing exact surveys of all the newly annexed territory in the Punjaub, Pegu, Sind, Nagpoor, and Berar in the same careful manner as the survey of the older territories had been before carried out; and in Central India ‘the consent of all the native states has been obtained to the making of a topographical survey, and to a demarcation of all the boundaries between the several

native states, and between the British territories and those of native states:’ a proceeding expected to lessen the frequency of feuds concerning disputed boundaries.

The activity in irrigation-works and canal-cutting had unquestionably been very great. In 1854 the Ganges Canal was opened in its main line, for the double purpose of irrigation and navigation. A mighty work this, which no mutiny, no angry feelings, should induce the English public to forget. It is 525 miles in length, and in some parts 170 feet in width; and considered as a canal for irrigation, ‘it stands unequalled in its class and character among the efforts of civilised nations. Its length is fivefold greater than that of all the main lines of Lombardy united, and more than twice the length of the aggregate irrigation lines of Lombardy and Egypt together – the only countries in the world whose works of irrigation rise above insignificance.’ Nor is this all. ‘As a single work of navigation for purposes of commerce, the Ganges Canal has no competitor throughout the world. No single canal in Europe has attained to half the magnitude of this Indian work. It nearly equals the aggregate length of the four greatest canals in France. It greatly exceeds all the first-class canals of Holland put together; and it is greater, by nearly one-third, than the greatest navigation canal in the United States of America.’ Pausing for one moment just to observe that the writer of the words here quoted seems to have temporarily forgotten the great canal of China, we proceed to state, on the authority of the minute, that when all the branches

are finished, this noble Ganges Canal will be 900 miles in length. It will then, by its periodical overflowings, irrigate *a million and a half of acres*, thus lessening the terrible apprehensions of famine or dearth among millions of human beings. We may doubt or not on other subjects, but it is impossible to doubt the sincerity of the Marquis of Dalhousie when he says: 'I trust I shall not be thought vain-glorious if I say that the successful execution and completion of such a work as the Ganges Canal would, even if it stood alone, suffice to signalise an Indian administration.' But this work did not absorb all the energies of the canal engineers; much of a similar though smaller kind had been effected elsewhere. An irrigation canal had been begun in the Punjaub, which, when finished, would be 465 miles in length, fed from the river Ravee. All the old canals formed in the Moultan district of the Punjaub, 600 miles in length, had been cleansed, enlarged, and improved, and the distribution of the waters for the purpose of irrigation placed under judicious regulation. Irrigation canals had been made or improved in the Derajat, in the provinces east of the Sutlej, in Behar, and in Sind. A magnificent work had been executed for carrying an irrigation canal over the river Godavery; and canals of much importance had been commenced in the Madras and Bombay presidencies.

Rivers and harbours had shared in the attention bestowed on irrigation and canal navigation. The Ganges had been opened to river steamers before 1848, and it only remained to advance in the same line of improvement. The Indus, by the conquest of the

Punjaub, had been made a British river almost from the Himalaya down to the ocean; steamers had been placed upon it; and it had become a direct route for troops and travellers to many parts of Northern India, before attainable only by the Calcutta route. All the rivers in the upper part of the Punjaub had been surveyed, with a view to the determination of their capabilities for steam-navigation. No sooner was Pegu acquired, than steamers were placed upon the Irrawaddy, the great river of that country; and short canals of junction between various rivers had been so planned as to give promise of a complete line of river-steaming from Bassein to Moulmein. Arrangements had been made for placing steamers upon the river Burhampooter or Brahmaputra, to connect Assam with the Bay of Bengal. Extensive works had been commenced to improve the navigation of the Godavery. The channels that lead from Calcutta through the Sundurbunds to the sea had been enlarged; and a great bridge over the Hoogly near the city had been planned. The port of Bombay had been greatly improved, and large works for water-supply commenced. At Kurachee, at Madras, at Singapore, at Rangoon, and at other places, engineering improvements had been made to increase the accommodation for shipping.

We follow the Marquis of Dalhousie from the river to the land, and trace with him the astonishing length of new road constructed or planned during his administration. A great trunk-road from Calcutta to Delhi had been extended nearly to the Sutlej; and when the Punjaub became a British possession, plans

were immediately marked out for prolonging the same road to Loodianah, Umritsir, Lahore, Jelum, Attock, and Peshawur – thus forming, if all be completed, a magnificent road 1500 miles in length from Calcutta to the Afghan frontier, available both for commercial and military operations. The difficulties of crossing so many broad rivers in Northern India is immense, and the cost great; but the road, as the minute tells us, ‘will repay a thousandfold the labour and the treasure it has cost.’ Then, fine roads had been formed from Patna to Gya, from Cuttack to Ungool and Sumbhulpore, from Dacca to Akyab, and thence towards Aracan and Pegu; while vast systems of roads had been brought under consideration for Pegu, the Punjaub, Sind, and other newly acquired regions. Engineers had been employed to plan a road from Simla up to the very Himalaya itself, to connect India with Tibet; as it would greatly improve the social position of all the native tribes near it. When Pegu was attacked, and when a military force was sent thither overland from Calcutta, hundreds of elephants were employed to force a way through the forests and roadless tracts between Aracan and Pegu; but by the spring of 1855 a road had been formed, along which a battalion could march briskly on foot.

The Marquis of Dalhousie was not in a position to say so much concerning railways in India as ordinary roads. Although railways were brought under the consideration of the Company in 1843, nothing was done regarding them till 1849, when a contract was entered into with a separate company to construct

a certain length of railway which, if continued, would connect Calcutta with the north and northwest of India. In the spring of 1853 the marquis recommended a bold line of policy in these matters: the sanction and support, in every available way, of great lines of railway to connect Calcutta with Lahore, Bombay with Agra, Bombay with Madras, and Madras with the Malabar coast. A qualified approval of these schemes had been accorded by the East India Company, and engagements to the extent of ten millions sterling had been made for a railway from Delhi to Burdwan: a line from Burdwan to Calcutta having been opened in 1855. The governor-general, not dreaming of mutinies and rebellions, named the year 1859 as the probable time of finishing the iron route from Calcutta to Delhi. Besides these engagements with the East India Railway Company in the Bengal presidency, contracts had been made with the Great India Peninsula Company for a railway from Bombay to the Ghaut Mountains; and another with the Bombay and Central India Company for a railway from Bombay to Khandeish and Nagpoor, and for another from Surat to Ahmedabad. On the eastern coast, the government had arranged with the Madras Railway Company for lines from Madras to the Malabar coast, *viâ* Coimbatore, and from Variembaddy to Bangalore. The English nation has long blamed the East India Company for a dilatory policy in regard to railways; but all we have to do in this place is, on the authority of the governor-general, to specify in few words what had been done in the years immediately preceding the outbreak.

The electric telegraph – perhaps the grandest invention of our age – found in India a congenial place for its reception. Where the officials had no more rapid means of sending a message to a distance of a thousand miles than the fleetness of a corps of foot-runners, it is no marvel that the achievements of the lightning-messenger were regarded with an eager eye. An experimental line of electric telegraph was determined on, to be carried out by Dr (now Sir William) O'Shaughnessy; and when that energetic man made his report on the result in 1852, it was at once determined to commence arrangements for lines of immense length, to connect the widely separated cities of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, and Peshawur, and the great towns between them. It was a grand idea, and was worthily realised; for by the month of March 1854 an electric wire of 800 miles was established between Calcutta and Agra; by the month of February 1855, the towns of Calcutta, Agra, Attock, Bombay, and Madras were placed in telegraphic communication by 3000 miles of wire, serving nearly forty towns on the way; and by the beginning of 1856 another length of 1000 miles was added, from Attock to Peshawur, from Bangalore to Ootacamund, and from Rangoon to the Burmese frontier. Many works of great magnitude were required; there were few good roads for the workmen to avail themselves of; there were few bridges; there were deadly jungles to be passed; there was every variety of foundation, from loose black soil to hard rocky wastes; there were seventy large rivers to be crossed, either by cables in the

water, or by wires extended on the tops of masts; there was a cable of two miles required to cross the Toongabudra, and one of three miles to cross the Sone – and yet the entire work was comprised within a cost of 500 rupees or £50 per mile: perhaps the wisest expenditure ever incurred in India. Repeatedly has a message, relating to news from England, been transmitted 1000 miles, from Bombay to Calcutta, in less than three-quarters of an hour; and it has become a regular routine that the government at Calcutta shall be in possession of a considerable body of telegraphic news from England within twelve hours after the anchoring of the mail-steamer at Bombay. Who can conceive the bewilderment of the Hindoo mind at such achievements! It is certainly permissible to the governor-general to refer with pride to two or three among many instances of the remarkable service rendered by these telegraphs. ‘When her Majesty’s 10th Hussars were ordered with all speed from Poonah to the Crimea, a message requesting instructions regarding their despatch was one day received by me at Calcutta from the government of Bombay, about nine o’clock in the morning. Instructions were forthwith sent off by the telegraph in reply; and an answer to that reply was again received at Calcutta from Bombay in the evening of the same day. A year before, the same communications for the despatch of speedy reinforcements to the seat of war, which occupied by the telegraph no more than *twelve hours*, could not have been made in less than *thirty days*.’ Again: ‘When it was resolved to send her Majesty’s 12th Lancers from Bangalore

to the Crimea, instead of her Majesty's 14th Dragoons from Meerut, orders were forthwith despatched by telegraph direct to the regiment at Bangalore. The corps was immediately got ready for service; it marched two hundred miles, and was there before the transports were ready to receive it.' Again: 'On the 7th of February 1856, as soon as the administration of Oude was assuredly under British government, a branch-electric telegraph from Cawnpore to Lucknow was forthwith commenced; in eighteen working-days it was completed, including the laying of a cable, six thousand feet in length, across the river Ganges. On the morning on which I resigned the government in India, General Outram was asked by telegraph: "Is all well in Oude?" The answer: "All is well in Oude," was received soon after noon, and greeted Lord Canning on his first arrival.' Little did the new governor-general then foresee in how few months he would receive painful proof that all was *not* well in Oude. However, the Marquis of Dalhousie was justified in adverting with satisfaction to the establishment of telegraphic communication during his reign of power; and he insists on full credit being due to the East India Company for what was done in that direction. 'I make bold to say, that whether regard be had to promptitude of executive action, to speed and solidity of construction, to rapidity of organisation, to liberality of charge, or to the early realisation and vast magnitude of increased political influence in the East, the achievement of the Honourable Company in the establishment of the electric telegraph in India may challenge

comparison with any public enterprise which has been carried into execution in recent times, among the nations of Europe, or in America itself.’

The postal system had not been allowed to stagnate during the eight years under consideration. A commission had been appointed in 1850, to inquire into the best means of increasing the efficiency of the system; and under the recommendations of this commission, great improvements had been made. A director-general of the post-office for the whole of India had been appointed; a uniformity of rate irrespective of distance had been established (three farthings for a letter, and three half-pence for a newspaper); prepayment by postage-stamps had been substituted for cash payment; the privileges of official franking had been almost abolished; and a uniform sixpenny rate was fixed for letters between India and England. Here again the governor-general insists, not only that the Indian government had worked zealously, but that England herself had been outstripped in liberal policy. ‘In England, a single letter is conveyed to any part of the British isles for one penny; in India, a single letter is conveyed over distances immeasurably greater – from Peshawur, on the borders of Afghanistan, to the southernmost village of Cape Comorin, or from Dehooghur, in Upper Assam, to Kurachee at the mouth of the Indus – for no more than three farthings. The postage chargeable on the same letter three years ago in India would not have been less than one shilling, or sixteen times the present charge. Again, since uniform rates of

postage between England and India have been established, the Scotch recruit who joins his regiment on our furthest frontier at Peshawur, may write to his mother at John o' Groat's House, and may send his letter to her free for sixpence: three years ago, the same sum would not have carried his letter beyond Lahore.'

So great had been the activity of the Company and the governor-general, in the course of eight years, in developing the productive resources of our Oriental empire, that a department of Public Works had become essentially necessary. The Company expended from two to three millions sterling annually in this direction, and a new organisation had been made to conduct the various works on which this amount of expenditure was to be bestowed. When the great roads and canals were being planned and executed, numerous civil engineers were of course needed; and the minute tells us that 'it was the far-seeing sagacity of Mr Thomason which first anticipated the necessity of training engineers in the country itself in which they were to be employed, and which first suggested an effectual method of doing so. On his recommendation, the civil engineering college at Roorkee, which now rightly bears his honoured name, was founded with the consent of the Honourable Court. It has already been enlarged and extended greatly beyond its original limits. Instruction in it is given to soldiers preparing for subordinate employment in the Public Works department, to young gentlemen not in the service of government, and to natives upon certain conditions. A higher class for commissioned officers of the army was created some

years ago, at the suggestion of the late Sir Charles Napier; and the government has been most ready to consent to officers obtaining leave to study there, as in the senior department at Sandhurst. Excellent fruit has already been borne by this institution; many good servants have already been sent forth into [from?] the department; and applications for the services of students of the Thomason College were, before long, received from other local governments.' But this was not all: civil engineering colleges and classes were formed at Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Lahore, and Poonah.

So greatly had the various public works on rivers and harbours, roads and canals, telegraphic and postal communications, increased the trade of India, that the shipping entries increased regularly year by year. There were about six hundred vessels, exclusive of trading craft, that ascended the Hoogly to Calcutta in 1847; by 1856, the number had augmented to twelve hundred; and the tonnage had risen in a still greater ratio.

What is the English nation to think of all this, and how reconcile it with the tragedies destined so soon to afflict that magnificent country? Here we find the highest representative of the British crown narrating and describing, in words too clear to be misunderstood, political and commercial advancements of a really stupendous kind, effected within the short period of eight years. We read of vast territories conquered, tributary states annexed, amicable relations with other states strengthened, territorial revenues increased, improved

administration organised, the civil service purified, legislative reforms effected, prison-discipline improved, native colleges and schools established, medical aid disseminated, thuggee and dacoitee put down, suttee and infanticide discouraged, churches and chapels built, ministers of religion salaried. We are told of the cultivation of raw produce being fostered, the improvement of live-stock insured, the availability of mineral treasures tested, exact territorial surveys completed, stupendous irrigation and navigation canals constructed, flotillas of river-steamers established, ports and harbours enlarged and deepened, magnificent roads formed, long lines of railway commenced, thousands of miles of electric telegraph set to work, vast postal improvements insured. We read all this, and we cannot marvel if the ruler of India felt some pride in his share of the work. But still the problem remains unsolved – was the great Revolt foreshadowed in any of these achievements? As the mutiny began among the military, it may be well to see what information is afforded by the minute concerning military reforms between the years 1848 and 1856.

It is truly remarkable, knowing what the English nation now so painfully knows, that the Marquis of Dalhousie, in narrating the various improvements introduced by him in the military system, passes at once to the *British* soldiers: distinctly asserting that ‘the position of the *native* soldier in India has long been such as to leave hardly any circumstance of his condition in need of improvement.’ The British troops, we are told, had

been benefited in many ways. The terms of service in India had been limited to twelve years as a maximum; the rations had been greatly improved; malt liquor had been substituted for destructive ardent spirits; the barracks had been mostly rebuilt, with modifications depending on the climate of each station, separate barracks had been set apart for the married men of each regiment; lavatories and reading-rooms had become recognised portions of every barrack; punkhas or cooling fans had been adopted for barracks in hot stations, and additional bed-coverings in cold; swimming-baths had been formed at most of the stations; soldiers' gardens had been formed at many of the cantonments; workshops and tools for handicraftsmen had been attached to the barracks; sanatoria had been built among the hills for sick soldiers; and arrangements had been framed for acclimatising all recruits from England before sending them into hot districts on service. Then, as to the officers. Encouragement had been offered for the officers to make themselves proficient in the native languages. A principle had been declared and established, that promotion by seniority should no longer govern the service; but that the test should be 'the selection of no man, whatever his standing, unless he was confessedly capable and efficient.' With the consent of the Queen, the Company's officers had had granted to them the recognition, until then rather humiliatingly withheld, of their military rank, not only in India but throughout the world. A military orphan school had been established in the hill districts. All the military departments had been revised and

amended, the commissariat placed on a wholly new basis, and the military clothing supplied on a more efficient system than before.

Again is the search baffled. We find in the minute proofs only that India had become great and grand; if the seeds of rebellion existed, they were buried under the language which described material and social advancement. Is it that England, in 1856, had yet to learn to understand the native character? Such may be; for *thuggee* came to the knowledge of our government with astounding suddenness; and there may be some other kind of thuggee, religious or social, still to be learned by us. Let us bear in mind what this thuggee or thugism was, and who were the Thugs. Many years ago, uneasy whispers passed among the British residents in India. Rumours went abroad of the fate of unsuspecting travellers ensnared while walking or riding upon the road, lassoed or strangled by means of a silken cord, and robbed of their personal property; the rumours were believed to be true; but it was long ere the Indian government succeeded in bringing to light the stupendous conspiracy or system on which these atrocities were based. It was then found that there exists a kind of religious body in India, called Thugs, among whom murder and robbery are portions of a religious rite, established more than a thousand years ago. They worship Kali, one of the deities of the Hindoo faith. In gangs varying from ten to two hundred, they distribute themselves – or rather *did* distribute themselves, before the energetic measures of the government had

nearly suppressed their system – about various parts of India, sacrificing to their tutelary goddess every victim they can seize, and sharing the plunder among themselves. They shed no blood, except under special circumstances; murder being their religion, the performance of its duties requires secrecy, better observed by a noose or a cord than by a knife or firearm. Every gang has its leader, teacher, entrappers, stranglers, and gravediggers; each with his prescribed duties. When a traveller, supposed or known to have treasure about him, has been inveigled to a selected spot by the *Sothas* or entrappers, he is speedily put to death quietly by the *Bhuttotes* or stranglers, and then so dexterously placed underground by the *Lughahees* or gravediggers that no vestige of disturbed earth is visible.¹ This done, they offer a sacrifice to their goddess Kali, and finally share the booty taken from the murdered man. Although the ceremonial is wholly Hindoo, the Thugs themselves comprise Mohammedans as well as Hindoos; and it is supposed by some inquirers that the Mohammedans have ingrafted a system of robbery on that which was originally a religious murder – murder as part of a sacrifice to a deity.

We repeat: there *may* be some moral or social thuggee yet to be discovered in India; but all we have now to assert is, that the condition of India in 1856 did not suggest to the retiring

¹ The visitor to the British Museum, in one of the saloons of the Ethnological department, will find a very remarkable series of figures, modelled by a native Hindoo, of the individuals forming a gang of Thugs; all in their proper costumes, and all as they are (or were) usually engaged in the successive processes of entrapping, strangling, and burying a traveller, and then dividing the booty.

governor-general the slightest suspicion that the British in that country were on the edge of a volcano. He said, in closing his remarkable minute: 'My parting hope and prayer for India is, that, in all time to come, these reports from the presidencies and provinces under our rule may form, in each successive year, a happy record of peace, prosperity, and progress.' No forebodings here, it is evident. Nevertheless, there are isolated passages which, read as England can *now* read them, are worthy of notice. One runs thus: 'No prudent man, who has any knowledge of Eastern affairs, would ever venture to predict the maintenance of continued peace within our Eastern possessions. Experience, frequent hard and recent experience, has taught us that war from without, or rebellion from within, may at any time be raised against us, in quarters where they were the least to be expected, and by the most feeble and unlikely instruments. No man, therefore, can ever prudently hold forth assurance of continued peace in India.' Again: 'In territories and among a population so vast, occasional disturbance must needs prevail. Raids and forays are, and will still be, reported from the western frontier. From time to time marauding expeditions will descend into the plains; and again expeditions to punish the marauders will penetrate the hills. Nor can it be expected but that, among tribes so various and multitudes so innumerable, local outbreaks will from time to time occur.' But in another place he seeks to lessen the force and value of any such disturbances as these. 'With respect to the frontier raids, they are and must for the present be viewed as

events inseparable from the state of society which for centuries past has existed among the mountain tribes. They are no more to be regarded as interruptions of the general peace in India, than the street-brawls which appear among the everyday proceedings of a police-court in London are regarded as indications of the existence of civil war in England. I trust, therefore, that I am guilty of no presumption in saying, that I shall leave the Indian Empire in peace, without and within.’

Such, then, is a governor-general’s picture of the condition of the British Empire in India in the spring of 1856: a picture in which there are scarcely any dark colours, or such as the painter believed to be dark. We may learn many things from it: among others, a consciousness how little we even now know of the millions of Hindostan – their motives, their secrets, their animosities, their aspirations. The bright picture of 1856, the revolting tragedies of 1857 – how little relation does there appear between them! That there *is* a relation all must admit, who are accustomed to study the links of the chain that connect one event with another; but at what point the relation occurs, is precisely the question on which men’s opinions will differ until long and dispassionate attention has been bestowed on the whole subject.

Notes

[This may be a convenient place in which to introduce a few observations on three subjects likely to come with much

frequency under the notice of the reader in the following chapters; namely, the distances between the chief towns in India and the three great presidential cities – the discrepancies in the current modes of spelling the names of Indian persons and places – and the meanings of some of the native words frequently used in connection with Indian affairs.]

Distances.— For convenience of occasional reference, a table of some of the distances in India is here given. It has been compiled from the larger tables of Taylor, Garden, Hamilton, and Parbury. Many of the distances are estimated in some publications at smaller amount, owing, it may be, to the opening of new and shorter routes:

	<i>To Calcutta.</i>	<i>To Madras.</i>	<i>To Bombay.</i>
	Miles.	Miles.	Miles.
From Agra	796	1238	754
From Allahabad	498	1151	831
From Arcot	1085	71	715
From Aracan	598	1661	1795
From Benares	428	1151	927
From Bhopal	849	944	492
From Bombay	1185	763	
From Calcutta		1063	1185
From Cawnpore	628	1200	854
From Delhi	900	1372	868
From Dinapore	376	1337	1072
From Furrukhabad	722	1257	892
From Gwalior	782	1164	680
From Hyderabad ¹	962	398	434
From Indore	965	979	378
From Jaunpore	473	1196	972
From Jeypoor	921	1352	757
From Kolapoor	1245	584	228
From Kurachee	1610	1567	873
From Lahore	1241	1712	1208
From Lucknow	619	1253	907
From Madras	1063		763
From Masulipatam	797	322	654
From Meerut	906	1405	912
From Moorshedabad	123	1186	1308
From Mysore	1245	290	635
From Nagpoor	677	713	508
From Oodypoor	1139	1209	606
From Patna	369	1299	1065
From Peshawur	1543	2014	1510
From Pondicherry	1157	98	803
From Poonah	1107	667	94

¹There are two Hyderabad – one in the Nizam's dominions in the Deccan, and the other in Sinde (spelt Hyderabad): it is the former here intended.

Orthography.— It is perfectly hopeless to attempt here any settlement of the vexed question of Oriental orthography, the spelling of the names of Indian persons and places. If we rely on one governor-general, the next contradicts him; the commander-in-chief very likely differs from both; authors and travellers have each a theory of his own; while newspaper correspondents dash recklessly at any form of word that first comes to hand. Readers must therefore hold themselves ready for these complexities, and for detecting the same name under two or three different forms. The following will suffice to shew our meaning: — Rajah, raja — nabob, nawab, nawaub — Punjab, Punjaub, Penjab, Panjab — Vizierabad, Wuzeerabad — Ghengis Khan, Gengis Khan, Jengis Khan — Cabul, Caboul, Cabool, Kabul — Deccan, Dekkan, Dukhun — Peshawur, Peshawar — Mahomet, Mehemet, Mohammed, Mahommed, Muhummud — Sutlej, Sutledge — Sinde, Scinde, Sindh — Himalaya, Himmaléh — Cawnpore, Cawnpoor — Sikhs, Seiks — Gujerat, Guzerat — Ali, Alee, Ally — Ghauts, Gauts — Sepoys, Sipahis — Faquir, Fakeer — Oude, Oudh — Bengali, Bengalee — Burhampooter, Brahmaputra — Asam, Assam — Nepal, Nepaul — Sikkim, Sikim — Thibet, Tibet — Goorkas, Ghoorkas — Cashmere, Cashmeer, Kashmir — Doab, Dooab — Sudra, Soodra — Vishnu, Vishnoo — Buddhist, Buddhist,

&c. Mr Thornton, in his excellent Gazetteer of India, gives a curious instance of this complexity, in *eleven* modes of spelling the name of one town, each resting on some good authority – Bikaner, Bhicaner, Bikaner, Bickaner, Bickanere, Bikkaneer, Bhikanere, Beekaneer, Beekaner, Beykaner, Bicanere. One more instance will suffice. Viscount Canning, writing to the directors of the East India Company concerning the conduct of a sepoy, spelled the man's name *Shiek Paltoo*. A fortnight afterwards, the same governor-general, writing to the same directors about the same sepoy, presented the name under the form *Shaik Phultoo*. We have endeavoured as far as possible to make the spelling in the narrative and the map harmonise.

Vocabulary.— We here present a vocabulary of about fifty words much used in India, both in conversation and in writing, connected with the military and social life of the natives; with the initials or syllables P., Port., H., M., A., T., Tam., S., to denote whether the words have been derived from the Persian, Portuguese, Hindustani, Mahratta, Arabic, Tatar, Tamil, or Sanscrit languages. Tamil or Tamul is spoken in some of the districts of Southern India. In most instances, two forms of spelling are given, to prepare the reader for the discrepancies above adverted to:

Ab, aub (P.), water; used in composition thus: *Punjaub*, five waters, or watered by five rivers; *Doab*, a district between two rivers, equivalent in meaning to the Greek *Mesopotamia*.

Abad (P.), inhabited; a town or city; such as *Allahabad*, city

of God; *Hyderabad*, city of *Hyder*.

Ayah (Port.), a nurse; a female attendant on a lady.

Baba (T.), a term of endearment in the domestic circle, nearly equivalent to the English *dear*, and applied both to a father and his child.

Baboo, a Hindoo title, equivalent to our *Esquire*.

Bag, *bágh*, a garden; *Kudsiya bágh* is a celebrated garden outside Delhi.

Bahadoor (P.), brave; a title of respect added to the names of military officers and others.

Bang (P.), an intoxicating potion made from hemp.

Bazar, *bazaar*, an exchange or market-place.

Begum (T.), a princess, a lady of high rank.

Bheestee, *bihishtí*, a water-carrier.

Bobachee, *báwarchí* (T.), an Indian officer's cook.

Budgerow, *bajrá* (S.), a Ganges boat of large size.

Bungalow, *banglá* (H.), a house or dwelling.

Cherry, *cheri* (Tam.), village or town; termination to the name of many places in Southern India; such as *Pondicherry*.

Chit, *chittí* (H.), a note or letter.

Chupatty, *chápátí* (P.), a thin cake of unleavened Indian-corn bread.

Coolie, *kuli* (T.), a porter or carrier.

Cutcherry, *kacharí* (H.), an official room; a court of justice.

Dacoit, *dákáit* (H.), a gang-robber.

Dâk, *dahk*, *dawk* (H.), the Indian post, and the arrangements

connected with it.

Dewan, a native minister or agent.

Dost (P.), a friend.

Feringhee, a Frank or European.

Fakeer, *fakír* (A.), a mendicant devotee.

Ghazee, *ghazi* (A.), a true believer who fights against infidels:
hence *Ghazeepoor*, city of the faithful.

Golundauze, *golandáz* (P.), a native artilleryman.

Havildar (P.), a native sergeant.

Jehad (A.), a holy war.

Jemadar (P.), a native lieutenant.

Jhageerdar, *jaghiredar*, *jágírdár* (P.), the holder of land
granted for services.

Mohurrum (A.), a fast held sacred by Mohammedans on the
tenth day of the first month in their year, equivalent to the 25th
of July.

Musjid (A.), a mosque; thence *jumma masjid* or *jum'aah
masjid*, a cathedral or chief mosque.

Naik, *naig* (S.), a native corporal.

Náná, *nena* (M.), grandfather, a term of respect or precedence
among the Mahrattas; *Náná Sahib*, so far from being a family or
personal name, is simply a combination of two terms of respect
(see *Sahib*) for a person whose real name was Dhundu Punt.

Nawab, *nabob*, *núwáb* (A.), derived from *náib*, a viceroy or
vicegerent.

Nuddee, *nadi* (S.), a river.

Nullah, nálá (H.), a brook, water-course, the channel of a torrent.

Patam, pattanam (S.), a town; the termination of the names of many places in Southern India; such as *Seringapatam*, the city of Shrí Ranga, a Hindoo divinity.

Peon (P.), a messenger or foot-attendant.

Pore, poor, a town; the final syllable in many significant names, such as *Bhurtpore* or *Bharatpoor*, the town of Bharata.

Rajpoot, a Hindoo of the military caste or order; there is one particular province in Upper India named from them *Rajpootana*.

Ryot, a peasant cultivator.

Sahib, saheb, sáaib (A.), lord; a gentleman.

Sepoy, sípahí, in the Bengal presidency, a native soldier in the Company's service; in that of Bombay, it often has the meaning of a peon or foot-messenger.

Shahzadah (P.), prince; king's son.

Sowar (P.), a native horseman or trooper.

Subadar, soubahdar (A.), a native captain.

Tuppál, tappál (H.), a packet of letters; the post.

Zemindar, zamindár (P.), a landowner.

CHAPTER I.

THE ANGLO-INDIAN ARMY AT THE TIME OF THE OUTBREAK

The magnificent India which began to revolt from England in the early months of 1857; which continued that Revolt until it spread to many thousands of square miles; which conducted the Revolt in a manner that appalled all the civilised world by its unutterable horrors – this India was, after all, not really unsound at its core. It was not so much the *people* who rebelled, as the *soldiers*. Whatever grievances the hundred and seventy millions of human beings in that wonderful country may have had to bear; whatever complaints may have been justifiable on their parts against their native princes or the British government; and whatever may have been the feelings of those native princes towards the British – all of which matters will have to be considered in later chapters of this work – still it remains incontestable that the outbreak was a military revolt rather than a national rebellion. The Hindoo foot-soldier, fed and paid by the British, ran off with his arms and his uniform, and fought against those who had supported him; the Mohammedan trooper, with his glittering equipments and his fine horse, escaped with both in like manner, and became suddenly an enemy instead of a friend and servant. What effect this treachery may have had on

the populace of the towns, is another question: we have at present only to do with the military origin of the struggle.

Here, therefore, it becomes at once necessary that the reader should be supplied with an intelligible clue to the series of events, a groundwork on which his appreciation of them may rest. As this work aims at something more than a mere record of disasters and victories, all the parts will be made to bear some definite relation one to another; and the first of these relations is – between the mutinous movements themselves, and the soldiers who made those movements. Before we can well understand what the sepoys *did*, we must know who the sepoys *are*; before we can picture to ourselves an Indian regiment in revolt, we must know of what elements it consists, and what are its usages when in cantonments or when on the march; and before we can appreciate the importance of two presidential armies remaining faithful while that of Bengal revolted, we must know what is meant by a presidency, and in what way the Anglo-Indian army bears relation to the territorial divisions of India. We shall not need for these purposes to give here a formal history of Hindostan, nor a history of the rise and constitution of the East India Company, nor an account of the manners and customs of the Hindoos, nor a narrative of the British wars in India in past ages, nor a topographical description of India – many of these subjects will demand attention in later pages; but at present only so much will be touched upon as is necessary for the bare understanding of the *facts* of the Revolt, leaving the *causes* for the present in abeyance.

What are the authoritative or official divisions of the country in reference to the governors who control and the soldiers who fight (or ought to fight) for it? What are the modes in which a vast region, extending more than a thousand miles in many different directions, is or may be traversed by rebel soldiers who fight against their employers, and by true soldiers who punish the rebels? What and who are the soldiers thus adverted to; how many, of what races, how levied, how paid and supported, where cantoned, how officered? These are the three subjects that will occupy a brief chapter; after which the narrative of the Revolt may with profit be at once entered upon.

And first, for India as an immense country governed by a people living eight or ten thousand miles distant. Talk as we may, there are few among us who can realise the true magnitude of this idea – the true bearing of the relation borne by two small islands in a remote corner of Europe to a region which has been famed since the time of Alexander the Great. The British Empire in India – what does it denote? Even before the acquisition of Oude, Pegu, and Nagpoor, the British possessions in India covered nearly 800,000 square miles; but as the influence of England is gradually extending over the protected and the hitherto independent states, we shall best conceive the whole (without Pegu, which is altogether eastward of what is considered India) as a compact territory of 1,400,000 square miles – twelve times as large as the United Kingdom, sixteen times as large as Great Britain, twenty-five times as large as England and Wales:

double the size, in fact, of Great Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Prussia, and Switzerland, all combined. Nor is this, like the Russian Empire, a vast but thinly populated region. It contains at least a hundred and eighty millions of human beings, more than a hundred and thirty millions of whom are the direct subjects of Queen Victoria – that is, if anything *can* be direct, connected with the anomalous relations between the Crown and the East India Company.

It comes within the knowledge of most intelligent English readers at the present day, that this Indian Empire, governed by a curiously complicated bargain between a sovereign and a company, has been growing for a hundred years, and still continues growing. In fits of national anger or international generosity, we inveigh against the Czar of Russia for processes of aggression and plans of annexation in regions around and between the Caspian and Black Seas, and we compassionate and assist his weak neighbours under the pressure of his ambition; but it is only in times of excitement or peril that we consider the extraordinary way in which our own Indian Empire has been built up – by conquest, by purchase, by forfeiture – and in some cases by means which, called robbery by our enemies, do at any rate demand a little compunction from us as a Christian people. Exactly a century ago, England scarcely occupied a foot of ground in India; her power was almost crushed out by the native nawab who rendered himself infamous by the episode of the Black Hole at Calcutta; and

it was in the year after that atrocity – namely, in 1757, that Clive began those wonderful victories which established a permanent basis for a British Empire in Hindostan. And what a continuous growth by increment has since been displayed! The Pergunnahs, Masulipatam, Burdwan, Midnapore, Chittagong, Bengal, Bahar, the Northern Circars, Benares, all passed into British hands by the year 1775; the next twenty-five years brought to us the ownership of Salsette, Nagore, Pulo Penang, Malabar, Dindigul, Salem, Barramahal, Coimbatore, Canara, Tanjore, and portions of the Deccan and Mysore; in the first quarter of the present century the list was increased by the Carnatic, Gorukhpore, the Doab, Bareilly, portions of Bundelcund, Cuttack, Balasore, Delhi, Gujerat, Kumaon, Saugor, Khandeish, Ajmeer, Poonah, the Concan, portions of Mahratta country, districts in Bejapore and Ahmednuggur, Singapore, and Malacca; in the next period of equal length the acquisitions included Assam, Aracan, Tenasserim, the Nerbudda districts, Patna, Sumbhulpore, Koorg, Loodianah, Kurnaul, Sinde, and the Jullundur Doab; while during the eight years of the Marquis of Dalhousie's administration, as we learn on his own authority, there were added Pegu, the Punjaub, Nagpoor, Oude, Satara, Jhansi, and Berar – all these in exactly a century.

The whole of British India is placed under a governor-general, whose official residence is at Calcutta, and who is assisted by a kind of cabinet or council of ministers. Formerly there were three presidencies, under whom the whole territory was placed;

two being under the governors of Bombay and Madras, and the remainder, called the Bengal presidency, being under the governor-general himself, who was to this extent vested with a special as well as a general government. But in process of time it was found impossible for this official to fulfil all the duties imposed upon him; and the great Bengal presidency became subdivided. There are now five local governors of great districts – the governor-general himself, who directly rules many of the newly acquired regions; the lieutenant-governor of the Northwest Provinces, who rules some of the country formerly included in the presidency of Bengal; the lieutenant-governor of the Lower Provinces, who rules the rest of that country; and the governors of Madras and Bombay, whose range of territory has not undergone much increase in recent years. Let us learn a little concerning each of these five.

Madras, as a presidency or government, includes the whole of the south of India, where its narrowed, peninsular form is most apparent, up to about latitude 16° north, together with a strip still further north on the east or Coromandel coast. Its greatest inland extent is about 950 miles in one direction, and 450 in another; while its shores are washed by the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal along a coast-line of no less than 1700 miles – unfortunately, however, very ill provided with ports and anchorages. There are about thirty districts and states under the governor's rule – some as 'regulation districts,' others as 'non-regulation districts,' and

others as 'native states.' The difference between these three kinds may be thus briefly indicated: the 'regulation' districts are thoroughly British, and are governed directly by the chief of the presidency; the 'non-regulation' districts are now equally British, though of more recent acquisition, but are governed by agents or commissioners; while the 'native states' have still their native princes, 'protected,' or rather controlled by the British. Without any formal enumeration, it may be well to remember that the following names of some of these districts, all more or less familiar to English readers as the names of towns or provinces, are included among those belonging to the presidency or government of Madras – Masulipatam, Nellore, Chingleput, Madras, Arcot, Cuddalore, Cuddapah, Salem, Coimbatore, Trichinopoly, Tanjore, Madura, Tinnevely, Malabar, Canara, Vizagapatam, Kurnaul, Koorg,² Cochin, Mysore, Travancore. Some of these are not absolutely British; but their independence is little more than a name. There are various important towns, or places worth knowing in connection with Indian affairs, which are included in some or other of these districts, but not giving their names to them – such as Seringapatam, Golcandah, Rajamandry, Juggernaut, Vellore, Pulicat, Pondicherry (French), Tranquebar, Negapatam, Bangalore, Ootacamund, Mangalore, Calicut.

Bombay, as a presidency, is a curiously shaped strip. Exclusive

² A young native princess was sent to England from this district to be educated as a *Christian* lady; and Queen Victoria became a sponsor for her at a baptismal ceremony.

of the subordinate territories of native princes (over which, however, the Company exercises paramount political sway) and of Sinde, which, though recently placed under the government of Bombay, may properly be regarded as a distinct territory – exclusive of these, the presidency occupies a narrow strip, of irregular outline, stretching for a considerable distance north and south. It occupies the western coast of the peninsula, from Gujerat on the north, to the small Portuguese settlement of Goa on the south; and has a length of 650 miles, with a maximum breadth of 240. The Bombay provinces included in the strip just noticed, the neighbouring territories administered by or on behalf of native princes, and Sinde, form three sections about equal in size, the whole collectively being thrice as large as England and Wales. To assist the memory, as in the last paragraph, we give the names of the chief districts likely to be known to English readers – all of which either belong absolutely to the presidency of Bombay, or are more or less under the control of the governor – Surat, Baroche, Ahmedabad, Khandeish, Poonah, Ahmednuggur, Bombay, Concan, Satara, Baroda, Kattywar, Kolapore, Cutch, the Mahratta districts, Kurachee, Hyderabad, Shikarpore, Khyrpore. The last four are districts of Sinde, conquered by the late Sir Charles James Napier, and placed under the Bombay presidency as being nearer at hand than any of the others. Besides the towns similarly named to most of these districts, the following may be usefully mentioned – Goa (Portuguese), Bejapore, Bassein, Aurungabad,

Assaye, Nuseerabad, Cambay.

Lower Bengal, or the Lower Provinces of Bengal, considered as a sub-presidency or lieutenant-government, comprises all the eastern portion of British India, bounded on the east by the Burmese and Chinese Empires, and on the north by Nepaul, Sikim, and Bhotan; southward, it is washed by the Bay of Bengal; while inland or westward, it reaches to a point on the Ganges a little beyond Patna, but not so far as Benares. Fancy might compare it in shape to a dumb-bell, surmounting the upper part of the Bay of Bengal, which washes its shores throughout a distance of 900 miles. Without reckoning native states under the control of the Company, this lieutenant-governorship is considerably more than three times as large as England and Wales; and nearly the whole of it is in the basins of, or drained by, the two magnificent rivers Ganges and Brahmaputra. On the principle before adopted, we give the names of districts most likely to become familiarised to the reader – Jessore, Burdwan, Bancorah, Bhaugulpore, Monghir, Cuttack, Balasore, Midnapore, Moorshedabad, Rungpoor, Dacca, Silhet, Patna, Bahar, Chittagong, the Sunderbunds, Assam, Aracan. Most of these are also the names of towns, each the chief in its district; but there are other important towns and places not here named – including Calcutta, Cossimbazar, Barrackpore, Chandernagore, Serampore, Culpee, Purneah, Boglipore, Rajmahal, Nagore, Raneegunge, Jellasore, Dinapore, Bahar, Ramghur, Burhampore.

Northwest Bengal, or the Northwestern Provinces of the Bengal presidency, regarded as a sub-presidency or lieutenant-governorship, comprises some of the most important and densely populated districts of Northern India. It covers seven degrees of latitude and nine of longitude; or, if the portion of the 'non-regulation' districts under the control of this lieutenant-governor be included, the range extends to ten degrees of latitude and twelve of longitude. Its boundary is roughly marked by the neighbouring provinces or states of Sirhind, Kumaon, Nepaul, Oude, Lower Bengal, Rewah, Bundelcund, and Scindiah's Mahratta territory; but many of these are included among its 'non-regulation' territories. In its limited, strictly British territory, it is a little larger than England and Wales; but including the 'non-regulation' provinces, such as Kumaon, Ajmeer, Saugor, &c., it is vastly larger. As the chief city is Agra, the lieutenant-governorship is often called by that name: more convenient, perhaps, than the one officially adopted – indeed it was at one time determined, though the plan has been postponed *sine die*, to form an entirely new and distinct presidency, called the Presidency of Agra. The Ganges and the Jumna are the great rivers that permeate it. As before, we give the names of the most familiarly known divisions or districts – Delhi, Meerut, Allygurh, Rohilcund, Bareilly, Shahjehanpoor, Bijnour, Agra, Furruckabad, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Futtehpore, Benares, Gorukhpore, Azimghur, Jounpore, Mirzapore, Ghazeepore; and if to these we add the names of towns not indicated by the names

of their districts – such as Simla, Sirhind, Umballa, Loodianah, Shahabad, Buxar – it will be seen how many places noted more or less in Indian affairs lie within this province or lieutenant-governorship.

For the sake of brevity, it may here be remarked, we shall frequently, in future chapters, use the names ‘Northwest Bengal’ and ‘Lower Bengal,’ instead of the tedious designations ‘Northwestern Provinces’ and ‘Lieutenant Government of Bengal.’

As to the fifth or remaining sphere of government – that which is under the governor-general himself – it is with difficulty described; so many are the detached scraps and patches. The overworked representative of the crown, whether his name be Auckland or Ellenborough, Dalhousie or Canning, finding the governorship of Bengal too onerous when added to the governor-generalship of the whole of India, gives up his special care of Bengal, divides it into two sub-provinces, and hands it over to the two lieutenant-governors. But the increase of territory in British India has been so vast within the last few years, and the difficulty so great of deciding to which presidency they ought to belong, that they have been made into a fifth dominion or government, under the governor-general himself. The great and important country of the Punjaub, acquired a few years ago, is one of the list; it is under the governor-general, and is administered for him by a board of commissioners. The kingdom of Oude is another, annexed in 1856, and similarly represented

by residents or commissioners acting for and under the orders of the governor-general. The province of Nagpoor is a third: a large country in the very centre of India, annexed in 1853, and nearly touching all the four governorships already described. Pegu is a fourth, wrested from the sultan of Burmah, in 1852, and placed under the governor-general's administration. A fifth is Tenasserim, a strip of country stretching five hundred miles along the eastern shore of the Bay of Bengal. There are other fragments; but the above will suffice to shew that the governor-general has no inconsiderable amount of territory under his immediate control, represented by his commissioners. If we look at the names of places included within these limits, we shall be struck with their number and importance in connection with stirring events in India. In the Punjaub we find Peshawur, Attock, Rawul Pindee, Jelum, Ramnugur, Chillianwalla, Wuzeerabad, Umritsir, Lahore, Jullundur, Ghoorka, Ferozpore, Ferozshah, Moodkee; in the once independent but now British province or kingdom of Oude will be found the names of Lucknow, Oude, Fyzabad, Sultanpore, Khyrabad; in the territory of Nagpoor is the town of the same name, but other towns of any note are scarce. In Pegu and Tenasserim, both ultra-Gangetic or eastward of the Ganges, we find Rangoon, Bassein, Prome, Moulmein, and Martaban.

The reader has here before him about a hundred and forty names of places in this rapid sketch of the great divisional governments of India, mostly the names of important towns; and

– without any present details concerning modes of government, or numbers governed, natural wealth or social condition – we believe he will find his comprehension of the events of the great Revolt much aided by a little attention to this account of the five governments into which British India is at present divided. As for the *original* names of kingdoms and provinces, nawabships and rajahships, it scarcely repays the trouble to learn them: when the native chiefs were made pensioned puppets, the former names of their possessions became of lessened value, and many of them are gradually disappearing from the maps. We have ‘political residents,’ ‘government agents,’ or ‘commissioners,’ at the capital city of almost every prince in India; to denote that, though the prince may hold the trappings of royalty, there is a watchful master scrutinising his proceedings, and claiming something to do with his military forces. Such is the case at Hyderabad in the Nizam’s territory, at Khatmandoo in Nepaul, at Gwalior in Scindiah’s dominions, at Indore in Holkar’s dominions, at Bhopal, in the country of the same name, at Bhurtpore and elsewhere in the Rajpoot princes’ dominions, at Darjeeling in Sikim, at Baroda in the Guicowar’s dominions, &c.

The semi-independent princes of India – mostly rajahs if Hindoos, nawabs if Mohammedans – are certainly placed in a most anomalous position. There are nearly two hundred of these vassal-kings, if we may so term them – some owning territories as large as European kingdoms, while others claim dominion over bits of country not larger than petty German

principalities. The whole of them have treaties and engagements with the British government, involving the reciprocal obligations of protection and allegiance. Some of them pay tribute, others do not; but almost all have formally relinquished the right of self-defence, and also that of maintaining diplomatic relations with each other. The princes are regarded as children, expected to look up for protection only to their great mother, the Company. The Company undertakes not only to guarantee external safety but also internal tranquillity in these states, and is the umpire in all quarrels between native rulers. Though not called upon, and indeed not allowed, to defend themselves from an external attack, the princes mostly have armies, more for show than use under ordinary circumstances; but then they must obtain permission to do this, and they must limit the numbers; and in some cases there is a stipulation that if the British be at war in India, the prince must lend his troops. It is in this sense that the independent princes of India are said to possess, collectively, an armed force of little less than four hundred thousand men: many of them available, according to treaty, for British service.

Next, we may usefully pay a little attention to this question – How, in so immense a country, do the soldiers and subjects of these several states, British and native, travel from place to place: how do they cross mountains where passes are few, or marshes and sandy plains where roads are few and bad, or broad rivers where bridges are scarce? The distances traversed by the armies are sometimes enormous. Let us open a map of

India, and see, for example, the relative positions of Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Delhi, Peshawur, and Kurachee at the western mouth of the Indus. Delhi is nearly nine hundred miles from Bombay, more than nine hundred from Calcutta by land, fifteen or sixteen hundred miles from the same city by water-route up the Ganges and Jumna, and nearly fourteen hundred from Madras. Kurachee, the most westerly spot in India, and destined one day, perhaps, to be an important depôt for steamers from the Red Sea or the Persian Gulf, is more than sixteen hundred miles from Calcutta, nearly across the broadest part of India from east to west; while Peshawur, at the extreme northwest or Afghan frontier, acquired by England when the Punjaub was annexed, is no less than *two thousand* miles from Madras. All opinions and judgments, concerning the slowness of operations in India, must be tempered by a consideration of these vast distances.

The rivers were the great highways of that country before roads existed, as in other regions; and they have never ceased to be the most frequented routes. At least such is the case in relation to the larger rivers – such as the Ganges, Indus, Nerbudda, Kishna, Jumna, Sutlej, and Jelum. Hindoos and Mohammedans, too poor to hire horses or palkees for land-travel, may yet be able to avail themselves of their river-boats.

The native boats which work on the Ganges are numerous and curious in kind. The *patella* or baggage-boat is of saul-wood, clinker-built, and flat-bottomed, with rather slanting outsides, and not so manageable as a punt or a London barge; its great

breadth gives it a very light draught of water, and renders it fittest for the cotton and other up-country products, which require little more than a dry and secure raft to float them down the stream. The *oolak* or common baggage-boat of the Hoogly and Central Bengal, has a sharp bow and smooth rounded sides, it is fitted for tracking and sailing before the wind, and is tolerably manageable with the oar in smooth water. The *Dacca pulwar* is more weatherly, although, like the rest, without keel, and the fastest and most handy boat in use for general traffic. The *budgerow*, the *bauleah*, and the ketch-rigged pinnace, are employed by Europeans for their personal conveyance. Besides these, there are numerous others – such as the wood-boats of the Sunderbunds, of various forms and dimensions – from one hundred to six thousand maunds burden (a maund being about equal to 100 pounds troy); the salt-boats of Tumlook; the light boats which carry betel-leaf; the Calcutta *bhur*, or cargo-boat of the port; the Chittagong boats; the light *mug*-boats, with floors of a single hollowed piece of timber, and raised sides, neatly attached by sewing, with strips of bamboo over the seams; the *dinghee*; and the *panswee*— all found within the limits of the Bengal presidency. ‘A native traveller, according to his degree and substance, engages a dinghee or a panswee, a pulwar or an oolak; the man of wealth puts his baggage and attendants in these, and provides a budgerow or a pinnace for his personal accommodation. Officers of high standing in the civil or military service, travelling with a large retinue of servants and a quantity

of baggage, seldom have less than five or six boats (one of them a cooking-boat, and another fitted with an oven for baking bread): sometimes as many as fifteen when they carry their horses and equipages, and the materials of housekeeping for their comfortable establishment on arrival.'

Before Indian steamers were introduced, or Indian railways thought of, the Ganges was the great highway from Calcutta to Benares, Allahabad, and the northwestern provinces generally, in all cases where speed was not required. The Indian government used to allow their military servants two months and a half for proceeding to Benares, three to Allahabad, five to Meerut, and nine to Loodianah – periods that seem to us, in the old country, outrageous in their length. The boats were chiefly of two of the kinds mentioned in the preceding paragraph – namely, the pinnace, very European in its appearance, and the lofty sterned budgerow, peculiarly Indian. Even after steamers were placed upon the Ganges, the slow-going budgerow continued to be much used by the Company's officers, and by other persons going northwest – chiefly in cases where a family and a large quantity of luggage or personal effects had to be conveyed; for every other mode than the budgerow then becomes very costly – and will probably so continue until the great trunk-railway is completed. Budgerow boating is, it must be confessed, enough to stagnate the blood of an active man who wishes to speed onward to a scene of usefulness. As the tide ends at a few miles above Calcutta, there is a constant downward current throughout all

the rest of the Ganges; and this current has to be struggled against during the up-passage. If the wind be favourable, sails are hoisted; but if otherwise, progress is made by *gooning* or tracking, an operation performed by the greater part of the crew proceeding on shore, and with ropes attached to the mast-head, dragging the vessel bodily along: wading for hours, it may be, through nullahs or creeks more than breast high. The travellers spend much of their time on shore in the cooler hours of the morning and evening, walking, fishing, or shooting, or otherwise whiling away their time; for they can easily keep up with a boat that only makes ten miles per average day. The Company have been accustomed to make a certain allowance to each officer for boat-accommodation up the country; and it is not unusual for two or three to join in the hire of one budgerow, to their mutual comfort, and with a small saving out of their allowance. They engage an attendant dinghee as a cook-boat, to keep the culinary operations at a respectful distance; and they fit up their budgerow with camp-tables, camp-stools, charpoys or light bedsteads, copper chillumchees or wash-basins, rugs, hanging lamps, canteens, bullock or camel trunks, and a few other articles of furniture; with wine, spirits, ale, preserves, cheeses, pickles, salt meats, hams, tongues, and other provisions, which are cheaper at Calcutta than if purchased on the way; and with their wardrobes, articles for the toilet, books, chess and backgammon boards, guns, musical instruments, and other aids to lessen the tedium of a long voyage.

Hitherto, commerce has had so much more to do with this Ganges traffic than passenger travel, that the slowness of the progress was not felt: as in the instance of the canals of England, which, made for goods and not for passengers, are not blameable on the score of tardiness. The Ganges is now, as it has been for ages, the main channel for the commerce of Northern India. The produce of Europe, of Southern India, of the Eastern Archipelago, of China, brought to Calcutta by ocean-going steamers or sailing-ships, is distributed upwards to Patna, Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Cawnpore, Agra, Delhi, and other great towns, almost exclusively by the Ganges route; and the same boats which convey these cargoes, bring down the raw cotton, indigo, opium, rice, sugar, grain, rich stuffs, piece-goods, and other grown or manufactured commodities from the interior, either for consumption at Calcutta and other towns on the route, or for shipment to England and elsewhere. It is probable that the cargo-boats and the budgerows will continue to convey a largo proportion of the traffic of India, let steamers and railways make what progress they may; for there is much local trading that can be better managed by this slow, stopping, free-and-easy Ganges route of boating.

The Ganges steamers are peculiar. Each consists of two vessels, a *tug* and a *flat*, neither of which is of much use without the other. The tug contains the engine; the flat contains the passengers and cargo; and this double arrangement seems to have been adopted as a means of insuring light draught. Each

flat contains fifteen or twenty cabins, divided into three classes according to the accommodation, and obtainable at a fare of twenty to thirty pounds for each cabin for a voyage from Calcutta up to Allahabad – less in the reverse direction, because the aid of the stream shortens the voyage. Besides this, the passenger pays for all his provisions, and most of the furniture of his cabin. Every passenger is allowed to take one servant free of passage fare. The steamer proceeds only during the day, anchoring every night; and it stops every three or four days, to take coals into the tug, and to deliver and receive passengers. The chief of these stopping-places are at the towns of Berhampore, Monghir, Patna, Dinapoor, Chupra, Buxar, Ghazeepore, Benares, Chunar, and Mirzapore, all situated on the banks of the Ganges between Calcutta and Allahabad; and it is only during the two or three hours of these stoppages that the passengers have an opportunity of rambling on the shore by daylight. The tug is of iron, and drags the flat by means of hawsers and a long beam, which latter serves both as a gangway and to prevent collision between the two vessels. The East India Company first established these steamers, but others have followed their example, and help to keep up a healthy competition. The river distance to Allahabad being eight hundred miles (three hundred in excess of the land route), and the time of transit being about twenty days, this gives forty miles per day as the average rate of progress of the tug and its attendant flat or accommodation-boat. Of proposed plans for improving this Ganges steaming, we do not speak in this place.

The Indus is less traversed by boats and steamers; but, being nearer to England than the Ganges, it is becoming more and more important every year, especially since the annexation of the Punjaub by the British. The boats on the Indus take up the produce of the Persian and Arabian gulfs, Cutch, the western districts of India, and so much of the produce of Europe as is available for Sind, the Punjaub, and the northwest of India generally: taking back the produce of Afghanistan, Cashmere, the Punjaub, Sind, and the neighbouring countries. The boats on this river, having fewer European travellers, do not possess so many accommodations as those on the Ganges; the scantiness of the population, too, and the semi-barbarous condition of the natives, tend towards the same result. The Sutlej boats, mostly employed, are long and clumsy; when going downwards, the stream gives them a velocity of about two miles an hour, while the oars and sail give them barely another extra mile. They correspond, indeed, rather with our idea of a Thames coal-barge, than with that of a boat. The steersman and two oarsmen are at the stern, working with a broad paddle and two oars. The passengers occupy the rest of the vessel, in a rude bamboo cabin twelve or fourteen feet long. When the wind and the stream are unfavourable, the sail is hauled down, and tracking is resorted to. As the up-river return-voyage is exceedingly slow, a passenger travelling down towards the sea is obliged to pay for the return-voyage as well. As there are hardly any important towns on the banks below the Punjaub, except Hyderabad, a traveller is

obliged to take almost the whole of his provisions and necessaries with him. The journey up the stream is so insupportably tedious by these boats, that small steamers are generally preferred; but these require very light draught and careful handling, to prevent them from grounding on the shoals and sandbanks, which are more numerous in the Indus than in the Ganges.

River-travelling, it hence appears, is a very slow affair, ruinously inadequate to the wants of any but a population in a low scale of commercial advancement. Let us inquire, therefore, whether land-travelling is in a condition to remedy these evils.

There are so few good roads in India, that wheel-carriages can scarcely be trusted for any long distances. The prevailing modes of travel are on horseback or in a palanquin. Technically, the one mode is called *marching*; the other, *dâk*, *dakh*, or *dawk*. The former is sometimes adopted for economy; sometimes from necessity while accompanying troops; and sometimes, on short trips, through inclination; but as it is almost impossible to travel on horseback during the heat of the day, the more expensive but more regular *dâk* is in greater request. The horseman, when he adopts the equestrian system, accomplishes from twelve to twenty miles a day: sending on his servants one march or day in advance, with tent, bedding, tent-furniture, canteen, &c., in order that they may have a meal ready for the traveller by the time he arrives. They daily buy fodder, fowls, eggs, milk, rice, fruit, or vegetables at the villages as they pass through; the traveller, if a sportsman, aids the supply of his larder with snipe, wild-

fowl, quail, partridges, hares, jungle-cocks, or bustard; but a week's provision at a time must be made of all such supplies as tea, coffee, dried or preserved meats, sauces, spices, beer, or wine, at the principal towns – as these commodities are either unattainable or very costly at the smaller stations and villages. Thus the traveller proceeds, accomplishing eighty to a hundred and fifty miles per week, according to his supply of horse-relays. We may get rid of the European notions of inns and hotels on the road: the India officer must carry his hotel with him.

We come next to the *dâk* system, much more prevalent than travelling by horseback. The *dâk* is a sort of government post, available for private individuals as for officials. A traveller having planned his journey, he applies to the postmaster of the district, who requires from one to three days' notice, according to the extent of accommodation needed. The usual complement for one traveller consists of eight *palkee-burdars* or palanquin-bearers, two *mussanjees* or torch-bearers, and two *bangey-burdars* or luggage-porters: if less than this number be needed, the fact must be notified. The time and place of starting, and the duration and localities of the halts, must also be stated; for everything is to be paid beforehand, on the basis of a regular tariff. The charge is about one shilling per mile for the entire set of twelve men – shewing at how humble a rate personal services are purchasable in India. There is also an extra charge for demurrage or delays on the road, attributable to the traveller himself. For these charges, the postmaster undertakes that there shall be relays

of dâk servants throughout the whole distance, even if it be the nine hundred miles from Calcutta to Delhi; and to insure this, he writes to the different villages and post stations, ordering relays to be ready at the appointed hours. The stages average about ten miles each, accomplished in three hours; at the end of which time the twelve men retrace their steps, and are succeeded by another twelve; for each set of men belong to a particular station, in the same way as each team of horses for an English stage-coach belongs to a particular town. The rivers and streams on the route are mostly crossed by ferry-boats, for bridges are scarce in India; and this ferrying is included in the fare charged by the postmaster; although the traveller is generally expected to give a small fee, the counterpart to the 'drink-money' of Europe, to ferrymen as well as bearers. The *palanquin*, *palankeen*, or *palkee*, is a kind of wooden box opening at the sides by sliding shutters; it is about six feet in length by four in height, and is suspended by two poles, borne on the shoulders of four men. The eight bearers relieve one another in two gangs of four each. The postmaster has nought to do with the palanquin; this is provided by the traveller; and on its judicious selection depends much of his comfort during the journey, for a break-down entails a multitude of petty miseries. The average value of a palanquin may be about ten pounds; and the traveller can generally dispose of it again at the end of his journey. On account of the weight, nothing is carried that can be easily dispensed with; but the traveller manages to fit up his palanquin with a few books, his shaving and

washing apparatus, his writing materials, and a few articles in frequent use. The regular fittings of the palanquin are a cushion or bed, a bolster, and a few light coverings. The traveller's luggage is mostly carried in *petarrahs*, tin boxes or wicker-baskets about half a yard square: a porter can carry two of these; and one or two porters will suffice for the demands of any ordinary traveller, running before or by the side of the palanquin. The *petarrahs* are hung, each from one end of a *bangey* or bamboo pole, the middle of which rests on the bearer's shoulder. The torch-bearers run by the side of the palanquin to give light during night-travelling; the torch is simply a short stick bound round at one end with a piece of rag or a tuft of hemp, on which oil is occasionally dropped from a flask or a hollow bamboo; the odour of the oil-smoke is disagreeable, and most travellers are glad to dispense with the services of a second torch-bearer.

Bishop Heber's journey from Delhi to Benares was a good example of *dâk*-travelling in his day; and the system has altered very little since. He had twelve bearers, on account of his route lying partly through a broken country. His clothes and writing-desk were placed in the two *petarrahs*, carried by the two *bangey-burdars*. 'The men set out across the meadows at a good round trot of about four miles an hour, grunting all the way like paviors in England: a custom which, like paviors, they imagine eases them under their burden.' Only four men can usually put their shoulders to a palanquin at the same time; but the bishop observed that whenever they approached a deep nullah

or steep bank, the bearers who were not at that time bearing the palanquin, but were having their interval of rest, thrust stout bamboos under the bottom of the palanquin, and took hold of the ends on each side; so that the strength of several additional men was brought into requisition. In crossing a stream, 'the boat (the spot being a regular ferry), a broad and substantial one, had a platform of wood covered with clay across its middle. The palanquin, with me in it, was placed on this with its length athwart the middle; the manglee steered, and some of the dâk-bearers took up oars, so that we were across in a very short time.'

Private dâks are occasionally employed, a speculator undertaking to supply the bearers. Having no large establishments to keep up, these men can afford to undersell the government – that is, establish a lower tariff; and they provide a little additional accommodation in other ways. Some travellers, however, think these speculators or *chowdries* not sufficiently to be trusted, and prefer the government dâk at higher rates. Experienced men will sometimes dispense with the preliminary of 'laying a dâk,' or arranging for the whole journey: depending on their own sagacity for hunting up bearers at the successive stations. There have also been introduced horse-dâks, wheeled palanquins drawn by horses; but these are only available on the great trunk-roads recently executed by the government.

It was observed, in relation to 'marching' or horse-travelling, that there are no hotels or inns on the road; there is a partial substitute, however, that may here be noticed. The Company

have established dâk-bungalows at certain stations, varying from fifteen to fifty miles apart, according as the road is much or little frequented. These places are under the control of government officers: a *khitmutgar* or servant, and a porter, attend at each; the traveller pays a fixed sum for the use of the room, and makes a separate bargain for any few articles of provisions that may be obtainable. The building is little more than a thatched house of one story, divided into two small rooms, to each of which a bathing-room is attached. The servant cooks and serves a meal, while the porter assists in subsidiary offices. If a traveller does not choose to avail himself of these bungalows, he can travel continuously in his palanquin, sleeping and waking by turns. This, however, is a great trial for most persons; because the bearers make an unpleasant grunting noise as an accompaniment to their movements; and moreover, unless well drilled, they do not balance the palanquin well, but subject its inmate to distressing joltings.

1. Dirgee – tailor. 2. *Khitmutgar* writing the accounts of the previous day. 3. Sepoy after parade. 4. *Maitre*, or house-cleaner. 5. *Dobee* – washerman. 6. *Chuprassee* going out with gun before a shooting-party. 7. *Chuprassee* – letter-carrier. 8. Bengalee Pundit, or scholar.

It has been placed upon record, as an instructive commentary on the immense distances to be traversed in India, the imperfection of most of the roads, and the primitive detail of travelling arrangements – that when Viscount Hardinge

was engaged in the Punjaub campaign in 1846, one hundred European officers were sent off from Calcutta to aid him. Although the distance was nearly fifteen hundred miles, nothing more rapid than palanquin travelling was available; and, as a consequence, the journey became so tediously prolonged that only thirty out of the hundred officers arrived at the Sutlej before the campaign was over. Palanquin-bearers were posted at different stations to carry three persons daily; and it was calculated that, assuming twelve bearers to be posted at every station, and the stations eight miles apart on an average, the duty must have required the services of *seven thousand* of these men – all to carry one hundred officers: a waste of muscular energy singular to contemplate by the light of an Englishman's home experience.

The Indian post is still more simple than the dâk. It is conducted by runners, each of whom slings his mail-bag on the end of a stick over his shoulder. He runs five miles in an hour, and then gives his bag to another man, who runs five miles in an hour; and so on. Strictly speaking, dâk is an appellation properly belonging to this letter-carrying system. It is equivalent to the English *post*; and as the English have adopted the custom of applying the term post to quick travelling as well as to letter-carrying, in like manner have the Anglo-Indians adopted a double application of the word dâk. It is only the express or quick dâk which maintains a speed of five miles an hour; the ordinary speed, when the letter-bag is heavy, is four miles. In

order that the runners may not be required to go far from their homes, each man carries his bag one stage, exchanges bags with another runner who has come in the opposite direction, and then returns. A letter may thus be conveyed a hundred miles in a day – a distance which, considering the nature of the system, is quite as great as can reasonably be expected. Horse and camel dâks are occasionally employed; but they are not easily available, except on good roads. Besides the letter-dâk, there is a parcel-dâk or *bangey*, the runner carrying a packet or box, in which small parcels or newspapers are placed.

It will become a duty, in a later portion of this work, to notice somewhat fully the railway schemes of India, in relation to the plans for developing the industrial resources of that great region; but at present this would be out of place, since the Revolt has been dependent on the actual, not the prospective. This actuality, so far as concerns means and modes of travelling, is summed up in a few words. An Indian officer, we have seen, must travel to his station by horse or by palanquin if on land, by drag-boat or by steam-boat if on the rivers. In any case his rate of progress is slow; his movements are encumbered by a train of servants, by a whole bazarful of furniture and culinary apparatus, and by an anxiously selected provision for his larder. To move quickly is well-nigh impossible: all the conditions for it are wanting. Improvements, it is true, are in progress: steamers of light draught and rapid movement are being planned for the rivers; the great trunk-road from Calcutta to

the Afghan frontier is beginning to offer facilities for wheel-carriage transport; and the railways are beginning to shew their iron tracks in various regions; nevertheless, these are rather indications of the future than appliances for the present; and the Indian officers are not yet in a position to say much about them from personal experience. The humbler soldiers, whether Europeans or sepoys, are of course less favourably served than the officers. There is no Weedon in India, connected by rail with a Chatham, a Portsmouth, a Liverpool, a Leeds, along which a whole regiment can be conveyed in a few hours; and as saddle-horses and palanquins are out of the question for infantry privates, it becomes necessary to trudge on foot along such roads as may be available, or to linger on the tardy river route. Once now and then, it is true, a daring man, a Napier or an Edwardes, will swiftly send a small body of troops over a sandy desert or a marshy plain on camels, horses, elephants, or some exceptional modes of conveyance; but the prevalent characteristics of travel are such as have here been described, and such will doubtless be the case for many years to come.

Such, then, being the territorial arrangements by which Anglo-Indian troops are considered to belong to different presidencies and states; and such the modes in which military as well as civilians must move from place to place in those territories; we shall be prepared next to understand something about the soldiers themselves – the Anglo-Indian army.

In no country in Europe is there an army so anomalous in

its construction as that which, until lately, belonged to the East India Company. Different kinds of troops, and troops from different provinces, we can well understand. For instance, the French avail themselves of a few Algerine Arabs, and a small foreign legion, as components in the regular army. The English have a few colonial corps in addition to the Queen's army. The Prussians have a *landwehr* or militia equal in magnitude to the regular army itself. The Russians have military colonists as well as military tributaries, in addition to the great *corps d'armée*. The Austrians have their peculiar Military Frontier regiments, besides the regular troops furnished by the dozen or score of distinct provinces and kingdoms which form their empire. The German States provide their several contingents to form (if the States can ever bring themselves to a unity of opinion) an Army of the Confederation. The Neapolitans employ Swiss mercenaries as a portion of their army. The Romans, the subjects of the pope as a temporal prince, have the 'protection' of French and Austrian bayonets, in addition to a small native force. The Turks have their regular army, aided (or sometimes obstructed) by the contingents of vassal-pachas and the irregulars from mountain districts. But none of these resemble the East India Company's army. Under an ordinary state of affairs, and without reference to the mutiny of 1857, the Indian army is in theory a strange conglomerate. The Queen *lends* some of her English troops, for which the Company pay; the Company enlist other English troops on their own account; they maintain

three complete armies among the natives of India who are their subjects; they raise irregular corps or regiments in the states not so fully belonging to them; they claim the services of the troops belonging to certain tributary princes, whenever exigency arises; and the whole of these troops are placed under the generalship of a commander-in-chief, who is appointed – not by the Company, who have to pay for all – but by the Queen or the British government.

The Company's army rose by degrees, as the territorial possessions increased. At first the troops were little better than adventurers who sold their swords to the highest bidders, and fought for pay and rations without regard to the justice of the cause in which they were engaged; many were liberated convicts, many were deserters from various European armies, some were Africans, while a few were Topasses, a mixed race of Indo-Portuguese. The first regular English troops seen in Bengal were an ensign and thirty privates, sent from Madras to quell a petty disturbance at the Company's factory in the Hoogly. Gradually, as the numbers increased and the organisation improved, the weapons underwent changes. The troops originally were armed with muskets, swords, and pikes twelve or fourteen feet long: the pikemen in the centre of the battalion or company, and the musketeers on the flank. In the beginning of the last century the pikes were abandoned, and the soldiers armed with bayonets in addition to the muskets and swords. When the custom was adopted, from European example, of forming the companies

into a regular battalion, the swords were abolished, and the common soldiers left only with muskets and bayonets. Various changes were made during the century, assimilating the troops more and more to those of the English crown, in weapons and accoutrements.

The regiments became, by successive ameliorations, composed almost wholly of native Hindoos and Mohammedans, officered to some extent by Europeans. An English sergeant was given to each company, and a drill-sergeant and sergeant-major to each battalion. Afterwards, when the battalions were formed into regiments, natives were appointed as sergeants of companies; and then the only European non-commissioned officers were a sergeant-major and a quartermaster-sergeant. By the time of Lord Clive's achievements, just about a century ago, three armies were owned by the Company – one in Bengal or the Calcutta presidency, one in the Coromandel or Madras presidency, and one on the Malabar coast, south of the present station of Bombay. These three armies were totally separate and distinct, each under its own commander, and each presenting some peculiarities of organisation; but they occasionally joined as one army for large military operations. There were many native corps, and a few European corps; but all alike were officered by Europeans. The cadet, the young man sent out from England to 'make his fortune' in India, was appointed to a native corps or a European corps at the choice of the commander. The pay being good and regular, and the customs and prejudices

respected, the sepoy, sipahi, or native soldiers became in most cases faithful servants to the Company, obeying their native officers, who, in their turn, were accountable to the European officers. The European and the native corps were alike formed by enlistment: the Company compelling no one to serve but those who deemed the pay and other arrangements sufficient. An endeavour was made at that time (afterwards abandoned) to equalise the Hindoos and Mohammedans in numbers as nearly as possible.

From an early period in the Company's history, a certain number of regiments from the British royal army were lent for Indian service; the number being specified by charter or statute; and the whole expense, of every kind, being defrayed by the Company – including, by a more modern arrangement, retiring pay and pensions. There were thus, in effect, at all times two English armies in India; the one enlisted by the Company, the other lent by the Crown; and it was a matter of some difficulty to obviate jealousies and piques between the two corps. For, on the one hand, the officers of the Company's troops had better pay and more profitable stations assigned to them; while, on the other hand, the royal officers had precedence and greater honour. A Company's captain, however so many years he might have served, was subordinate even to the youngest royal captain, who assumed command over him by right. At length, in 1796, the commissions received by the Company's officers were recognised by the crown; and the two corps became placed on a

level in pay and privileges.

The year just named witnessed a new organisation also of the native army. A regiment was ordered to be of two thousand men, in two corps or battalions of one thousand each; and each battalion was divided into ten companies, with two native officers to each company. Thus there were forty native officers in each of these large regiments. Besides these, there were half as many European officers as were allowed to a European regiment of the same magnitude. There had before been a native commandant to each battalion; but he was now superseded by a European field-officer, somewhat to the dissatisfaction of the men. The service occasionally suffered from this change; for a regiment was transferred at once from a native who had risen to command by experience and good conduct, to a person sent out from England who had to learn his duties as a leader of native troops after he went out. The youngest English ensign, perhaps a beardless boy, received promotion before any native, however old and tried in the service. And hence arose the custom, observed down to recent times, of paying no attention to the merits of the natives as a spur to promotion, allowing seniority to determine the rise from one grade to another.

While on the one hand the natives volunteered as soldiers in the Company's service, and were eligible to rise to a certain rank as regimental officers; the English officers, on the other, had their own particular routine and hopes of preferment. The cadets or youths went out partially educated by the Company in

England, especially those intended for the artillery and engineer departments; and when settled with their regiments in India as officers, all rose by seniority; the engineers and artillery in their own corps, the cavalry and infantry in their own regiments. It often happened, however, that when few deaths occurred by war, officers reached middle life without much advancement, and retired after twenty years or more of service with the pay of the rank they then held. In 1836, however, a law was made to insure that the retiring allowance should not be below a certain minimum: if an officer served twenty-three years, he retired with captain's pay; if twenty-seven years, with major's pay; if thirty-one years, with lieutenant-colonel's pay; if thirty-five years, with colonel's pay – whatever might have been his actual rank at the date of his retirement. There was also permission for them to sell their commissions, although those commissions were not bought by them in the first instance.

Unquestionably the sepoy was well paid, considering the small value of labour and personal services in his country; and thus it arose that the Company had seldom any difficulty in obtaining troops. The sepoys were volunteers in the full sense of the word. Their pay, though small in our estimation, was high in proportion to the station they formerly held. The Bengal Infantry sepoy received seven rupees (fourteen shillings) per month, with an additional rupee after sixteen years' service, and two after twenty years. A havildar or sergeant received fourteen rupees; a jemadar or lieutenant twenty-four rupees; and a subadar or captain sixty-

seven rupees. This pay was relatively so good, that each man was usually able to send two-thirds of it to his relations. And he was not a stranger to them at the end of his term, like a Russian soldier; for it was a part of the system to allow him periodical furlough or leave of absence, to visit his friends. If unfit for military service after fifteen months' duty, he retired on a life-pension sufficient to support him in his own simple way of life. Whether he *ought*, in moral fairness, to be grateful towards the rulers who fed and clothed him, is just one of those questions on which Indian officers have differed and still differ. Viewed by the aid of the experience furnished by recent events, many of the former encomiums on the sepoys, as men grateful for blessings conferred, read strangely. The Marquis of Dalhousie's statement, that 'The position of the native soldier in India has long been such as to leave hardly any circumstance of his condition in need of improvement,' has already been adverted to. To this we may add the words of Captain Rafter: 'We assert, on personal knowledge and reliable testimony, that the attachment of the sepoy to his English officer, and through him to the English government, is of an enduring as well as an endearing nature, that will long bid defiance to the machinations of every enemy to British supremacy, either foreign or domestic.'³ In another authority we find that the sepoy, when his term of military service has expired, 'goes back to live in ease and dignity, to teach his children to love and venerate that mighty abstraction

³ *Our Anglo-Indian Army.*

the Company, and to extend the influence of England still further throughout the ramifications of native society. Under such a system, although temporary insubordination may and sometimes does occur in particular regiments, it is invariably caused by temporary grievances. General disaffection cannot exist – desertion is unknown.’ But the validity or groundlessness of such opinions we do not touch upon here: they must be reserved to a later chapter, when the *causes* of the mutiny will come under review. We pass on at once, therefore, from this brief notice of the origin of the Company’s army, to its actual condition at and shortly before the period of the outbreak.

Should it be asked what, during recent years, has been the number of troops in India, the answer must depend upon the scope given to the question. If we mention Queen’s troops only, the number has been usually about 24,000; if Queen’s troops and the Company’s European troops, about 42,000; if the Company’s native regulars be added to these, the number rises to 220,000; if the Company’s irregular corps of horse be included, there are 280,000; if it include the contingents supplied by native princes, the number amounts to 320,000; and lastly, if to these be added the armies of the independent and semi-independent princes, more or less available by treaty to the Company, the total swells to 700,000 men.

As exhibiting in detail the component elements of the Company’s Anglo-Indian army at a definite period, the following enumeration by Captain Rafter may be adopted, as applicable to

the early part of 1855. Certain minor changes were made in the two years from that date to the commencement of the outbreak; but these will be noticed in later pages when necessary, and do not affect the general accuracy of the list. The three presidencies are kept separate, and the three kinds of troops – regiments of the royal army, the Company's native regular regiments, and native irregular regiments – are also kept separate.

First we take the Bengal presidency in all its completeness, stretching almost entirely across Northern India from the Burmese frontier on the east, to the Afghan frontier on the west:

BENGAL PRESIDENCY

Queen's Troops

- Two regiments of light cavalry.
- Fifteen regiments of infantry.
- One battalion of 60th Rifles.

Company's Regular Troops

- Three brigades of horse-artillery, European and native.
- Six battalions of European foot-artillery.
- Three battalions of native foot-artillery.

- Corps of Royal Engineers.
- Ten regiments of native light cavalry.
- Two regiments of European fusiliers.
- Seventy-four regiments of native infantry.
- One regiment of Sappers and Miners.

Irregular and Contingent Troops

- Twenty-three regiments of irregular native cavalry.
- Twelve regiments of irregular native infantry.
- One corps of Guides.
- One regiment of camel corps.
- Sixteen regiments of local militia.
- Shekhawuttie brigade.
- Contingents of Gwalior, Jhodpore, Malwah, Bhopal, and Kotah.

The European troops here mentioned, in the Company's regular army, are those who have been enlisted in England or elsewhere by the Company's agents, quite irrespective of the royal or Queen's army. The above forces, altogether, amounted to somewhat over 150,000 men. Let us now glance at another presidency:

MADRAS PRESIDENCY

Queen's Troops

- One regiment of light cavalry.
- Five regiments of infantry.

Company's Regular Troops

- One brigade of horse-artillery, European and native.
- Four battalions of European foot-artillery.
- One battalion of native foot-artillery.
- Corps of Royal Engineers.
- Eight regiments of native light cavalry.
- Two regiments of European infantry.
- Fifty-two regiments of native infantry.

No irregular or contingent troops appear in this entry.

BOMBAY PRESIDENCY

Queen's Troops

- One regiment of light cavalry.
- Five regiments of infantry.

Company's Regular Troops

- One brigade of horse-artillery, European and native.
- Two battalions of European foot-artillery.
- Two battalions of native foot-artillery.
- Corps of Royal Engineers.
- Three regiments of native light cavalry.
- Two regiments of European infantry.
- Twenty-nine regiments of native infantry.

Irregular and Contingent Troops

- Fifteen regiments of irregular native troops.

The European and the native troops of the Company are not here separated, although in effect they form distinct regiments. So costly are all the operations connected with the Anglo-Indian

army, that it has been calculated that every English soldier employed in the East, whether belonging to the Queen's or to the Company's forces, costs, on an average, one hundred pounds before he becomes available for service, including his outfit, his voyage, his marching and barracking in India. This of course relates to the privates; an officer's cost is based upon wholly distinct grounds, and can with difficulty be estimated. The greatly increased expenditure of the Company on military matters has partly depended on the fact that the European element in the armies has been regularly augmenting: in 1837 there were 28,000 European troops in India; in 1850 the number was 44,000, comprising 28,000 Queen's troops, and 16,000 belonging to the Company; while the new charter of 1854 allowed the Company to raise 24,000, of whom 4000 were to be in training in England, and the rest on service in India. What was the number in 1857, becomes part of the history of the mutiny. In the whole Indian army, a year or two before this catastrophe, there were about 5000 European officers, governing the native as well as the European regiments; but of this number, so many were absent on furlough or leave, so many more on staff appointments, and so many of the remainder in local corps and on civil duties, that there was an insufficiency of regimental control – leading, as some authorities think, in great part to the scenes of insubordination; for the native officers, as we shall presently see, were regarded in a very subordinate light. There was a commander-in-chief for each of the three presidencies,

controlling the three armies respectively; while one of the three, the commander-in-chief of the Bengal army, held at the same time the office of commander-in-chief of the whole of the armies of India, in order that there might be a unity of plan and purpose in any large combined operations. Thus, when Sir Colin Campbell went out to India in the summer of 1857, his power was to be exerted over the armies of the whole of India generally, as well as over that of Bengal in particular.

Continuing to speak of the Indian army as it was before the year 1857, and thereby keeping clear of the changes effected or commenced in that year, we proceed to mention a few more circumstances connected with the Company's European element in that army. The formation of an Indian officer commenced in England. As a youth, from fourteen to eighteen years of age, he was admitted to the Company's school at Addiscombe, after an ordeal of recommendations and testimonials, and after an examination of his proficiency in an ordinary English education, in which a modicum of Latin was also expected. A probation of six months was gone through, to shew whether he possessed the requisite abilities and inclination; and if this probation were satisfactory, his studies were continued for two years. His friends paid the larger portion of the cost of his maintenance and education at the school. If his abilities and progress were of a high class, he was set apart for an appointment in the engineers; if next in degree, in the artillery; and if the lowest in degree, for the infantry. At the end of his term the pupil must have

attained to a certain amount of knowledge, of which, however, very little was professional. Supposing all to be satisfactory, he became a military *cadet* in the service of the Company, to be available for Indian service as occasion arose. Having joined one of the regiments as the lowest commissioned officer, his subsequent advancement depended in part on his qualifications and in part on seniority. He could not, by the more recent regulations of the Company, become a captain until he had acquired, besides his professional efficiency, a knowledge of the spoken and written Hindustani language, and of the Persian written character, much used in India. When placed on the general staff, his services might be required in any one of a number of ways quite unknown in the Queen's service in England: he might have a civil duty, or be placed at the head of the police in a tract of country recently evacuated by the military, or be made an adjutant, auditor, quartermaster, surveyor, paymaster, judge-advocate, commissary-general, brigade-major, aid-de-camp, barrack-master, or clothing agent. Many of these offices being lucrative, the military liked them; but such a bestowal created some jealousy among the civil servants of the Company, whose prizes in the Indian lottery were thereby diminished; and, what was worse, it shook the connection between an officer and his regiment, rendering him neither able nor willing to throw his sympathies into his work. No officer could hold any of these staff appointments, as they were called, until he had been two years in the army.

The officers noticed in the last paragraph were appointed to the command both of European and of native regiments. As to privates and non-commissioned officers in the European regiments, they were much the same class of men, and enlisted much in the same way, as those in the Queen's army. The privates or sepoys of the native regiments were of course different, not only from Europeans, but different among themselves. Four-fifths of the Bengal native infantry were Hindoos, mainly of the Brahmin and Rajpoot castes; and the remainder Mohammedans. On the other hand, three-fourths of the Bengal native cavalry were Mohammedans, the Hindoos being generally not equal to them as troopers. In the Madras native army, the Mohammedans predominated in the cavalry, while the infantry comprised the two religions in nearly equal proportions. In Bombay, nearer the nations of Western Asia, the troops comprised volunteers of many countries and many religions – more easily managed, our officers found, on that account.

Without at present going into the question how far the religious feelings and caste prejudices of the natives induced a revolt, it may be useful to shew how a regiment was constituted, of what materials, and in what gradations. An infantry regiment in the Bengal presidency will serve as a type.

The organisation of a Bengal native regiment, before the mutiny, was nearly as follows: An infantry regiment consisted of about 1000 privates, 120 non-commissioned officers, and 20 native commissioned officers. It was divided into ten

companies, each containing one-tenth of the above numbers. When stationary, the regiment seldom had barracks, but was quartered in ten lines of thatched huts, one row for each company. In front of each row was a small circular building for containing the arms and accoutrements of that particular company, under the charge of a *havildar* or native sergeant. All these natives rose by a strict rule of seniority: the sepoy or private soldier becoming a *naik* or corporal, the *naik* being promoted to be *havildar* or sergeant, the *havildar* in time assuming the rank of *jemadar* or lieutenant, and the *jemadar* becoming a *subadar* or captain. All these promotions were necessarily slow; for the English colonel of the regiment had very little power to promote a worthy native officer or non-commissioned officer to a higher rank. The *jemadar* often became a gray-headed man of sixty before he rose to the rank of *subadar*, the highest attainable by a native. As a rule, there were four or five Hindoos to one Mohammedan in a Bengal infantry regiment; and of these eight hundred Hindoos, it was not unfrequent to find four hundred Brahmins or hereditary priests, and two hundred Rajpoots, a military caste only a little lower in rank than the former; while the remaining two hundred were low-caste Hindoos. The European officers, as will be explained more fully further on, lived in bungalows or detached houses near the lines of their regiment; but as the weather is too hot to admit of much open-air duty in the daytime, these officers saw less of their men than is customary in European armies, or than is necessary for the due preservation

of discipline. The head of a regiment was the commander, generally a lieutenant-colonel; below him was an adjutant, who attended to the drill and the daily reports; below him was a quartermaster and interpreter, whose double duties were to look after the clothes and huts of the men, and to interpret or translate orders. Besides these three, there were ten subordinate officers for the ten companies, each expected to make a morning scrutiny into the condition and conduct of his men. The Europeans in a native regiment were thus fourteen or fifteen. It is true that the *theory* of a regiment involved a complement of about five-and-twenty European officers; but the causes of absenteeism, lately adverted to, generally brought down the effective number to about twelve or fifteen. The arrangements of the infantry in the other presidencies, and of the native cavalry all over India, each had their peculiarities.

Leaving for future chapters a further elucidation of the relations between the European officers and the native troops – so important in connection with the Revolt – and a description of the sepoys in their dresses, usages, and personal characteristics – we shall now proceed to view the native army under two different aspects – first, when barracked and cantoned in time of peace; and, secondly, when on the march towards a scene of war.

And first, for the army when stationary. At Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras, there are solidly built barracks for the whole of the soldiery, men as well as officers; but in almost all other parts of India the arrangements are of a slighter and less permanent

character. At the cantonments, it is true, the officers have houses; but the sepoy is lodged in huts of their own construction. Around the cantonments at the stations, and generally skirting the parade-grounds, are the houses or bungalows of the officers. Within the lines of the cantonment, too, the officers' mess-rooms are situated; and at the larger stations may be seen ball-rooms, theatres, and racket-courts; while outside is a race-stand for witnessing the sports which Englishmen love in India as well as at home.

1. Subadar – major. 2. Jemadar – Lieutenant. 3. Subadar – Captain. 4. Naik – Corporal. 5. Havildar – Sergeant. 6. Sepoy – Private.

The Indian bungalows, the houses inhabited by European officers at the different towns and stations in India, have a certain general resemblance, although differing of course much in details. A bungalow of good size has usually a central room called the hall, a smaller room opening on the front verandah, a similar one opening on the back verandah, three narrower rooms on each side of these three, and bathing-rooms at the four corners. A verandah runs entirely round the exterior. The central hall has only the borrowed light derived from eight or a dozen doors leading out of the surrounding apartments: these doors are always open; but the doorways are covered, when privacy is desired, with the *chick*, a sort of gauze-work of green-painted strips of fine bamboo, admitting air and light, but keeping out flies and mosquitoes. The floors are usually of *chunam*, finely

tempered clay, covered with matting, and then with a sort of blue-striped carpet or with printed calico. The exterior is usually barn-like and ugly, with its huge roof, tiled or thatched, sloping down to the pillars of the verandah. Air and shade are the two desiderata in every bungalow, and adornment is wisely sacrificed to these. The finest part of the whole is the surrounding space or garden, called the *compound*, from a Portuguese word. The larger the space allowed for this compound, the more pleasant is the residence in its centre, and the more agreeable to the eye is a cantonment of such bungalows. The trees and fruits in these enclosures are delicious to the sight, and most welcome to the heat-wearied occupants of the dwellings. Officers in the Company's service, whether military or civil, live much under canvas during the hot seasons, at some of the stations; and the tents they use are much larger and more like regular habitations than those known in Europe. The tents are double, having a space of half a yard or so between the two canvas walls, to temper the heat of the sun. The double-poled tents are large enough to contain several apartments, and are furnished with glass-doors to fit into the openings. A wall of canvas separates the outer offices and bathing-rooms. Gay chintz for wall-linings, and printed cotton carpets, give a degree of smartness to the interior. Movable stoves, or else fire-dishes for wood-fuel called *chillumchees*, are provided as a resource against the chill that often pervades the air in the evening of a hot day. The tents for the common soldiers hold ten men each with great ease, and have

a double canvas wall like the others.

An important part of every cantonment is the bazaar, situated in convenient proximity to the huts or tents of the troops. It comprises an enormous number of sutlers, who sell to the soldiers those commodities which cannot well be dispensed with, but which cannot conveniently be provided and carried about by them. Curry stuffs, tobacco, rice, arrack (in addition to the Company's allowance), cotton cloth, and a multiplicity of other articles, are sold at these bazaars; and the market-people who supply these things, with their families, the coolies or porters, and their hackeries or carts – add enormously to the mass that constitutes an Indian cantonment. The sepoy has little to spend with his sixpence a day; but then his wants are few; and his copper *pice*, somewhat larger than the English farthing, will buy an amount of necessaries little dreamed of in England. The Hindoos have such peculiar notions connected with food and cooking, that the government leave them as much to themselves as possible in those matters; and the bazaar and sutlers' arrangements assume a particular importance from this circumstance.

An Anglo-Indian army we have seen at rest, in cantonments. Now let us trace it when on a march to a scene of war; but while describing this in the *present* tense, we must make allowance for the changes which the Revolt has inevitably produced.

The non-fighting men who accompany the troops greatly exceed in number the troops themselves. Captain Munro says: 'It would be absurd for a captain to think of taking the field

without being attended by the following enormous retinue – namely, a *dubash* (agent or commissioner), a cook, and a *maty* boy (servant-of-all-work); if he cannot get bullocks, he must assemble fifteen or twenty *coolies* to carry his baggage, together with a horse-keeper and grass-cutter, and sometimes a dulcinea and her train, having occasionally the assistance of a barber, a washer, and an ironer, in common with the other officers of his regiment. His tent is furnished with a good large bed, mattress, pillows, &c., a few camp stools or chairs, a folding table, a pair of glass shades for his candles, six or seven trunks, with table equipage, his stock of linens (at least twenty-four suits), some dozens of wine, porter, brandy, and gin; with tea, sugar, and biscuit, a hamper of live poultry, and his milch-goat. A private's tent for holding his servants and the overplus of his baggage is also requisite; but this is not at the Company's expense.' Of course it must be inferred that all this luxury belongs to the best of times only, and is not available in the exigency of sudden military movements. The sepoys or common soldiers, too, have their satellites. Each man is accompanied by his whole family, who live upon his pay and allowances of rice from the Company. Every trooper or horse-soldier, too, has his grass-cutter; for it is a day's work for one person to dig, cut, and prepare a day's grass for one horse.

When on the march, the tents are generally struck soon after midnight. At the first tap of the drum, the servants knock up the tent-pins, and down fall the tents; horses begin to neigh and

the camels to cry, the elephants and camels receive their loads of camp-equipage, the bullocks are laden with the officers' tents and boxes, the coolies take up their burdens, and all prepare for the road. During the noise and bustle of these preliminaries, the officers and men make their few personal arrangements, aided by their servants or families; while the officers' cooks and agents are sent on in advance, to prepare breakfast at the next halting-place. Between one and two o'clock the regiments start off, in columns of sections: the camp-followers, baggage, bullocks, elephants, and camels, bringing up the rear. The European soldiers do not carry their own knapsacks on the march; they have the luxury of cook-boys or attendants, who render this service for them. The natives, it is found, are able to carry heavier loads than the Europeans; or – what is perhaps more nearly the case – they bear the burdens more patiently, as the Europeans love soldiering better than portering. The tedium of the journey is sometimes relieved by a hunt after antelopes, hares, partridges, wild ducks, or wild boars, which the officers may happen to espy, according to the nature of the country through which they are passing. Arrived at the halting-place, everything is quickly prepared for a rest and a breakfast; the quarter-masters push forward to occupy the ground; the elephants and camels are disburdened of the tents; the natives and the cattle plunge into some neighbouring pool or tank to refresh themselves; the cooks have been already some time at work; and the officers sit down to a breakfast of tea, coffee, curry, rice, pillau, ham, and other

obtainable dishes. The fakeers often recognise their friends or admirers among the natives of the cavalcade, and give loud blessings, and tom-tom drummings, in exchange for donations of the smallest Indian coins. The quarter-masters' arrangements are so quickly and so neatly made, that in a short time the general's *darbar* appears in the centre of a street of tents for staff-officers, dining-tents on the one side and sleeping-tents on the other; while the bazaar-dealers open their temporary shops in the rear. The horses are picketed in long lines; while the elephants and camels browse or rest at leisure. Under ordinary circumstances, the day's marching is over by nine o'clock in the morning, at which hour the sun's heat becomes too fierce to be willingly borne. Repose, amusements, and light camp-duties fill up the remainder of the day, to be followed by a like routine on the morrow.

While one of these extraordinary marches is in progress, 'when the moving masses are touched here and there by the reddening light of the dawn, it seems to be a true migration, with flocks and herds, cattle loaded with baggage, men, women, and children, all in a chaos of disorder but the troops whose wants and wishes have attracted this assemblage. At length the country appears to awake from its sleep, and with the yell of the jackal, or the distant baying of the village dogs, are heard to mingle the voices of human beings. Ruddier grows the dawn, warmer the breeze, and the light-hearted sepoy, no longer shivering with cold, gives vent to the joyous feelings of morning in songs and laughter. The scenes become more striking, and

the long array of tall camels, led by natives in picturesque costume, with here and there a taller elephant mingling with droves of loaded bullocks, give it a new and extraordinary character to a European imagination. The line of swarthy sepoy figures, contrasts favourably with the shorter and plainer soldiers of Britain; the grave mechanical movements of the regular cavalry in their light-blue uniforms are relieved by the erratic evolutions and gay and glittering dresses of the irregulars, who with loud cries and quivering spears, and their long black locks streaming behind them, spur backwards and forwards like the wind from mere exuberance of spirits... The camp-followers in the meantime present every possible variety of costume; and among them, and not the least interesting figures in the various groups, may frequently be seen the pet lambs of which the sepoy is so fond, dressed in necklaces of ribbons and white shells, and the tip of their tails, ears, and feet dyed orange colour. The womenkind of the troops of the Peninsula (Southern India) usually follow the drum; but the Bengalees have left their families at home; and the Europeans bidden adieu to their temporary wives with the air the band strikes up on quitting the station, "The girl I left behind me."⁴

Such, before the great Revolt, were the usual characteristics of an Anglo-Indian army when on the march; and, considering the *impedimenta*, it is not surprising that the daily progress seldom

⁴ Leitch Ritchie. *British World in the East*.

exceeded ten or twelve miles. The system was very costly, even at the cheap rate of Indian service; for the camp-followers, one with another, were ten times as numerous as the troops; and all, in one way or other, lived upon or by the Company.

Note

A parliamentary paper, issued in 1857 on the motion of Colonel Sykes, affords valuable information on some of the matters treated in this chapter. It is 'A Return of the Area and Population of each Division of each Presidency of India, from the Latest Inquiries; comprising, also, the Area and Estimated Population of Native States.' It separates the British states from the native; and it further separates the former into five groups, according to the government under which each is placed. These five, as indicated in the present chapter, are under the administration of 'the governor-general of India in council' – the 'lieutenant-governor of Bengal' – the 'lieutenant-governor of the Northwest Provinces' – the 'government of Madras' – and the 'government of Bombay.' In each case the 'regulation districts' are treated distinct from the non-regulation provinces, the former having been longer under British power, and brought into a more regular system than the latter. Without going again over the long list of names of places, it will suffice to quote those belonging to the group placed immediately under the governor-general's control. This group comprises the Punjaub,

in the six divisions of Lahore, Jelum, Moulton, Leia, Peshawur, and Jullundur; the Cis-Sutlej states, four in number; the lately annexed kingdom of Oude; the central district of Nagpoor or Berar; the recently acquired region of Pegu; the strip of country on the east of the Bay of Bengal, known as the Tenasserim Provinces; and the 'Eastern Straits Settlements' of Singapore, Penang, and Malacca. The whole of British India is divided into nearly a hundred and eighty districts, each, on an average, about the size of Inverness-shire, the largest county, except Yorkshire, in the United Kingdom. The population, however, is eight times as dense, per average square mile, as in this Scottish shire. Keeping clear of details concerning divisions and districts, the following are the areas and population in the five great governments:

			Area.	Population.
			Square Miles.	
Governor-general's	}		246,050	23,255,972
Provinces.	}			
Lower Bengal	}	Regulation,	126,133	37,262,163
Provinces.	}	Non-regulation,	95,836	3,590,234
Northwest	}	Regulation,	72,052	30,271,885
Provinces.	}	Non-regulation,	33,707	3,383,308
Madras	}	Regulation,	119,526	20,120,495
Presidency.	}	Non-regulation,	12,564	2,316,802
Bombay	}	Regulation,	57,723	9,015,534
Presidency.	}	Non-regulation,	73,821	2,774,508
			—	—
		Total,	837,412	131,990,901

In some of the five governments, the population is classified more minutely than in others. Thus, in the Punjaub member of the governor-general's group, Hindoos are separated from non-Hindoos; then, each of these classes is divided into agricultural and non-agricultural; and, lastly, each of these is further separated into male and female. The most instructive feature here is the scarcity of females compared with males, contrary to the experience of Europe; in the Punjaub and Sirhind, among thirteen million souls, there are a million and a half more males than females – shewing, among other things, one of the effects of female infanticide in past years. The ratio appears to be about the same in the Northwest Provinces, around Delhi, Meerut, Rohilcund, Agra, Benares, and Allahabad. Not one place is

named, throughout India, in which the females equal the males in number. In the Bombay presidency, besides the difference of sex, the population is tabulated into nine groups – Hindoos, Wild Tribes, Low Castes, Shrawniks or Jains, Lingayets, Mussulmans, Parsees, Jews, Christians. Of the last named there are less than fifty thousand, including military, in a population of twelve millions.

The area and population of the native states are given in connection with the presidencies to which those states are geographically and politically related, and present the following numbers:

	Area.	Population.
	Square Miles.	
In Bengal Presidency,	515,583	38,702,206
In Madras Presidency,	61,802	5,213,071
In Bombay Presidency,	60,575	4,460,370
	—	— —
	627,910	48,376,247

The enumeration of these native states is minute and intricate; and it may suffice to shew the complexity arising out of the existence of so many baby-princedom, that one of the native states of Bundelcund, Kampta by name, figures in the table as occupying an area of *one* square mile, and as having *three hundred* inhabitants!

Including the British states, the native states, the few

settlements held by the French and Portuguese, and the recent acquisitions on the eastern side of the Bay of Bengal, the grand totals come out in the following numbers:

1,466,576	Square miles,
180,884,297	Inhabitants,

or 124 dwellers per square mile. Of these inhabitants, it is believed – though the returns are not complete in this particular – that there are fifteen Hindoos to one Mohammedan: if so, then India must contain more than a *hundred and sixty million* worshippers of Hindoo deities – even after allowance is made for Buddhists, Parsees, and a few savage tribes almost without religion.

CHAPTER II.

SYMPTOMS: – CHUPATTIES AND CARTRIDGES

Little did the British authorities in India suspect, in the early weeks of 1857, that a mighty CENTENARY was about to be observed – a movement intended to mark the completion of one hundred years of British rule in the East; and to mark it, not by festivities and congratulations, but by rebellion and slaughter.

The officers in India remembered and noted the date well; but they did not know how well the Mohammedans and Hindoos, the former especially, had stored it up in their traditions. The name of Robert Clive, the ‘Daring in War,’ was so intimately associated with the date 1757, that the year 1857 naturally brought it into thought, as a time when Christian rule began to overawe Moslem rule in that vast country. True, the East India Company had been connected with India during a period exceeding two hundred years; but it was only at the commencement of the second half of the last century that this connection became politically important. It was remembered that – 1756 having been marked by the atrocities of the Black Hole at Calcutta, and by the utter extinction for a time of the East India Company’s power in Bengal – the year 1757 became a year of retribution. It was remembered, as a matter of history among the British,

and of tradition among the natives, how wonderful a part the young officer Clive performed in that exciting drama. It was remembered that he arrived at Calcutta, at that time wholly denuded of Englishmen, on the 2d of January in the last-named year, bringing with him a small body of troops from Madras; that on the 4th of February, with two thousand men, he defeated an army ten times as large, belonging to Suraj-u-Dowlah, Nawab of Bengal – the same who had caused the atrocities at the Black Hole, when a hundred and thirty persons died from suffocation in a room only fitted to contain a fourth of the number. It was further remembered how that, on the 9th of February, Clive obtained great concessions from the nawab by treaty; that Suraj broke the treaty, and commenced a course of treachery, in which Clive was not slow to imitate him; that on the 13th of June, Clive, having matured a plan equally bold and crafty, declared renewed hostilities against the nawab; that on the 23d he gained the brilliant battle of Plassey, conquering sixty thousand men with a force of only three thousand; that within a week, Suraj-u-Dowlah, a miserable fugitive, ended his existence; and that from that day British power had ever been supreme in Bengal. This was a series of achievements not likely to be forgotten by Englishmen. Ere yet the news of mutiny and murder reached Europe, steps had been taken to render homage to Clive on the hundredth anniversary of the battle of Plassey; the East India Company had subscribed largely towards a statue of the hero; and a meeting in London had decided that the chief town in Clive's native county

of Shropshire should be selected as the spot wherein the statue should be set up.

Judging from the experience afforded by recent events, it is now clear that the Mohammedans in India had thought much of these things, and that the year 1857 had been marked out by them as a centenary to be observed in a special way – by no less an achievement, indeed, than the expulsion of the British, and the revival of Moslem power. In the spring of the year it was ascertained that a paper was in circulation among the natives, purporting to be a prophecy made by a Punjaub fakeer seven hundred years ago – to the effect that, after various dynasties of Mohammedans had ruled for some centuries, the *Nazarenes* or Christians should hold power in India for one hundred years; that the Christians would then be expelled; and that various events foretold in the Koran would then come to pass, connected with the triumph of Islamism. That this mysterious prediction was widely credited, is probable – notwithstanding that the paper itself, if really circulated, must manifestly have been an imposture of recent date; for the English nation was not known even by name to the natives of India seven hundred years ago. Setting aside, at present, all inquiries concerning the first authors of the plot, the degree to which the Company's annexations had provoked it, the existence of any grievances justifiably to be resisted, the reasons which induced Hindoos to join the Mohammedans against the British, or the extent to which the general population shared the views of the native military –

laying aside these inquiries for the present, there is evidence that a great movement was planned for the middle of the year 1857. Of this plan the British government knew nothing, and suspected little.

But although no vast plot was suspected, several trifling symptoms had given cause for uneasiness and the English public learned, when too late, that many Indian officers had long predicted the imminency of some outbreak. Insubordination and mutiny, it was found, are not faults of recent growth among the native troops of India. Now that the startling events of 1857 are vividly presented to the public mind, men begin to read again the old story of the outbreak at Vellore, and seek to draw instruction therefrom. A little more than half a century ago – namely, on the 10th of July 1806 – the European barracks at Vellore were thrown into a state of great excitement. This town is in the Carnatic, a few miles west of Madras, and in the presidency of the same name. At two o'clock in the morning, the barracks, containing four companies of the 69th regiment, were surrounded by two battalions of sepoys in the Company's service, who poured in a heavy fire of musketry, at every door and window, upon the soldiers. At the same time the European sentries, the soldiers at the mainguard, and the sick in the hospital, were put to death. The officers' houses were ransacked, and everybody found in them murdered. Upon the arrival of the 19th Light Dragoons, under Colonel Gillespie, the sepoys were immediately attacked; six hundred were cut down upon

the spot, and two hundred taken from their hiding-places to be shot. There perished of the four European companies, a hundred and sixty-four, besides officers; and many British officers of the native troops were also murdered. Nothing ever came to light concerning the probable cause of the outrage, but this – that an attempt had been made by the military men at Madras to *change the shape of the sepoy turban* into something resembling the helmet of the light infantry of Europe, which would prevent the native troops from wearing on their foreheads the marks characteristic of their several castes. The sons of Tippoo Saib, the deposed ruler of Mysore, together with many distinguished Mohammedans deprived of office, were at that time in Vellore; and the supposition is, that these men contributed very materially to excite or inflame the suspicions of the Hindoos, concerning an endeavour to tamper with their religious usages. There was another mutiny some time afterwards at Nundeydroog, in the same presidency; and it was found indispensable to disarm four hundred and fifty Mohammedan sepoys, who had planned a massacre. At Bangalore and other places a similar spirit was exhibited. The governor of Madras deemed it necessary, in very earnest terms, to disclaim any intention of tampering with the native religion. In a proclamation issued on the 3d of December, he said: ‘The right honourable the governor in council having observed that, in some late instances, an extraordinary degree of agitation has prevailed among several corps of the native army of this coast, it has been his lordship’s particular endeavour to

ascertain the motives which may have led to conduct so different from that which formerly distinguished the native army. From this inquiry, it has appeared that many persons of evil intention have endeavoured, for malicious purposes, to impress upon the native troops a belief that it is the wish of the British government to convert them by forcible means to Christianity; and his lordship in council has observed with concern that such malicious reports have been believed by many of the native troops. The right honourable the governor in council, therefore, deems it proper, in this public manner, to repeat to the native troops his assurance, that the same respect which has been invariably shewn by the British government for their religion and their customs, will be always continued; and that no interruption will be given to any native, whether Hindoo or Mussulman, in the practice of his religious ceremonies.' Notwithstanding the distinctness of this assurance, and notwithstanding the extensive promulgation of the proclamation in the Tamul, Telinga, and Hindustani languages – the ferment continued a considerable time. Even in March 1807, when some months had elapsed, so universal was the dread of a general revolt among the native troops, that the British officers attached to the Madras army constantly slept with loaded pistols under their pillows.

In the interval between 1806 and 1857, nothing so murderous occurred; but, among the Bengal troops, many proofs of insubordination were afforded; for it repeatedly occurred that grievances, real or pretended, led to combinations among the

men of different regiments. In 1835, Lord William Bentinck, acting on a principle which had often been advocated in England, abolished flogging in the Indian army; this appears to have raised the self-pride rather than conciliated the good-will of the troops: insubordination ensued, and several regiments had to be disbanded. Again, in 1844, when several Bengal regiments were ordered to march to Sind, the 34th native infantry refused; whereupon Lord Ellenborough, at that time governor-general, ignominiously disbanded the regiment in presence of the rest of the army. Again, in 1849, Sir Colin Campbell, serving under Sir Charles Napier, reported that the 22d Bengal regiment had mutinied on a question of pay, in which they were clearly in the wrong; but as the Punjaub was at that time in a critical state, Sir Charles did that which was very opposite to his general character – he yielded to an unjust demand, as a measure of prudence. It may have been that the sepoys counted on this probability when they mutinied. No less than forty-two regiments were ascertained to be in secret correspondence on this matter, under Brahminical influence – one of whom went so far as to threaten the commanding officer that they could stop enlistment if they chose. In 1850, Napier was compelled to disband the 66th regiment, for mutiny at Peshawur. In 1852, the 38th regiment was ordered to proceed to Burmah; the men objected to the sea-voyage, and refused to depart; and the authorities in this case gave way.

Like as, in the ordinary affairs of life, men compare notes

after a disaster, to ascertain whether any misgiving had silently occupied their minds concerning causes and symptoms; so did many military officers, observing that the troubles were all or mostly in Bengal, or where Bengal troops operated, come forward to state that they had long been cognizant of a marked difference between the Bengal army on the one hand, and the Bombay and Madras armies on the other. Lord Melville, who, as General Dundas, had held a command during the Punjaub campaign, expressed himself very strongly in the House of Lords shortly after news of the mutiny arrived. He stated that, in the Bengal army, the native officers were in nearly all cases selected by seniority, and not from merit; that they could not rise from the ranks till old age was creeping on them; and that a sort of hopelessness of advancement cankered in the minds of many sepoys in the middle time of life. In the Bombay and Madras armies, on the contrary, the havildars or sergeants were selected for their intelligence and activity, and were recommended for promotion by the commanding officers of the regiments. It might possibly be a theory unsusceptible of proof, that this difference made the one army mutinous and the other two loyal; but Lord Melville proceeded to assert that the Bengal troops were notoriously less fully organised and disciplined, more prone to insubordination, than the troops of the other two presidencies. He stated as an instance, that when he commanded the Bombay army in the Punjaub frontier in 1849, the Bengal regiments were mutinous; while the Bombay troops remained in soldierly

subordination. Indeed these latter, which he commanded in person, were credited by his lordship with having exhibited the highest qualities of brave and faithful troops. He detailed an incident which had occurred at the siege of Moultan. A covering-party having been ordered into the trenches, some disturbance soon afterwards arose; and an English officer found that many soldiers of the Bengal army had been endeavouring to prevent the men belonging to one of the Bombay regiments from digging in the trenches in discharge of their duty, on the ground that the sepoys' duty *was to fight and not to work*. Again: after the assault of Moultan, an officer in command of one of the pickets was requested to post a sergeant and twelve men at one of the gates of the town; this was done; but not long afterwards, three native officers of the Bengal engineers were detected in an endeavour to pass the gate with stores which they were about to plunder or appropriate. Although the views of Lord Melville were combated by a few other officers, there was a pretty general concurrence of opinion that the Bengal native army, through some circumstances known or unknown, had long been less obedient and orderly than those of the other two presidencies.

As it is the purpose of the present chapter to treat rather of the facts that preceded the horrors of Meerut and Cawnpore, than of the numerous theories for explaining them, we shall not dwell long in this place on the affairs of Oude, in connection with the Revolt; but so general is the opinion that the annexation of that kingdom was one of the predisposing causes of the late

calamities, that it may be right to glance slightly at the subject.

Oude – once a nawabship under the great Mogul, then a kingdom, and the last remaining independent Mohammedan state in Northern India – was annexed in the early part of 1856; and although the governor-general sought to give a favourable account, both in its reasons and its results, of that momentous measure, there are not wanting grounds for believing that it made a deep impression on the minds of the natives, unfavourable to the English – among the military, if not among the people at large. The deposed king, with his family and his prime-minister, came to live at Calcutta in April 1856; and in the following month his mother, his brother, and one of his sons, proceeded in great state to England, to protest before Queen Victoria against the conduct of the governor-general and of the East India Company, in having deprived them of their regal position: prepared to prove, as they everywhere announced, that no justifiable grounds had existed for so harsh a step. Whether they sincerely believed this, or whether it was a blind to hide ulterior objects, could not at that time be determined. It is one among many opinions on the subject, that the courtiers around the deposed king gradually organised a plot against the British power; that the Queen of Oude's visit to England was merely intended to mask the proceedings arising out of this plot; that the conspirators brought over to their views the Mogul of Delhi, the shadowy representative of a once mighty despot; that they then sought to win over the Hindoos to side with them; and

that, in this proceeding, they adduced any and all facts that had come to their knowledge, in which the British had unwittingly insulted the religious prejudices of the worshippers of Brahma – craftily insinuating that the insult was premeditated. The wisdom or justice of the annexation policy we do not discuss in this place; there is a multiplicity of interpretations concerning it – from that of absolute necessity to that of glaring spoliation; but the point to be borne in mind is, that a new grievance was thereby added to others, real or pretended, already existing. It is especially worthy of note, that any distrust of England, arising out of annexation policy, was likely to be more intense in Oude than anywhere else; for three-fourths of the infantry in the Bengal army had been recruited from the inhabitants of that state; they were energetic men, strongly attached to their native country; and when the change of masters took place, they lost certain of the privileges they had before enjoyed. The Bengalees proper, the natives of the thickly populated region around the lower course of the Ganges, have little to do with the Bengal army; they are feeble, indolent, and cowardly, glad by any excuses to escape from fighting.

Let us now – having said a few words concerning the centenary of British rule, and the state of feeling in Oude – attend to the strange episode of the *chupatties*, as a premonitory symptom of something wrong in the state of public feeling in India.

The *chupatties* – small cakes of unleavened bread, about two inches in diameter, made of Indian corn-meal, and forming part of the sepoys' regular diet – were regarded in England, as soon

as the circumstances of the Revolt became known, as signs or symptoms which the various officers of the Company in India ought sedulously to have searched into. Ever since the middle of 1856 – ever since, indeed, the final arrangements for the annexation of Oude – these chupatties were known to have been passing from hand to hand. A messenger would come to a village, seek out the headman or village elder, give him six chupatties, and say: ‘These six cakes are sent to you; you will make six others, and send them on to the next village.’ The headman accepted the six cakes, and punctually sent forward other six as he had been directed. It was a mystery of which the early stages were beyond our ken; for no one could say, or no one would say, which was the *first* village whence the cakes were sent. During many months this process continued: village after village being brought into the chain as successive links, and relays of chupatties being forwarded from place to place. Mr Disraeli, attacking on one occasion in the House of Commons the policy of the Indian government, adverted sarcastically to this chupatty mystery: ‘Suppose the Emperor of Russia, whose territory, in extent and character, has more resemblance to our Eastern possessions than the territory of any other power – suppose the Emperor of Russia were told – “Sire, there is a very remarkable circumstance going on in your territory; from village to village, men are passing who leave the tail of an ermine or a pot of caviare, with a message to some one to perform the same ceremony. Strange to say, this has been going on in some ten thousand villages,

and we cannot make head or tail of it.” I think the Emperor of Russia would say: “I do not know whether you can make head or tail of it, but I am quite certain there is something wrong, and that we must take some precautions; because, where the people are not usually indiscreet and troublesome, they do not make a secret communication unless it is opposed to the government. This is a secret communication, and therefore a communication dangerous to the government.” The opposition leader did not assert that the government could have penetrated the mystery, but that the mystery ought to have been regarded as significant of something dangerous, worthy of close scrutiny and grave consideration.

The chupatties first appeared in the Northwest Provinces, around Delhi; and subsequent events offered a temptation for rebuking the governor-general and the commander-in-chief, in having failed to strengthen the posts with English troops after the indications of some secret conspiracy had thus been made. In some places it was ascertained that the cakes were to be kept *till called for* by the messengers, other cakes being sent on instead of them; but what was the meaning of this arrangement, the English officials could not, or at least did not find out. In Scotland, in the clannish days, war-signals were sent from hut to hut and from clan to clan with extraordinary rapidity; and, however little an unleavened cake might appear like a war-signal, military men and politicians ought certainly to have been alive to such strange manifestations as this chupatty movement. From the Sutlej to

Patna, throughout a vast range of thickly populated country, was the secret correspondence carried on. One thing at any rate may safely be asserted, that the military stations required close watching at such a time; something was fermenting in the minds of the natives which the English could not understand; but that very fact would have justified – nay, rendered almost imperative – the guarding of the chief posts from sudden surprise. Little or nothing of this precautionary action seems to have been attempted. Throughout nearly the whole of the great trunk-road from Calcutta to the Punjaub, the military stations were left as before, almost wholly in the hands of the sepoys. At Benares there was only a single company of European foot-artillery; the rest of the troops consisting of two regiments of native infantry, and one of the Cis-Sutlej Sikh regiments. At Allahabad, the great supply magazine of the province was left almost wholly to the guard of the sepoys. Lucknow had only one European regiment and one company of artillery; notwithstanding that, as the capital of Oude, it was in the midst of a warlike and excited population; while the native army of the province, capable of soon assembling at the city, comprised no less than fourteen regiments of infantry, six of cavalry, and six companies of artillery. Cawnpore, a very important station with a large medical dépôt, contained three regiments of native infantry, one of native cavalry, and two companies of native artillery with twelve guns; while the English force was only a company of infantry, and about sixty artillerymen with six guns. The large magazine

of Delhi, the great storehouse of ammunition for the military stations all around it, was left to be guarded entirely by sepoys. The late General Anson, at that time commander-in-chief, was among the hills at Simla, relaxing from his duties; and neither at Simla nor at Calcutta did it seem to be felt that, with existing symptoms, more European troops were necessary in the Bengal and Northwest Provinces.

The chupatty was not the only symbol of some mystery: the *lotus* was another. It was a common occurrence for a man to come to a cantonment with a lotus-flower, and give it to the chief native officer of a regiment; the flower was circulated from hand to hand in the regiment; each man took it, looked at it, and passed it on, saying nothing. When the lotus came to the last man in the regiment, he disappeared for a time, and took it to the next military station. This strange process occurred throughout nearly all the military stations where regiments of the Bengal native army were cantoned.

Chupatties and lotus-flowers, together with the incendiarism and the cartridge grievances presently to be noticed, unquestionably indicated some widely spread discontent among the natives – military if not general. ‘It is clear,’ in the words of an observant officer, writing from one of the Cis-Sutlej stations, ‘that a certain ferment had been allowed gradually to arise throughout the mass of the Bengal army. In some it was panic, in some excitement, in some a mere general apprehension or expectation, and in some it was no doubt disaffection, or

even conspiracy. Governing an alien people and a vast army, we had divested ourselves of all the instruments of foreign domination so familiar to Austria and all other continental powers. We had no political police, no European strongholds, no system of intelligence or espionage, comparatively little real military discipline; and even our own post-office was the channel of free, constant, and unchecked intercourse between all the different regiments. Not a letter even was opened; that would have been too abhorrent to English principles. The sepoy mind had probably become prepared to distrust us, as we had begun to distrust them. There were strange new legislative acts, and new post-office rules, and new foreign service enlistments, and new employment of armed races in our army, and other things disagreeable and alarming to the true old sepoy caste. And then it came about that from a small and trifling beginning, one of those ferments to which the native mind is somewhat prone, took possession of the sepoy army.'

One of the strange facts connected with the chupatty movement was, that the cakes were transmitted to the heads of villages who have not been concerned in the mutiny, while many sepoys who broke out in revolt had received no cakes. They appear to have been distributed mostly to the villagers; whereas the lotus passed from hand to hand among the military.

The chupatties and the lotus-flowers, however indicative they may have been of the existence of intrigue and conspiracy, were quiet indications; but there were not wanting other proofs of a

mutinous spirit, in acts of violence and insubordination – apart from the incendiarisms and the cartridge difficulties. On one evening, early in the year, information was given by a sepoy of the intention of the men to rise against their officers and seize on Fort William, at Calcutta. On another occasion, a fanatic moulvie, a high Mohammedan priest at Oude, was detected preaching war against the infidels; and on his person was found a proclamation exciting the people to rebellion. On a third day, two sepoys were detected in an attempt to sap the fidelity of the guard at the Calcutta mint. An English surgeon in an hospital at Lucknow, by the bedside of a sepoy, put his lips to a bottle of medicine before giving it to his patient; this being regarded as a pollution, a pundit was sent for to break the bottle and exorcise the evil: on that night the doctor's bungalow was burned down by incendiaries who could not be discovered. A refusal to accept a furlough or leave of absence might not usually be regarded as a symptom of a mutinous spirit; yet in India it conveyed a meaning that could not safely be disregarded. On the 6th of March, the commander-in-chief, with the sanction of the governor-general, notified that the native army would receive, as usual, the annual indulgence of furlough from the 1st of April to a certain subsequent date. When this order was read or issued, about fourteen men of the 63d native infantry, stationed at Soorie, and under orders to proceed to Berhampore, evinced a disinclination to avail themselves of the indulgence, on the plea that none of the regiments at Barrackpore intended

to take theirs. It certainly appears to have been a circumstance worthy of a searching inquiry by the military authorities, *why* the troops should have declined to take their furlough at that particular time.

We must now pass on to that series of events which, so far as outward manifestations are concerned, was more especially the immediate forerunner of the Revolt – namely, the disturbances connected with the *greased cartridges*. Let not the reader for a moment regard this as a trivial matter, merely because it would be trivial in England: the sepoys may have been duped, and indeed were unquestionably duped, by designing men; but the subject of suspicion was a serious one to them. The fat of cows and of pigs is regarded in a peculiar light in the East. The pig is as much held in abhorrence by the Mohammedans as the cow is venerated by the Hindoos; to touch the former with the lips, is a defilement to the one religion; to touch the latter, is a sacrilege to the other. The religious feelings are different, but the results in this case are the same. So sacred, indeed, are cattle regarded by the Hindoos, that the Company's officers have been accustomed to observe much caution in relation to any supply of beef for their own tables; the slaughter of a cow in a Hindoo village would in itself have been a sufficient cause for revolt; in large towns where Europeans are stationed, a high-walled paddock or compound is set apart for the reception of bullocks intended for food; and scrupulous care is taken that the natives shall know as little as possible of the proceedings connected with the

slaughtering. The use of cow's fat in ammunition would therefore be repulsive to the Hindoo sepoy. Many experienced men trace the mutiny to a false report concerning the cartridges, acting on the minds of natives who had already become distrustful by the machinations of agitators and emissaries. 'It is a marvel and a mystery that so many years should have passed away without an explosion. At last a firebrand was applied to what a single spark might have ignited; and in the course of a few weeks there was a general conflagration; but a conflagration which still bears more marks of accident than of deliberate conspiracy and incendiarism. In a most unhappy hour – in an hour laden with a concurrence of adverse circumstances – the incident of the greased cartridges occurred. It found the Bengal army in a season of profound peace, and in a state of relaxed discipline. It found the sepoys pondering over the predictions and the fables which had been so assiduously circulated in their lines and their bazaars; it found them with imaginations inflamed and fears excited by strange stories of the designs of their English masters; it found them, as they fancied, with their purity of caste threatened, and their religious distinctions invaded, by the proselytising and annexing Englishmen. Still, there was no palpable evidence of this. Everything was vague, intangible, obscure. Credulous and simple-minded as they were, many might have retained a lingering confidence in the good faith and the good intentions of the British government: had it not been suddenly announced to them, just as they were halting between two opinions, that,

in prosecution of his long-cherished design to break down the religion both of Mohammedan and Hindoo, the Feringhee had determined to render their military service the means of their degradation, by compelling them to apply their lips to a cartridge saturated with animal grease – the fat of the swine being used for the pollution of the one, and the fat of the cow for the degradation of the other. If the most astute emissaries of evil who could be employed for the corruption of the Bengal sepoy had addressed themselves to the task of inventing a lie for the confirmation and support of all his fears and superstitions, they could have found nothing more cunningly devised for their purpose.⁵

It was on the 7th of February 1857 that the governor-general communicated to the home government the first account of anything mysterious or unpleasant in relation to the greased cartridges. He had to announce that a dissatisfaction had exhibited itself among the native troops attached to the musketry-depôt at Dumdum. There are two Dumdums, two Dumdumas, one Dumdumma, and one Dumdumineah in India; but the place indicated is in Bengal, a few miles out of Calcutta, and about half-way between that city and Barrackpore. It was formerly the head-quarters of artillery for the presidency of Bengal; and near it is an excellent cannon-foundry, with casting-rooms, boring-rooms, and all the appliances for making brass guns. It is a sort of Woolwich on a humble scale, connected with ordnance and firearms.

⁵ *Edinburgh Review*, No. 216.

The sepoys at Dumdum had heard rumours which induced them to believe that the grease used for preparing the cartridges for the recently introduced Enfield rifles was composed of the fat of pigs and cows – substances which their religion teaches them to regard in a light altogether strange to Europeans. It was not the first time by three or four years that the cartridge-question had excited attention in India, although in England the public knew absolutely nothing concerning it. From documents brought to light during the earlier months of the mutiny, it appears that in 1853 the commander-in-chief of the forces in India directed the adjutant-general of the Bengal army to call the attention of the governor-general to the subject of cartridges as connected with the prejudices of the natives. For what reason grease of any kind is employed on or with cartridges, may be soon explained. A cartridge, as most persons are aware, is a contrivance for quickly loading firearms. Instead of inserting the powder and bullet separately into the musket, rifle, or pistol, as was the earlier wont, the soldier is provided with a supply of small cartridge-paper tubes, each containing a bullet and the proper proportion of powder; and by the employment of these cartridges much time and attention are saved under circumstances where both are especially valuable. The missiles are called *ball* or *blank* cartridges, according as they do or do not each contain a bullet. Now the Enfield rifle, an English improvement on the celebrated Minié rifle invented and used by the French, was largely manufactured by machinery in a government establishment at

Enfield, for use in the British and Indian armies; and in firing from this or other rifles it was necessary that the ball-end of the cartridge should have an external application of some greasy substance, to facilitate its movement through the barrel. In the year above named, the East India Company informed the Calcutta government, that a supply of new-greased cartridges had been sent, which the Board of Ordnance wished should be subjected to the test of climate. It was concerning these cartridges that the commander-in-chief recommended caution; on the ground that ‘unless it be known that the grease employed in these cartridges is not of a nature to offend or interfere with the prejudices of caste, it will be expedient not to issue them for test to native corps, but to Europeans only, to be carried in pouch.’ It was not until June 1854 that the cartridges were received in India; and during the next twelve months they were subjected to various tests, at Calcutta, at Cawnpore, and at Rangoon. The cartridges had been greased in four ways – with common grease, with laboratory grease, with Belgian grease, and with Hoffman’s grease, in each case with an admixture of creosote and tobacco; one set was tested by being placed in the ordnance magazines, a second by being kept in wagons, and a third by being tied up in pouch-bundles. The result of these tests was communicated to the directors in the autumn of 1855; and as a consequence, a modification was effected in the cartridges afterwards sent from England for service with the Enfield rifles in India.

To return now to the affair at Dumdum. When the complaints

and suspicions of the sepoys were made known, inquiries were sent to England for exact particulars relating to the obnoxious missiles. It was ascertained that the new cartridges were made at the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich; and that Captain Boxer, the superintendent of that department, was accustomed to use for lubrication a composition formed of five parts tallow, five parts stearine, and one part wax – containing, therefore, ox or cow's fat, but none from pigs. He had no prejudices in the matter to contend against in England, and used therefore just such a composition as appeared to him most suitable for the purpose. The cartridges were not sent out to India ready greased for use; as, in a hot country, the grease would soon be absorbed by the paper: there was, therefore, a part of the process left to be accomplished when the cartridges reached their destination.

It appears to have been in the latter part of January that the first open manifestation was made at Dumdum of a disinclination to use the cartridges; and immediately a correspondence among the authorities commenced concerning it. When the complaint had been made, the men were seemingly appeased on being assured that the matter would be duly represented; and as a means of conciliation, cartridges without grease were issued, the men being allowed to apply any lubricating substance they chose. It was further determined that no more ready-made cartridges should be obtained from England, but that bullets and paper should be sent separately, to be put together in India; that experiments should be made at Woolwich, to produce some

lubricating substance free from any of the obnoxious ingredients; and that other experiments should meanwhile be made by the 60th Rifles – at that time stationed at Meerut – having the same object in view.

During the inquiry into the manifestation and alleged motives of this insubordination, one fact was elicited, which, if correct, seems to point to a date when the conspirators – whoever they may have been – began to act upon the dupes. On the 22d of January, a low-caste Hindoo asked a sepoy of the 2d Bengal Grenadiers to give him a little water from his lota or bottle; the other, being a Brahmin, refused, on the ground that the applicant would defile the vessel by his touch – a magnificence of class-superiority to which only the Hindoo theory could afford place. This refusal was met by a retort, that the Brahmin need not pride himself on his caste, for he would soon lose it, as he would ere long be required to bite off the ends of cartridges covered with the fat of pigs and cows. The Brahmin, alarmed, spread the report; and the native troops, as is alleged, were afraid that when they went home their friends would refuse to eat with them. When this became known to the English officers, the native troops were drawn up on parade, and encouraged to state the grounds of their dissatisfaction. All the native sergeants and corporals, and two-thirds of all the privates, at once stepped forward, expressed their abhorrence of having to touch anything containing the fat of cows or pigs, and suggested the employment of wax or oil for lubricating the cartridges. It was then that the

conciliatory measures, noticed above, were adopted.

Still were there troubles and suspicious circumstances; but the scene is now transferred from Dumdum to Barrackpore. This town, sixteen miles from Calcutta, is worthy of note chiefly for its connection with the supreme government of India. The governor-general has a sort of suburban residence there, handsome, commodious, and situated in the midst of a very beautiful park. There are numerous bungalows or villas inhabited by European families, drawn to the spot by the salubrity of the air, by the beauty of the Hoogly branch of the Ganges, at this place three-quarters of a mile in width, and by the garden and promenade attached to the governor-general's villa. In military matters, before the Revolt, there was a 'presidency division of the army,' of which some of the troops were in Calcutta, some at Barrackpore, and a small force of artillery at Dumdum, nearly midway between the two places; the whole commanded by a general officer at Barrackpore, under whom was a brigadier to command that station only. The station is convenient for military operations in the eastern part of Bengal, and for any sudden emergencies at Calcutta. Six regiments of native infantry were usually cantoned at Barrackpore, with a full complement of officers: the men hutted in commodious lines, and the officers accommodated in bungalows or lodges.

It was at this place that the discontent next shewed itself, much to the vexation of the government, who had hoped that the Dumdum affair had been satisfactorily settled, and who had

explained to the native regiments at Barrackpore what had been done to remove the alleged cause of complaint. The sepoys at this place, however, made an objection to bite off the ends of the cartridges – a necessary preliminary to the loading of a rifle – on account of the animal fat contained, or supposed to be contained, in the grease with which the paper was lubricated: such fat not being permitted to touch the lips or tongues of the men, under peril of defilement. Some of the authorities strongly suspected that this renewed discontent was the work of secret agitators rather than a spontaneous expression of the men's real feeling. There was at the time a religious Hindoo society or party at Calcutta, called the Dhurma Sobha, suspected of having spread rumours that the British government intended to compel the Hindoos to become Christians. Contemporaneously, too, with this movement, three incendiary fires took place at Barrackpore within four days; and a native sergeant's bungalow was burnt down at Raneegunge, another military station in Lower Bengal. It was natural, therefore, that General Hearsey, the responsible officer at Barrackpore, should wish to ascertain what connection, if any, existed between these incendiarisms, intrigues, complainings, and greased cartridges. This was the more imperative, on account of the relative paucity of English troops in that part of India. There were four native regiments quartered at that time at Barrackpore – namely, the 2d Grenadiers, the 34th and 70th Native Infantry, and the 43d Native Light Infantry; whereas, in the four hundred miles

between Calcutta and Dinapoor there was only one European regiment, the Queen's 53d foot, of which one half was at Calcutta and the other half at Dumdum. The general held a special court of inquiry at Barrackpore on the 6th of February, and selected a portion of the 2d native Grenadier regiment to come forward and explain the cause of their continued objection to the paper of which the new rifle-cartridges were composed. One of the sepoys, Byjonath Pandey, stated that he felt a suspicion that the paper might affect his caste. On being asked his reason for this suspicion, he answered that the paper was a new kind which he had not seen before; and there was a 'bazaar report' that the paper contained animal fat. On being requested to examine the paper carefully in the light, and to explain to the court what he saw objectionable in it, he replied that his suspicion proceeded from the paper being stiff and cloth-like, and from its tearing differently from the paper formerly in use. Another sepoy, Chaud Khan, was then examined. He objected to the paper because it was tough, and burned as if it contained grease. He stated that much dismay had been occasioned in the regiment by the fact that 'on the 4th of February a piece of the cartridge-paper was dipped in water, and then burned; when burning, it made a fizzing noise, and smelt as if there were grease in it.' Thereupon a piece of the paper was burned in open court; Chaud Khan confessed that he could not smell or see grease in it; but he repeated his objection to the use of the paper, on the plea that 'everybody is dissatisfied with it on account of its being glazed, shining like

waxed cloth.' Another witness, Khadu Buksh, filling the rank of subadar or native captain, on being examined, frankly stated that he had no objection to the cartridge itself, but that there was a general report in the cantonment that the paper was made up with fat. A jemadar or lieutenant, named Golal Khan, said very positively: 'There is grease in it, I feel assured; as it differs from the paper which has heretofore been always used for cartridges.' As shewing the well-known power of what in England would be called 'public opinion,' the answer of one of the sepoys is worthy of notice; he candidly confessed that he himself had no objection to use the cartridges, but he could not do so, as his companions would object to it. While these occurrences were under scrutiny, a jemadar of the 34th regiment came forward to narrate what he knew on the matter, as affording proof of conspiracy. On the 5th, when the fear of detection had begun to work among them, two or three of the sepoys came to him, and asked him to accompany them to the parade-ground. He did so, and there found a great crowd assembled, composed of men of the different regiments at the station; they had their heads tied up in handkerchiefs or cloths, so that only a small part of the face was exposed. They told him they were determined to die for their religion; and that if they could concert a plan that evening, they would on the next night plunder the station and kill all the Europeans, and then depart whither they pleased. The number he stated to be about three hundred. It was not at the time known to the authorities, but was rendered probable by circumstances afterwards brought

to light, that letters and emissaries were being despatched, at the beginning of February, from the native troops at Barrackpore to those at other stations, inviting them to rise in revolt against the British.

Under any other circumstances, a discussion concerning such petty matters as bits of cartridge-paper and items of grease would be simply ridiculous; but at that time and place the ruling authorities, although ignorant of the real extent of the danger, saw clearly that they could not afford to regard such matters as otherwise than serious. There was either a sincere prejudice to be conciliated, or a wide-spread conspiracy to be met; and it was at once determined to test again the sincerity of the sepoys, by yielding to their (apparently) religious feelings on a matter which did not affect the efficiency of the service. A trial was made, therefore, of a mode of loading the rifle without biting the cartridge, by tearing off the end with the left hand. The commander-in-chief, finding on inquiry that this method was sufficiently efficacious, and willing to get rid of mere formalism in the matter, consented that the plan should be adopted both for percussion-muskets and for rifles. This done, the governor-general, by virtue of his supreme command, ordered the adoption of the same system throughout India.

The scene now again changes: we have to attend to certain proceedings at Berhampore, following on those at Barrackpore. Of Berhampore as a town, little need be said here; and that little is called for principally to determine *which* Berhampore is meant.

Under the forms Berhampore, Berhampoor, or Burhampore, there are no less than four towns in India – one in the native state of Nepal, sixty miles from Khatmandoo; another in the Nagpore territory, sixty miles from the city of the same name; another in the Madras presidency, near Orissa; and a fourth in the district of Moorshedabad, Lower Bengal. It is this last-named Berhampore to which attention is here directed. The town is on the left bank of the river Bhagruttee, a great offset of the Ganges, and on the high road from Calcutta to Moorshedabad – distant about a hundred and twenty miles from the first-named city by land, and a hundred and sixty by water. It is in a moist, unhealthy spot, very fatal to Europeans, and in consequence disliked by them as a station in past times; but sanitary measures, draining, and planting have greatly improved it within the last few years. As a town, it is cheerful and attractive in appearance, adorned by stately houses in the neighbourhood, to accommodate permanent British residents. The military cantonments are large and striking; the grand square, the excellent parade-ground, the quarters of the European officers – all are handsome. Before the Revolt, Berhampore was included within the presidency division in military matters, and was usually occupied by a body of infantry and another of artillery. There is painful evidence of the former insalubrity of the station met with in a large open space filled with tombstones, contrasting mournfully with the majestic cantonments of the military. Berhampore has, or had a few years ago, a manufactory of the silk bandana handkerchiefs once so

popular in England.

The troubles in this town were first made manifest in the following way. On or about the 24th of February, a portion of the 34th regiment of Bengal infantry changed its station from Barrackpore to Berhampore, where it was greeted and feasted by the men of the 19th native infantry, stationed there at that time. During their feasting, the new-comers narrated all the news from Dumdum and Barrackpore concerning the greased cartridges; and the effects of this gossip were very soon made visible. To understand what occurred, the mode of piling or storing arms in India must be attended to; in the Bombay army, and in the Queen's regiments, the men were wont to keep their arms with them in their huts; but in the Bengal army, it was a custom to deposit them in circular brick buildings called bells, which were kept locked under native guard, each in front of a particular company's lines. The men of the 19th regiment, then, excited by the rumours and stories, the fears and suspicions of their companions in arms elsewhere, but not knowing or not believing – or perhaps not caring for – the promises of change made by the military authorities, broke out into insubordination. On the 26th of February, being ordered to parade for exercise with blank cartridges, they refused to receive the percussion-caps, as a means of rendering their firing impossible – alleging that the cartridge-paper supplied for the charge was of two kinds; that they doubted the qualities of one or both; and that they believed in the presence of the fat of cows or pigs in the grease employed.

That the men were either dupes or intriguers is evident; for it so happened that the cartridges offered to them were the very same in kind as they had used during many years, and had been made up before a single Enfield rifle had reached India. This resistance was a serious affair; it was something more than a complaint or petition, and needed to be encountered with a strong hand. It is a matter of opinion, judged differently even by military men accustomed to India and its natives, whether the proper course was on that occasion taken. The commanding officer, Lieutenant-colonel Mitchell, ordered a detachment of native cavalry and a battery of native artillery – the only troops at Barrackpore besides those already named – to be on parade on the following morning. Between ten and eleven o'clock at night, however, the men of the 19th regiment broke open the armouries or bells, took possession of their muskets and ammunition, and carried them to their lines. The next day, the guns were got ready, and the officers proceeded to the parade-ground, where they found the men in undress, but armed, formed in line, and shouting. The officers were threatened if they came on. Mitchell then expostulated with them; he pointed out the absurdity of their suspicions, and the unworthiness of their present conduct, and commanded them to give up their arms and return peaceably to their lines; whereupon the native officers said the men would refuse so to do unless the cavalry and artillery were withdrawn. The lieutenant-colonel withdrew them, and then the infantry yielded. It was a difficult position for an officer to be placed in; if

he had struggled, it would have been with natives against natives; and, doubtful of the result of such a contest, he assented to the men's conditional surrender.

The affair could not be allowed to end here. The Calcutta authorities, receiving news on the 4th of March of this serious disaffection, but deeming it unsafe to punish while so few European troops were at hand, sent quietly to Rangoon in Pegu, with orders that Her Majesty's 84th foot should steam up to Calcutta as quickly as possible. On the 20th, this regiment arrived; and then the governor-general, acting in harmony with Major-general Hearsey, resolved on the disbandment of the native regiment which had disregarded the orders of its superiors. Accordingly, on the 31st of March, the 19th regiment was marched from Berhampore to Barrackpore, the head-quarters of the military division; the men were disarmed, paid off, marched out of the cantonments as far as Palta Ghaut, and conveyed across the river in steamers placed for the purpose. In short, the regiment, in a military sense, was destroyed, without personal punishment to any of the men composing it. But though not punished, in the ordinary sense, the infliction was a great one; for the men at once became penniless, unoccupied, objectless. The governor-general, in describing these proceedings for the information of the home government, added: 'We trust that the severe measures which we have been forced to adopt will have the effect of convincing the native troops that they will only bring ruin on themselves by failing in their duty to the state and in

obedience to their officers.’

On the occasion just adverted to, General Hearsey addressed the men very energetically, while an official paper from the governor-general, read to the troops, asserted in distinct terms that the rumour was wholly groundless which imputed to the government an intention to interfere with the religion of the people. It was a charge soon afterwards brought in England against the governor-general, that, having subscribed to certain missionary societies in India, he did not like to abjure all attempts at the conversion of the natives; and that, being thus balanced between his public duty and his private religious feeling, he had issued the general order to the whole army, but had not shewn any solicitude to convey that positive declaration to all the natives in all the cantonments or military stations. This, however, was said when Viscount Canning was not present to defend himself; reasonable men soon saw that the truth was not to be obtained by such charges, unless supported by good evidence. It is, however, certain, that much delay and routine formality occurred throughout all these proceedings. As early as the 11th of February, General Hearsey wrote from Barrackpore the expressive words: ‘We are on a mine ready to explode’ – in allusion to the uneasy state of feeling or opinion among the sepoys that their religious usages were about to be tampered with; and yet it was not until the 27th of March that the Supreme Council at Calcutta agreed to the issue of a general order declaring it to be the invariable rule of the government

to treat the religious tendencies of all its servants with respect; nor until the 31st that this general order was read to the troops at Barrackpore. Considering the mournful effects of dilatoriness and rigid formalism during the Crimean war, the English public had indulged a hope that a healthy reform would be introduced into the epistolary mechanism of the government departments; and this was certainly to some extent realised in England; but unfortunately the reform had not yet reached India. During these early months of the mutiny, an absurd waste of time occurred in the writing and despatching of an enormous number of letters, where a personal interview, or a verbal message by a trusty servant, might have sufficed. Eight letters were written, and four days consumed, before the Calcutta authorities knew what was passing at Dumdum, eight miles distant. A certain order given by the colonel of a regiment at Calcutta being considered injudicious by the general, an inquiry was made as to the grounds for the order; eight days and nine letters were required for this inquiry and the response to it, and yet the two officers were within an hour's distance of each other during the whole time. Although the affair at Barrackpore on the 6th of February was assuredly of serious import, it was not known to the government at Calcutta until the evening of the 10th, notwithstanding that a horseman might easily have ridden the sixteen miles in two hours. General Hearsey's reply to a question as to the cause of the delay is truly instructive, as exemplifying the slowness of official progress in India: 'I have no means of communicating anything to the

government; I have no mounted orderly, no express camels; I must always write by the post; and that leaves Barrackpore at the most inconvenient hour of three o'clock in the afternoon.' These facts, trivial in themselves, are worthy of being borne in mind, as indicative of defects in the mechanism of government likely to be disastrous in times of excitement and insubordination.

Barrackpore was destined to be a further source of vexation and embarrassment to the government. It will be remembered that a part of the 34th native infantry went from that town to Berhampore in the last week in February; but the bulk of the regiment remained at Barrackpore. Inquiries, afterwards instituted, brought to light the fact that the European commander of that regiment had been accustomed to distribute religious tracts among his men; and it was surmised that the scruples and prejudices of the natives, especially the Brahmins, had been unfavourably affected by this proceeding. But whether the cause had or had not been rightly guessed, it is certain that the 34th displayed more mutinous symptoms at that time than any other regiment. When the news of the disturbance at Berhampore reached them, they became greatly excited: they attended to their duties, but with sullen doggedness; and they held nightly meetings, at which speeches were made sympathetic with the Berhampore mutineers. The authorities, not wholly ignorant of these meetings, nevertheless remained quiet until a European regiment could arrive to aid them. When the Queen's 84th arrived at Calcutta, the 34th were more excited than ever,

believing that something hostile was intended against them; their whispers became murmurs, and they openly expressed their sympathy. When, in accordance with the plan noticed in the last paragraph, the 19th were marched off from Berhampore to be disbanded at Barrackpore, the 34th displayed still greater audacity. The 19th having rested for a time at Barraset, eight miles from Barrackpore, a deputation from the 34th met them, and made a proposal that they should that very night kill all their officers, march to Barrackpore, join the 2d and 34th, fire the bungalows, surprise and overwhelm the Europeans, seize the guns, and then march to threaten Calcutta. Had the 19th been as wild and daring, as irritated and vengeful, as the 34th, there is no knowing what calamities might have followed; but they exhibited rather a repentant and regretful tone, and submitted obediently to all the details of their disbandment at Barrackpore.

It will therefore be seen that the seeds of further disaffection had been already sown. As the 34th native infantry had been instrumental in inciting the 19th to mutiny, ending in disbandment, so did it now bring a similar punishment on itself. On the 29th of March, one Mungal Pandey, a sepoy in the 34th, roused to a state of excitement by the use of intoxicating drugs, armed himself with a sword and a loaded musket, traversed the lines, called upon his comrades to rise, and declared he would shoot the first European he met. Lieutenant Baugh, adjutant of the corps, hearing of this man's conduct, and of the excited state of the regiment generally, rode hastily to the lines. Mungal Pandey

fired, missed the officer, but struck his horse. The lieutenant, in self-defence, fired his pistol, but missed aim; whereupon the sepoy attacked him with his sword, wounded him in the hand, brought him to the ground, and tried to entice the other soldiers to join in the attack. The sergeant-major of the corps, who went to the lieutenant's assistance, was also wounded by Mungal Pandey. The dark feature in this transaction was that many hundred men in the regiment looked on quietly without offering to protect the lieutenant from his assailant; one of them, a jemadar, refused to take Mungal into custody, and forbade his men to render any assistance to the lieutenant, who narrowly escaped with his life. Major-general Hearsey, on being informed of the occurrence, proceeded to the parade-ground, where, to his astonishment, he saw the man walking to and fro, with a blood-smeared sword in one hand, and a loaded musket in the other. He advanced with some officers and men to secure the sepoy, which was accomplished with much difficulty; and it was only by the most resolute bearing of the major-general that the rest of the men could be induced to return quietly to their lines. A court-martial was held on Mungal Pandey, and on the rebellious jemadar, both of whom were forthwith found guilty, and executed on the 8th of April. No assignable cause appeared for the conduct of this man: it may have been a mere drunken frenzy; yet there is more probability that a mutinous spirit, concealed within his breast during sober moments, made its appearance unchecked when under the influence of drugs. There was another sepoy, however,

who acted faithfully on the occasion; this man, Shiek Paltoo, was accompanying Lieutenant Baugh as orderly officer at the time of the attack; and by his prompt assistance the lieutenant was saved from further injury than a slight wound. Shiek Paltoo was raised to the rank of supernumerary havildar for his brave and loyal conduct.

The outrage, however, could not be allowed to terminate without further punishment. For a time, the government at Calcutta believed that the execution of the two principal offenders would suffice, and that the sepoys would quietly return to their obedience; but certain ominous occurrences at Lucknow and elsewhere, about the end of April, shewed the necessity for a stern line of conduct, especially as the 34th still displayed a kind of sullen doggedness, as if determined on further insubordination. After mature consideration the whole of the disposable troops in and around Calcutta were, on the 5th of May, marched off to Barrackpore, to effect the disarming and disbanding of such sepoys among the 34th as were present in the lines when Lieutenant Baugh was wounded. The force comprised the Queen's 64th regiment, a wing of the 53d, the 2d, 43d, and 70th native infantry, two squadrons of cavalry, and a light field-battery with six guns. When these troops had been drawn up in two sides of a square, on the morning of the 6th, about four hundred sepoys of the 34th were halted in front of the guns. The order for disbandment was read out by the interpreter, Lieutenant Chamier; and after a few energetic remarks upon the

enormity of their offence, General Hearsey commanded them to pile their arms, and strip off the uniform which they had disgraced. When this was done, the work of paying up their arrears was commenced. They were then dismissed with their families and baggage, to Chinsura, a town a few miles higher up the Hoogly. The grenadiers of the 84th, and a portion of the cavalry, accompanied them to see that they went to and settled at Chinsura, and did not cross the river to Chittagong, where three other companies of the same regiment were stationed. Four of the disbanded sepoys were officers; one of whom, a subadar, sobbed bitterly at his loss and degradation, although it was strongly suspected that he had been one of the leaders in the insubordination. In the general order which the governor-general ordered to be read to every regiment in the service, concerning this disbandment, words occur which shew that the old delusion was still working in the breasts of the natives. 'The sepoy who was the chief actor in the disgraceful scene of the 29th of March called upon his comrades to come to his support, for the reason that their religion was in danger, and that they were about to be compelled to employ cartridges, the use of which would do injury to their caste; and from the words in which he addressed the sepoys, it is to be inferred that many of them shared this opinion with him. The governor-general in council has recently had occasion to remind the army of Bengal that the government of India has never interfered to constrain its soldiers in matters affecting their religious faith. He has declared that

the government of India never will do so; and he has a right to expect that this declaration shall give confidence to all who have been deceived and led astray. But, whatever may be the deceptions or evil counsels to which others have been exposed, the native officers and men of the 34th regiment native infantry have no excuse for misapprehension on this subject. Not many weeks previously to the 29th of March, it had been explained to that regiment – first by their own commanding officer, and subsequently by the major-general commanding the division – that their fears for religion were groundless. It was carefully and clearly shewn to them that the cartridges which they would be called upon to use contained nothing which could do violence to their religious scruples. If, after receiving these assurances, the sepoys of the 34th regiment, or of any other regiment, still refuse to place trust in their officers and in the government, and still allow suspicions to take root in their minds, and to grow into disaffection, insubordination, and mutiny, the fault is their own, and their punishment will be upon their own heads.’

Five weeks elapsed between the offence of the 19th native infantry and its punishment by disbandment; five weeks similarly elapsed between the offence and the disbandment of the 34th; and many observant officers were of opinion that these delays worked mischief, by instilling into the minds of the sepoys a belief that the authorities were afraid to punish them. Whether the punishment of disbanding was, after all, sufficiently severe, is a question on which military men are by no means agreed.

At a later date than the events narrated in this chapter, but closely connected with them in subject, was the circulation of a report manifestly intended to rouse the religious prejudices of the Hindoos by a false assertion concerning the designs of the ruling powers. In some of the towns of Southern India, far away from Bengal, unknown emissaries circulated a paper, or at least a story, of which the following was the substance: That the padres, probably Christian missionaries, had sent a petition to the Queen of England, complaining of the slowness with which Hindoos were made to become Christians; they adduced the conduct of some of the Mohammedan potentates of India in past times, such as Tippoo Saib, who had compelled the Hindoos to embrace Islamism; and they suggested a similar authoritative policy. The story made the padres give this advice: to mix up bullocks' fat and pigs' fat with the grease employed on the cartridges; in order that, by touching these substances with their teeth or lips, the sepoy might lose caste, and thus induce them to embrace Christianity as their only resource. The climax of the story was reached by making the Queen express her joy at the plan, and her resolve that it should be put in operation. The success of such a lying rumour must, of course, have mainly depended on the ignorance and credulity of the natives.

A far-distant region now calls for notice. At a time when the Upper and Lower Bengal provinces were, as the authorities hoped and believed, recovering from the wild excitement of the cartridge question, the commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej territory

had ample means for knowing that the minds of the natives in that region were mischievously agitated by some cause or other. It is necessary here to understand what is meant by this geographical designation. If we consult a map in which an attempt is made, by distinct colouring, to define British territory from semi-independent states, we shall find the region between Delhi and Lahore cut up in a most extraordinary way. The red British patches are seen to meander among the scraps of native territory with great intricacy: so much so, indeed, that a map on a very large scale could alone mark the multitudinous lines of boundary; and even such a map would soon become obsolete, for the red, like a devouring element, has been year by year absorbing bits of territory formerly painted green or yellow. The peculiar tribe of the Sikhs, besides occupying the Punjaub, inhabit a wide region on the east or left bank of the river Sutlej, generally included under the name of Sirhind. For fifty years the British in India have had to deal, or have made a pretext for dealing, with the petty Sikh chieftains of this Sirhind region: at one time ‘protecting’ those on the east of the Sutlej from the aggression of the great Sikh leader, Runjeet Singh, on the west of that river; then ‘annexing’ the small territories of some of these chieftains on failure of male heirs; then seizing others as a punishment for non-neutrality or non-assistance during war-time. Thus it arose that – before the annexation of the Punjaub itself in 1849 – much of the Sikh country in Sirhind had become British, and was divided into four districts marked by the towns of Ferozpour,

Umballa or Umballah, Loodianah, and Kythul; leaving Putialah, Jeend, and Furreedkote as the three principal protected or semi-independent Sikh states of that country. Meanwhile a region somewhat to the east or northeast of Sirhind was subject to just the same process. Being hilly, it is called the Hill Country, and being ruled by a number of petty chieftains, the separate bits of territory are called the Hill States. During about forty years the process of absorption has been going on – arising primarily out of the fact that the British aided the Hill chieftains against the Nepaulese, and then paid themselves in their wonted manner. Part of Gurhwal was annexed; then Sundock, Malowa, and a number of other places not easily found in the maps; and afterwards Ramgurh was given back in exchange for Simla, to form a healthy holiday-place among the hills, a sort of Balmoral for sick governors and commanders. As a final result, much of the Hill Country became British, and the rest was left in the hands of about twenty petty chieftains.

Now, when the Cis-Sutlej territory is mentioned, it must be interpreted as including all the region taken by the British from the minor Sikh chieftains in Sirhind; together with such of the Hill States of Gurhwal and its vicinity as have become British. The whole together have been made a sub-government, under a commissioner responsible to the governor-general; or, more strictly, the commissioner rules the Sirhind region, while the Hills are included among the non-regulation districts of the Agra government. The four towns and districts of Ferozpour,

Loodianah, Umballa, and Kythul, east of the Sutlej, will suffice for our purpose to indicate the Cis-Sutlej territory – so named in a Calcutta point of view, as being on the *cis* or *hither* side of the Sutlej, in reference to that city.

It was at Umballa, one of the towns in the Cis-Sutlej territory, that the commissioner, Mr Barnes, reported acts of incendiarism that much perplexed him. On the 26th of March, Hurbunsee Singh, a subadar or native captain in the 36th regiment native infantry, attached to the musketry depôt at that place, became an object of attack to the other men of the regiment; they endeavoured to burn his hut and his property. It was just at the time when reports reached Umballa relative to the cartridges, the using of which was said by the sepoys to be an innovation derogatory to their caste and religion. Hurbunsee Singh had at once come forward, and publicly stated his willingness to fire with such cartridges, as being, in his opinion, free from objection. The incendiarism took place on the day named; and the commissioner directly inferred that there must be something wrong in the thoughts of men who would thus seek to injure one of their own native officers on such grounds. Nothing further occurred, however, until the 13th of April, when another fire broke out. This was followed by a third on the 15th, in some outhouses belonging to the 60th native infantry; by two fires on the 16th, when government property was burned to the value of thirty thousand rupees; by the burning on the 17th of an empty bungalow in the 5th regiment native infantry lines, of

a stable belonging to an English officer of the 60th, and of another building. On the 20th, attempts were made on the houses of the jemadar and havildar of the 5th regiment, two native officers favourable to the new cartridges; and under the bed of the jemadar were found gunpowder and brimstone, as if to destroy the man as well as his property. Some of the buildings are believed to have been set on fire by dropping burning brimstone through holes in the roof; and on one occasion, when the attempt at incendiarism had failed, a paper containing powder and brimstone was found. On the 21st and two following days, similar fires occurred. On the 25th, the house of the band-master of Her Majesty's 9th Lancers was fired and burned; and two or three similar attempts were shortly afterwards made, but frustrated. At all these fires, the engines of the cantonment were set to work; but it was observed that many of the sepoys worked listlessly and indifferently, as if their thoughts were bent rather upon fire-raising than fire-quenching.

That such occurrences produced uneasiness among the English authorities at Umballa may well be supposed. Captain Howard, magistrate of the cantonment, wrote thus to the Calcutta government: 'The emanating cause of the arson at this cantonment, I conceive, originated with regard to the newly introduced cartridges, to which the native sepoy shews his decided objection: it being obnoxious to him from a false idea – which, now that it has entered the mind of the sepoy, is difficult to eradicate – that the innovation of this cartridge is

derogatory both to his caste and his religion... That this has led to the fires at this cantonment, in my own private mind I am perfectly convinced. Were it the act of only one or two, or even a few persons, the well-disposed sepoys would at once have come forward and forthwith informed; but that there is an organised leagued conspiracy existing, I feel confident. Though all and every individual composing a regiment may not form part of the combination, still I am of opinion that such a league in each corps is known to exist; and such being upheld by the majority, or rather connived at, therefore it is that no single man dared to come forward and expose it.' Although proof could not be obtained of the culpability of any one sepoy, the incendiarism was at once attributed to them rather than to the peasantry. The existence of some oath or bond of secrecy was further supposed from the fact that a reward of one thousand rupees failed to bring forward a single witness or accuser. After about twenty attempts at burning buildings, more or less successful, the system was checked – by the establishment of mounted and foot patrols and pickets; by the expulsion of all fakeers and idle persons not belonging to the cantonment; by the refusal of a passage through it to sepoys on furlough or discharged; and by the arrest of such sepoys in the Umballa regiments as, having furloughs, still remained in the cantonment – influenced, apparently, by some mischievous designs.

Every one coincided in opinion with Captain Howard that there had been an organised plan among the sepoys; but some of

the officers in the Company's service, civil as well as military, differed from him in attributing it solely to the cartridge affair – they thought this a blind or pretence to hide some deeper scheme. The commissioner of the Cis-Sutlej states, however, agreed with the magistrate, and expressed an opinion that nothing would restore quiet but a concession to the natives in the matter of greased cartridges; and he recommended to the government at Calcutta the adoption of that line of policy. Writing on the 7th of May, he said: 'Fires, for the present, have ceased; but I do not think that this is any indication that the uneasy feeling among the sepoys is on the wane.' Considering the position of Umballa, it is no wonder that those in authority at that spot should feel anxiety concerning the safety of their position. Umballa is more than a thousand miles from Calcutta, separated from it by the whole of the important states in which the cities of Delhi, Meerut, Agra, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Allahabad, and Benares are situated, and deprived of assistance from thence in the event of the intermediate regions being disturbed. Umballa is a somewhat important town, too, in itself, with more than twenty thousand inhabitants; it is large, and surrounded with a wall, well supplied with water, bounded by a highly fertile district, and capable of furnishing abundant supplies to rebels, if held by them.

The authorities, awakened by these events in so many parts of India, sought to inquire whether the native newspaper press of India had fermented the anarchy. It seemed at first ridiculous to suppose that those miserable little sheets, badly written

and worse printed, and having a small circulation, could have contributed much to the creation of the evil. Yet many facts tended to the support of this view. It was a frequent custom in those papers to disguise the writer's real sentiments under the flimsy mask of a dialogue, in which one side was uniformly made victor. When the government was not actually abused and vilified, it was treated with ridicule, and its motives distorted. There were not many copies of these papers printed and sold; but a kind of ubiquity was afforded to them by the practice of news-mongers or tale-bearers, who went from hut to hut, retailing the various items of news or of comment that had been picked up.

Indeed, the tendency of the people to listen to attacks against the government is now known to have been very marked among the Hindoos. Predictions of the downfall of rulers were a favourite subject with them. Of course, such predictions would not be openly hazarded in newspapers; but they not less surely reached the ears of the natives. Thirty years ago, Sir John Malcolm spoke on this subject in the following way: 'My attention has been, during the last twenty-five years, particularly directed to this dangerous species of secret war against our authority, which is always carrying on by numerous though unseen hands. The spirit is kept up by letters, by exaggerated reports, and by pretended prophecies. When the time appears favourable, from the occurrence of misfortune to our arms, from rebellion in our provinces, or from mutiny in our troops, circular-letters and proclamations are dispersed over the country

with a celerity almost incredible. Such documents are read with avidity. The contents in most cases are the same. The English are depicted as usurpers of low caste, and as tyrants who have sought India with no other view but that of degrading the inhabitants and of robbing them of their wealth, while they seek to subvert their usages and their religion. The native soldiery are always appealed to, and the advice to them is, in all instances I have met with, the same – “*Your European tyrants are few in number: kill them!*” This testimony of Malcolm is especially valuable, as illustrating, and illustrated by, recent events.

The native press of India will come again under notice in a future chapter, connected with the precautionary measures adopted by the governor-general to lessen the power of those news-writers, whether English or native, who shewed a disposition to encourage rebellion by their writings. News and rumours always work most actively among credulous people – an important fact, knowing what we now know of India and its Hindoo inhabitants.

When General Anson, commander-in-chief of the forces in India, found that the small events at Dumdum, Berhampore, and Barrackpore had grown into great importance, and that the cartridge grievance still appeared to press on the consciences or influence the conduct of the sepoys, he deemed it right to make an effort that should pacify the whole of the native troops. Being at Umballa on the 19th of May, to which place he had hastened from his sojourn at Simla, he issued a general

order to the native army, informing the troops that it had never been the intention of the government to force them to use any cartridges which could be objected to, and that they never would be required to do so. He announced his object in publishing the order to be to allay the excitement which had been raised in their minds, at the same time expressing his conviction that there was no cause for this excitement. He had been informed, he said, that some of the sepoys who entertained the strongest attachment and loyalty to the government, and who were ready at any moment to obey its orders, were nevertheless under an impression that their families would believe them to be in some way contaminated by the use of the cartridges used with the Enfield rifles recently introduced in India. He expressed regret that the positive assertions of the government officers, as to the non-existence of the objectionable substances in the grease of the cartridges, had not been credited by the sepoys. He solemnly assured the army, that no interference with their caste-principles or their religion was ever contemplated; and as solemnly pledged his word and honour that no such interference should ever be attempted. He announced, therefore, that whatever might be the opinions of the government concerning the cartridges, new or old, he had determined that the new rifle-cartridge, and every other of new form, should be discontinued: ball ammunition being made up by each regiment for its own use, by a proper establishment maintained for the purpose. Finally, he declared his full confidence, 'that all in the native army will now perform

their duty, free from anxiety or care, and be prepared to stand and shed the last drop of their blood, as they had formerly done, by the side of the British troops, and in defence of their country.’ The central government at Calcutta, on receipt of the news of this order having been promulgated, hastily sent to state that, in implying that new cartridges *had* been issued, the commander-in-chief had overstepped the actual facts of the case; nothing new in that way had been introduced throughout the year, except to the troops at the Depôt of Musketry Instruction at Dumdum. From this fact it appears certain that the credulity of the sepoys at the more distant stations had been imposed upon, either by their fellow-Hindoos engaged in a conspiracy, or by Mohammedans.

In this chapter have been discussed several subjects which, though strange, exhibit nothing terrible or cruel. The suspicions connected with the Oude princes, the mystery of the chupatties, the prophecies of British downfall, the objections to the greased cartridges, the insubordination arising out of those objections, the incendiarism, the inflammatory tendency of the native newspaper press – all were important rather as symptoms, than for their immediate effects. But the month of May, and the towns of Meerut and Delhi, will now introduce us to fearful proceedings – the beginning of a series of tragedies.

CHAPTER III.

MEERUT, AND THE REBEL-FLIGHT TO DELHI

The first week in May marked a crisis in the affairs of British India. It will ever remain an insoluble problem, whether the hideous atrocities that followed might have been prevented by any different policy at that date. The complainings and the disobedience had already presented themselves: the murders and mutilations had not yet commenced; and there are those who believe that if a Lawrence instead of a Hewett had been at Meerut, the last spark that ignited the inflammable materials might have been arrested. But this is a kind of cheap wisdom, a prophecy after the event, an easy mode of judgment, on which little reliance can be placed. Taking the British officers in India as a body, it is certain that they had not yet learned to distrust the sepoys, whom they regarded with much professional admiration for their external qualifications. The Brahmins of the Northwest Provinces – a most important constituent, as we have seen, of the Bengal army – are among the finest men in the world; their average height is at least two inches greater than that of the English soldiers of the line regiments; and in symmetry they also take the lead. They are unaddicted to drunkenness; they are courteous in demeanour, in a degree

quite beyond the English soldier; and it is now known that the commanding officers, proud of the appearance of these men on parade, too often ignored those moral qualities without which a good soldier is an impossible production. Whether, when the disturbances became known, the interpretation was favourable to the sepoys, depended much on the peculiar bias in the judgment of each officer. Some believed that the native soldier was docile, obedient, and loyal as long as his religious prejudices were respected; that he was driven to absolute frenzy by the slightest suspicion, whether well or ill grounded, of any interference with his creed or his observances; that he had been gradually rendered distrustful by the government policy of forbidding suttee and infanticide, by the withholding of government contributions to Hindoo temples and idol-ceremonies, by the authorities at Calcutta subscribing to missionary societies, and lastly by the affair of the greased cartridges; and that the sensibilities of Brahminism, thus vitally outraged, prepared the native mind for the belief that we designed to proceed by some stratagem or other to the utter and final abolition of caste. This interpretation is wholly on the Hindoo side, and is respectful rather than otherwise to the earnestness and honesty of the Brahmins. Other officers, however, directed their attention at once to the Mohammedan element in the army, and authoritatively pronounced that the Hindoo sepoys were simply dupes and tools in the hands of the Moslem. These interpreters said – We have superseded the Mohammedan power in India; we have dethroned the

descendants of the great Aurungzebe and the greater Akbar; we have subjected the mogul's lieutenants or nawabs to our authority; we have lately extinguished the last remaining monarchy in Northern India held by a son of the Faithful; we have reduced a conquering and dominant race to a position of inferiority and subserviency; and hence their undying resentment, their implacable hatred, their resolute determination to try one more struggle for supremacy, and their crafty employment of simple bigoted Hindoos as worthy instruments when sufficiently excited by dark hints and bold lies.

But there was one fact which all these officers admitted, when it was too late to apply a remedy. Whether the Hindoo or the Mohammedan element was most disturbed, all agreed that the British forces were ill placed to cope with any difficulties arising out of a revolt. Doubt might be entertained how far the disloyalty among the native troops would extend; but there could be no doubt that European troops were scanty, just at the places where most likely to be needed. There were somewhat over twenty thousand Queen's troops at the time in India, with a few others on the way thither. Of these, as has been shewn in a former page, the larger proportion was with the Bengal troops; but instead of being distributed in the various Bengal and Oude provinces, they were rather largely posted at two extreme points, certainly not less than two thousand miles apart – on the Afghan frontier of the Punjaub, and on the Burmese frontier of Pegu. Four regiments of the Queen's army were guarding the

newly annexed country of the Punjaub, while three others were similarly holding the recent conquests in Pegu. What was the consequence, in relation to the twelve hundred miles between Calcutta and the Sutlej? An almost complete denudation of European troops: a surrendering of most of the strongholds to the mercy of the sepoys. Only one European regiment at Lucknow, and none other in the whole of Oude; two at Meerut, one at Agra, one at Dinapoor, and one at Calcutta – none at Cawnpore or Allahabad. The two great native capitals of India – Delhi, of the Mohammedans: Benares, of the Hindoos – had not one European regiment in them. Indeed, earlier in the year, Calcutta itself had none; but the authorities, as narrated in the last chapter, became so uneasy at the thought of being without European supporters at the seat of government, that they sent to Rangoon in Pegu for one of the Queen's regiments, and did not venture upon the Barrackpore disbandments until this regiment had arrived. The lieutenant-governor of the Northwest Provinces, comprising Delhi and the surrounding regions, had in his whole government only three European regiments, and a sepoy army, soon found to be faithless. Oude had a considerable native force; but Bengal proper had very few troops of any kind. In short, the Company's forces were almost as unfavourably distributed as they could possibly be, to stem the Revolt at its beginning; and there may not be much hazard in assuming that the natives were as well acquainted with this fact as the British.

The reader will find it useful to bear in mind, that the

unfavourable symptoms during the first four months of the year did not present themselves in those districts which were afterwards associated with such terrible deeds. Meerut and Delhi, Dinapoor and Ghazeepore, Benares and Allahabad, Cawnpore and Lucknow, Mirzapore and Agra – these were not in open disaffection during the period under notice, however much the elements for a storm may have been gathering. It was at Dumdum, Barrackpore, and Berhampore, on the Hoogly branch of the Lower Ganges – and at Umballa near the Sutlej, separated from them by more than a thousand miles – that the insubordination was chiefly shewn. Now, however, the scene shifts to the Jumna and the Upper Ganges – with which it will be well to become familiar by means of maps. Especially must the positions of Meerut and Delhi be attended to, in relation to the events detailed in this and the next following chapters.

Meerut, as a district, is a part of the Doab or delta enclosed between the rivers Ganges and Jumna; but it is Meerut the town with which this narrative is concerned. It came into the possession of the British in 1836, and is now included in the territories of Northwest Bengal. The town, standing on the small river Kalee Nuddee, is about equidistant from the Ganges and the Jumna, twenty-five or thirty miles from each, and nearly nine hundred miles from Calcutta. Meerut is interesting to the Indian antiquary in possessing some good architectural remains of mosques and pagodas; and to the European residents, in possessing one of the largest and finest Christian churches in

India, capable of accommodating three thousand persons, and provided with a good organ; but the houses of the natives are wretchedly built, and the streets narrow and dirty, as in most oriental towns. It is as a military station, however, that Meerut is most important. The cantonment is two miles north of the town, and is divided into two portions by a small branch of the river, over which two bridges have been thrown. The northern half of the cantonment contains lines for the accommodation of a brigade of horse-artillery, a European cavalry corps, and a regiment of European infantry – separated respectively by intervals of several hundred yards. In front of these is a fine parade-ground, a mile in width and four miles in length, having ample space for field-battery practice and the manœuvres of horse-artillery; with a heavy battery on the extreme right. Overlooking the parade are the barracks, with stables, hospitals, riding-schools, canteens, and other military offices. The barracks consist of a series of separate brick-built low-roofed structures, each comprising one large and lofty room, surrounded by a spacious enclosed verandah, divided into apartments for the non-commissioned officers and the families of married men. Behind the barracks, in a continued line three deep, are the bungalows or lodges of the officers, each surrounded by a garden about a hundred yards square. The opposite or southern half of the cantonment is mainly occupied by the huts (not barracks) for native troops, and by the detached bungalows for the officers who command them. This description, applicable in some degree

to many parts of India, may assist in conveying an idea of the manner in which the European officers have usually been lodged at the cantonments – in detached bungalows at no great distance from the huts of the native troops: it may render a little more intelligible some of the details of the fearful tragedies about to be narrated. Before the Revolt, it was customary to keep at Meerut a regiment of European cavalry, a regiment of European infantry, one of native cavalry, and three of native infantry, besides horse and foot artillery. The station is a particularly healthy one; and, both politically and geographically, is an important place to the British rulers of India.

Meerut, in some respects, was one of the last towns in which the mutiny might have been expected to commence; for there was no other place in the Northwest Provinces containing at the time so many English troops. There were the 60th (Rifle) regiment, 1000 strong; the 6th Dragoon Guards or Carabineers, 600 strong (but not fully mounted); a troop of horse-artillery; and 500 artillery recruits – altogether about 2200 men, with a full complement of officers. The native troops were but little more numerous: comprising the 3d Bengal cavalry, and the 11th and 20th Bengal infantry. In such a relative state of the European and native forces, no one for an instant would have admitted the probability of a revolt being successful at such a time and place.

Although it was not until the second week in May that those events took place which carried grief and mourning into so many families, Meerut began its troubles in the latter part of

the preceding month. The troops at this station had not been inattentive to the events transpiring in Lower Bengal; they knew all the rumours concerning the greased cartridges; they had been duped into a belief in the truth of those rumours; and, moreover, emissaries had been at work among them, instilling into their minds another preposterous notion – that the government had plotted to take away their caste and insult their religion, by causing the pulverised bones of bullocks to be mixed up with the flour sold in the public markets or bazaars. Major-general Hewett, commanding the military division of which Meerut was the chief station, sought by every means to eradicate from the minds of the men these absurd and pernicious ideas; he pointed out how little the government had to gain by such a course, how contrary it would be to the policy adopted during a hundred years, and how improbable was the whole rumour. He failed, however, in his appeal to the good sense of the men; and equally did the European officers of the native regiments fail: the sepoy or infantry, the sowars or cavalry, alike continued in a distrustful and suspicious state. Many British officers accustomed to Indian troops aver that these men had been rendered more insubordinate than ever by the leniency of the proceedings at Barrackpore and Berhampore; that disbandment was not a sufficiently severe punishment for the offences committed at those places; that the delay in the disbanding was injurious, as denoting irresolution on the part of the authorities at Calcutta; and that the native troops in other places had begun to imbibe an opinion that the

government were afraid of them. But whatever be the amount of truth in this mode of interpretation, certain it is that the troops at Meerut evinced a mutinous spirit that caused great uneasiness to their commanders. Bungalows and houses were set on fire, no one knew by whom; officers were not saluted as had been their wont; and whispers went about that the men intended to adopt a bold course in reference to the greased cartridges.

The military authorities on the spot resolved to put this matter to the test. On the 23d of April, Colonel Smyth, the English commander of the 3d regiment of native Bengal cavalry, ordered a parade of the skirmishers of his regiment with carabines on the following morning, to shew them the newly introduced mode of adjusting their cartridges without biting, hoping and believing that they would be gratified by this indication of the willingness of the government to consult their feelings in the matter. He caused the havildar-major and the havildar-major's orderly to come to his house, to shew them how it was to be done; and the orderly fired off a carabine under the new system. At night, however, uneasiness was occasioned by the burning down of the orderly's tent, and of a horse-hospital close to the magazine. Although this act of incendiarism looked ominous, the colonel nevertheless determined to carry out his object on the morrow. Accordingly, on the morning of the 24th, the troops assembled on parade; and the havildar-major fired off one cartridge to shew them how it was to be done. The men demurred, however, to the reception of the cartridges, though the same in kind as had been

used by them during a long period, and *not* the new cartridges. An investigation ensued, which was conducted on the 25th by Major Harrison, deputy-judge advocate. On being examined, the men admitted that they could discern nothing impure in the composition or glazing of the paper; but added that they had *heard* it was unclean, and believed it to be so. The inquiry, after a few conciliatory observations on the part of the judge, ended in the men expressing contrition for their obstinacy, and promising a ready obedience in the use of the cartridges whenever called upon.

A hope was now entertained that the difficulties had been smoothed away; but this hope proved to be fallacious. Major-general Hewett, wishing to put an end to the stupid prejudice, and to settle at once all doubts as to the obedience of the men, ordered a parade of the 3d cavalry for the morning of the 6th of May. On the evening of the 5th, preparatory to the parade, cartridges were given out to the men, the same in quality as those which had been freely in use during many years. Eighty-five of the sowars or troopers – either still incredulous on the grease-question, or resolved to mutiny whether with just cause or not – positively refused to receive the cartridges. This conduct, of course, could not be overlooked; the men were taken into custody, and tried by a court-martial; they were found guilty of a grave military offence, and were committed to imprisonment with hard labour, for periods varying from six to ten years. The governor-general, seeing the necessity of promptitude at

this crisis, had just sent orders to the military stations that the judgments of all court-martials should be put in force instantly, as a means of impressing the troops with the seriousness of their position; and Major-general Hewett, acting on these instructions, proceeded on the 9th to enforce the sentence of the court-martial. A European guard of 60th Rifles and Carabiniers was placed over the convicted men; and at daybreak the whole military force at the station was assembled on the rifle parade-ground. All were there – the European 60th, Carabiniers, and artillery – the native 3d, 11th, and 20th. The European cannon, carbines, and rifles were loaded, to prepare for any emergency. The eighty-five mutineers of the 3d native cavalry were marched upon the ground; they were stripped of their uniforms and accoutrements; they were shackled with irons riveted on by the armourers. While this was being done, very meaning looks were exchanged between the culprits and the other sowars of the same regiment – the former looking reproachfully at the latter, while the latter appeared gloomy and crestfallen: it was evident that the unconvicted men had promised to resist and prevent the infliction of the degrading punishment on their convicted associates; but it was equally evident that the presence of so many armed European troops would have rendered any attempt at rescue worse than useless. The manacles having been adjusted, the men were marched off to jail. And herein a grave mistake appears to have been committed. Instead of keeping a watchful eye over these men at such a perilous time, and retaining them

under a guard of European troops until the excitement had blown over, they were sent to the common jail of Meerut, two miles distant from the cantonment, and there handed over to the police or ordinary civil power of the town. How disastrous was the result of this course of proceeding, we shall presently see. The native troops, when the culprits had been removed from the parade-ground, returned to their lines furious with indignation – at least the 3d cavalry were so, and they gradually brought over the infantry to share in their indignant feelings. It was a degrading punishment, unquestionably: whether the remainder of the native troops at the station would be terrified or exasperated by it, was just the problem which remained to be solved. All the afternoon and evening of that day were the men brooding and whispering, plotting and planning. Unfortunately, the European officers of native regiments were accustomed to mix so seldom with their men, that they knew little of what occurred except on parade-ground: this plotting was only known by its fruits. Judged by subsequent events, it appears probable that the native troops sent emissaries to Delhi, forty miles distant, to announce what had occurred, and to plan an open revolt. The prime plotters were the 3d; the 20th were nearly as eager; but the 11th, newly arrived at Meerut, held back for some time, although they did not betray the rest.

Little did the European inhabitants, their wives and their children, at Meerut, dream what was in store for them on Sunday the 10th of May – a day of peace in the eyes of Christians. It was

on the 9th that the sentence of the court-martial on the eighty-five mutineers was enforced: it was on the 10th that the Revolt, in its larger sense, began. Whether these two events stood to each other in the relation of cause and effect, is a question not easily to be answered; but it may safely be asserted that the Revolt would not have resulted from the punishment unless the men had been generally in a state of disaffection. The Sunday opened as most Sundays open in India, quiet and uneventful, and remained so till evening. Ladies and families were then going to evening-service at the church. Some of them passed the mess-room of the 3d cavalry, and there saw servants looking towards the road leading to the native infantry lines. Something was evidently wrong. On inquiry it appeared that a mutiny had broken out, and that fighting was going on in the bazaar. Crowds of armed men soon hurried that way; and families who had been on the route to church, drove or walked back in haste to escape danger. So it was on all sides: whoever on that evening ventured forth, found that blood-shedding instead of church-service would fill their thoughts. The Rev. Mr Smyth, chaplain of Meerut, while driving to church for the seven o'clock service, met two of the 60th Rifles covered with blood; and on reaching the church, he saw buggies and carriages driving away in great confusion, and a body of people pointing to a column of fire and smoke in the direction of the city: frequent shots were heard, amid the cries of a large mob. In another direction the wife of an officer in the 3d cavalry, going like other Europeans to church, and startled like them by

sounds of violence, saw a private of the Carabiniers unarmed, and running for very life from several men armed with *latthies* or long sticks: she stopped her carriage and took in the English soldier; but the men continued to strike at him until the vehicle rolled away. This lady, on reaching her bungalow in haste and dismay, was the first to give notice to her husband that something was wrong among the native troops: he instantly started off on foot to the lines, without waiting for his horse. In another part of the scene, an English officer of the 11th native infantry, at about six o'clock on that evening, while in his bungalow preparing for a ride with Colonel Finnis of the same regiment, had his attention attracted to his servants, and those in the bungalows of other officers, going down towards the front of the several compounds or gardens, and looking steadily into the lines or cantonment of the regiment. He heard a buzzing, murmuring noise, which at first he deemed of no consequence; but as it continued and increased, he hastily finished dressing and went out. Scarcely had he reached his gate, when he heard the sound of firearms, which his practised ear at once told him were loaded with ball-cartridge. An European non-commissioned officer came running towards him, with others, and exclaimed: 'For God's sake, sir, leave! Return to your bungalow, change that dress, and fly!' Shortly afterwards shots came into his own compound; and the havildar-major of the 11th, rushing terrified and breathless into the bungalow, exclaimed: 'Fly, sahib – fly at once! the regiments are in open mutiny, and firing on their officers; and Colonel

Finnis has just been shot in my arms!’ The officer mounted and started off – at first leisurely – because ‘a Briton does not like actually running away under any circumstances;’ but when the havildar-major (native sergeant-major) advised him to gallop off to the European cavalry lines, he saw that the suggestion was good; and he immediately started – over a rugged and barren plain, cut up by nullahs and ravines – towards the lines of the Queen’s Carabiniers.

When these, and a dozen similar mysteries, came to receive their solution, it was found that a mutiny had indeed broken out. Shortly before five o’clock on that Sunday afternoon, the men of the 3d native cavalry, and of the 20th native infantry, rushed out of their lines on a given signal, and proceeded to the lines of the 11th native infantry, all fully armed. After a little hesitation, their comrades joined them; and then all three regiments proceeded to open acts of violence. Colonel Finnis of the 11th, the moment he heard of this startling proceeding, rode to the parade-ground, harangued the men, and endeavoured to induce them to return to their duty. Instead of listening to him, the men of the 20th fired a volley, and he fell, riddled with bullets – the first victim of the Indian Revolt. The other officers present, feeling that their remaining longer on the ground would effect no good, escaped. Whether a daring man might have stemmed the torrent, cannot now be told: no one attempted it after Finnis’s death; his brother-officers were allowed to escape to the lines of the artillery and the Carabiniers, on the other side of the encampment. So far as

the accounts are intelligible, the first shots appear to have been fired by the 20th, the 11th joining afterwards in the violence.

While the infantry were thus engaged, the ominous but natural step was taken by the 3d cavalry of releasing their eighty-five imprisoned companions – ominous, because those men, enraged at their incarceration, would join in the disorder with heated blood and excited passions. The troopers proceeded to the jail, set their companions free, armed them, and invited them to share in the mutiny. All this was evidently preconcerted; for native smiths were at hand to strike off the manacles. Yelling and threatening, the whole returned to the lines; and then commenced the direful mischief. Within a very short time, all three regiments became busily engaged in burning and murdering. But this was not all; when the eighty-five troopers were liberated, the other prisoners in the jail, *twelve hundred* in number, were set at liberty at the same time; and then the scum of Indian society entered into the scenes of violence with demoniac relish, adding tenfold to the horrors perpetrated by the sepoy and sowars. The mutineers and the ruffians set fire to nearly all the bungalows of the native lines, and to the government establishments near at hand, murdering, as they went, the Europeans who fell in their way. The bungalows being mostly thatched with straw, the destruction was very rapid; the cowardly assailants, setting fire to the thatch, waited till the flames had driven out the inmates of the bungalow, and then fell upon them as assassins. The conflagrations were accompanied by the yells of the rioters and the shrieks of the sufferers, rendered

more terrible by the approach of darkness. The rabble of the bazaar, and the lowest portion of the population generally, as if intoxicated by release from the dread of Europeans, now joined the mutineers and the released felons, and the horrors thickened. On all sides shot up columns of flame and smoke, on all sides were heard the shouts and curses of some, the cries and lamentations of others. One redeeming feature – there may have been others – marked these proceedings; the sepoys of the 11th, in most instances, connived at the escape of their officers – nay, strove earnestly to save them: it was not by men of his own regiment that poor Colonel Finnis had been shot down.

A few individual examples, drawn from the simple but painful narratives of eye-witnesses, will shew in what way misery and death were brought into homes where the peace of a Christian Sabbath had reigned only a few hours before.

The Rev. Mr Smyth, after returning hurriedly from the church where he had intended to perform divine service, took shelter in the house of an officer of the artillery in the English lines. Shots had just before been aimed at that officer and his wife by eight or ten sepoys of the artillery dépôt or school, while standing at the very gate of their compound; and yet Mr Smyth himself was saluted respectfully by several sepoys during his hurried retreat – shewing the strange mixture of deference and ferocity exhibited by these misguided men. Presently afterwards another shot was heard, a horse was seen galloping past with a buggy; and it was soon found that the surgeon and the veterinary surgeon of the

3d cavalry had been wounded and mutilated. The clergyman escaped unhurt, to learn and to mourn over the events transpiring in other parts of the town and cantonment.

A captain of horse, the husband of the lady mentioned in a former paragraph, hastened on the first news from his bungalow to the lines of the 3d cavalry, in which he commanded a troop. He was respected by his men, who offered him no hurt, and who seemed to hesitate for a time whether to join the rest in mutiny or not. Soon, however, the mania infected them; and the captain, seeing the jail opened and the prisoners liberated, hastened back. The road from the town to the cantonment was in an uproar; the infantry and the bazaar-people were in crowds, armed and firing; and he saw one of the miscreant troopers stab to death an Englishwoman, the wife of the Meerut hotel-keeper, as she passed. Soon a ball whizzed past his own car, and he saw one of his own troopers aiming at him; he shouted: 'Was that meant for me?' 'Yes,' was the reply; 'I will have your blood!' The captain detected this man as one whom he had been obliged to punish for carelessness and disobedience. The man fired again, but again missed his aim; and although the other troopers did not join in this, they made no attempt to check or seize the assailant. The captain, abandoned gradually by all but a very few troopers, at length reached the European lines, where he took part in the proceedings afterwards adopted. Meanwhile the poor wife had passed two hours of terrible suspense. Believing at first that the carabinier whom she had saved might have been

the main object of attack, she hid his uniform, dressed him in a coat of her husband's, and bade him sit with herself and family, for mutual safety. Out of doors she heard shots and shouts, and saw houses burning. In the next bungalow, speedily fired, was the wife of an adjutant lately arrived from England, she was entreated to come over for shelter, but not arriving, servants were sent in to seek her. A horrid sight met them: the hapless lady lay on the floor in a pool of blood, dead, and mutilated in a way that the pen refuses to describe. The noises and flames increased; eight or ten flaming bungalows were in sight at once; and many a struggle took place between the captain's servants and the mutineers, during which it was quite uncertain whether one more burning, one more massacre, would ensue. Troopers rushed into the bungalow, endeavouring to fire it; while others, with a lingering affection towards the family of their officer, prevented them. The husband arrived, in speechless agony concerning the safety of those dear to him. Wrapped in black stable-blankets, to hide their light dresses, all left the house amid a glare of flame from neighbouring buildings, and hid under trees in the garden; whence they sped to a small ruin near at hand, where, throughout the remainder of the night, they crouched listening to the noises without. Bands of armed men passed in and out of the bungalow compound during the night, and were only prevented from prosecuting a search, by an assurance from the domestics that the officer's family had effected their escape. When morning came, the (now) houseless Europeans,

with about twenty troopers who remained faithful to the last – though agitated by strange waverings and irresolution – left the place, taking with them such few clothes and trinkets as could be hastily collected, and started off for the Carabiniers' lines, passing on their way the smouldering ruins of many bungalows and public buildings.

Howsoever the narratives might vary in details, in substance they were all alike; they spoke of a night of burning, slaughter, and dismay. Wherever there was a bungalow, the European inhabitants of which did not succeed in escaping to the English lines, there was murder perpetrated. The escape of Mr Greathed, civil commissioner for Meerut, was a narrow one. His house – flat-roofed, as it fortunately happened – was one of the first attacked by the mutineers: at the first alarm, Mr and Mrs Greathed fled to the roof; thither, on the least intimation from any of the servants, the miscreants would have followed them; but the servants persisted that the family had departed; and the assailants, after searching every room in the house, took their departure. One officer after another, as he rushed from his bungalow to call his men back to their allegiance, was shot down; and wherever the mutineers and their ruffian companions brought murder into a house, they mingled with the murder a degree of barbarity quite appalling and unexpected. There were a few Europeans in the town and vicinity not connected with the military department; and these, unless they effected their escape, were treated like the rest; rank, age, and sex were equally

disregarded – or, if sex made any difference, women, gentle English women, were treated more ruthlessly than men. An officer of the 20th, living in his bungalow with his wife and two children, was sought out by the ruffians: the father and mother were killed; but a faithful ayah snatched up the two children and carried them off to a place of safety – the poor innocents never again saw their parents alive. An English sergeant was living with his wife and six children beyond the limits of the cantonment; he and three of his little ones were massacred in a way that must for very shame be left untold: the mother, with the other three, all bleeding and mutilated, managed to crawl to the European lines about midnight.

With what inexpressible astonishment were the narratives of these deeds heard and perused! Men who had been in India, or were familiar with Indian affairs, knew that the sepoy had before risen in mutiny, and had shot their officers; but it was something strange to them, a terrible novelty, that tender women and little children – injuring none, and throwing a halo of refinement around all – should be so vilely treated as to render death a relief. The contrast to all that was considered characteristic of the Hindoo was so great, that to this day it remains to many an Indian veteran a horrid enigma – a mystery insoluble even if his heart-sickness would lead him to the attempt. Be it remembered that for a whole century the natives had been largely trusted in the relations of social life; and had well justified that trust. Many an English lady (it has been observed by an eloquent reviewer,

whose words we have before quoted) has travelled from one end of the country to the other – along desert roads, through thick jungles, or on vast solitary rivers – miles and miles away from the companionship of white men, without the slightest anxiety. Her native servants, Mohammedans and Hindoos, were her protectors; and she was as safe in such custody as in an English home. Her slightest caprice was as a law to her attendants. These swarthy bearded men, ready at her beck, ever treated her with the most delicate respect, ever appeared to bear about with them a chivalrous sense of the sacredness of their charge. Not a word or a gesture ever alarmed her modesty or excited her fear; and her husband, father, brother never hesitated to confide her to such guardianship. It was in the year 1857 that the charm of this delicate fidelity was first broken; and broken so appallingly, that men were long incredulous that such things could be.

But the children, the sabred and mangled little ones – that these could be so treated by the same natives, was more astounding to the Anglo-Indians than even the treatment of the women. ‘Few of our countrymen have ever returned from India without deploring the loss of their native servants. In the nursery they are, perhaps, more missed than in any other part of the establishment. There are, doubtless, hundreds of English parents in this country who remember with feelings of kindness and gratitude the *nursery* bearers, or male nurses, who attended their children. The patience, the gentleness, the tenderness with which these white-robed swarthy Indians attend the little children

of their European masters, surpass even the love of women. You may see them sitting for hour after hour, with their little infantine charges, amusing them with toys, fanning them when they slumber, brushing away the flies, or pacing the verandah with the little ones in their arms, droning the low monotonous lullaby which charms them to sleep; and all this without a shadow on the brow, without a gesture of impatience, without a single petulant word. No matter how peevish, how wayward, how unreasonable, how exacting the child may be, the native bearer only smiles, shews his white teeth, or shakes his black locks, giving back a word of endearment in reply to young master's imperious discontent. In the sick-room, doubly gentle and doubly patient, his noiseless ministrations are continued through long days, often through long nights, as though hunger and weariness were human frailties to be cast off at such a time. It is little to say that these poor hirelings often love their master's children with greater tenderness than their own. Parted from their little charges, they may often be seen weeping like children themselves; and have been known, in after-years, to travel hundreds of miles to see the brave young ensign or the blooming maiden whom they once dandled in their arms.' These men, it is true, were domestic servants, not sepoys or soldiers fighting in the army of the Company; but it is equally true that the British officers, almost without exception, trusted implicitly to the sepoys who acted as orderlies or servants to them; and that those orderlies shewed themselves worthy of the trust, by

their scrupulous respect to the ladies of each household, and their tender affection for the little ones born under the roof of the bungalow. Hence the mingled wonderment and grief when fiend-like cruelties suddenly destroyed the charm of this reliance.

Allowing the veil to remain, at present, drawn over still greater horrors in other places, it must be admitted that the principal atrocities at Meerut were perpetrated by the twelve hundred miscreants liberated from the jail, aided by the general rabble of the town. The native troops had something in their thoughts besides firing bungalows and murdering a few Europeans; they had arranged some sort of plot with the native troops of Delhi; and they set out in a body for that city long before the deplorable transactions at Meerut had ceased. Those scenes continued more or less throughout the night; officers and their wives, parents and their children, were not relieved from the agony of suspense before morning broke.

The number massacred at Meerut on this evening and night was not so large as the excited feelings of the survivors led them to imply; but it was large to them; for it told of a whole cluster of happy homes suddenly broken up, of bungalows reduced to ashes, of bleeding corpses brought in one by one, of children rendered fatherless, of property consumed, of hopes blasted, of confidence destroyed. The European soldiers, as will presently be seen, soon obtained the mastery so far as Meerut was concerned; but the surviving women and children had still many hours, many days, of discomfort and misery to bear. The School

of Instruction near the artillery laboratory became the place of shelter for most of them; and this place was much crowded. How mournfully does it tell of large families rendered homeless to read thus: 'We are in a small house at one end of the place, which consists of one large room and verandah rooms all round; and in this miserable shed – for we can scarcely call it anything else – there are no less than forty-one souls' – then are named thirteen members of one family, ten of another, three other families of four each, and two others of three each – 'besides having in our verandah room the post-office, and arranging at present a small room adjoining the post-office as the telegraph-office.' Some of the houseless officers and their families found temporary homes in the sergeants' rooms of the European lines; space was found for all, although amid much confusion; and one of the refugees writes of 'a crowd of helpless babies' that added to the misery of the scene. Adverting to others like herself, she remarks: 'Ladies who were mere formal acquaintances now wring each other's hands with intense sympathy; what a look there was when we first assembled here! – all of us had stared death in the face.'

Let us turn now to a question which has probably presented itself more than once to the mind of the reader during the perusal of these sad details – What were the twenty-two hundred European troops doing while the three native regiments were imbuing their hands in the blood of innocent women and children? Could not they have intervened to prevent the atrocities? It must be borne in mind that these fine English

troops, the Carabiniers and 60th Rifles, with artillery, were nearly equal in number to the rebels; and that, if quickly moved, they would have been a match for five or ten times their number. Whether or not they *were* quickly moved, is just the question at issue. Major-general Hewett's dispatch to the adjutant-general thus describes the course adopted as soon as the outbreak became known to him: 'The artillery, Carabiniers, and 60th Rifles were got under arms; but by the time we reached the native infantry parade-ground, it was too dark to act with efficiency in that direction; consequently, the troops retired to the north of the nullah, so as to cover the barracks and officers' lines of the artillery, Carabiniers, and 60th Rifles; which were, with the exception of one house, preserved; though the insurgents – for I believe the mutineers had by that time retired by the Allygurh and Delhi roads – burned the vacant Sapper and Miner lines.'

One thing is quite certain – the mutineers were not pursued: they were allowed to go to Delhi, there to raise the standard of rebellion in a still more alarming way. The Carabiniers, it is true, were deficient in horses to join in pursuit; but this might assuredly have been obviated by precautionary arrangements during the many days on which the 3d native cavalry had shewn symptoms of insubordination. An officer of the 11th native infantry, who narrowly escaped death in his gallop to the European cantonment, accompanied the Queen's regiments to the scene of anarchy; but there is evidence that he considered the movements somewhat tardy. 'It took us a long time, in

my opinion,' he says, 'to get ready, and it was dark before the Carabiniers were prepared to start in a body.' In the latitude of Meerut, we may remark, in the second week in May, darkness can hardly come on until near seven o'clock, whereas the outbreak occurred two hours earlier. He continues: 'When the Carabiniers were mounted, we rode off at a brisk trot, through clouds of suffocating dust, and darkness, in an easterly direction, and along a narrow road —*not advancing in the direction of the conflagration*, but, on the contrary, leaving it behind on our right rear. In this way we proceeded for some two or three miles, to my no small surprise, when suddenly the "halt" was sounded, and we faced about, retracing our steps, and verging off to our left. Approaching the conflagration, we debouched on the left rear of the native infantry lines, which of course were all in a blaze. Skirting along behind these lines, we turned them at the western end, and wheeling up to the left, came upon the 11th parade-ground, where, at a little distance, we found the horse-artillery and her Majesty's 60th Rifles. It appears that the three regiments of mutineers had by this time commenced dropping off to the westward to the Delhi road, for here some firing took place between them and the Rifles; and presently the horse-artillery, coming to the front and unlimbering, opened upon a copse or wood in which they had apparently found cover, with heavy discharges of grape and canister, which rattled among the trees; and all was silent again. The horse-artillery now limbered up again, and wheeled round; and here I joined them, having lost

the Carabiniers in the darkness. By this time, however, the moon arose. The horse-artillery column, with Rifles at its head, moving across the parade-ground, we entered the long street turning from the southward behind the light cavalry lines. There it was that the extent and particulars of the conflagration first became visible; and, passing the burning bungalow of the adjutant of the 11th native infantry, we proceeded along the straight road or street, flanked on both sides with flaming and crashing houses in all stages of combustion and ruin; the Rifles occasionally firing volleys as we proceeded. It was by this time past ten o'clock; and having made the entire circuit of the lines, we passed up to the east of them, and, joined by the Carabiniers and Rifles, bivouacked for the night.'

Collating various accounts of this evening's events, it becomes evident that the military movements of the Europeans were anything but prompt. Even if the two regiments and the artillery could not have reached the scene of tumult before dark – a supposition not at all borne out – still it seems strange that all should have 'bivouacked for the night' at the very time when three mutinous native regiments were on the way to Delhi. Hasty critics, as is usual in such circumstances, at once condemned the military commander at Meerut; and an ex-governor-general, dwelling, in his place in the House of Lords, on the occurrences in India, spoke in a contemptuous tone of 'an unknown man named Hewett' as one whose misconduct had allowed the rebel troops to escape from Meerut to Delhi. It was hard for a soldier

who had served for forty years in India, without once returning to his native country, to find contumely thus hurled at him; it is one of the bitter things to which public men are subjected, not only from anonymous writers, but from other public men whose names carry authority with them. A near relation of the major-general afterwards took up his defence, urging that it might have been unwise policy to send the only European troops in pursuit to Delhi, at a time when the magazines and stores at Meerut required so much attention. The defence may possibly be insufficient; but the history of the Crimean war had shewn how hastily Lord Raglan had been accused of offences, things committed and things omitted, for which he was afterwards known not to have been responsible; and this experience ought to have suggested caution to assailants, especially remembering how long a time must often elapse between an accusation and a refutation, during which time the wound is festering. Declining years certainly did not prevent the officer whose name is now under notice from taking a part in the operations, such as they were, of the English troops at Meerut; although in his sixty-eighth year, he slept on the ground among the guns, like his men, on the 10th of May, and for fourteen consecutive nights he did the same; while for many following weeks he never doffed his regimentals, except for change of apparel, night or day. Whether such details are trivial or not, depends on the nature of the accusations. It is only the hasty judgments of those at a distance that are here commented on; the dissatisfaction of the Calcutta authorities will

be adverted to in a future page.

The sympathies of the Europeans at Meerut were drawn in a forcible way towards the inmates of a convent and school at Sirdhana – an establishment remarkable as existing in that part of India. We must go back sixty years to understand this. Towards the close of the last century, there was a Cashmerian bayadère or dancing-girl, who became associated with a German adventurer, and then, by a course of unscrupulous intrigue and fearless sanguinary measures, obtained possession of three considerable jaghires or principalities in the region around and between Meerut and Delhi. These cities, as well as Agra and others in the Doab, were at that time in the hands of the great Mahratta chief, Dowlut Rao Scindia. After a series of brilliant victories, the British obtained possession of the Doab in 1803, but awarded a petty sovereignty to the female adventurer, who became thenceforth known as the Begum Sumroo. She retained her queendom until her death in 1836, after which the three jaghires passed into the hands of the British. This remarkable woman, during the later years of her life, professed the Roman Catholic faith; she had a spacious and handsome palace at Sirdhana, about twelve miles from Meerut; and near it she built a Catholic church, imitative on a small scale of St Peter's at Rome, with a beautiful altar inlaid with mosaics and precious stones. Out of twelve thousand inhabitants in Sirdhana, about one-tenth now profess themselves Christians, having imitated the begum in her change of religion; and there is a Christian

convent there, containing a number of priests, nuns, and pupils. When, therefore, the outrages occurred at Meerut, apprehensions naturally arose concerning the fate of the European women and girls at this convent. About five days after the Revolt commenced, rumours came in that the inmates of the convent at Sirdhana were in peril; and it was only by great exertions that the postmaster at Meerut was enabled to bring some of them away. A letter written in reference to this proceeding said: 'The poor nuns begged of him, when he was coming away, to try and send them some help; he tried all he could to get a guard to escort them to this station, but did not succeed; and yesterday morning (16th of May), having given up the idea of procuring a guard from the military authorities, he went round, and by speaking to some gentlemen, got about fifteen persons to volunteer their services, to go and rescue the poor nuns and children from Sirdhana; and I am happy to say they succeeded in their charitable errand without any one having been injured.'

It will be remembered that, during the burnings and murderings at Meerut on the evening of the 10th, most of the mutineers of the three regiments started off to Delhi. They took, as was afterwards found, the high road from Meerut, and passing the villages of Begumabad, Moradnuggur, Furrucknuggur, and Shahderuh, reached Delhi early on Monday; the infantry making forced marches, and the cavalry riding near them for support. Proof was soon afforded that the native troops in that city, or some of them, had been waiting for the mutineers, prepared to

join them in an organised attack on the Europeans. What aspect that attack put on, and what were the calamities to which it gave rise, will be narrated in the next two chapters.

Many days elapsed before Meerut recovered its tranquillity. Such men of the 3d, 11th, and 20th regiments as remained faithful – especially the 11th, of whom there were more than a hundred – were received at the cantonment, and their previous insubordination pardoned on account of their subsequent fidelity; but still there were many causes for anxiety. In the major-general's first report on the disasters, he said: 'Nearly the whole of the cantonment and Zillah police have deserted.' These police or watchmen are referred to by an officer familiar with the district, who says: 'Round about Meerut and Delhi there are two or three peculiar castes or tribes, something similar to our gipsies, only holding human life at less value, and which in former days gave constant trouble. Of late years, they have lived in more peace and quietness, contenting themselves with picking up stray cattle and things that did not belong to them. They have now, however, on the earliest occasion broken out again, and have been guilty of all kinds of depredations. Skinner's Horse was originally raised to keep these people in order, about the time of Lord Lake; such men have hitherto been necessary at Meerut, Delhi, and those parts, as watchmen; every one was obliged to keep one, to avoid being robbed to a certainty.' The Meerut inhabitants had thus, in addition to their other troubles, the knowledge that gangs of desperadoes would be likely to

acquire renewed audacity through the defection of the native police.

It was soon ascertained that the dâk communications on many of the roads were cut off, and the military commandant found much difficulty in transmitting intelligence to the seat of government. Five days after the great outbreak, another cause of uneasiness ensued. Six companies of native Sappers and Miners arrived at Meerut from Roorkee, under their commander, Major Fraser. The place here named is interesting in a twofold point of view. Being situated in one of the most elevated sites in the Doab between the Jumna and the Ganges, about eighty miles north of Meerut, it was selected as the head-quarters for operations on the great Ganges Canal, the noblest British work in India; and here has been made a magnificent aqueduct nine hundred feet in length, with arches of fifty feet span. This aqueduct, and the necessary workshops and model-rooms of the engineers, have converted the place from a small village to a considerable station. Roorkee also contains an establishment called the 'Thomason College,' for affording instruction in civil engineering to Europeans and natives. When the native Sappers and Miners, about eight hundred strong, arrived at Meerut from this place, on the 16th of May – either excited by the news of the late occurrences, or moved by some other impulse – they suddenly shot their commanding officer, and made off for the open country. A force of the Carabiniers and horse-artillery went in pursuit of them, and shot down many; but a greater number

escaped, probably to Delhi. Such of the companies as did not attempt flight were disarmed and carefully watched.

Too soon, alas! did the Europeans at Meerut know that atrocities were being committed at Delhi. By twos and threes did fugitives come in, glad to sacrifice all else for the sake of very life. Now several officers of the 38th native regiment; now a merchant and his family; now officers of the 74th and their families; now civil servants of the Company; now officers of the 54th – all toil-worn, dirty, ragged, hungered, weighed down by the miseries of their forty miles' flight from brutal assailants: women, as is usual with Englishwomen, bearing their share of these miseries with the truest heroism. All was doubt as to the occurrences in other quarters; dâks were cut off, telegraphic wires were severed; the wishes and orders of the governor-general at one place, and the commander-in-chief at another, could not yet be known. On the night of the outbreak, two Europeans had endeavoured to travel by dâk from Meerut to Delhi; they encountered the rebels, and were murdered; and this was the commencement of indications, afterwards abundant enough, that the roads were no longer safe. All that was certain was, that a sudden social earthquake had overturned the homes of families distant nine hundred miles from Calcutta, bringing death to many, mourning and loss to others, distrust and anxiety to all.

CHAPTER IV.

DELHI, THE CENTRE OF INDIAN NATIONALITY

The course of this narrative now requires that attention – more particular than will be required in relation to other cities in India – should be bestowed on the world-renowned Delhi, the great focus of all that can be called truly national in that vast country. Three regiments fled from Meerut to Delhi, and there found other regiments ready to join them in scenes of revolt and violence, of spoliation and murder; but it is necessary, in order to appreciate what followed, to know why Delhi is regarded in a peculiar light by the natives: why a successful resistance to British rule was, and must long continue to be, more serious in that locality than in any other part of the East. Not only ought the position of the city, considered as the residence of a hundred and sixty thousand Mohammedans and Hindoos, to be rendered familiar; but the reader should know how it has happened that the sovereign of that city has, for eight or nine hundred years, been regarded in a peculiar sense as the autocrat of Hindostan, the one man before whom millions of natives have been wont to bend the knee, or rather to lie prostrate in abject submission.

What India was before the arrival of the Mussulmans, need not be told here at any length. We know, in truth, very little on that

matter. It was from the days of the first Moslem conqueror that the greatness of Delhi began. Long before the Christian era, Arab merchants brought rich spiceries from Sinde and Malabar, and sold them to Phœnician merchants, who conveyed them on laden camels by way of Petra to the shores of the Mediterranean. Other portions of Indian merchandise were carried up the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates to a point whence they were transported westward to Aleppo or Antioch – a route almost identical with that advocated in the present day for a Euphrates railway and a Euphrates telegraph. The Greeks derived all their knowledge of Indian commodities through the Phœnicians: while their information concerning the country itself was obtained from the Persians, who at one time held sway as far as the Indus. The expedition of Alexander the Great into India, about 326 B.C., first gave the Greeks a personal knowledge of this wonderful land; and many successors of the great Macedonian added to the then existing amount of information concerning the tribes, the productions, the customs of the region beyond the Indus. Consequent on those discoveries, the merchants of the newly founded city of Alexandria gradually obtained a command of the trade with India: bringing the rich produce of the East by ship to Berenice on the Red Sea, and then transporting it overland to Alexandria. The commodities thus imported were chiefly precious stones, spices, perfumes, and silks; and during some centuries the Roman Empire was drained of much specie to pay for these imports. Alexandrians were the principal merchants

who furnished the nations of Europe with Indian articles till the discovery of the passage round the Cape of Good Hope by Vasco de Gama in 1498. The western nations of Asia, however, continued to be supplied principally by the merchants of Basra or Bussorah, a very flourishing commercial city near the point where the Euphrates empties itself into the Persian Gulf; and there was also an extensive caravan-trade from Northern India through Northern Persia to the Caspian and the Black Sea. The discovery of the Cape of Good Hope route naturally attracted the attention of the maritime nations of Europe towards India, followed by the settlement of Portuguese and Dutch traders on the coast, and ultimately by the wonderful rise of British power in those regions through the instrumentality of the East India Company.

But although trading instincts thus laid India open to the commercial dealings of merchants, and to the cupidity of European princes, it was not until modern erudition had been applied to the subject that the true history of the land of the Hindoos became at all known. Scholars found, when they had mastered the Sanscrit or sacred language of that people, that a wonderful mine of information was thrown open to them. They ascertained that the nation, whatever it may have been called, from which the genuine Hindoos are descended, must at some period have inhabited the central plains of Asia, whence they migrated into the northern parts of India; that for at least a thousand years before the Christian era, great and powerful

empires existed in Hindostan, which made considerable progress in knowledge, civilisation, and literature; that Southern India, or the Deccan, was conquered and peopled by the Hindoos at a much later date than the rest; that Buddhism, the religion of the earlier inhabitants, was overruled and driven out by Brahminism or Hindooism in the fifth century of our era; and that for five centuries longer, the Hindoos were the true rulers of this much-coveted land.

It was, however, as has been already implied, only with the arrival of the Mohammedans that the course of Indian history took that turn which is now interesting to us, especially in connection with the city of Delhi.

The year 1000 was marked by the invasion of India by Mahmoud of Ghiznee, a Tatar sovereign who held sway among the chieftains of Afghanistan. He defeated the rajah of Lahore at Peshawur; then penetrated beyond the Sutlej; and returned laden with spoil. In a second expedition he conquered Moultan; in a third, he reconquered the same city after a revolt. A fourth expedition found Mahmoud opposed by a confederacy of all the sovereigns of Northern India, who, seeing a common danger, resolved to unite for a common cause; they were rapidly gaining an advantage over him, when the sudden fright of an elephant induced a panic in the Hindoo army, and left the victory to Mahmoud, who returned to Ghiznee still more richly laden with booty than ever. For a time, the Hindoo king who reigned over the region of which Delhi was the chief city, managed to ward

off the hostility of the great invader; but taking offence at a departure from neutrality during one of the later expeditions, Mahmoud captured that city, and returned to Ghiznee with forty thousand prisoners. For thirty years did these raids and spoliations continue. The most celebrated next to that which resulted in the sack of Delhi, was the expedition intended for the destruction of the Hindoo temple of Somnauth in Gujerat: a temple which, if native annals are to be believed, had fifty thousand worshippers, and was endowed with a revenue of two thousand villages; which had two thousand Brahmins officiating as priests, five hundred daughters of noble Hindoos as dancing-girls, three hundred musicians; and the sandal-wood gates of which were the theme of magniloquence from the pen of an English governor-general eight centuries afterwards.⁶ Mahmoud broke all the idols, and carried off countless treasures to Ghiznee.

⁶ When General Nott returned to India after his victorious campaign in Afghanistan in 1842, he brought away with him the gates of Somnauth, which, according to the tradition, had remained at Ghiznee since the days of Mahmoud. This and other trophies gave occasion to an address from Lord Ellenborough to the native princes of India, conceived in somewhat bombastic language, in which the recapture of the gates was characterised as an achievement 'avenging the insult of eight hundred years.' The chiefs and princes of Sirhind, Rajwarra, Malwah, and Gujerat, were enjoined to transmit, 'with all honour,' the gates to Somnauth. The address was much ridiculed in England; but those on the spot believed it to be calculated to make an impression on the natives. The home government, however, would not permit the gates – even if the genuine sandal-wood originals, which is not free from doubt – to be sent to the still-existing temple of Somnauth; they considered such an act would identify the Company injuriously with one of the two great parties of religionists in India, and deeply offend the other.

From that time to the period of the rise of British power, the Mohammedans never lost their hold upon India, however much it may have been shaken by occasional success on the part of the Hindoos; nor did they ever cease to regard Delhi as the chief Indian city. Although Mahmoud made twelve expeditions across the Indus, the object was mainly booty, rather than permanent settlement. His successors, however, established a regular government in the Punjaub, and in the region thence eastward to Delhi. The Ghiznee dynasty was put an end to in the year 1184, when it was overcome by the Seljuks; and in 1193 Delhi was formally appointed capital of the Moslem sovereigns of India. After a succession of rebellions and murders, exhibiting all the hideous features of Oriental politics, the Seljuk dynasty fell to pieces in the year 1289. Then arose a third Mohammedan dynasty, that of the Afghans or Patans, who came like all the other conquerors of India from the northwest, and who like them coveted Delhi as their capital. For about a century did these Patan emperors reign, continually struggling against Hindoo rajahs on the one hand, and Mussulman adventurers on the other.

It was in the year 1398 that Tamerlane – familiar to all school-boys in England by the famous name of Timour the Tatar – first set foot in India, and laid the foundation of the Mogul dynasty. Properly speaking, he was not a true Mogul, but belonged to the rival Tatar nation of Turcomans; nevertheless the line of emperors to which he gave origin has always been known as the Mogul dynasty. He was a ruthless conqueror, who, having

ravaged all Central Asia from the Black Sea to the Chinese frontier, turned his attention towards India. He crossed the Indus at Attock, went to Moultan, and extended his march to Delhi, wading through Hindoo blood, which he shed without resistance and almost without cause. The native annalists record how he put a hundred thousand beings to death in the great city; how he caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor or Great Mogul of India; how he departed suddenly to end his days on the other side of the Indus; and how Delhi mourned for many a year over its miseries. No pen can describe what India suffered during the next century and a quarter, with a Mogul emperor at Delhi, constantly fighting with the Mohammedan chieftains who resisted his authority.

The long but often broken line of wretched despots need not be enumerated here: a few landmarks of great names – Baber, Akbar, Jehanghire, Shahjehan, Aurungzebe, Nadir Shah – will furnish all that is needful for our present purpose.

Baber – or, in more majestic form, Zahireddin Mohammed Baber – a descendant of Tamerlane, was the first really great Mohammedan emperor of Delhi, the first Mogul who regarded his subjects in any other light than as a prey to be spoliated. Centering his power at Delhi, he extended it eastward to the mouth of the Ganges; and although, in his short reign of four years, from 1526 to 1530, constantly engaged in military expeditions, he nevertheless found time to cultivate the arts of peace, and to attend to whatever appeared calculated to

promote the prosperity of his empire. In blood-shedding, he was scarcely surpassed by his predecessor Tamerlane: indeed this was a propensity among all the Tatar chieftains of those times. When his warlike and angry passions were not excited, Baber could, however, come forth in a very different light, as a kind and forgiving man, one fond of friends and friendship, and not without a tinge of poetry in his tastes. He was a man of business, who attended personally to the affairs of government, and passed fewer hours in sensual idleness than is customary with oriental princes. With the Hindoos he had little trouble; their national character was by this time much broken; the rapid succession of reigning families had inured them to change; and they had imbibed a feeling of horror and dismay from the atrocities to which the various Moslem conquerors had subjected them. When opposition to his progress had once ceased in India, he became an altered man. He made or improved roads; established serais or resting-places for travellers at suitable distances; caused the land to be measured, in order to fix taxation by equitable adjustment; planted gardens, and introduced many trees and plants until then unknown in India; established a regular post from Agra, through Delhi, Lahore, and Peshawur, to Cabool; and wrought many improvements in the city of Delhi.

Akbar, unquestionably the wisest and greatest prince who ever ruled India – a prince who was really a benefactor to his people – was the grandson of Baber. Becoming emperor of Delhi in 1556, he established the Mogul dynasty on a firmer basis

than it had before occupied. The native Hindoos enjoyed, under him, greater prosperity than they had ever experienced since the first invasion of the Mohammedans. He was distinguished by a spirit of toleration and a love of justice; and the memory of his virtues is to this day treasured up by the Hindoos as well as the Mussulmans of India. As the worshippers of Islam had, by the time of Akbar, fallen out much among themselves, in various parts of Asia, the Mogul Moslems of India gradually became weaned from sympathy with the rest, and prepared for more thorough amalgamation with the Hindoos than had ever before been possible. If not an amalgamation by family ties, it was at least an incorporation by civil and social usages; and thus it is that from the time of Akbar may be dated the remarkable mixture of Mohammedans and Hindoos in so many towns of India. Ambitious chieftains might continue to struggle for supremacy; but the populace of the two religions began to wish rather to trade together than to exterminate each other. Akbar had the genius to see the full force of this tendency, and the honesty to encourage it. He never crushed those whom he conquered; but invited all alike, Hindoos as well as Mohammedans, to settle down as peaceful citizens, assured that they would receive equal justice from him regardless of their religious differences. He placed natives of both races in offices of trust; he abolished the capitation-tax on infidels; he forbade the degradation of war-prisoners to the position of slaves; he abrogated such of the Hindoo laws as were most repulsive to

reason or humanity, without being vital parts of their religion; he discouraged fanaticism among those of his own faith; he encouraged trade and commerce; he reduced taxation; and he kept a strict watch over the conduct of the officers of his government. The mildness of his character, his strict impartiality to the different classes of his subjects the magnanimity which he shewed to his enemies, and his great personal courage are mentioned with praise even by the Jesuits, who visited India during his reign. Well did this eminent man, during his long reign of forty-nine years, deserve the title of Akbar the Great; and natural was it that his subjects should look up with reverence to Delhi, the centre and seat of his empire. His reign, both in its beginning and its end, was almost exactly contemporaneous with that of Queen Elizabeth in England.

Jehanghire, a far inferior prince to Akbar, succeeded him in 1605, and soon became involved in troubles. The Uzbeks obtained possession of his dominions in Cabool; the King of Persia took Candahar from him; the Afghans revolted from his rule; the Hindoo Rajpoots commenced their struggles for independence; and, at a later date, his son Shahjehan rebelled against him. Nevertheless, Jehanghire, judged by an oriental standard, was not a bad ruler of Hindostan. The country enjoyed considerable prosperity under him; literature was extensively cultivated; many new cities were built; the Hindoo religion experienced even greater toleration than in the reign of Akbar; and he gave a courteous reception to Sir Thomas Roe, sent on

an embassy from England to the Great Mogul. He was, however, a strange being. In a fit of anger against certain rebels, he caused several hundreds of them to be impaled, and placed in a row leading out of the Lahore gate at Delhi; and he himself rode past them on an elephant, 'to receive the obeisance of his friends.' His native ferocity also shone out, in his causing one of his principal councillors to be sewed up in the hide of a newly flayed ox, and thrown into the street; the hide, shrinking in the heat of the sun, compressed him to death; but as the compression came too soon to satisfy the savage feelings of the monarch, he caused the next victim, when similarly incased, to be sprinkled with water occasionally, to prolong the torture. One of the most remarkable circumstances in the career of Jehanghire was the influence gradually acquired over him by his Sultaness Nurmahal, the 'light of the palace,' whose name became changed to Nurjehan, the 'light of the world;' her exquisite beauty, wit, and accomplishments, won the love of the monarch; and as she was in mind and heart far his superior, her power over him was often exerted for good purposes.

Shahjehan, an ungrateful son to Jehanghire, was destined to be, in turn, the victim of his own son Aurungzebe. He was an emperor from 1627 to 1659, and then a miserable uncrowned captive for seven years longer. He attacked all the neighbouring princes whose dominions or wealth he coveted; and blinded or murdered all his relations whose ambition he dreaded. And yet, amid his atrocities, he was a man of much ability. Delhi, Agra,

and other cities, benefited by his rule. The internal government of his kingdom was very complete. The great mosque at Delhi, and the Taj Mahal at Agra, which rose at his command, are, to this day, objects of admiration to the natives of India. Though it may, to English minds, have been a waste of public money to spend six millions sterling on the far-famed peacock's throne; yet, as all his establishments were formed on a scale of great magnificence, and as numerous other cities and towns throughout the Empire vied with the splendour of Delhi and Agra – there is evidence that the Mogul and his dominions must have owned vast wealth. He possessed both taste and financial tact; and thus, with all his atrocities, Shahjehan left behind him a full treasury and a splendid and prosperous empire.

Aurangzebe, the last Mogul who maintained the real greatness of the native court of Delhi, became emperor in 1659, by an act of violence against his royal parent. He captured the cities of Hyderabad, Bejapore, and Golconda, and extended his dominions nearly to the limits of the Carnatic. There were, however, the germs of mischief perceptible in his reign: the warlike Hindoo tribe of Mahrattas rose into note; and though they were frequently defeated in the plains by the troops of Aurungzebe, he was unable to subdue the country inhabited by these mountaineers. Sevajee, the founder of the Mahratta empire, gradually conquered the greater part of the Deccan; he died in 1682, and his son, Sambajee, was put to a cruel death by Aurungzebe in 1689; but the Mogul emperors of the north

could never afterwards wholly subdue the Mahratta rajah of the south. Aurungzebe was illiberal towards his Hindoo subjects; and this circumstance threw them into closer sympathy than would otherwise have been produced with the rude Mahratta mountaineers. He was not without ability; but he had neither the wisdom nor the justice to maintain his wide-spreading empire in a state of greatness; and when he died in 1707, he left the Mogul power at Delhi much weaker than he found it at the period of his seizure of the crown.

Nadir Shah, although never emperor of Delhi, must be named here as one who contributed to the crumbling of the Mogul dynasty. This man, one of the grand barbarians whom Central Asia has so often sent forth, was the son of a sheep-skin cap-maker. He became a soldier of fortune; then the leader of a band of robbers; then governor of Khorassan; then Shah of Persia; then a formidable opponent of the Turks and the Afghans; and then a scourge to India. While devastating Afghanistan in 1738, he required of the Emperor of Delhi that none of the Afghans should find shelter in his (the Mogul's) dominions; but as no attention was paid to his demands, he marched into Hindostan in the following year, and entered Delhi with an enormous army on the 8th of March. He seized the whole of the vast treasures which had been amassed in the course of nearly two centuries by the Mogul monarchs. The citizens not being so submissive as he wished, he ordered a general massacre. His commands were only too well obeyed; for, from sunrise till noon, the

inhabitants were slaughtered by his soldiers without distinction of sex or age. At the earnest intercession of the emperor, Nadir ordered the butchery to be stopped. Where the estimates of human beings murdered varies from 8000 to 150,000, it is clear that no trustworthy data are obtainable; but it is unquestionable that Delhi suffered immensely, both in its population and its wealth. The ruthless despoiler not only refrained from claiming the crown of Hindostan, but he did not make any conquests whatever: he came simply as a Shah of Persia on an errand of vengeance; he remained two months at Delhi; and then departed westward, carrying with him treasures that have been variously estimated at from thirty to seventy millions sterling.

The Delhi monarchs no longer need or deserve our attention; they had fallen from their high estate, and were forced to struggle constantly for the maintenance of their authority. A number of obscure names meet our view after the time of Aurungzebe – Shah Alum, Moez-Eddin, Furrucksir, Mohammed Shah, Ahmed Shah, Alumghir, and Shah Alum II.: each more powerless than the preceding. Now they were attacked by the warlike Mahrattas; now by the Rajpoots, a military Hindoo tribe which had never been wholly subdued by the Moslems; now by the Sikhs, a kind of Hindoo dissenters, brave and independent in their bearing; now by the Rohillas, an Afghan race, who effected a settlement in the very neighbourhood of Delhi; now by many of the Mohammedan nawabs or viceroys, who, like other Asiatic viceroys in parallel circumstances, were willing to rise on the fall of their masters;

now by the competing sons and nephews who surrounded every emperor; and now – more striking in its consequences than all the rest – by the ever-encroaching British.

Nevertheless, amid all this decadence of Mogul power, the natives of Hindostan never ceased to look up to the emperor as the centre of power, to Delhi as the centre of nationality. Their traditions told them of Mahmoud, of Tamerlane, of Baber, of the great Akbar, of Jehanghire, of Shahjehan, of Aurungzebe; and although ruthless barbarities were connected with the names of many of these rulers, there was still a grandeur that impressed the imagination. The Hindoos, it is true, had their sacred associations connected with Benares rather than with Delhi; but their distinct nationality had been almost stamped out of them during eight centuries of Mohammedan supremacy; and they, like the rest, held in reverence the city where the peacock's throne had glittered on the world.

By what strange steps the descendants of the Great Mogul became pensioners of the East India Company, will be explained presently; but it will be well first to describe Delhi itself.

This far-famed city is situated on the river Jumna, about five hundred miles by road above Allahabad, where the Jumna flows into the Ganges, and nine hundred by road from Calcutta. In the opposite direction, Delhi is nearly four hundred miles from Lahore, and six or seven hundred from Peshawur – so great are the distances between the chief towns in India: distances that terribly hamper the operations of a British army during any

sudden emergency. Striking as Delhi may be, it presents but a faint approach in splendour to the city of past days, the home of the grand old Moguls. Of the original Delhi, the natives give the most extravagant account; they even run back to a period three thousand years before the Christian era for its foundation. All that is certain, however, is, that Inderput or Indraprestha, the name of the old city, was the capital of a Hindoo kingdom under a rajah, long before its conquest by the Mohammedans. When or how the original city went to ruin, is not exactly known; but modern Delhi owes its chief adornments to Shahjehan. A traveller from the south or Agra direction is struck with the evidences of ruined Inderput before he sees anything of modern Delhi. 'Everywhere throughout the plain rise shapeless half-ruined obelisks, the relics of massive Patan architecture, their bases buried under heaps of ruins bearing a dismal growth of thorny shrubs. Everywhere we tread on overthrown walls. Brick mosaics mark the ground-plan of the humbler dwellings of the poorer classes. Among the relics of a remote age, are occasionally to be seen monuments of light and elegant style of architecture, embellished with brilliant colours, gilt domes, and minarets incased in enamelled tiles.' Some travellers have asserted that they have traced these ruins thirty miles along the Jumna; but these cannot all have been the ruins of one city. Approaching the present Delhi, it is seen that the ruins are spread over a plain, in the midst of which the city is situated; and they give place, after a time, to the tasteful villas of the

Europeans who exercise civil or military control within Delhi. Most of these villas are on the site of the once famous garden of Shalimar. On the northern side of the city, close under a ridge of sandstone rocks called the Mijnoon Pahar, are the cantonments – an alternation of bungalows, huts, and groups of trees.

So much for the environs. Although not entitled to take rank among the great cities of the earth, Delhi is nevertheless a considerable place, for it is seven miles in circumference. The Jumna bounds it on the east, while a lofty crenellated wall, of horseshoe shape, completes the boundary on the other sides. This wall has been an object of much attention at different times. As built by Shahjehan, it possessed little strength. When the British obtained ascendancy over the city in 1803, the wall was found to be in a ruinous state, without other flanking defences than small circular bastions placed at intervals; the ditch was imperfect; there was scarcely any vestige of a glacis or exterior slope; and the crumbling ruins of dilapidated buildings had been allowed to accumulate all round the wall. Captains Hutchinson and Smith, of the Bengal engineers, were thereupon deputed to restore and strengthen the fortifications. It was determined to establish a series of bastions, with faces and flanks to defend the curtain or plain wall, and to mount them with heavy artillery. The walls were repaired; and to shield them from escalade, they were protected, especially on the river-front, with beams of timber, the sharpened ends of which were pointed at an acute angle downward into the ditch. The ditch was cleared out and

deepened; the glacis was made to cover, in some degree, the scarp of the wall; the ground outside was cleared to some distance of ruins and houses; and the ravines were filled up to check the approach of marauding horsemen. To prepare for a rising within the city as well as an attack from without, detached martello towers were constructed, entirely separate from the walls, and accessible from them only by drawbridges; each tower had a gun mounted on a pivot, so that in the event of a tumult in the city, the towers might be occupied by artillerymen, the drawbridges drawn up, and the guns swiveled round to pour a fire upon the insurgents. The gateways of the city were strengthened; outworks were provided in front of some of them, while others were provided with guard-houses and *places-d'armes*. At a much later date – in 1838 – Lord Auckland caused the walls and towers to be strengthened, and one of the new defences, called the Wellesley Bastion, to be reconstructed.

In what relation these defences stood to a British besieging force in 1857, will remain to be told in a future chapter: we proceed here with the description of the city.

Delhi has seven gates on the land-side, named, respectively, the Lahore, Ajmeer, Turcoman, Cabool, Mohur or Moree, Cashmere, and Agra Gates; while along the river-front are four others, the Rajghat, Negumbod, Lall, and Kaila Gates. Some little diversity is shewn by travellers in giving these names; and some make the number of gates twelve instead of eleven. The Cashmere Gate is provided with casemated or

shot-proof chambers, for the accommodation of a city-guard. A bridge of boats over the Jumna connects Delhi with the road leading northeastward to Meerut, and the chief magazine is, or was, between the centre of the city and this bridge. Eight of the defences on the walls are called the Shah Bastion, Burn Bastion, Gurstin Bastion, College Bastion, Ochterlony Bastion, Lake Bastion, Wellesley Bastion, and Nawab Bastion – names obviously derived, in most instances, from military officers engaged in the Company's service. Strictly speaking, the wall does not quite surround the city; for on one side it abuts on a small branch of the river, where there is a short bridge across to the old fort of Selimgurh, built in a very heavy style by one of the early emperors. Entirely outside the wall, north of the city, is a custom-house, which affords a curious commentary on the relations existing between the civil and military officers of the Company. It was first built by a medical officer, then sold to the Company for a treasury, and then adapted as a custom-house. The engineers wanted to get rid of this building, as an obstruction to their plan of defences, in the same way as they had swept away numerous outhouses, bazaars, and ruins; but the civilians prevented this; and so the custom-house remained till 1857, when the building and its garden became a ready prey to the rebels.

The city, considered without relation to its defences, presents many of those features so familiar in oriental towns. As seen by the approaching traveller, few of the dwelling-houses peep

above the ramparts; but the Jumma Musjid or principal mosque, the turreted and battlemented palace, the minarets, and other public buildings, combine to form a majestic picture; while the graceful acacias and lofty date-trees bending over the ramparts, and the grouping of tombs with sombre foliage on the glacis, add new features to the scene. Arrived within the city, it is seen that the streets are mostly narrow. The chief exception is that of a handsome street running south from the palace to the Agra Gate: three quarters of a mile long by a hundred and fifty feet wide. This street has, therefore, length and breadth enough to afford space for much splendour; but the Delhians have not fully availed themselves of this opportunity, for they have built blocks of small houses in the midst of this street, analogous in some degree to the 'Middle Rows' known to the inhabitants of London. Another large street, similarly shorn of its due dignity, runs from the palace westward to the Lahore Gate. Both streets are, however, enlivened by raised water-courses flowing in channels of red stone – part of a great work begun and finished by the Company, for supplying Delhi with water.

The glories of Delhi are the great mosque and the still greater palace. The Jumma Musjid, situated in the centre of the city, is one of those buildings to which Mohammedans point with pride: famous not only in Hindostan, but all over Southern and Central Asia. It presents to the eye an open court on an elevated platform, nearly five hundred feet square; in the middle of which is a marble fountain for the ablutions necessary in

the ceremonials of Islamism. On three sides of this court are open arcades and octagonal pavilions; while on the fourth side is the mosque, a structure of great splendour approached by a magnificent flight of marble steps. White marble cornices inlaid in black marble with inscriptions from the Koran; walls, ceilings, and pavements of the same delicate materials; beautiful domes and lofty minarets – all combine to render the Jumma Musjid a truly gorgeous structure. The Emperor Shahjehan built it more than two centuries ago; and the British government gave orders in 1851 that it should be kept in repair.

But, splendid as is the Jumma Musjid, the imperial palace is still more striking – partly for what it is, but principally for what it has been. The palace stands between the two principal streets and the bridge. Some travellers have compared it with Windsor Castle, some with the Kremlin at Moscow, in size and majesty; while others insist that it has no compeer. Bishop Heber was quite enthusiastic in its praise. In the first place, the palatial buildings are surrounded by a wall to which there is certainly no parallel either at Windsor or at Moscow; it is of red granite, three quarters of a mile in circuit, nearly forty feet high, flanked with turrets and domes, and entered by two noble gates with barbicans. This wall is a grand work in itself, irrespective of the structures it encloses. Strictly speaking, the wall is only on three sides, the fourth abutting on a small branch of the Jumna, where occurs the short bridge crossing to the old fort of Selimgurh. The palace itself is entered by a series of beautiful gateways, all of

red granite, and all sculptured with flowers and inscriptions from the Koran. The vaulted aisles and the open octagonal courts are spoken of by Heber with great admiration. The Dewani Khas, or private council-chamber, although allowed to become filthy by the visits of crows and kites, is an exquisite structure; it is a pavilion of white marble, supporting four cupolas of the same delicate material, with pillars and arches elaborately inlaid with gilt arabesques, flowers, and inscriptions. The garden around it has numerous white marble fountains of elegant form, and a small octagonal pavilion with bath-rooms, but all dirty and neglected. The Moti Musjid or private mosque for the court, and the Dewani-aum or public hall of audience, are, like the rest of the palace, ornate in marble and in carving, in sculpture and in inscriptions, in gilding and in inlaying; and, also like the rest, disfigured with filth – a combination truly oriental. In the hall of audience is, or was before the Revolt, the dais on which once stood the world-renowned peacock's throne, formed entirely of gold and jewels; and it was in this same chamber that the victorious Nadir Shah, by exchanging turbans with the defeated Mogul Mohammed Shah, obtained possession of a treasure almost as renowned as the peacock's throne itself – the *koh-i-noor*, the 'mountain of light,' the glorious diamond which, after various vicissitudes, now occupies a place in the regalia of Queen Victoria.

Passing from a scene of decayed splendour to one of living interest, we find Delhi to be inhabited by almost an exactly

equal number of Hindoos and Mohammedans, eighty thousand of each; but it is essentially a Mohammedan city, the centre of their prestige and influence in India; and all the dwellings and public buildings of the Hindoos are indicative of a race locally less powerful. Besides the imperial palace just described, there is, about nine miles from Delhi, near an extraordinary pillar called the Kootub Minar, the country residence of the emperor, or, as it has been more customary in recent years to call him, the King. It is a large but paltry building, in an inferior style of Italian architecture, with a public road running through the very court-yard. Within the city a palace was built for the British resident a few years ago; and around this building a number of elegant houses have since been erected, by the natives as well as by the Europeans. Since the once great Mogul has been a king without a kingdom, a pensioned puppet of the Company, a potentate having nothing to employ his thoughts and his pension but political intrigue and sensual indulgence – the representative of England has been a sort of envoy or resident, ostensibly rendering honour to the Mogul, but really watching that he does no mischief, really insuring that he shall be a king only in name. But more on this point presently. The British civil staff in the city comprises – or did comprise before the Revolt – a resident or commissioner, a revenue collector, a magistrate, and other officials. There have usually been three regiments barracked or stationed in the cantonment; but the military importance of the place has been rather due to the fact that Delhi has been made a

depôt for a large park of artillery – valuable enough when in the hands of the British, but a source of dismay and disaster when seized by mutineers.

Although this narrative has little to do with the merits or demerits of Delhi as a place of residence; yet, knowing something of what Englishmen and Englishwomen have had to bear when cooped up within a town or fort menaced by ruthless natives, every compatriot at home would like further to know in what way those trials are likely to have been aggravated by the incidents of climate. A lady-traveller furnishes a vivid picture of Delhi in a *hot-wind*, such as frequently visits towns in India during certain seasons of the year. ‘Every article of furniture is burning to the touch; the hardest wood, if not well covered with blankets, will split with a report like that of a pistol; and linen taken from the drawers appears as if just removed from a kitchen-fire. The nights are terrible, every apartment being heated to excess. Gentlemen usually have their beds placed in the verandahs, or on the chubootiar or terrace on the top of the house: as they incur little risk in sleeping in the open air, at a season in which no dew falls, and when there is scarcely any variation in the thermometer. Tornados are frequent during these hot winds; while they last, the skies, though cloudless, are darkened with dust, the sun is obscured, and a London fog cannot more effectually exclude the prospect. The birds are dreadful sufferers at this season; their wings droop, and their bills are open as if gasping for breath; all animals are more or less affected.’

Then, when this frightful heat is about to depart, ensues a storm, more terrible to look at, though easier to bear. 'The approaching strife is made known by a cloud, or rather a wall of dust, which appears at the extremity of the horizon, becoming more lofty as it advances. The air is sultry and still; for the wind, which is tearing up the sand as it rushes along, is not felt in front of the billowy masses, whose mighty ramparts gather strength as they spread. At length the plain is surrounded, and the sky becomes as murky as midnight. Then the thunder breaks forth, but its most awful peals are scarcely heard in the deep roar of the tempest; burst succeeds to burst, each more wild and furious than the former; the forked lightnings flash in vain, for the dust, which is as thick as snow, flings an impenetrable veil around them. The wind having spent itself in a final effort, suddenly subsides, and the dust is as speedily dispersed by torrents of rain, which in a very short time flood the whole country.' This is the last agony of the storm; after which the temperature lowers and nature becomes more tranquil.

Such is Delhi – such the city which, amid all its changes of fortune, has for so many centuries been an object of reverential affection to the natives of Hindostan. When the disorganised regiments from Meerut entered the imperial gates, they found an aged mogul or king, with sons and grandsons, courtiers and retainers, willing to make him a stepping-stone to their own advancement. Who this king was, and how he had come into that position, may soon be told.

Precisely a century ago, when Clive was preparing to revenge the atrocities connected with the Black Hole at Calcutta, the Delhi empire was rapidly losing all its power; the northern and northwestern provinces were seized upon by the Afghans and the Sikhs; the Rajpoots extended their dominions as far as Ajmeer; and the Emperor Alumghir was too weak to protect his capital from the monstrous barbarities of the Afghan insurgents. The next emperor, Shah Alum II., unable either to repel invaders or to control his rebellious nawabs, virtually yielded to the rapidly rising power of the East India Company. He signed a treaty with Clive in 1765, involving mutual obligations; he was to yield to the British certain provinces, and to award to a resident appointed from Calcutta considerable power at the court of Delhi; while the British were to protect him from his numerous assailants, and to secure him a pension of £260,000 per annum, which, with other sources of wealth, brought the degenerate descendant of the Moguls nearly half a million annually. Troubled by the Mahrattas on one side, by the Rohillas on a second, and by the Nawab of Oude on a third, the paralysed emperor became so bewildered that he knew not which way to turn. About 1788 a Rohilla chieftain suddenly entered Delhi, and put out the eyes of the unfortunate emperor with a poniard; then the Mahrattas defeated this chieftain, seized the capital, and reduced Shah Alum himself to a mere puppet. During this anarchy the British in India were so fully occupied in other quarters, that they could not make a resolute demonstration in the centre of the once

great Mogul empire; but in the year 1803 all was prepared by Lord Lake for a resolute attempt to break down the Mahratta and Rohilla power in the north, and to insure that the emperor should have no other master than the Company – a kindness, the motives for which will not bear very close scrutiny. The battle of Delhi, fought on the 11th of September 1803, opened the gates of the city to the British, and relieved the emperor from his thralldom. A reverse had very nearly occurred, however. While Lake was reposing after his victory, Holkar, the great Mahratta chief, leaving his cavalry to attract the notice of the British at Muttra, suddenly appeared before Delhi with a force of 20,000 infantry and 100 guns. The garrison comprised only two battalions and four companies of native troops, with a few irregular horse; and as some of these deserted at the first affright, there were left only 800 men and 11 guns to defend a city seven miles in circuit. By unwearied patience and daring intrepidity, however, Colonel Burn, who was military commandant in the city at the time, and who was ably assisted by Colonel Ochterlony and Lieutenant Rose, succeeded in repelling all the attacks of the Mahrattas; and Holkar retired discomfited.

From that day – from the 16th of October 1803, until the 11th of May 1857 – an enemy was never seen before the gates of Delhi; a day had never passed during which the city had been other than the capital of a state governed nominally by a Mogul king, but really by a British resident. Shah Alum, after thirty years of a troubled life, was vouchsafed three years of

peace, and died in 1806 – a pensioner of that great abstraction, that inscrutable mystery to the millions of Hindostan, the ‘Coompanee Bahadoor,’ the Most Honourable Company.

The behaviour of the Company’s servants towards the feeble descendant of the Great Moguls was, until about thirty years ago, the most absurd mockery. They took away all his real power, and then offered him a privilege, the least exercise of which, if he had ventured on such a thing, they would at once have resented. Shah Akbar, who succeeded his old, blind, feeble father, Shah Alum, in 1806, became at once a pensioner. He was really king, not over a kingdom, but only over the twelve thousand inmates of the imperial palace at Delhi, his relations and retainers – the whole of whom he supported on a pension of about a hundred thousand pounds per annum, paid by the Company. Hindoo and Mussulman, notwithstanding his fallen state, alike looked up to him as the only representative of the ancient glories of India; numerous princes received their solemn and legal investiture from him; and until 1827, the Company acquired no new province *without applying for his nominal sanction and official firman*. He was permitted to bestow dresses of honour on native princes at their accession to the musnud, as a token of suzerainty; and the same ceremony was attempted by him occasionally towards the governor-general. At length, under the rule of Earl Amherst in 1827, it was determined to put an end to a system which was either a mockery, or an incentive to disaffection on the part of the Delhians. The pension to the king

was increased to a hundred and fifty thousand pounds, but the supposed or implied vassalage of the East India Company to the nominal Padishah or Mohammedan ruler of India was brought to an end; Shah Akbar being, from that date, powerless beyond the walls of his palace – except as the representative, the symbol, of something great, still venerated by the natives.

Palace intrigues have not been wanting at Delhi during the twenty years that preceded the Revolt; and these intrigues have borne some relation to the state of disaffection that accompanied that outbreak. Shah Akbar reigned, if reigning it can be called, from 1806 until 1837. He wished to be succeeded by his second son, Shahzadah Jehanghire; but the British authorities insisted that the succession should go, as before, to the eldest son; and consequently Meerza Abu Zuffur became emperor on Shah Akbar's death in 1837, under the title of Mahomed Suraj-u-deen Shah Ghazee. This monarch, again, exhibited the same distrust of the next heir that is so often displayed in Oriental countries; the British authorities were solicited to set aside the proper heir to the peacock's throne, in favour of a younger prince who possessed much influence in the zenana. Again was the request refused; and the palace at Delhi was known to have been a focus of discontent and intrigue for some time previous to the Revolt. The mode in which the Marquis of Dalhousie treated these matters, in his minute of 1856, has already been adverted to; but it may be well to repeat his words here, to shew the exact state of Delhi palace-politics at that time. 'Seven years ago [that is, in 1849],

the heir-apparent to the King of Delhi died. He was the last of the race who had been born in the purple. The Court of Directors was accordingly advised to decline to recognise any other heir-apparent, and to permit the kingly title to fall into abeyance upon the death of the present king, who even then was a very aged man. The Honourable Court accordingly conveyed to the government of India authority to terminate the dynasty of Timour, whenever the reigning king should die. But as it was found that, although the Honourable Court had consented to the measure, it had given its consent with great reluctance, I abstained from making use of the authority which had been given to me. The grandson of the king was recognised as heir-apparent; but only on condition that he should quit the palace in Delhi, in order to reside in the palace at the Kootub; and that he should, as king, receive the governor-general of India at all times on terms of perfect equality.' It was therefore simply a suspension of the absolute extinction of the kingly title at Delhi: a suspension dictated, apparently, by the existence of a little more hesitation in the court of directors, than in the bold governor-general.

The king who occupied the nominal throne of Delhi at the time of the Revolt was neither better nor worse than the average of his predecessors. A pensioned prince with no responsibilities, he was a true Oriental sensualist, and had become an almost imbecile old man between eighty and ninety years of age. Nevertheless, for the reasons already more than once stated, he was invested with a certain greatness in the eyes of the natives of

Hindustan; and Delhi was still their great city. Hindoos, Afghans, Patans, Seljuks, Rajpoots, Tatars, Moguls, Persians, Rohillas, Mahrattas, Sikhs – all had left their impress upon the capital; and with one or other of these, the millions of India had sympathies either of race or of creed. Even to the hour of the outbreak, the king was approached with the reverence due to royalty. In the ruined paradise of Oriental sensualism, the great palace of Delhi, ‘the house of Tamerlane still revelled in unchecked vileness. The royal family, consisting of many hundreds – idle, dissolute, shameless, too proud or too effeminate for military service – lived in entire dependence on the king’s allowance. For their amusement were congregated from all India the most marvellous jugglers, the most cunning bird-tamers and snake-charmers, the most fascinating dancing-girls, the most skilled Persian musicians. Though the population was exactly balanced between Mohammedans and Hindoos, it was the Moslem who here reigned supreme.’⁷

⁷ *Quarterly Review*, No. 204.

CHAPTER V.

THE EVENTFUL ESCAPES FROM DELHI

Remembering that in the month of May 1857 there was a very aged king living in the great palace at Delhi; that the heir-apparent, his grandson, resided in the palace of Kootub Minar, eight or nine miles from the city; that the Moslem natives still looked up to the king with a sort of reverence; and that his enormous family had become dissatisfied with the prospective extinction of the kingly power and name – remembering these facts, the reader will be prepared to follow the fortunes of the Meerut mutineers, and to understand on what grounds the support of the royal family was counted upon.

The distance to be passed over being forty miles, it was not till the day after the outbreak at Meerut – namely, the 11th of May – that the three mutinous regiments reached Delhi. The telegraphic wires were so soon cut, and the dâks so effectually interrupted, that it is doubtful at what hour, and to what extent, the transactions at Meerut became known to Brigadier Graves, who commanded at Delhi. The position of that officer was well calculated to produce uneasiness in his mind at a time of insubordination and distrust; for he had no European regiments with him. The garrison consisted of the 38th, 54th, and 74th

native regiments, and a battery of native artillery; the English comprised only a few officers and sergeants of those regiments, the various servants of the Company, and private traders within the city. The 54th and 74th had not up to that time shewn any strong symptoms of disaffection; but the 38th, which had achieved a kind of triumph over the Marquis of Dalhousie in 1852, in reference to the proposed expedition to Pegu, had ever since displayed somewhat of a boastful demeanour, a pride of position and influence. The three regiments and the artillery had their regular quarters in the cantonment, about two miles north of the city: sending into Delhi such companies or drafts as were necessary to man the bastions, towers, magazine, &c. As the river Hindoun, a tributary to the Jumna, crosses the Meerut and Delhi road near Furrucknuggur, about ten miles from Delhi, it might be a fair problem whether the mutineers could have been met and frustrated at the crossing of that river: the solution of this problem, however, would necessarily depend partly on the time available, and partly on the prudence of marching the Delhi force across the Jumna at such a period, placing a broad river between the brigadier and a city likely to be readily affected by notions of disaffection. Whether influenced by want of time, want of due information, or by strategical reasons, no such movement was made by him. The mutineers would obviously cross the Jumna by the bridge of boats, and would then pass southwestward into the city, or northwestward towards the cantonment, or possibly both. A necessity arose, therefore, for adopting defensive measures in

two different quarters; and as the non-military portion of the European inhabitants, especially women and children, would be a source of much anxiety at such a time, the brigadier made arrangements to accommodate them, or some of them, in the Flagstaff Tower, a strong circular brick building on the heights near the cantonment, a mile and a half north of the nearest or Cashmere Gate of the city. The military commandant ordered out his regiments, drew forth his guns, and delivered a pithy address, in which he exhorted the sepoys to stand true to their colours, and repel the mutineers as soon as they should appear. His address was received with cheers, the insincerity of which was soon to be made manifest.

So many Europeans were cut and shot down at Delhi on this day of misery, and so precipitate was the escape of others, that not one single person was in a position to give a connected narrative of the dismal work. Startling, indeed, were the sights and the sounds which riveted the attention of the European inhabitants on this morning. A peaceful Sunday had passed over in its ordinary way; for none knew what were the deeds being perpetrated at Meerut. The native troops, it is true, were to some extent cognizant of that movement, for the insurgents had unquestionably arranged the outlines of a plan; and some of the European officers at Delhi had observed, not without uneasiness, a change in the behaviour of the sepoys at that station; nevertheless, to the Europeans generally, this social avalanche was a wholly unexpected visitation. Resistance was needed from

those too powerless to resist effectually; and flight was the only resource for many too weak, too young, too sick, to bear up under such a necessity. All the letters, since made public, relating to the sad events of that day, tend to shew how little the European inhabitants of Delhi looked forward to such scenes. One lady, after a hurried retreat, said: 'We can hardly ourselves believe how we escaped. The way in which poor helpless men, women, and children were slaughtered without a moment's warning was most dreadful. We were surprised on the morning of the 11th of May (baby's birthday) by a party of mutineers from Meerut.' It is evident that 'baby's birthday' had dawned with much happier thoughts in the poor mother's mind, than were destined to remain there. Another lady, with her husband and child, were just about to leave Delhi for Calcutta; their dâk-passage was paid, and their travelling arrangements nearly completed. Suddenly a messenger hastened to their home to announce that the Meerut mutineers had crossed the bridge, and were within the city walls; and very soon afterwards, fearful sights told them that immediate escape was the only mode of saving their lives. So it was all over the city; terror and blood began the week, instead of peace and commerce.

The train of circumstances, as we have just said, having involved either the death or the hasty flight of nearly all the English within the city and the cantonment, it follows that the narrative of the day's ruthless work must be constructed from materials derived from various quarters, each supplying some of

the links. When Major Abbott of the 74th found himself, on the next day, the senior officer among those who escaped to Meerut, he deemed it his duty to write an account to Major-general Hewett of the proceedings, so far as his sad tale could tell them. With this we begin.

The city, according to Major Abbott's narrative, was entered first by a small number of the mutinous 3d native cavalry, who crossed by the bridge of boats. While proceeding westward, they were met by a wing of the 54th native infantry, under the command of Colonel Ripley. But here a serious symptom at once presented itself; the 54th excused themselves from firing on the mutineers, on the plea of their muskets not being loaded; the guard of the 38th native infantry likewise refused, on some pretence, to fire; and thus the insurgents were enabled to enter the city by the Cashmere Gate. Captain Wallis, the field-officer of the week, on ordering the men of the mainguard at the gate to wheel up and fire, was met by insulting jeers; and he only desisted from importuning them when he found the work of death going on in other quarters. Six British officers of the 54th speedily fell, either killed or wounded – namely, Colonel Ripley, Captains Smith and Burrowes, Lieutenants Edwardes, Waterfield, and Butler. Major Abbott, willing to hope that his own regiment, the 74th, was still faithful, hastened to the cantonment, got as many of his men together as he could, and explained to them that the time was come to shew their fidelity as true soldiers: he announced his intention to go down to the Cashmere Gate,

and called for volunteers to follow him. All for a while went favourably; the men stepped up to the front, loaded promptly, and marched off briskly after the major. On arriving at the Cashmere Gate, the 74th took possession of the main guard, drawn up in readiness to receive any attack that might be made. Affairs remained quiet near that gate until towards three o'clock, when a heavy firing of guns, followed by a terrific explosion, announced that fighting had been going on near the magazine, and that a vast store of ammunition had been blown into the air. Whether this explosion had been caused by friends or enemies was not at first known; but the news soon spread abroad that a gallant artillery-officer, Lieutenant Willoughby, had adopted this terrible mode of preventing an enormous supply of warlike material from falling into the hands of the insurgents.

Before proceeding with the narrative of events in the city, it will be necessary to describe more particularly the occurrence last adverted to. There were two magazines, one near the cantonment, and a much larger and more important one in the city. It was the last named that became the scene of such desperate work. This magazine was an enclosure of considerable size, about midway between the Selimgurh Fort and the Cashmere Gate, almost close to the British residency. As a storehouse filled with a greater quantity of guns, gunpowder, and ammunition, than any other place in India, a struggle for its possession between the British and the insurgents became inevitable: hence it arose that the destruction of the magazine was

an achievement worthy of record, no less for its vast importance in relation to the ultimate fate of the city, than for the cool heroism that marked its planning and execution. The magazine contained no less than three hundred guns and mortars, twenty thousand stand of arms, two hundred thousand shot and shell, and other warlike stores. Lieutenant Willoughby was himself too severely wounded by the explosion to write; but the details of this gallant affair have been very exactly given by Lieutenant G. Forrest, who was assistant-commissary of ordnance in Delhi at the time. Between seven and eight o'clock in the morning of this eventful day, Sir Theophilus Metcalfe, one of the civil servants of the Company, residing between the city and the cantonment, came to the lieutenant, and requested him to go to the magazine for the purpose of planting two guns on the bridge, as a means of barring the passage of the mutineers. Arrived at the magazine, they met Lieutenants Willoughby and Raynor, and several officers and privates of the ordnance establishment. The three principals went to the small bastion on the river-face, commanding a full view of the bridge; there they could distinctly see the mutineers marching in open columns, headed by their cavalry; and they also saw that the Delhi side of the bridge was already in the possession of a smaller body of horse. Any attempt to close or guard the city-gates was found to be too late; for the mutineers were admitted, with great cheering, into the gate of the palace. Lieutenant Willoughby, seeing the critical state of affairs, returned quickly to the magazine, closed

and barricaded the gates, and prepared for defence. Conductor Crow and Sergeant Stewart were placed near one of the gates, with lighted matches in their hands, in command of two six-pounders double-charged with grape, which they were ordered to fire if any attempt were made to force the gate from without. The principal gate of the magazine was similarly defended by two guns, with *chevaux-de-frise* laid down on the inside. There were five other six-pounders, and a twenty-four pounder howitzer, quickly placed at such spots as might render them more readily available for defence – all double-loaded with grape-shot. A more doubtful task was that of arming the native artillerymen or ordnance servants within the magazine; for they were in a state, not only of excitement, but of insubordination, much more inclined to aid the assailants without than the defenders within. This arming being effected so far as was practicable, a train of gunpowder was laid down from the magazine to a distant spot; and it was agreed that, on Lieutenant Willoughby giving the order, Conductor Buckley should raise his hat as a signal to Conductor Scully to fire the train and blow up the magazine with all its contents. Having done all that a cool and circumspect leader could do to prepare for the worst, Lieutenant Willoughby awaited the issue. Very soon, mutinous sepoys – or rather the palace guards, who had not until that hour been mutinous – came and demanded possession of the magazine, *in the name of the King of Delhi!* No answer being vouchsafed to this demand, scaling-ladders were sent from the palace, and placed against the

wall of the magazine. This decided the wavering of the native artillerymen; they all as with one accord deserted, climbed up to the sloping roofs on the inside of the magazine, and descended the ladders to the outside. The insurgents now appearing in great numbers on the top of the walls, the little band of Europeans commenced a brisk fire of grape-shot, which worked much mischief among the enemy; although only nine in number, they kept several hundred men at bay. At last, the stock of grape at hand was exhausted, and the beleaguered garrison was shot at instead of shooting: seeing that none could run to the storehouses for more grape-shot without leaving to the mutineers freedom of entry by leaping from the walls. Two of the small number being wounded, and the impossibility of longer holding out being apparent, Lieutenant Willoughby gave the signal; whereupon Conductor Scully instantly fired the train. An awful explosion followed, amid the din and confusion of which, all who were not too much injured made their way out of the sally-port, to escape in the best manner they could. What was the number of insurgents killed and wounded by the grape-shot discharges and by the explosion, no one knew; some of the English officers estimated it at more than a thousand. It was at the time hoped by the authorities that the whole of the vast store of ammunition had been blown into the air, beyond the reach of the mutineers; but subsequent events shewed that the destruction was not so complete.⁸

⁸ Rightly did the governor-general, when officially informed of this achievement,

To return to the agitating scenes within the city. Major Abbott, immediately on hearing of the explosion at the magazine, found himself placed in a painful position: urged to different courses by different persons, and doubtful how long his own regiment would remain faithful. He was requested by the commandant to send back two guns to the cantonment, as a means of defence; while, on the other hand, he was entreated by Major Paterson, and by the civil collector who had charge of the treasury, to retain his small force for guarding the various government establishments within the city. Major Abbott listened to this latter suggestion for a time, but then made arrangements for sending off the two guns to the cantonment. By this time, however, he found it was of little consequence what orders he gave: the native troops were fast getting beyond his control. The two guns, and some men of the 38th regiment, returned; the gunners had deserted on the road, and the guns had therefore been brought back again. A few of the native officers who were still faithful now importuned him to leave the city as soon as possible; he at first interpreted their

speak of 'the noble and cool soldiership of the gallant defenders' of the magazine: 'The governor-general in council desires to offer his cordial thanks to Lieutenants Raynor and Forrest, and the other survivors among the brave men mentioned in this report, and to express the admiration with which he regards the daring and heroic conduct of Lieutenant G. D. Willoughby and the warrant and non-commissioned officers by whom he was supported on that occasion. Their names are Lieutenants Raynor and Forrest, Conductors Shaw, Buckley, Scully, Sub-conductor Crow, Sergeants Edwards and Stewart. The family of the late Conductor Scully, who so devotedly sacrificed himself in the explosion of the magazine, will be liberally provided for, should it be ascertained that they have survived him.'

request as an advice to hasten to defend the cantonment; but soon found that it bore relation to his own safety. Presently he heard shots whizzing in the mainguard. He asked what they meant, and was told: 'The 38th are shooting the European officers.' He then ordered about a hundred of his men to hasten with him to the rescue; but they replied: 'Sir, it is useless. They are all killed by this time, and we shall not save any one. We have saved you, and we are happy; we will not allow you to go back and be murdered.' The history of the Revolt presented many such incidents as this; in every native regiment there were some men who wished to remain faithful, and some officers who were favourites among them. The sepoys formed a ring round the major, and hurried him on foot along the road leading to the cantonment. He stopped some time at the quarter-guard, and sent a messenger to the saluting tower to obtain information of the proceedings in other parts of the city.

The sun was now setting, and evening approaching, giving omen of a night of danger and difficulty. Major Abbott espied two or three carriages belonging to officers of his own regiment, going northward on the road to Kurnaul; and on inquiry, he was told by the men at the quarter-guard: 'Sir, they are leaving the cantonment; pray follow their example. We have protected you so far; but it will be impossible for us to do so much longer. Pray fly for your life!' Willing as he was to remain at his post to the last, the major felt that the men around him were so far faithful as to deserve credence for what they had just uttered; and that

his own life, if now taken, would be sacrificed without in any way contributing towards the retention of Delhi in British hands. He therefore replied: 'Very well; I am off to Meerut. Bring the colours; and let me see as many of you at Meerut as are not inclined to become traitors.' Major Abbott and Captain Hawkey now mounted one horse and started off after the carriages. They overtook some guns going the same road; but after a progress of four miles, the drivers refused to go any further, and insisted on driving the guns back again to Delhi. The officers, thus entirely deserted by the native troops, having no European troops with or near them, and being powerless to effect any good, rode or drove off to seek safety in other directions.

Major Abbott afterwards learned at what point in the day's proceedings his own regiment, the 74th, first broke out in mutiny. As soon as the explosion of the magazine was heard, he ordered Captain Gordon to take a company with him, to see whether he could render any aid in that quarter; the captain found, however, not only that his aid would be useless, but that his men exhibited great unwillingness to move. Somewhat later, several officers of the 74th were about to march out with a detachment, when a ball whistled among them: Captain Gordon fell dead. Another ball was heard, and Lieutenant Revely was laid low. It now became a matter of life and death: each officer, without any imputation of selfishness, looking after his own safety. Among others, Ensign Elton made for the bastion of the fort, jumped over the parapet, descended into the ditch,

clambered up the counterscarp on the other side, ran across the country to the cantonment, and then followed the road which many of the other officers had taken. Captain Tytler, Captain Nicoll, and some others, went towards Kurnaul; Major Abbott, Captains Hawkey and Wallace, Lieutenant Aislabie, Ensign Elton, and Farrier-sergeant Law, took the Kurnaul road for some distance, and then struck off on the right to Meerut, where they arrived at eight o'clock in the evening of Tuesday the 12th – thirty-six hours after the mutineers from Meerut had reached Delhi.

After stating that almost all the European inhabitants of Delhi had been murdered, except those who had at once been able to effect their escape, Major Abbott thus expressed the opinion which he formed during these two days of terrible excitement, concerning the successive steps of the mutiny at Delhi: 'From all I could glean, there is not the slightest doubt that this insurrection has been originated and matured in the palace of the King of Delhi, with his full knowledge and sanction, in the mad attempt to establish himself in the sovereignty of this country. It is well known that he has called on the neighbouring states to co-operate with him in thus trying to subvert the existing government. The method he adopted appears to have been to gain the sympathy of the 38th light infantry, by spreading the lying reports now going through the country, of the government having it in contemplation to upset their religion, and have them all forcibly inducted to Christianity. The 38th, by insidious

and false arguments, quietly gained over the 54th and 74th native infantry, each being unacquainted with the other's real sentiments. I am perfectly persuaded that the 54th and 74th were forced to join the combination by threats that the 38th and 54th would annihilate the 74th if they refused; or, *vice versâ*, that the 38th and 74th would annihilate the 54th. I am almost convinced that had the 38th not been on guard at the Cashmere Gate, the results would have been very different; the men of the 74th would have shot down every man who had the temerity to assail the post.' It may be that this officer, anxious to lessen the dishonour of his own regiment, viewed somewhat too partially the relative merits of the native troops; but it is unquestionable that the 74th remained faithful much longer than the 38th. To what extent the King of Delhi was really implicated, neither Major Abbott nor any other Englishman could at that time correctly tell.

It was not during the dire confusion of this terrible day that the course of events in the streets and buildings of Delhi could be fully known. The facts came to light one by one afterwards. When the 3d Bengal troopers, who preceded the mutinous infantry in the march from Meerut, arrived at the Jumna about seven in the morning, they killed the toll-keeper of the bridge of boats, took the money found in his office, and crossed the bridge. Arrived in Delhi, they hastened to the royal palace, where they made some sort of announcement of their arrival and its purport. Mr Simon Fraser, the commissioner for Delhi, Captain Douglas, his assistant, and one or two other officials,

hearing of this movement, and seeing the approach of insurgent infantry on the other side of the river, hastened to the palace to watch the conduct of the royal personages at such a suspicious time. No sooner did they enter the palace precincts, however, than they were shot down. Shortly afterwards, the Rev. Mr Jennings, chaplain of the residency, was killed; as were likewise his daughter and another lady near him – after, it is to be feared, atrocities worse than death. It was seen that the insurgent troopers were in a state of the greatest excitement and fury, as if they had worked themselves up, by indulgence in the intoxicating *bang*, to a level with their terrible plans. While the military operations, already noticed, were going on at the Cashmere Gate, the magazine, and the cantonment, all the ruffians of Delhi and the neighbouring villages, eager for *loot* or plunder, joined the insurgents. Every European residence was searched: the troopers and sepoys seeking the lives of the inmates; while the rabble followed, and swept off every shred of property. Bungalows were fired one by one, until glaring sheets of flame were visible in every direction. Bands of Goojurs – a kind of Hindoo gipsy tribe – were lying in wait after nightfall all along the line of road twenty miles out of Delhi, on the watch for refugees. It was a day of jubilee for all the miscreants; they did not stay their hands when the Europeans had been pillaged, but attacked the houses of all the Hindoo bankers, carrying off great treasure. Some of the Europeans concealed themselves for a time within the palace gardens – a vain refuge, for they were all detected, tied to trees in

a row, and shot or sabred by the mutineers. Many of the troopers, during the savage scenes of these days, pointed to the marks of manacles on their ankles; they were of the eighty-five who had been put in irons at Meerut on the preceding Saturday; and they now shewed how deep was the revenge which they intended to take for that degrading punishment. The military officers and their families were, from various causes, those whose fate became more publicly known; but the number of civil servants, Christians of humble grade, and half-castes, put to death, was very great. The bank-clerks, with their wives and children, were murdered; and similar scenes occurred at most of the public offices.

Mr Farrington, deputy-commissioner, when at Jullundur two or three weeks afterwards, received a written account from a native of the occurrences at Delhi during the days immediately following the Revolt – an account considered worthy of credence. A part of this narrative comprised the following sad tale: ‘On the third day they [the mutineers] went to a house near the mosque where some Europeans had taken refuge. As they were without water, &c., they called for a subadar and five others, and asked them to take their oaths that they would give them water, and take them alive to the king: he might kill them, if he liked. On this oath, the Europeans came out: the mutineers placed water before them, and said: “Lay down your arms, and then you get water.” They gave over two guns, all they had. The mutineers gave no water. They seized eleven children – among them infants

– eight ladies, and eight gentlemen. They took them to the cattle-sheds. One lady, who seemed more self-possessed than the rest, observed that they were not taking them to the palace; they replied they were taking them by the way of Duryagunge (one of the gates on the river-side of the city). Deponent says that he saw all this, and saw them placed in a row and shot. One woman entreated to give her child water, though they might kill her. A sepoy took her child, and dashed it on the ground. The people looked on in dismay, and feared for Delhi.’ The imagination can, too truly, alas! fill up the deficient incidents in this tale of treachery. Mr Farrington deemed his informant worthy of reliance. He said: ‘The man has been with me. He speaks frankly, and without fear. He is able, evidently, to narrate many a harrowing tale; but I did not wish to hear any. He seemed really to recall with dismay what he had witnessed.’

The aged but wretched king of Delhi – wretched in having the hopes of earlier years revived, only to be crushed again – for a time distrusted the mutineers; he entertained misgivings that all might not end well. The shops and bazaars were being plundered; the king was in the palace; and some of those around him urged that order could be restored only by his assumption of the imperial purple. After three or four days, he went in a kind of state through the city, advising or commanding the people to re-open their shops, and resume their former commercial dealings – advice more easily given than acted upon; for the devastation had been terrible, striking grief into the more peaceful portion

of the native inhabitants. The king assumed command in the city; he named Mirza Mogul commander-in-chief, and gave the title of general of cavalry to Mirza Abu Bukur; he collected around him eight or nine thousand mutineers and volunteers, who were posted at the several gates of the city, or cantoned in the Duryagunge Bazaar. Additional guns were placed on the ramparts; and the native sappers and miners were placed in command of the cannon in the old fort of Selingurh. The Company's treasury, one of the largest in India, is said to have been respected by the mutineers to this extent – that they did not appropriate it among themselves as spoil, but guarded it as belonging to their newly chosen leader, the King of Delhi. To shew how perplexed the Calcutta government must have been at the first news of these events, it may be mentioned that the king's name was adverted to as that of a friend rather than an enemy. On the 14th of May, three days after the arrival of the Meerut mutineers at Delhi, Mr Colvin, lieutenant-governor of the Northwest Provinces, telegraphed from Agra to the governor-general as follows: 'We have authentic intelligence in a letter from the king that the town and fort of Delhi, *and his own person*, are in the hands of the insurgent regiments of the place, which joined about one hundred of the troops from Meerut and opened the gates.' Judged by the ordinary rules of probability, it would appear that the mutineers first secured the person of the king, and then compelled him to head them: the old man being further urged by the entreaties and threats of his intriguing sons and

grandsons. It is difficult, under any other supposition, to account for his transmission of a message of information and warning to the chief British authority in those regions. On the 15th Mr Colvin sent a further telegraphic communication to Calcutta, containing this information: 'The rebels have declared the heir-apparent king. They are apparently organising the plan of a regular government; they still remain in the place. Their policy is supposed to be to annex the adjoining districts to their newly formed kingdom. They are not likely, therefore, to abandon the country or leave Delhi; they have probably strengthened themselves there. They may have secured fifty lacs of rupees [half a million sterling].' No further mention was here made of the old man; it was a younger relation who had been set up as king; and this younger prince may possibly have been the one whom the Marquis of Dalhousie had insisted should be the heir-apparent, with such prospective limitations of authority as the Company might hereafter declare to be expedient. The ordinary motives which influence men's conduct would be quite strong enough to induce this prince to avail himself of any accidental or unexpected means of insuring the crown without the limitations here adverted to. Ambition was almost the only sentiment not absolutely degrading left to the pensioned, sensual, intriguing dwellers in the palace.

The details of this chapter have hitherto been confined chiefly to the course of events within the city – as collected from the dispatches of military officers, the letters from commissioners

and other civil servants of the Company, and the published statements of Europeans who survived the dangers of the day. But we now come to adventures which, politically of less importance, touch more nearly the hearts and sympathies of those who would know how Englishmen, and more particularly Englishwomen, bore up against the accumulated miseries that pressed upon them. We have to accompany the fugitives to the fields and jungles, the ditches and rivers, the swampy marshes and scorching sandy roads; we have to see how they contended against privation and trial – on their way forty miles in one direction towards Meerut, or eighty miles in another towards Kurnaul. Many of the narratives of the fugitives, afterwards made public, supply details not furnished in any official dispatches; while they illustrate many points worth knowing – among others, the greater hostility of the Mohammedan than the Hindoo natives near Delhi, and the indications of individual kindness in the midst of general brutality. A selection from these narratives will suffice for the present purpose, shortened and thrown into a different form so as to throw light on each other, and on the general events of the day. In most cases, the names of the fugitives, especially of ladies, will be withheld, from a motive which a considerate reader will easily appreciate. This scruple must not, however, be interpreted as affecting the authenticity of the narratives, which was verified only too abundantly by collateral evidence.

We select first a family of three fugitives to Kurnaul. The wife of an officer of the 54th native regiment, in the

forenoon of this eventful Monday, hastened with her child to the Flagstaff Tower; where, in accordance with the advice of the brigadier-commandant, many other families had assembled. The gentlemen remained outside on guard; the ladies assisted in loading the guns, and in other services towards the common defence of all. Here they remained many hours, in all the horrors of suspense; for the husbands and fathers of many were away, and their fate unknown. At length came the news that the 38th had openly revolted; that none of the native regiments at Delhi could now be depended upon; and that the inmates of the tower ought to effect their escape as speedily as possible. There had been one company of the 38th at the Flagstaff Tower all day; and as the building was very strong, and armed with two guns, the brigadier long deemed himself able to protect the numerous persons there assembled; but as soon as the defection of the main body of this regiment became known, all reliance on the smaller corps was at an end. Such carriages and horses as could be obtained were immediately put in requisition, and various parties hastened off, mostly northward on the Kurnaul road. The small group whom we have here under notice – namely, the officer with his wife and child, reached Kurnaul the next day; but danger was all around, and the fugitives were forced to continue their flight, as soon as they could obtain means of conveyance. It is touching to read how ‘baby’ occupied the mother’s thoughts through all this agitating escape. During a sojourn at a place called Thwanessur, on the road between Kurnaul and Umballa, they stopped at the assistant-

commissioner's house. 'Before we had rested two hours we were alarmed by being told that a regiment of sepoy was come to attack us; we had to fly from the house and hide as best we could, under the bushes, &c., in the garden; and I kept dear baby in my own arms the whole time until morning.' The alarm proved to be false, and the fugitives proceeded. They arrived safely at Umballa on the morning of Thursday the 14th, having left Delhi on Monday evening. That the brave wife was 'quite fatigued and worn out' may well be conceived when she adds, 'for dear baby had never left me since we left Delhi.'

This adventure, however, was far exceeded in length, in privation, in strange situations, in hair-breadth escapes, by one which befell a party of four persons – an officer of the 38th regiment, an army surgeon, and their two wives: all of whom, in the wilderness of confusion, sought the Kurnaul route rather than that to Meerut. These ladies were among the many who sought refuge in the Flagstaff Tower. There they had the pain of witnessing the sufferings of poor Colonel Ripley, who, as already narrated, had been bayoneted by men of his own regiment, and had been brought thither for succour; they tended him as women only can tend the sick; but their ministrations were of brief avail. After hours of suspense, in which small hope was mingled with large despair, the necessity for escape became obvious. A little bitterness is expressed, in the narratives of some of the fugitives, concerning the delay in making any preparations for the escape of the women and children; and a few of the head officers are

blamed for supineness; but those who suffer are not always, at the time, the best judges of the cause of their sufferings. When evening approached, many of the native coachmen drove away the vehicles belonging to the Europeans, and appropriated them, thus leaving the women and children in dreadful perplexity how to reach Kurnaul or Meerut. The two Englishwomen whose narrative we now follow were among the last of those who left the city, when evening was approaching. They were in a buggy, but had been parted from their husbands during the confusion of the arrangements for departure, and one of them had lost her little child. They drove on, with no male protector, across rugged fields, fearful of the high road: treated sometimes respectfully by the natives, but at other times robbed and vilely addressed. Even the velvet head-dress of one of them was torn off, for the value of the bugles that adorned it. A jewel-box had been brought away in haste, as the only treasure preserved; and it became every hour more uncertain whether this would be a prey to the spoilers. Returning to the high road, the ladies met some gunners with two guns; and as the men told them certain death would be the result if they took the road to Kurnaul, they drove in another direction to the Company's garden outside Delhi. Here, marauding was everywhere going on; the poor ladies soon had the misery of seeing their carriage, horse, jewel-box, and most of their outer clothing reft from them. In the dead of the night they ventured to a neighbouring village. The surgeon, husband to one of the ladies, here managed to join them; but being enfeebled

by previous sickness, and wounded in the jaw during the day's exciting troubles, he was powerless as a defender, and – far from being able to succour others – needed succour himself. During the next fifteen hours were these three persons hiding in fields and huts, befriended by a few natives, and conscious that roving sepoys were near, ready for murder or pillage. Sallying forth again on the evening of Tuesday, they were speedily stopped by six men, who robbed them of a further portion of their scanty apparel, and only stopped short of murder when the officer's wife pleaded for mercy, on the ground that she was searching for her husband and her child, both of whom had gone she knew not whither. The three fugitives walked all that night, the wounded surgeon dragging himself along. In the morning they were again accosted, and only escaped death by the ladies yielding up a further part of their attire, the only property they had left to give. During the remainder of that day they crept on, obtaining a little food and water from some villagers, who were, however, too much afraid of the sepoys to afford the fugitives the shelter of a roof; and it was terrible work indeed to roam along the roads with a burning sun overhead and burning sand under foot. They sat down by a well-side, and drank some water; but rude fellows accosted them, and after insulting the hapless women, compelled them to withdraw. They next encountered a party of irregular horse, who had not yet joined the mutineers; the men were at first inclined to befriend them; but fears of the consequences supervening, they soon deserted the fugitives. Here

were these two Englishwomen, gently nurtured, and accustomed to all the amenities of good society, again compelled to wander like miserable outcasts, helping along a male companion whose under-jaw had been shattered, and who was otherwise in a weak state. They crawled on during another night, and then reached a village, which, as they saw it was Hindoo, they did not scruple to enter. Kindness was accorded to them for one whole day; after which the humane natives, timid lest the sepoy should burn their village if they heard of Feringhees having been harboured, declared they could no longer afford shelter. Once more, therefore, were the fugitives driven forth: having seen renewed symptoms that the sepoy, or rather the marauding ruffians, would not scruple to murder them, if opportunity offered. They had now been five days wandering about, and yet were only ten miles distant from Delhi: so completely had each day's plans been frustrated by the events of the next day. Again they entered a friendly village, and again were they compelled soon to depart, after receiving simple but kind assistance. No villagers, it was found, were free from dread at having assisted a Feringhee. Once they hid for shelter under a bridge; but an armed ruffian detected them, and behaved so unbearably towards the women that the surgeon, who was a Roman Catholic, took a gold cross from his bosom, and gave it as the price of their freedom from further molestation: a wounded, shattered, sinking man, he could not offer them a strong arm as a shield from insult. On the night of the 17th, at a little more than twenty miles

from Delhi, they were glad to obtain the shelter of an outhouse containing twenty cows, the only roof that the owner dared to offer them. They made an attempt to have a letter forwarded to Kurnaul, praying for assistance; but none in those parts could be depended upon for faithfulness beyond an hour or two: so much was there of treachery on the one hand, and timidity on the other. On the 18th they heard that Major Paterson, of the 54th regiment, was in the same village as themselves; and he, powerless to succour, contrived to send a short message to them, written with a burnt stick on a piece of an old broken pan. Shortly afterwards they were greatly astonished, and not a little delighted, to see an officer, the husband of one of the ladies, enter the village; but more like a naked savage, blistered from head to foot, than like an English gentleman.

An eventful tale had this officer to narrate. When the scenes of violence on the 11th at Delhi had reached such a point that to remain longer was to meet certain slaughter, he sent off his little boy with friends towards Meerut, and saw his wife and her lady-companion start for Kurnaul. After being robbed of his horse, and having three bullets sent through his hat, and one through the skirt of his coat, he ran past the blazing houses of the cantonment, and, being ill at the time, sank down under a tree exhausted. A gang of ruffians found him, stripped him, robbed him of everything, and endeavoured, Thug-like, to strangle him – using, however, the sleeve of his own shirt instead of a silken cord. Happily the choking was only partial;

he recovered, staggered on a mile or two, rested briefly in a hut, and then walked twelve miles to Alipore in a broiling sun. He obtained a little water, a little bread, and a few fragments of clothing, but was refused shelter. He wended his painful way barefoot, keeping to ploughed fields as safer than the high road, and reached a village where the headman gave him an asylum for five days. During these days, however, he twice narrowly escaped death from sepoy prowling about the village. On the sixth he received information which led him to believe that his wife and her travelling companions were within six or seven miles of him. He hastened on, with swollen and blistered feet, wretched substitutes for raiment, and a frame nearly worn out by sickness and anxiety; but a gleam of joy burst upon him when at length he overtook the surgeon and the two wives, though dismayed to see the plight to which they had been reduced. The poor ladies he found to be, like himself, reft of everything they had in the world except a few torn and toil-worn fragments of garments. The surgeon had been less rudely stripped, simply because the clothes of a wounded man were less acceptable to the spoliators. The fugitives, now four in number, continued their journey, their feet pierced with thorns and sharp stones, and the difficulty of carrying or dragging a wounded man becoming greater and greater. The officer's wife, having had no head-covering for many days, felt the sun's heat to be gradually affecting her brain; she was thankful when a villager gave her a wet cloth to bind round her temples. Matters now began to mend; the villagers

were less afraid of the Delhi sepoy; the vicinity of Kurnaul exhibited less violence and marauding; horses and mules were obtained on one day to take them to Lursowlie; and on the next a carriage was provided for their conveyance to Kurnaul. How they got on from Kurnaul to Umballa, and from Umballa to Simla, need not be told – the romance of the incident was over when the three fugitives, two women and a wounded man, were joined by a fourth; although much physical and mental suffering had still to be endured. The little son of this lady, it was afterwards found, had been carried by some friends safely to Meerut on the 12th. The four fugitives, when they reached friendly quarters, were poor indeed: no beggars could be more completely dependent on the sympathy of those whom they now happily met.

Next we will follow the steps of some of those who chose Meerut rather than Kurnaul as their place of refuge. Their adventures partake of a new interest, because there was a broad and swift river to be crossed. A young ensign of the 54th regiment, a stripling who had just commenced military service under the Company, had a sad tale to tell, how the European officers of his regiment had fallen almost to a man. He was in the cantonment when the news arrived of the approach of the Meerut mutineers; his regiment was ordered to hasten to the city; and he, like other officers, was fain to hope that the men would remain true to their colours. Leaving two companies to follow with two guns, the other eight marched off to the city, distant, as has already been stated, about two miles. Arriving at the mainguard

of the Cashmere Gate, the regiment encountered the mutinous 3d Bengal cavalry, who immediately shot down nearly all the officers of the eight companies: the men of those companies shewing, by a refusal to defend their officers, that they were quite ready for revolt. The colonel, indeed, was bayoneted by one of his own men after a trooper had shot him. In about half an hour the other two companies arrived with the two guns; but as the few remaining officers of the regiment knew not which of their men, if any, could be depended on, they formed a kind of small fort or citadel of the mainguard, into which they brought their few remaining companions one by one. The poor youth, who had just commenced soldiering, and who had never seen a dead body, was nearly overwhelmed with grief at the sight of his brother-officers, with whom he had laughed and chatted a few hours before, lying side by side dead and mutilated. The main body of the regiment remained sullen, though not mutinous, until about five o'clock in the evening; but then the spirit of evil seemed to seize them, and they turned upon the Europeans near them, shooting indiscriminately. The scene became agonising. Many women and children had gone to the mainguard for security; and now they as well as the officers found it necessary to flee for very life. Some ran, leaped, clomb, until they got beyond the wall of the city; others waited to help those who were weaker or of more tender years. Some of the ladies, though wounded, lowered themselves by handkerchiefs into the ditch, from embrasures in the parapet, and were caught by officers below; and then

ensued the terrible labour of dragging or carrying them up the counterscarp on the other side of the ditch. (A ditch, in military matters, be it remembered, is a dry, broad, very deep trench outside a fortified wall, with nearly vertical sides, called the scarp and counterscarp.) The young officer tells how that he and his male companions would have made a dash towards Meerut, sword in hand, or have sold their lives at once; but that their chief thoughts were now for the women and children. What were the privations of such a company as this, in fords and jungles, in hunger and nakedness, we shall presently see by means of a narrative from another quarter.

It is an officer of the 38th who shall now tell his tale – how that his own personal troubles, when alone, were slight compared with those which he had afterwards to bear in company with other fugitive Europeans. This officer states that, while the refugees were anxiously watching the course of events at the Flagstaff Tower, they were momentarily expecting aid from Meerut. They could not believe that Major-general Hewett would have allowed the mutineers to march from Meerut to Delhi without either making an attempt to intercept them, or following on their heels; and their disappointment in this particular led to some of the unfavourable comments made on that general's line of conduct. The officer of the 38th, whose narrative is now under notice, shared the difficulty of all the others in endeavouring to keep the men at their duty; and he speaks of the terrible sight, more than once adverted to, which met his

eye at the mainguard inside the Cashmere Gate: 'By the gate, side by side, and covered by pretty ladies' dresses taken from some house, as if in mockery, lay the bodies of poor Captain Smith, Burrowes, Edwardes, and Waterfield, and the quarter-master-sergeant; some lying calm as shot dead, and others with an expression of pain, mutilated by bayonets and swords.' When all became hopeless within the city, and the brigadier had given orders to retire, the officers made a show of bringing off their regiments as well as their families; but it was only a show; for such of the men as had remained faithful up to this time now fell away, and the Europeans found themselves compelled to escape as best they could. The officer hastened to the cantonment, disconsolate and helpless, but having no immediate idea of escape. With the colonel of the same regiment, however, he was urged to adopt that course, as the cantonment itself was now in a blaze. The two ran off in the dead of the night towards the river, crouching beneath trees when enemies seemed near; they forded the Jumna Canal, slaking their parched lips as they waded or swam; and they tore off the brighter parts of their glittering accoutrements, to prevent betrayal. In the morning, faint and hungered, they took refuge in a hut while a body of sepoys was searching around, as if for victims. A few Hindoo peasants discovering them, told them where they could hide in a tope of trees, and brought them chupatties and milk. Being able to ford across a narrow branch of the Jumna soon afterwards, they concealed themselves in the wild jungle; and there, to their joy and surprise, they

found others of their friends in the same kind of concealment – joy damped, it is true, at the thought of educated English men and women crouching among long jungle-grass like savages or wild beasts. On counting numbers, they found they were thirteen, eight gentlemen and five ladies and children; and as they had several guns and swords among them, they took heart, and prepared to struggle against further difficulties.

To bring up the two parallel threads of the story, the escapes of the larger party, comprising the women and little ones, must now be told. In the afternoon of the preceding day, after arrangements had been made for conveying the ladies on gun-carriages from the city to the cantonment, the natives who had been trusted with this duty turned faithless, and the Europeans within the Cashmere Gate, finding themselves shot at, sought to escape beyond the walls in any way they could. One after another, women and children as well as men, leaped over into the ditch, scrambled up the other side, and ran off towards the house of Sir T. Metcalfe. One lady, the mother of three daughters who had to share in the flight, was shot through the shoulder, yet still kept on. The native servants – in the absence of their master, who afterwards had his own tale to tell of jungle-life and narrow escapes – gave them a little food; but just before the house was about being fired by the insurgents, the fugitives left it, and succeeded in fording the narrow stream to the spot mentioned above. When the thirteen had told their adventures, and formed a plan, they started anew, and sought a spot where they could

ford the majestic Jumna. The officer must here tell the story of this perilous fording: 'Our hearts failed, and no wonder, where ladies were concerned, as we looked at the broad swift river. It was getting dark, too. Two natives went across. We watched them anxiously wade a considerable portion of the river; then their heads alone appeared above water. It was our only chance of life, and our brave ladies never flinched. The water was so deep, that where a tall man would wade, a short man would be drowned. I thought it was all over when, on reaching the deep water with Mrs – on my left arm, a native supporting her on the other side, we were shot [drifted] down the river; however, by desperate efforts and the assistance of another native, we reached the bank in safety. I swam back once more for another of our party; and so ultimately we all got safe over. It was a brave feat for our ladies to do.' But so it was throughout these terrific scenes: the heroism, the patience, the long-suffering endurance of these gentlewomen, bore up to the last; feebleness of frame was vanquished by nobility of spirit; and the men were often kept in heart, though deeply pained, by the uncomplaining perseverance of their gentle companions in misery. Our fugitives passed a wretched night after this fording of the Jumna, crouching in the jungle, with no sound 'but the chattering of their teeth.' The next day threw them into the hands of a large band of ruffians; and as the guns of the officers had been rendered useless by wet, the consequence was direful: the whole party were stripped and robbed, and then left without food, without clothing, without resource, to wander

whither they could. With naked feet, and skins blistering in the sun, they toiled on. 'How the ladies stood it,' says the officer whose narrative we are following, 'is marvellous; they never murmured or flinched, or distressed us by a show of terror.' Fortunately, a fakeer, in a Hindoo village, ventured to give them shelter; they remained three days, obtaining a little food, but nothing more. A German zemindar or landowner, who had been so long in India as to be hardly distinguishable from a Hindoo, hearing of their plight, sent for them, gave them some rough cloth to huddle on as substitutes for garments, and caused a message to be sent to Meerut, which brought relief to them; and they reached that town in seven days after leaving Delhi – worn out in mind and body, haggard, lame, penniless, but thankful that their lives had been spared.

Strange as these escapes and perils were, they were eclipsed in individual daring and fertility of resource by one which remains to be told, and which may form the last of this little group of painful narratives. Mr Batson, surgeon of the 74th regiment, was unheard of during so long a time after the events at Delhi on the fatal Monday that he was given up for lost; but in a letter which he wrote to announce his safety, he detailed such a series of adventures as appear to belong rather to romance than to real life – Defoe-like, but entirely true instead of fictitious. And here it may be again remarked that these narratives must not be suspected of boastful exaggeration; there were links which connected all the eventful stories into one chain – each receiving

corroborative strength from the others. Mr Batson states that when it was found that the three regiments at Delhi refused to act against the mutineers from Meerut, and that when such of the women and children as could be collected were placed in the main guard and the Flagstaff Tower, he went to Brigadier Graves, volunteering to convey a letter to Meerut, in hope of obtaining the aid of European troops. His offer being accepted, he took leave of his wife and three daughters in the Flagstaff Tower, went to his house, dressed himself like a native fakeer or mendicant devotee, and coloured his face, hands, and feet. Off he set on his perilous errand. He first tried to cross the Jumna by the bridge of boats, but found it broken. Then he ran to the cantonment, and endeavoured to cross by a ferry near that spot, but found the insurgent cavalry and the neighbouring villagers plundering and marauding. Next he hastened across the parade-ground, and, after escaping two or three shots, was seized by some of the villagers and stripped of every bit of his fakeer clothing. On he ran again, in his now truly forlorn state, towards the Kurnaul road, hoping to overtake some of the officers who were escaping by that route; but before he could do so, two of the insurgent troopers intercepted him. Just as they were about to cut him down with their drawn swords, his tact and knowledge saved him. Being familiar both with the Hindostani language and with the Mohammedan customs, he threw himself into a supplicating position, and uttered the most exalted praises of the great Prophet of Islam: begging them to spare his life for the sake

of the Moslem. Had his assailants been infantry sepoy, he would probably not have attempted this manœuvre, for most of them were Hindoos; but knowing that the cavalry sowars were chiefly Mohammedans, he made the venture. It succeeded. Whether they knew him as a fugitive Englishman, is not certain; but they let him go, saying: 'Had you not asked for mercy in the name of the Prophet, you should have died like the rest of the Kaffirs [infidels].' After running another mile – at once shivering with nakedness and burning with excitement – he encountered some Mussulman villagers, who rushed upon him, crying: 'Here is a Feringhee; kill the Kaffir! You Feringhees want to make us all Christians!' They dragged him to a village, tied his hands behind him, and sent one of their number to a house hard by to get a sword, with which to despatch him. At this critical moment some excitement – the nature of which Mr Batson could not understand – caused them all to leave him, and he ran off again. He fortunately fell in with some smiths who had been employed in the Delhi magazine, and who were willing to save him; they urged him not to go forward, or the villagers would certainly murder him. They took him to a hut, gave him an article or two of apparel, and fed him with milk and bread. He tried to sleep, but could not; he lay awake all night, restless and excited. In the morning he bethought him of informing his protectors that he was a physician, a doctor, a 'medicine-man;' and this proved to be an aid to him; for the villagers, finding that he could answer questions relating to maladies, and was familiar with their

religion, language, and customs, began to take much interest in the Feringhee doctor. He found that two officers were in hiding at no great distance, but he could reach neither of them. To get to Meerut in time to deliver his message was of course now out of the question: all that Mr Batson could do was to secure his own safety. More perils were in store for him. The villagers of Badree were informed that if they harboured any Feringhees, the now triumphant King of Delhi would direfully punish them; they became alarmed, and hid him in a small mango tope. 'Here,' the surgeon says, 'I was left night and day alone. I was visited at night by some one or other of the villagers, who brought me bread and water in a ghurrah. I am unable to describe my feelings during this trying time. I was all day in the sun, in the extreme heat, and alone at night, when the jackals came prowling about and crying. It is only God and myself know what I have endured. After five nights and days in this tope of trees, I was again taken back to the village and concealed in a bhoosa house. I was here shut in for twenty-four hours; the heat and suffocation I cannot find language to describe. I do not know which was the greatest misery, the tope of trees in solitude or the bhoosa kotree.' At length the villagers, afraid to keep him any longer, dismissed him – enabling him to dress himself up again as a fakeer. Tramping on from village to village, he acted his part so well as to escape detection. He gave himself out as a Cashmerian; and although one of the villagers suspected his European origin by his blue eyes, he did not betray him. He observed from village to village –

and the fact is worthy of note in relation to the causes and details of the Revolt – that the Mohammedans were much more savage than the Hindoos in their expressions and threats against the Feringhees. The further he proceeded from Delhi, the less did Mr Batson find himself involved in danger; and he was fortunately picked up by Captain M^cAndrews and Lieutenant Mew of his own regiment. He had been out no less than twenty-five days, wandering from village to village, from tope to tope; suffering privations which none but himself could know, and not even he adequately describe. One great anxiety gnawed him the while – the fate of his family: one great joy awaited him – his family escaped.

Here this chapter may close. We have seen that on the morning of Monday the 11th of May, the European inhabitants of Delhi arose from their beds in peace; and that by the close of the same day there was not a single individual of the number whose portion was not death, flight, or terrified concealment. So far as the British rule or influence was concerned, it was at an end. The natives remained masters of the situation; their white rulers were driven out; and a reconquest, complete in all its details, could alone restore British rule in Delhi. At what time, in what way, and by whom, that reconquest was effected, will remain to be told in a later portion of this work. Much remains to be narrated before Delhi will again come under notice.

CHAPTER VI.

LUCKNOW AND THE COURT OF OUDE

Another regal or once-regal family, another remnant of Moslem power in India, now comes upon the scene – one which has added to the embarrassment of the English authorities, by arraying against them the machinations of deposed princes as well as the discontent of native troops; and by shewing, as the King of Delhi had shewn in a neighbouring region, that a pension to a sovereign deprived of his dominions is not always a sufficient medicament to allay the irritation arising from the deprivation. What and where is the kingdom of Oude; of what rank as an Indian city is its capital, Lucknow; who were its rulers; why and when the ruling authority was changed – these matters must be clearly understood, as a preliminary to the narrative of Sir Henry Lawrence's proceedings about the time of the outbreak.

Oude, considered as a province of British India, and no longer as a kingdom, is bounded on the north and northeast by the territory of Nepaul; on the east by the district of Goruckpore; on the southeast by those of Azimghur and Jounpoor; on the south by that of Allahabad; on the southwest by the districts of the Doab; and on the northwest by Shahjehanpoor. It is now about thrice the size of Wales; but before the annexation, Oude

as a kingdom included a larger area. On the Nepaul side, a strip of jungle-country called the Terai, carries it to the base of the sub-Himalaya range. This Terai is in part a wooded marsh, so affected by a deadly malaria as to be scarcely habitable; while the other part is an almost impassable forest of trees, underwood, and reeds, infested by the elephant, the rhinoceros, the bear, the wild hog, and other animals. Considered generally, however, Oude surpasses in natural advantages almost every other part of India – having the Ganges running along the whole of its southwest frontier, a varied and fertile soil, a genial though hot climate, and numerous facilities for irrigation and water-carriage. It cannot, however, be said that man has duly aided nature in the development of these advantages; for the only regularly made road in the whole province is that from Lucknow to Cawnpore: the others being mostly wretched tracks, scarcely passable for wheel-carriages. The railway schemes of the Company include a line through Oude, which would be of incalculable benefit; but no definite contract had been made at the time when the Revolt commenced; nor would such a railway be profitable until the trunk-line is finished from Calcutta to Benares and Allahabad. Although the Mohammedans have, through many ages, held the ruling power in Oude, the Hindoos are greatly more numerous; and nearly the whole of the inhabitants, five millions in number, speak the Hindostani language; whereas those nearer Calcutta speak Bengali. As shewing the kind of houses in which Europeans occasionally sought concealment

during the disturbances, the following description of the ordinary dwelling-places of Oude may be useful. They are generally built either of unburnt brick, or of layers of mud, each about three feet in breadth and one foot high. The roofs are made of square beams, placed a foot apart, and covered with planks laid transversely; over these are mats, and a roofing of well-rammed wet clay half a yard in thickness. The walls are carried to a height six or seven feet above the upper surface of the roof, to afford a concealed place of recreation for the females of the family; and during the rainy season this small elevated court is covered with a slight awning of bamboos and grass. Though so simply and cheaply constructed, these houses are very durable. Around the house there is usually a verandah, covered with a sloping tiled roof. Inside, the beams overhead are exposed to view, without any ceiling. The floors are of earth, well beaten down and smoothed, and partially covered with mats or cotton carpets. In the front of the house is a chabootra or raised platform of earth, open to the air at the sides, and provided with a roof of tiles or grass supported on pillars. This platform is a pleasant spot on which neighbours meet and chat in the cool of the evening. The dwellings of the wealthy natives of course present an aspect of greater splendour; while those of the Europeans, in the chief towns, partake of the bungalow fashion, already described.

There are few towns of any distinction in Oude compared with the area of the province; and of these few, only two will need to be mentioned in the present chapter. As for the city

whence the province originally obtained its name – Oude, Oudh, or Ayodha – it has fallen from its greatness. Prinsep, Buchanan, and other authorities, regard it as the most ancient, or at any rate one of the most ancient, among the cities of Hindostan. Some of the coins found in Oude are of such extreme antiquity, that the characters in which their legends are graven are totally unknown. Buchanan thinks that the city was built by the first Brahmins who entered India, and he goes back to a date fourteen hundred years before the Christian era for its foundation; while Tod and Wilford claim for Oude an origin even six centuries earlier than that insisted on by Buchanan. The value of such estimates may not be great; they chiefly corroborate the belief that Oude is a *very* ancient city. With its eight thousand inhabitants, and its mud and thatch houses, the grandeur of Oude lives in the past; and even this grandeur is in antiquity rather than in splendour; for the ruins and fragments give a somewhat mean idea of the very early Hindoo architecture to which they belong. On the eastern side of the town are extensive ruins, said to be those of the fort of Rama, king of Oude, celebrated in the mythological and romantic legends of India. According to Buchanan: ‘The heaps of bricks, although much seems to have been carried away by the river, extend a great way – that is, more than a mile in length, and half a mile in width – and, although vast quantities of materials have been removed to build the Mohammedan Ayodha or Fyzabad, yet the ruins in many parts retain a very considerable elevation; nor is there any reason to doubt that the structure to

which they belonged was very large, when we consider that it has been ruined for above two thousand years.' A spot among the ruins is still pointed out by the reverential Hindoos from which Rama took his flight to heaven, carrying all the people of the city with him: a hypothetical emigration which had the effect of leaving Oude desolate until a neighbouring king repopulated it, and embellished it with three hundred and sixty temples. The existing buildings connected with the Hindoo faith are four establishments kept up in honour of the fabled monkey-god, the auxiliary of Rama; they have annual revenues, settled on them by one of the rulers of Oude; they are managed by *maliks* or spiritual superiors; and the revenues are dispensed to several hundreds of *bairagis* or religious ascetics, and other lazy Hindoo mendicants – no Mussulman being ever admitted within the walls.

Lucknow, however, is the city to which our attention will naturally be most directed – Lucknow, as the modern capital of the kingdom or province; as a city of considerable importance, political, military, commercial, and architectural; and as a scene of some of the most memorable events in the Revolt.

The city of Lucknow stands on the right bank of the river Goomtee, which is navigable thence downwards to its confluence with the Ganges between Benares and Ghazeepore. It is rather more than fifty miles distant from Cawnpore, and about a hundred and thirty from Allahabad. As Cawnpore is on the right bank of the Ganges, that majestic river intervenes between the two towns. The Goomtee is crossed at Lucknow by a bridge of

boats, a bridge of substantial masonry, and an iron bridge – an unusual fulness of transit-channels in an Indian city. Lucknow displays a varied, lively, and even brilliant prospect, when viewed from a position elevated above the level of the buildings; but, once in the streets, the traveller has his dream of beauty speedily dissipated; for oriental filth and abomination meet his eye on all sides. The central portion of the city, the most ancient, is meanly built with mud-houses roofed with straw; many of them are no better than booths of mats and bamboos, thatched with leaves or palm-branches. The streets, besides being dirty, are narrow and crooked, and are dismally sunk many feet below the level of the shops. The narrow avenues are rendered still less passable by the custom of employing elephants as beasts of burden: unwieldy animals which almost entirely block up the way. In the part of the city occupied by Europeans, however, and containing the best public buildings, many of the streets are broad and lively. Until 1856, when Oude was annexed to British India, Lucknow was, to a stranger, one of the most remarkable cities of the east, in regard to its armed population. Almost every man went armed through the streets. One had a matchlock, another a gun, another a pistol; others their bent swords or *tulwars*; others their brass-knobbed buffalo-hide shields. Men of business and idlers – among all alike it was a custom to carry arms. The black beards of the Mussulmans, and the fierce moustaches of the Rajpoots, added to the warlike effect thus produced. Oude was the great storehouse for recruits for the Company's native

army; and this naturally gave a martial bent to the people. The Company, however, deemed it a wise precaution to disarm the peaceful citizens at the time of the annexation.

Three or four structures in and near Lucknow require separate description. One is the Shah Nujeef, or Emanbarra of Azof-u-Dowlah, a model of fantastic but elegant Mohammedan architecture. English travellers have poured out high praise upon it. Lord Valentia said: 'From the brilliant white of the composition, and the minute delicacy of the workmanship, an enthusiast might suppose that genii had been the artificers;' while Bishop Heber declared: 'I have never seen an architectural view which pleased me more, from its richness and variety, as well as the proportions and general good taste of its principal features.' The structure consists of many large buildings surrounding two open courts. There are three archways to connect the courts; and in the centre of these is the tomb of the founder, watched by soldiers, and attended by moullahs perpetually reading the Koran. This structure is often called the king's Emanbarra or Imaumbarah, a name given to the buildings raised by that sect of Moslems called Sheahs, for the celebration of the religious festival of the Mohurram. Every family of distinction has its own emanbarra, large or small, gorgeous or simple, according to the wealth of its owner, who generally selects it as his own burial-place. The central hall of the Shah Nujeef, the king's emanbarra, is of vast size and very magnificent; and the combination of Moslem minarets with Hindoo-pointed

domes renders the exterior remarkably striking; nevertheless the splendour is diminished by the poverty of the materials, which are chiefly brick coated with chunam or clay cement. Near or connected with this building is the Roumee Durwaza or Gate of the Sultan, having an arch in the Saracenic style. Another public building is the mosque of Saadut Ali, one of the former nawabs of Oude; its lofty dome presents a remarkable object as seen from various parts of the city; and, being provided with terraces without and galleries within, it is especially attractive to a sight-seer. Southeast of the city, and near the river, is a fantastic mansion constructed by Claude Martine, a French adventurer who rose to great wealth and power at the late court of Lucknow. He called it Constantia, and adorned it with various kinds of architectural eccentricities – minute stucco fretwork, enormous lions with lamps instead of eyes, mandarins and ladies with shaking heads, gods and goddesses of heathen mythology, and other incongruities. The house is large, and solidly built of stone; and on the topmost story is the tomb of Martine; but his body is deposited in a sarcophagus in one of the lower apartments. The favourite residence of the former nawabs and kings of Oude was the Dil Koosha or ‘Heart’s Delight,’ a richly adorned palace two miles out of the city, and placed in the middle of an extensive deer-park. When Colonel (afterwards General Sir James) Outram was appointed British resident at the court of Lucknow, about a year before the annexation, the Dil Koosha was set apart for his reception; and the whole ceremonial illustrated

at once the show and glitter of oriental processions, and the honour paid to the Englishman. As soon as the colonel arrived at Cawnpore from Calcutta, the great officers of state were sent from Lucknow to prepare for his reception. After crossing the Ganges, and thereby setting foot in the Oude dominions, he entered a royal carriage replete with gold and velvet; a procession was formed of carriages, cavalry, and artillery, which followed the fifty miles of road to the capital. On the next day, the king was to have met the colonel half-way between the city palace and the Dil Koosha; but being ill, his place was taken by the heir-apparent. The one procession met the other, and then both entered Lucknow in state. A Lucknow correspondent of a Bombay journal said: 'Let the reader imagine a procession of more than three hundred elephants and camels, caparisoned and decorated with all that barbaric pomp could lavish, and Asiatic splendour shower down; with all the princes and nobles of the kingdom blazing with jewels, gorgeous in apparel, with footmen and horsemen in splendid liveries, swarming on all sides; pennons and banners dancing in the sun's rays, and a perfect forest of gold and silver sticks, spears, and other insignia of imperial and royal state.'

A work of remarkable character has appeared, relating to Lucknow and the court of Oude. It is called the *Private Life of an Eastern King*, and has been edited from the notes of an Englishman who held a position in the household of the king

of Oude, Nussir-u-Deen, in 1834 and following years.⁹ Though the name of the author does not appear, the work is generally accepted as being trustworthy, so many corroborations of its statements having appeared in other quarters. Speaking of the king's palace within the city, this writer says: 'The great extent of the buildings, generally called the king's palace, surprised me in the first instance. It is not properly a palace, but a continuation of palaces, stretching all along the banks of the Goomtee, the river on which Lucknow is built. In this, however, the royal residence in Oude but resembles what one reads of the Seraglio at Constantinople, the khan's residence at Teheran, and the imperial buildings of Pekin. In all oriental states, the palaces are not so much the abode of the sovereign only, as the centre of the government: little towns, in fact, containing extensive lines of buildings occupied by the harem and its vast number of attendants; containing courts, gardens, tanks, fountains, and squares, as well as the offices of the chief ministers of state. Such is the case in Lucknow. One side of the narrow Goomtee – a river not much broader than a middle-sized London street – is lined by the royal palace; the other is occupied by the *rumna* or park, in which the menagerie is (or was) maintained... There is nothing grand or striking about the exterior of the palace, the Fureed Buksh, as it is called. Its extent is the only imposing feature about it; and this struck me more forcibly than any magnificence or loftiness of structure would have done.'

⁹ By Mr Knighton, author of *Forest Life in Ceylon*.

These few topographical and descriptive details concerning Oude and its two capitals, the former and the present, will prepare us to enter upon a subject touching immediately the present narrative: namely, the relations existing between the East India Company and the Oudians, and the causes which have generated disaffection in the late royal family of that country. It will be needful to shew by what steps Oude, once a Hindoo *kingdom*, became under the Mogul dynasty a Mohammedan *nawabship*, then a *nawab-viziership*, then under British protection a Mohammedan *kingdom*, and lastly an Anglo-Indian *province*.

Whether or not historians are correct in asserting that Oude was an independent Hindoo sovereignty fourteen hundred years before the Christian era, and that then, for an indefinite number of centuries, it was a Hindoo dependency of a prince whose chief seat of authority was at Oojein – it seems to be admitted that Bakhtiar Khilzi, towards the close of the twelfth century, was sent to conquer the country for the Mohammedan sovereign at that time paramount in the north of India; and that Oude became at once an integral part of the realm of the emperor of Delhi. Under the powerful Baber, Oude was a lieutenancy or *nawabship*: the ruler having sovereign power within his dominions, but being at the same time a vassal of the Great Mogul. This state of things continued until about a century ago, when the weakening of the central power at Delhi tempted an ambitious *nawab* of Oude to throw off the trammels of dependency, and exercise

royalty on his own account. At that time the Mohammedan rulers of many states in Northern India were troubled by the inroads of the fierce warlike Mahrattas; and although the nawabs cared little for their liege lord the emperor, they deemed it expedient to join their forces against the common enemy. One result of this struggle was, that the nawab of Oude was named 'perpetual' nawab – the first loosening of the imperial chain. The nawab-vizier, as he was now called, never afterwards paid much allegiance to the sovereign of Delhi: nay, the effete Mogul, in 1764, asked the British to defend him from his ambitious and disobedient neighbour. This assistance was so effectively given, that in the next year the nawab-vizier was forced to sue humbly for peace, and to give up some of his possessions as the price of it. One among many stipulations of the East India Company, in reference to the military forces allowed to be maintained by native princes, was made in 1768, when the nawab-vizier was limited to an army of 35,000 troops; namely, 10,000 cavalry, 10,000 sepoy or infantry, 5000 matchlockmen, 500 artillery, and 9500 irregulars. In 1773, Warren Hastings had become so completely involved in the perplexities of Indian politics, and made treaties so unscrupulously if he could thereby advance the interests of the Company – that Company which he served with a zeal worthy of a better cause – that he plotted with the nawab-vizier against the poor decrepit Mogul: the nawab to obtain much additional power and territory, and the British to obtain large sums of money for assisting him. When the next nawab-vizier,

Azof-u-Dowlah, assumed power in Oude in 1775, he hastened to strengthen himself by an alliance with the now powerful British; he gave up to them some territory; they agreed to protect him, and to provide a certain contingent of troops, for which he was to pay an annual sum. This was the complicated way in which the Company gained a footing in so many Indian provinces and kingdoms. It was in 1782 that that shameful proceeding took place, which – though Warren Hastings obtained an acquittal concerning it at his celebrated trial in the House of Lords – has indubitably left a stain upon his name; namely, the spoliation of two begums or princesses of Oude, and the cruel punishment, almost amounting to torture, of some of their dependents. The alleged cause was an arrear in the payment of the annual sum due from the nawab. Even if the debt were really due, the mode of extorting the money, and the selection of the persons from whom it was extorted, can never be reconciled to the principles of even-handed justice. The truth may be compressed into a short sentence – the Company being terribly in want of money to carry on a war against Hyder Ali, the governor-general determined to obtain a supply from some or other of the native princes in Northern India; and those natives being often faithless, he did not hesitate to become faithless to them. During the remainder of the century, the Company increased more and more its ‘protection’ of the nawab-vizier, and received larger and larger sums in payment for that protection. Azof-u-Dowlah was succeeded in 1797 by Vizier Ali, and he in 1798 by Saadut Ali.

We come now to the present century. In 1801, the Marquis Wellesley placed the relations with Oude on a new footing: he relinquished a claim to any further subsidy from the nawab-vizier, but obtained instead the rich districts of Allahabad, Azimghur, Goruckpore, and the Southern Doab, estimated to yield an annual revenue of nearly a million and a half sterling. Oude was larger than England before this date; but the marquis took nearly half of it by this transaction. Matters remained without much change till 1814, when Saadut Ali was succeeded by Ghazee-u-Deen Hyder. During the war between the British and the Nepaulese, soon afterwards, the nawab-vizier of Oude lent the Company two millions sterling, and received in return the Terai or jungle-country between Oude and Nepaul. A curious system of exchanges, this; for after receiving rich districts instead of money, the Company received money in return for a poor district inhabited chiefly by wild beasts. In 1819, the Company allowed Ghazee-u-Deen Hyder to renounce the vassal-title of nawab-vizier, which was a mockery as connected with the suzerainty of the now powerless Emperor of Delhi, and to become *King* of Oude – a king, however, with a greater king at his elbow in the person of the British resident at the court of Lucknow. The Company again became a borrower from Ghazee, during the Mahratta and Burmese wars. In 1827, the throne of Oude was ascended by Nussir-u-Deen Hyder – an aspirant to the throne who was favoured in his pretensions by the Company, and who was, as a consequence, in bitter animosity

with most of his relations during the ten years of his reign. Complicated monetary arrangements were frequently made with the Company, the nature and purport of which are not always clearly traceable; but they generally had the effect of increasing the power of the Company in Oude. On the death of Nussir, in 1837, a violent struggle took place for the throne. He, like other eastern princes, had a large number of sons; but the Company would not acknowledge the legitimacy of any one of them; and the succession therefore fell upon Mahomed Ali Shah, uncle to the deceased sovereign. The begum or chief wife of Nussir fomented a rebellion to overturn this arrangement; and it cost Colonel (afterwards General) Low, resident at Lucknow, much trouble to preserve peace among the wrangling members of the royal family.

Now approaches the arrangement which led to the change of rulers. Oude had been most miserably governed during many years. The king and his relations, his courtiers and his dependents, grasped for money as a substitute for the political power which they once possessed; and in the obtainment of this money they scrupled at no atrocities against the natives. The court, too, was steeped in debaucheries of the most licentious kind, outraging the decencies of life, and squandering wealth on the minions who ministered to its pleasures. The more thoughtful and large-hearted among the Company's superior servants saw here what they had so often seen elsewhere: that when the Company virtually took possession of a native state,

and pensioned off the chief and his family, a moral deterioration followed; he was not allowed to exercise real sovereignty; he became more intensely selfish, because he had nothing to be proud of, even if he wished to govern well; and he took refuge in the only oriental substitute – sensual enjoyment. When Mahomed Ali Shah died in 1842, and his son, Umjud Ali Shah, was sanctioned by the Company as king, a pledge was exacted and a threat foreshadowed: the pledge was, that such reforms should be made by the king as would contribute to the tranquillity and just government of the country; the threat was, that if he did *not* do this, the sovereignty would be put an end to, and the Company would take the government into its own hands. In 1847, Umjud Ali Shah was succeeded by his son, Wajid Ali Shah: a king who equalled or surpassed his predecessors in weakness and profligacy, and under whom the state of matters went from bad to worse. The Marquis of Dalhousie was governor-general when matters arrived at a crisis. There can be no question that the Company, whatever may be said about aggressive views, wished to see the millions of Oude well and happily governed; and it is equally unquestionable that this wish had not been gratified. The engagement with Umjud Ali Shah had assumed this form: ‘It is hereby provided that the King of Oude will take into his immediate and earnest consideration, in concert with the British resident, the best means of remedying the existing defects in the police, and in the judicial and revenue administration of his dominions; and that if his

majesty should neglect to attend to the advice and counsel of the British government or its local representative, and if (which God forbid!) gross and systematic oppression, anarchy, and misrule, should hereafter at any time prevail within the Oude dominions, such as seriously to endanger the public tranquillity, the British government reserves to itself the right of appointing its own officers to the management of whatsoever portion of the Oude territory, either to a small or great extent, in which such misrule as that above alluded to may have occurred, for so long a period as it may deem necessary.’ The marquis, finding that thirteen years had presented no improvement in the internal government of Oude, resolved to adopt decisive measures. He drew up a treaty, whereby the administration of the territory of Oude was to be transferred to the British government: ample provision being made for the dignity, affluence, and honour of the king and his family. The king refused to sign the treaty, not admitting the allegations or suppositions on which it was based; whereupon the marquis, acting with the sanction of the Company and of the imperial government in London, announced all existing treaties to be null and void, and issued a proclamation declaring that the government of the territories of Oude was henceforth vested exclusively and for ever in the East India Company. The governor-general in his minute, it will be remembered, spoke of this transfer of power in the following brief terms: ‘The kingdom of Oude has been assumed in perpetual government by the Honourable East India Company; in pursuance of a policy which

has so recently been under the consideration of the Honourable Court, that I deem it unnecessary to refer to it more particularly here.'

Everything tends to shew that the king violently opposed this loss of his regal title and power. When the governor-general and the resident at Lucknow waited on him with the draft of the proposed treaty, towards the close of 1855, he not only refused to sign it, but announced his intention to proceed to England, with a view of obtaining justice from Queen Victoria against the Company. This the marquis would not prevent; but he intimated that the king must travel, and be treated by the Company's servants, as a *private individual*, if he adopted this step. The stipend for the royal family was fixed by the Company – of course without the consent of the king and his relations – at £120,000 per annum. The reasons for putting an end to the title of King of Oude were thus stated, in a document addressed by the directors of the East India Company to the governor-general of India in council, many months after the transfer of power had been effected, and only a short time before the commencement of the Revolt: 'Half a century ago, our new and critical position among the Mohammedans of Northwestern India compelled us to respect the titular dignity of the Kings of Delhi. But the experiences of that half-century have abundantly demonstrated the inconveniences of suffering an empty nominal sovereignty to descend from generation to generation; and the continuance of such a phantom of power

must be productive of inconvenience to our government, and we believe of more mortification than gratification to the royal pensioners themselves. It fosters humiliating recollections; it engenders delusive hopes; it is the fruitful source of intrigues that end in disappointment and disgrace. The evil is not limited to the effect produced upon the members of the royal house: prone to intrigue themselves, they become also a centre for the intrigues of others. It is natural, also, that the younger members of such a family should feel a greater repugnance than they otherwise would to mix with the community and become industrious and useful subjects. Strongly impressed with these convictions, we therefore observe with satisfaction that no pledge or promise of any kind with regard to the recognition by our government of the kingly title after the death of the present titular sovereign, Wajid Ali Shah, has been made to him or to his heirs.' The reasoning in this declaration is probably sound; but it does not apply, and was not intended to apply, to the original aggressive movements of the Company. Because the shadow of sovereignty is not worth retaining without the substance, it does not necessarily follow that the Company was right in taking the substance fifty-five years earlier: that proceeding must be attacked or defended on its own special ground, by any one who wishes to enter the arena of Indian politics.

It appears from this document, that four of the British authorities at Calcutta – the Marquis of Dalhousie, General Anson, Mr Dorin, and Mr Grant – had concurred in opinion

that, as the king refused to sign the treaty, he should, as a punishment, be denied many of the privileges promised by that treaty. They proposed that the annual stipend of twelve lacs of rupees (£120,000) should be 'reserved for consideration' after the demise of the king – that is, that it should not necessarily be a perpetual hereditary stipend. To this, however, Colonel Low, who had been British resident at Lucknow, very earnestly objected. He urged that the king's sons were so young, that they could not, in any degree, be blamed for his conduct in not signing the proposed treaty; that they ought not to be made to lose their inheritance through the father's fault; that the father, the king, would in any case be pretty severely punished for his obstinacy; and that it would not be worthy of a great paramount state, coming into possession of a rich territory, to refuse a liberal stipend to the descendants of the king. These representations were listened to, and a pension to the amount already named was granted to the king and his heirs – 'not heirs according to Mohammedan usages, but only those persons who may be direct male descendants of the present king, born in lawful wedlock.' A difficult duty was left to the Calcutta government, to decide how many existing persons had a claim to be supported out of the pension, seeing that an eastern king's family is generally one of great magnitude; and that, although he has many wives and many children, they fill various ranks in relation to legitimacy. The Company proposed, if the king liked the plan, that one-third of the pension should be commuted into a capital sum,

with which jaghires or estates might be bought, and vested in the family for the use of the various members – making them, in fact, zemindars or landed proprietors, having something to do instead of leading lives of utter idleness. In what light the directors viewed the large and important army of Oude, will be noticed presently; but in reference to the transfer of mastership itself, they said: ‘An expanse of territory embracing an area of nearly twenty-five thousand square miles, and containing five million of inhabitants, has passed from its native prince to the Queen of England without the expenditure of a drop of blood, and almost without a murmur. The peaceable manner in which this great change has been accomplished, and the tranquillity which has since prevailed in all parts of the country, are circumstances which could not fail to excite in us the liveliest emotions of thankfulness and pleasure.’ This was written, be it remembered – and the fact is full of instruction touching the miscalculations of the Company – less than two months before the cartridge troubles began, and while the mysterious chupatties were actually in circulation from hand to hand.

The deposed King of Oude did not go to England, as he had threatened; he went to Calcutta, and took up his abode, in April 1856, at Garden Reach, in the outskirts of that city, attended by his late prime minister, Ali Nuckee Khan, and by several followers. The queen, however, achieved the adventurous journey to the British capital, taking with her a numerous retinue. This princess was not, in accordance with European

usages, the real Queen of Oude; she was rather a sort of queen-dowager, the king's mother, and was accompanied by the king's brother and the king's son – the one claiming to be heir-presumptive, the other heir-apparent. All felt a very lively interest in the maintenance of the regal power and revenues among the members of the family, and came to England in the hope of obtaining a reversal of the governor-general's decree. They left Lucknow in the spring of 1856, and arrived in England in August. An attempt was made by an injudicious agent to enlist public sympathy for them by an open-air harangue at Southampton. He bade his hearers picture to themselves the suppliant for justice, 'an aged queen, brought up in all the pomp and luxury of the East, the soles of whose feet were scarcely allowed to tread the ground, laying aside the prejudices of travel, and undertaking a journey of some ten thousand miles, to appeal to the people of England for justice;' and the 'fellow-countrymen' were then exhorted to give 'three cheers' for the royal family of Oude – which they undoubtedly did, in accordance with the usual custom of an English assemblage when so exhorted; but this momentary excitement soon ceased, and the oriental visitors settled in London for a lengthened residence. What official interviews or correspondence took place concerning the affairs of Oude, was not publicly known; but there was an evident disinclination on the part both of the government and the two Houses of parliament to hold out any hopes of a reversal of the policy adopted by the East India Company; and the ex-royal family of Oude maintained no

hold on the public mind, except so far as the turbaned and robed domestics attracted the attention of metropolitan sight-seers. In what fashion these suppliants disowned and ignored the Revolt in India, a future chapter will shew.

The reader will, then, picture to himself the state of Oude at the period when the Revolt commenced. The deposed king was at Calcutta; his mother and other relations were in London; while the whole governing power was in the hands of the Company's servants. Sir Henry Lawrence, a man in whom sagacity, energy, and nobleness of heart were remarkably combined, had succeeded Sir James Outram as resident, or rather chief-commissioner, and now held supreme sway at Lucknow.

It is important here to know in what light the East India Company regarded the native army of Oude, at and soon after the annexation. In the directors' minute, of December 1856, just on the eve of disturbances which were quite unexpected by them, the subject was thus touched upon: 'The probable temper of the army, a force computed on paper at some 60,000 men of all arms, on the announcement of a measure which threw a large proportion of them out of employment, and transferred the remainder to a new master, was naturally a source of some anxiety to us. In your scheme for the future government and administration of the Oude provinces, drawn up on the 4th of February, you proposed the organisation of an Oude irregular force, into which you suggested the absorption of as large a number of the disbanded soldiers of the king as could be

employed in such a corps, whilst others were to be provided for in the military and district police; but you observed at the same time that these arrangements would not absorb one-half of the disbanded troops. To the remainder you determined to grant pensions and gratuities, graduated according to length of service. There were no better means than these of palliating a difficulty which could not be avoided. But only partial success was to be expected from so partial a measure. As a further precaution, the chief-commissioner deemed it expedient to promise pensions of one hundred rupees per month to the commandants of the regiments of the late king, some sixty in number, conditional on their lending their cordial co-operation to the government in this crisis, and provided that their regiments remained quiet and loyal. We recognise the force of the chief-commissioner's argument in support of these grants; and are willing to adopt his suggestion that, in the event of any of these men accepting office as *tuhseeldars* or other functionaries under our government, the amount of their pensions should still be paid to them.' It was found that the King of Oude had allowed the pay of his soldiers to run into arrear. On this point the directors said: 'The army, a large number of whom are necessarily thrown out of employment, and who cannot immediately find, even if the habits of their past lives fitted them for, industrial occupations, are peculiarly entitled to liberal consideration. It is doubtless true that, as stated by the chief-commissioner, the soldiery of Oude have "fattened on rapine and plunder;" and it is certain that the servants of the Oude

government enriched themselves at the expense of the people. But this was only part of the system under which they lived; nothing better, indeed, was to be expected from men whose pay, after it had been tardily extracted from the treasury, was liable to be withheld from them by a fraudulent minister. Whatever may have been the past excesses and the illicit gains of the soldiers, it was the duty of the British government in this conjuncture to investigate their claims to the arrears of regular pay alleged to be due to them by the Oude government, and, having satisfied ourselves of the justice of these claims, to discharge the liabilities in full. We observe with satisfaction that this has been done... We concur, moreover, in the very judicious remark made by Viscount Canning, in his minute of the 5th of March, "that a few lacs¹⁰ spent in closing the account, without injustice, and even liberality, will be well repaid if we can thereby smooth down discontent and escape disturbance."

The plan adopted, therefore, was to disband the army of the deposed king, pay up the arrears due by him to the soldiers, re-enlist some of the discharged men to form a new Oude force in the Company's service, and give pensions or gratuities to the remainder.

We are now in a condition to follow the course of events at Lucknow during the months of April and May 1857: events less mutinous and tragical than those at Meerut and Delhi, but important for their consequences in later months.

¹⁰ Lacs or lakhs of rupees: a lac being 100,000, value about £10,000.

It was in the early part of April that the incident occurred at Lucknow concerning a medicine-bottle, briefly adverted to in a former chapter: shewing the existence of an unusually morbid feeling on the subjects of religion and caste. Dr Wells having been seen to taste some medicine which he was about to administer to a sick soldier, to test its quality, the Hindoos near at hand refused to partake of it, lest the taint of a Christian mouth should degrade their caste. They complained to Colonel Palmer, of the 48th native regiment, who, as he believed and hoped, adopted a conciliatory course that removed all objection. This hope was not realised, however; for on that same night the doctor's bungalow was fired and destroyed by some of the sepoy, whom no efforts could identify. Very soon afterwards, nearly all the huts of the 13th regiment were burned down, under similarly mysterious circumstances.

Sir Henry Lawrence's difficulties began with the vexatious cartridge-question, as was the case in so many other parts of India. Towards the close of April, Captain Watson found that many of the recruits or younger men in his regiment, the 7th Oude infantry, evinced a reluctance to bite the cartridges. Through some oversight, the new method of tearing instead of biting had not been shewn to the sepoy at Lucknow; and there was therefore sufficient reason for adopting a conciliatory course in explaining the matter to them. The morbid feeling still, however, remained. On the 1st of May, recusancy was again exhibited, followed by an imprisonment of some of the

recruits in the quarter-guard. The native officers of the regiment came forward to assure Captain Watson that this disobedience was confined to the 'youngsters,' and that the older sepoys discountenanced it. He believed them, or seemed to do so. On the 2d he addressed the men, pointing out the folly of the conduct attributed to the young recruits, and exhorting them to behave more like true soldiers. Though listened to respectfully, he observed so much sullenness and doggedness among the troops, that he brought the matter under the notice of his superior officer, Brigadier Grey. The native officers, when put to the test, declined taking any steps to enforce obedience; they declared their lives to be in danger from the men under them, should they do so. The brigadier, accompanied by Captains Watson and Barlow, at once went to the lines, had the men drawn up in regular order, and put the question to each company singly, whether it was willing to use the same cartridges *which had all along been employed*. They refused. The brigadier left them to arrange plans for the morrow; placing them, however, under safe guard for the night. On the morning of the 3d, the grenadier company (picked or most skilful company) of the regiment went through the lines, threatening to kill some of the European officers; and soon afterwards the tumult became so serious, that the fulfilment of the threat seemed imminent. By much entreaty, the officers, European and native, allayed in some degree the excitement of the men. While this was going on, however, at the post or station of Moosa Bagh, a messenger was sent by the intriguers

of the 7th regiment to the cantonment at Murreeoun, with a letter inciting the 48th native infantry to join them in mutiny. This letter was fortunately brought, by a subadar true to his duty, to Colonel Palmer, the commandant. Prompt measures were at once resolved upon. A considerable force – consisting of the 7th Oude cavalry, the 4th Oude infantry, portions of the 48th and 71st Bengal infantry, a portion of the 7th Bengal cavalry, a wing of her Majesty's 32d, and a field-battery of guns – was sent from the cantonment to the place where the recusants were posted. The mutineers stood firm for some time; but when they saw cannon pointed at them, some turned and fled with great rapidity, while others quietly gave up their arms. The cavalry pursued and brought back some of the fugitives. The 7th Oude irregular infantry regiment, about a thousand strong, was thus suddenly broken into three fragments – one escaped, one captured, and one disarmed. A letter from the Rev. Mr Polehampton, chaplain to the English residents at Lucknow, affords one among many proofs that Sunday was a favourite day for such outbreaks in India – perhaps purposely so selected by the rebellious sepoys. The 3d of May was Sunday: the chaplain was performing evening-service at the church. 'Towards the end of the prayers, a servant came into church, and spoke first to Major Reid, of the 48th; and then to Mr Dashwood, of the same regiment. They both went out, and afterwards others were called away. The ladies began to look very uncomfortable; one or two went out of church; one or two others crossed over the aisle to friends who were sitting

on the other side; so that altogether I had not a very attentive congregation.' When it was found that the officers had been called out to join the force against the mutineers, the chaplain 'felt very much inclined to ride down to see what was going on; but as the Moosa Bagh is seven miles from our house, and as I should have left my wife all alone, I stayed where I was. I thought of what William III. said when he was told that the Bishop of Derry had been shot at the ford at the Battle of the Boyne, "What took him there?"'

The course of proceeding adopted by Sir Henry Lawrence on this occasion was quite of an oriental character, as if suggested by one who well knew the Indian mind. He held a grand military durbar, to reward the faithful as well as to awe the mutinous. In the first instance he had said that the government would be advised to disband the regiment, with a provision for re-enlisting those who had not joined the rebels; but pending the receipt of instructions from Calcutta, he held his durbar (court; levee; hall of audience). Four native soldiers – a havildar-major, a subadar, and a sepoy of the 48th regiment, and a sepoy of the 13th – who had proved themselves faithful in an hour of danger, were to be rewarded. The lawn in front of the residency was carpeted, and chairs were arranged on three sides of a square for some of the native officers and sepoys; while a large verandah was filled with European officials, civil and military, upwards of twenty in number. Sir Henry opened the proceedings with an address in the Hindostani language, full of point and

vigour. After a gorgeous description of the power and wealth of the British nation – overwrought, perhaps, for an English ear, but well suited to the occasion – he adverted to the freedom of conscience in British India on matters of religion: ‘Those amongst you who have perused the records of the past must well know that Alumghir in former times, and Hyder Ali in later days, forcibly converted thousands and thousands of Hindoos, desecrated their fanes, demolished their temples, and carried ruthless devastation amongst the household gods. Come to our times; many here present well know that Runjeet Singh never permitted his Mohammedan subjects to call the pious to prayer – never allowed the Afghan to sound from the lofty minarets which adorn Lahore, and which remain to this day a monument to their munificent founders. The year before last a Hindoo could not have dared to build a temple in Lucknow. All this is changed. Who is there that would dare *now* to interfere with our Hindoo or Mohammedan subjects?’ He contrasted this intolerance of Mohammedan and Hindoo rulers in matters of religion with the known scruples of the British government; and told his hearers that the future would be like the present, in so far as concerns the freedom of all religions over the whole of India. He rebuked and spurned the reports which had been circulated among the natives, touching meditated insult to their faith or their castes. He adverted to the gallant achievements of the Company’s native troops during a hundred years of British rule; and told how it pained him to think that disbandment of such troops had been

found necessary at Barrackpore and Berhampore. And then he presented the bright side of his picture: ‘Now turn to these good and faithful soldiers – Subadar Sewak Tewaree, Havildar Heera Lall Doobey, and Sipahi Ranura Doobey, of the 48th native infantry, and to Hossein Buksh, of the 13th regiment – who have set to you all a good example. The first three at once arrested the bearer of a seditious letter, and brought the whole circumstance to the notice of superior authority. You know well what the consequences were, and what has befallen the 7th Oude irregular infantry, more than fifty of whose sirdars and soldiers are now in confinement, and the whole regiment awaits the decision of government as to its fate. Look at Hossein Buksh of the 13th, fine fellow as he is! Is he not a good and faithful soldier? Did he not seize three villains who are now in confinement and awaiting their doom. It is to reward such fidelity, such acts and deeds as I have mentioned, and of which you are all well aware, that I have called you all together this day – to assure you that those who are faithful and true to their salt will always be amply rewarded and well cared for; that the great government which we all serve is prompt to reward, swift to punish, vigilant and eager to protect its faithful subjects; but firm, determined, resolute to crush all who may have the temerity to rouse its vengeance.’ After a further exhortation to fidelity, a further declaration of the power and determination of the government to deal severely with all disobedient troops, Sir Henry arrived at the climax of his impassioned and vigorous address: ‘Advance, Subadar Sewak

Tewaree – come forward, havildar and sepoy – and receive these splendid gifts from the government which is proud to number you amongst its soldiers. Accept these honorary sabres; you have won them well: long may you live to wear them in honour! Take these sums of money for your families and relatives; wear these robes of honour at your homes and your festivals; and may the bright example which you have so conspicuously set, find, as it doubtless will, followers in every regiment and company in the army.’ To the subadar and the havildar-major were presented each, a handsomely decorated sword, a pair of elegant shawls, a choogah or cloak, and four pieces of embroidered cloth; to the other two men, each, a decorated sword, a turban, pieces of cloth, and three hundred rupees in cash. Hossein Buksh was also made a naik or corporal.

Let not the reader judge this address and these proceedings by an English standard. Sir Henry Lawrence knew well what he was doing; for few of the Company’s servants ever had a deeper insight into the native character than that eminent man. There had been, in the Company’s general system, too little punishment for misconduct, too little reward for faithfulness, among the native troops: knowing this, he adopted a different policy, so far as he was empowered to do.

When the news of the Lucknow disturbance reached Calcutta, a course was adopted reminding us of the large amount of written correspondence involved in the mode of managing public affairs. The governor-general, it may here be explained,

was assisted by a supreme council, consisting of four persons, himself making a fifth; and the council was aided by four secretaries, for the home, the foreign, the military, and the financial affairs of India. All these officials were expected to make their inquiries, communicate their answers, state their opinions, and notify their acts in writing, for the information of the Court of Directors and the Board of Control in London; and this is one reason why parliamentary papers touching Indian affairs are often so voluminous. At the period in question, Viscount Canning, Mr Dorin, General Low, Mr Grant, and Mr Peacock, were the five members of council, each and all of whom prepared 'minutes' declaratory of their opinions whether Sir Henry Lawrence had done right or wrong in threatening to disband the mutinous 7th regiment. The viscount wished to support the chief-commissioner at once, in a bold method of dealing with the disaffected. Mr Dorin went further. He said: 'My theory is that no corps mutinies that is well commanded;' he wished that some censure should be passed on the English officers of the 7th, and that the men of that regiment should receive more severe treatment than mere disbanding. General Low advocated a course midway between the other two; but at the same time deemed it right to inquire how it happened that the men had been required to bite the cartridges; seeing that instructions had already been issued from head-quarters that the platoon exercises should be conducted without this necessity. Mr Grant's minute was very long; he wanted more time, more

reports, more examinations, and was startled at the promptness with which Lawrence had proposed to act. Mr Peacock also wanted further information before deciding on the plan proposed by the ruling authority at Oude. The governor-general's minute was written on the 9th; the other four commented on it on the 10th; the governor-general replied to their comments on the 11th; and they commented on his reply on the 12th. Thus it arose that the tedious system of written minutes greatly retarded the progress of business at Calcutta.

There cannot be a better opportunity than the present for advertg to the extraordinary services rendered by the electric telegraph in India during the early stages of the Revolt, when the mutineers had not yet carried to any great extent their plan of cutting the wires. We have just had occasion to describe the routine formalities in the mode of conducting business at Calcutta; but it would be quite indefensible to withhold admiration from the electro-telegraphic system established by the East India Company. This matter was touched upon in the Introduction; and the middle of May furnished wonderful illustrations of the value of the lightning-messenger. Let us fix our attention on two days only – the 16th and 17th of May – less than one week after the commencement of violent scenes at Meerut and Delhi. Let us picture to ourselves Viscount Canning at Calcutta, examining every possible scheme for sending up reinforcements to the disturbed districts; Sir John Lawrence at Lahore, keeping the warlike population of the Punjaub in

order by his mingled energy and tact; Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow, surrounded by Oudians, whom it required all his skill to baffle; Mr Colvin at Agra, watching with an anxious eye the state of affairs in the Northwest Provinces; General Anson at Simla, preparing, as commander-in-chief, to hasten down to the Delhi district; Lord Elphinstone at Bombay, as governor of that presidency; and Lord Harris, filling an analogous office at Madras. Bearing in mind these persons and places, let us see what was done by the electric telegraph on those two busy days – deriving our information from the voluminous but ill-arranged parliamentary papers on the affairs of India: papers almost useless without repeated perusals and collations.

First, then, the 16th of May. Sir Henry Lawrence sent one of his pithy, terse telegrams¹¹ from Lucknow to Calcutta, to this effect: ‘All is quiet here, but affairs are critical; get every European you can from China, Ceylon, and elsewhere; also all the Goorkhas from the hills. Time is precious.’ On the same day he sent another: ‘Give me plenary military power in Oude; I will not use it unnecessarily. I am sending two troops of cavalry to Allahabad. Send a company of Europeans into the fort there. It will be good to raise regiments of irregular horse,

¹¹ The word *telegram*, denoting a message sent, as distinguished from the *telegraph* which sends it, has been a subject of much discussion among Greek scholars, concerning the validity of the grammatical basis on which it is formed; but as the new term is convenient for its brevity and expressiveness, and as it has been much used by the governor-general and the various officers connected with India, it will occasionally be employed in this work.

under good officers.’ In the reverse direction – from Calcutta to Lucknow – this message was sent: ‘It appears that the regiment of Ferozpoore [Sikhs] has already marched to Allahabad, and that, under present circumstances, no part of that regiment can be spared.’ And another, in like manner answering a telegram of the same day: ‘You have full military powers. The governor-general will support you in everything you think necessary. It is impossible to send a European company to Allahabad; Dinapoor must not be weakened by a single man. If you can raise any irregulars that you can trust, do so at once. Have you any good officers to spare for the duty?’ All this, be it remembered was telegraphed to and from two cities six or seven hundred miles apart. On the same day, questions were asked, instructions requested, and information given, between Calcutta, on the one hand, and Agra, Gwalior, Meerut, Cawnpore, and Benares on the other. Passing thence to Bombay – twelve hundred miles from Calcutta by road, and very much more by telegraph-route – we find the two governors conversing through the wires concerning the English troops which had just been fighting in Persia, and those about being sent to China; all of whom were regarded with a longing eye by the governor-general at that critical time. Viscount Canning telegraphed to Lord Elphinstone on the 16th: ‘Two of the three European regiments which are returning from Persia are urgently wanted in Bengal. If they are sent from Bombay to Kurachee, will they find conveyance up the Indus? Are they coming from Bushire in steam or sailing transports? Let

me know immediately whether General Ashburnham is going to Madras.' The general here named was to have commanded the troops destined for China. The replies and counter-replies to this on the 17th, we will mention presently. Lord Harris, on this same day of activity, sent the brief telegram: 'The Madras Fusiliers will be sent immediately by *Zenobia*; but she is hardly fit to take a whole regiment.' This was in reply to a request transmitted shortly before.

Next, the 17th of May. Sir Henry Lawrence telegraphed from Lucknow: 'You are quite right to keep Allahabad safe. We shall do without Sikhs or Goorkhas. We have concentrated the troops as much as possible, so as to protect the treasury and magazine, and keep up a communication. A false alarm last night.' He sent another, detailing what he had done in managing the turbulent 7th regiment. In the reverse direction, a message was sent to him, that 'The artillery invalids at Chunar, about 109 in number, have been ordered to proceed to Allahabad immediately.' The telegrams were still more numerous than on the 16th, between the various towns mentioned in the last paragraph, in Northern India. From Bombay, Lord Elphinstone telegraphed to ask whether an extra mail-steamer should be sent off to Suez with news for England; and added: 'The 64th will arrive in a few days from Bushire; their destination is Bengal; but we can keep them here available, or send them round to Calcutta if you wish it.' To which the governor-general replied from Calcutta, still on the same day, expressing his wishes about

the mail, and adding: 'If you can send the 64th to Calcutta by steam, do so without any delay. If steam is not available, I will wait for an answer to my last message before deciding that they shall come round in sailing-vessels. Let me know when you expect the other European regiments and the artillery, and what steam-vessels will be available for their conveyance. Have you at present a steam-vessel that could go to Galle to bring troops from there to Calcutta? This must not interfere with the despatch of the 64th.' Another, from Lord Elphinstone, on the very same day, announced that the best of the Indus boats were in Persia; that it would be impossible to send up three European regiments from Kurachee to the Punjaub, within any reasonable time, by the Indus boats then available; that he nevertheless intended to send one regiment, the 1st Europeans, by that route; and that the 2d Europeans were daily expected from Persia. He further said: 'Shall I send them round to Calcutta; and shall I send the 78th also? General Ashburnham leaves this to-day by the steamer for Galle, where he expects to meet Lord Elgin; he is not going to Madras.' While this was going on between Calcutta and Bombay, Madras was not idle. The governor-general telegraphed to Lord Harris, to inform him of the mutiny, on the previous day, of the Sappers and Miners who went from Roorkee to Meerut; and another on the same day, replying to a previous telegram, said: 'If the *Zenobia* cannot bring all the Fusiliers, the remainder might be sent in the *Bentinck*, which will be at Madras on the 26th; but send as many in the *Zenobia* as she

will safely hold. Let me know when the *Zenobia* sails, and what force she brings.' If we had selected three days instead of two, as illustrating the wonders of the electric telegraph, we should have had to narrate that on the third day, the 18th of May, Lord Harris announced that the Fusiliers would leave Madras that evening; that Viscount Canning thanked him for his great promptness; that Lord Elphinstone received instructions to send one of the three regiments up the Indus, and the other two round to Calcutta; that he asked and received suggestions about managing a Beloochee regiment at Kurachee; and that messages in great number were transmitted to and from Calcutta, Benares, Allahabad, Cawnpore, Lucknow, Agra, and other large towns.

The imagination becomes almost bewildered at contemplating such things. Between the morning of the 16th of May and the evening of the 17th, the great officers of the Company, situated almost at the extreme points of the Indian empire – east, west, north, and south – were conversing through four thousand miles of wire, making requests, soliciting advice, offering services, discussing difficulties, weighing probabilities, concerting plans; and all with a precision much greater than if they had been writing letters to one another, in ordinary official form, in adjoining rooms of the same building. It was, perhaps, the greatest triumph ever achieved up to that time by the greatest of modern inventions – the electric telegraph.

We shall find the present part of the chapter an equally convenient place in which to notice a series of operations

strikingly opposed to those just described – slow travelling as compared with quick telegraphy. It is full of instruction to see how earnestly anxious Viscount Canning was to send troops up to the northern provinces; and how he was baffled by the tardiness of all travelling appliances in India. The railway was opened only from Calcutta to Raneeunge, a very small portion of the distance to the disturbed districts. The history of the peregrinations of a few English troops in May will illustrate, and will receive illustration from, the matters treated in Chapter I.

The European 84th regiment, it will be remembered, had been hastily brought from Rangoon in the month of March, to assist in disbanding the sepoys who had shewn disaffection at Barrackpore and Berhampore. When the troubles began at Meerut and Delhi, in May, it was resolved to send on this regiment; and the governor-general found no part of his onerous duties more difficult than that of obtaining *quick* transmission for those troops. On the 21st of May he telegraphed to Benares: ‘Pray instruct the commissariat officer to prepare cooking-pots and other arrangements for the 84th regiment, now on its way to Benares; and the barrack department to have cots ready for them.’ On the 23d, Sir Henry Lawrence asked: ‘When may her Majesty’s 84th be expected at Cawnpore?’ to which an answer was sent on the following day: ‘It is impossible to convey a wing of Europeans to Cawnpore (about six hundred and thirty miles) in less time than twenty-five days. The government dâk and the dâk companies are fully engaged in carrying a company of

the 84th to Benares, at the rate of 18 men a day. A wing of the Madras Fusiliers arrived yesterday, and starts to-day; part by bullock-train, part by steamer. The bullock-train can take 100 men per day, at the rate of thirty miles a day. The entire regiment of the Fusiliers, about 900 strong, cannot be collected at Benares in less than 19 or 20 days. About 150 men who go by steam will scarcely be there so soon. I expect, that from this time forward troops will be pushed upwards at the rate of 100 men a day from Calcutta; each batch taking ten days to reach Benares; from Benares they will be distributed as most required. The regiments from Pegu, Bombay, and Ceylon will be sent up in this way. Every bullock and horse that is to be had, except just enough to carry the post, is retained; and no troops will be sent by steam which can be sent more quickly by other means.' These details shew that Cawnpore and Benares were both asking for troops at the same time; and that the governor-general, even if he possessed the soldiers, had not the means of sending them expeditiously. On the 24th, a message was sent to Raneegunge, ordering that a company of Madras troops might be well attended to, when they arrived by railway from Calcutta; and on the next day, Benares received notice to prepare for four companies proceeding thither by bullock-train, one company per day. The Benares commissioner announced the arrival of *fifteen* English soldiers, as if that were a number to be proud of, and stated that he would send them on to Cawnpore. (It will be seen, on reference to a map, that Benares lies in the route to

almost all the upper and western provinces, whether by road or by river.) The Raneegunge agent telegraphed on the 26th: 'If the men reach Sheergotty, there is no difficulty in conveying them to Benares; the only difficulty is between Raneegunge and Sheergotty. *Ekahs* are not, I think, adapted for Europeans; nor do I think that time would be gained.' An ekah or ecka, we may here remark, is a light pony-gig on two wheels, provided with a cloth cushion on which the rider (usually a native) sits cross-legged. It shews the nature of Indian travelling, to find the officials discussing whether English soldiers should be thus conveyed – one cushioned vehicle to convey each cross-legged soldier. At Benares, the commissioner borrowed from the rajah the use of a house in which to lodge the English troops as fast as they came; and he sent them on by dâk to Allahabad and Cawnpore. Nevertheless Sir Henry Lawrence, disturbed by ominous symptoms, wished for ekahs, dâks – anything that would give him English soldiers. He telegraphed on this day: 'I strongly advise that as many ekah-dâks be laid as possible, from Raneegunge to Cawnpore, to bring up European troops. *Spare no expense*;' and on the next day he received the reply: 'Every horse and carriage, bullock and cart, which could be brought upon the road, has been collected, and no means of increasing the number will be neglected.' On the 27th it was announced from Benares that 'the steamer had stuck,' and that all the land-dâks were being used that could possibly be procured. On the same day the Allahabad commissioner spoke hopefully of his

plan that – by the aid of 1600 siege-train bullocks from that place, 600 from Cawnpore, the government bullocks, the private wagon-trains, and magazine carts – he might be able to send 160 Europeans per day up to Cawnpore. On the 28th, the Calcutta authorities sent a telegram to Benares, to announce that ‘Up to the 1st of June seven dâk-carriages will be despatched daily, with one officer and 18 soldiers. On the 1st of June, and daily afterwards, there will be despatched nine dâk-carriages, with one officer and 24 Europeans; and 28 bullock-carts, with one officer, 90 Europeans, a few followers, and provisions to fill one cart. The Calcutta steamer and flat, with four officers, 134 Europeans, and proportion of followers; and the coal-steamer, with about the same numbers, will reach Benares on the 10th or 11th of June.’ From this it will be seen that a ‘dâk-carriage’ conveyed three soldiers, and a ‘bullock-cart’ also three, the ‘followers’ probably accompanying them on foot. The Benares commissioner on the same day said: ‘Happily we have good metalled roads all over this division’ – thereby implying what would have been the result if the roads were *not* good. The use of bullocks was more particularly adverted to in a telegram of the 30th of May: ‘Gun-bullocks would be most useful between Raneegunge and the Sone, if they could be sent from Calcutta in time; if there are carts, the daily dispatches can be increased; not otherwise. Gun-bullocks would save a day, as they travel quicker than our little animals.’ Immediately afterwards, forty-six elephants were sent from Patna, and one hundred from Dacca and Barrackpore,

to Sheergotty, to assist in the transport of troops. On a later occasion, when more troops had arrived from England, Viscount Canning sent two steamers from Calcutta to Pegu, to bring over cargoes of elephants, to be used as draught-animals!

Thus it continued, day after day – all the servants of the Company, civil and military, calculating how long it would take to send driblets of soldiers up the country; and all harassed by this dilemma – that what the Ganges steamers gained in roominess, they lost by the sinuosities of the river; and that what the dâks and bullock-trains gained by a direct route, they lost by the inevitable slowness of such modes of conveyance, and the smallness of the number of soldiers that could be carried at a time. Thankful that they possessed telegraphs, the authorities had little to be thankful for as concerned railways or roads, vehicles or horses.

We now return to the proceedings of Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow.

Before the collective minutes of the five members of the Supreme Council were fully settled, he had acted on the emergency which gave rise to them. He held a court of inquiry; the result of which was that two subadars, a jemadar, and forty-four sepoyes of the mutinous 7th were committed to prison; but he resolved not at present to disband the regiment. His grand durbar has been already described. In the middle of the month, as just shewn, he sent many brief telegrams indicating that, though no mutinies had occurred at Lucknow, there was nevertheless need for watchfulness. He had asked for the aid of some Sikhs, but

said, on the 18th: 'As there is difficulty, do not send the Sikhs to Lucknow.' On the next day, his message was: 'All very well in city, cantonment, and country;' but after this, the elements of mischief seemed to be gathering, although Lawrence prepared to meet all contingencies resolutely. 'All quiet,' he said on the 21st, 'but several reports of intended attacks on us.' He was, however, more solicitous about the fate of Cawnpore, Allahabad, and Benares, than of Lucknow.

The military position of Sir Henry towards the last week in May was this. He had armed four posts for his defence at Lucknow. In one were four hundred men and twenty guns; in another, a hundred Europeans and as many sepoys; in another was the chief store of powder, well under command. A hundred and thirty Europeans, two hundred sepoys, and six guns, guarded the treasury; the guns near the residency being under European control. The old magazine was denuded of its former contents, as a precautionary measure. Six guns, and two squadrons of the 2d Oude irregular cavalry, were at the Dâk bungalow, half-way between the residency and the cantonment. In the cantonment were three hundred and forty men of her Majesty's 32d, with six European guns, and six more of the Oude light field-battery. By the 23d of the month, nearly all the stores were moved from the old magazine to one of the strongholds, where thirty guns and one hundred Europeans were in position, and where ten days' supplies for five hundred men were stored. On the 29th, Lawrence's telegram told of 'great uneasiness at

Lucknow. Disturbances threatened outside. Tranquillity cannot be much longer maintained unless Delhi be speedily captured.' The residency, a place rendered so memorable by subsequent events, must be here noticed. The cantonment was six miles from the city, and the residency was itself isolated from the rest of Lucknow. The Rev. Mr Polehampton, describing in his letter the occurrences about the middle of May, said: 'The sick have been brought to the residency; so have the women; and the residency is garrisoned by 130 men of the 32d, and by the battery of native artillery. All the ladies, wives of civilians, who live in different parts of the city, have come into the residency. By the residency, I mean a piece of ground a good deal elevated above the rest of the city, allotted by the King of Oude, when he first put himself under British "protection" some fifty years ago, to the British civil residents. It is walled round almost entirely; on one side native houses abut upon it, but on the other three sides it is tolerably clear. Roads without gates in some places connect it with the city; but it is not at all a bad place to make a stand – certainly the best in Lucknow, to which it is a sort of acropolis. The residency contains the chief-commissioner's house, Mr Gubbins's, Mr Ommaney's, Foyne's, the post-office, city hospital, electric-telegraph office, church, etc.' The ever-memorable defence made by a little band of English heroes in this 'acropolis' of Lucknow, will call for our attention in due time. Mr Polehampton spoke of the gravity with which Sir Henry Lawrence regarded the state of public affairs; and of the caution

which led him to post *one* English soldier at every gun, to watch the native artillerymen. The chaplain had means of knowing with what assiduity crafty lying men tried to gain over the still faithful sepoys to mutiny. ‘Another most absurd story they have got hold of, which came out in the examination of some of the mutineers before Sir Henry Lawrence. They say that in consequence of the Crimean war there are a great many widows in England, and that these are to be brought out and married to the Rajahs in Oude; and that their children, brought up as Christians, are to inherit all the estates! The natives are like babies – they will believe anything.’ – Babies in belief, perhaps; but fiends in cruelty when excited.

The last two days of May were days of agitation at Lucknow. Many of the native troops broke out in open mutiny. They consisted of half of the 48th regiment, about half of the 71st, some few of the 13th, and two troops of the 7th cavalry – all of whom fled towards Seetapoor, a town nearly due north of Lucknow. Lawrence, with two companies of her Majesty’s 32d, three hundred horse, and four guns, went in pursuit; but the horse, Oude native cavalry, evinced no zeal; and he was vexed to find that he could only get within round-shot of the mutineers. He took thirty prisoners – a very inadequate result of the pursuit. Many disaffected still remained in Lucknow; four bungalows were burned, and a few English officers shot. The city was quiet, but the cantonment was in a disturbed state. In his last telegrams for the month, the chief-commissioner,

who was also chief military authority, used these words: 'It is difficult to say who are loyal; but it is believed the majority are so; only twenty-five of the 7th cavalry proved false;' and he further said: 'The faithful remnants of three infantry regiments and 7th cavalry, about seven hundred men, are encamped close to the detachment of two hundred of her Majesty's 32d and four European guns.' Even then he did not feel much uneasiness concerning the city and cantonment of Lucknow: it was towards other places, Cawnpore especially, that his apprehensive glance was directed.

What were the occurrences at Lucknow, and in other towns of the territory of Oude, in June, will be better understood when the progress of the Revolt in other places during May has been narrated.

CHAPTER VII.

SPREAD OF DISAFFECTION IN MAY

The narrative has now arrived at a stage when some kind of classification of times and places becomes necessary. There were special reasons why Delhi and Lucknow should receive separate attention, connected as those two cities are with deposed native sovereigns chafed by their deposition; but other cities and towns now await notice, spread over many thousand square miles of territory, placed in various relations to the British government, involved in various degrees in mutinous proceedings, and differing much in the periods at which the hostile demonstrations were made. Two modes of treatment naturally suggest themselves. The towns might be treated topographically, beginning at Calcutta, and working westward towards the Indus; this would be convenient for reference to maps, but would separate contemporaneous events too far asunder. Or the occurrences might be treated chronologically, beginning from the Meerut outbreak, and advancing, as in a diary, day by day throughout the whole series; this would facilitate reference to dates, but would ignore local connection and mutual action. It may be possible, however, to combine so much of the two methods as will retain their advantages and

avoid their defects; there may be groups of days and groups of places; and these groups may be so treated as to mark the relations both of sequence and of simultaneity, of causes and of co-operation. In the present chapter, a rapid glance will be taken over a wide-spread region, to shew in what way and to what degree disaffection spread during the month of May. This will prepare us for the terrible episode at one particular spot – Cawnpore.

To begin, then, with Bengal – the fertile and populous region between the Anglo-Indian city of Calcutta and the sacred Hindoo city of Benares; the region watered by the lower course of the majestic Ganges; the region inhabited by the patient, plodding, timid Bengalee, the type from which Europeans have generally derived their idea of the Hindoo: forgetting, or not knowing, that Delhi and Agra, Cawnpore and Lucknow, exhibit the Hindoo character under a more warlike aspect, and are marked also by a difference of language. A fact already mentioned must be constantly borne in mind – that few Bengalees are (or were) in the Bengal army: a population of forty millions furnished a very small ratio of fighting men.

Although not a scene of murder and atrocity during the Revolt, Calcutta requires a few words of notice here: to shew the relation existing between the native and the European population, and the importance of the city as the head-quarters of British India, the supreme seat of legislation and justice, the residence of the governor-general, the last great city on the course down

the Ganges, and the port where more trade is conducted than in all others in India combined.

Calcutta stands on the left bank of the Hoogly, one of the numerous streams by which the Ganges finds an outlet into the sea. There are no less than fourteen of these streams deep enough for the largest craft used in inland navigation, but so narrow and crooked that the rigging of vessels often becomes entangled in the branches of the trees growing on the banks. The delta formed by these mouths of the Ganges, called the Sunderbunds, is nearly as large as Wales; it is little else than a cluster of low, marshy, irreclaimable islands, very unhealthy to the few natives living there, and left almost wholly to tigers, wild buffaloes, wild boars, and other animals which swarm there in great numbers. The Hoogly is one of the few really navigable mouths of the Ganges; and by this channel Calcutta has free access by shipping to the sea, which is about a hundred miles distant. The city, extending along the river four or five miles, covers an area of about eight square miles. A curved line nearly bounds it on the land-side, formed by the Mahratta ditch, a defence-work about a century old. Beyond the ditch, and a fine avenue called the Circular Road, the environs are studded with numerous suburbs or villages which may be considered as belonging to the city: among these are Nundenbagh, Bahar-Simla, Sealdah, Entally, Ballygunge, Bhowaneepore, Allipore, Kidderpore, Seebpore, Howrah, and Sulkea. The three last are on the opposite or west bank of the river, and contain

the dock-yards, the ship-building establishments, the railway station, the government salt-warehouses, and numerous extensive manufactories. The approach to the city from the sea presents a succession of attractive features. First, a series of elegant mansions at a bend in the river called Garden Reach, with lawns descending to the water's edge; then the anchorage for the Calcutta and Suez mail-steamers; then the dock-yards; next the canal junction, the arsenal and Fort William. Above these is the Chowringhee, once a suburb, but now almost as closely built as Calcutta itself, containing the Esplanade, the Town Hall, the Government House, and many European residences. 'Viewed from Garden Reach,' says Mr Stocqueler, 'the *coup d'œil* is one of various and enchanting beauty. Houses like palaces are studding the bank on the proper left of the river, and a verdure like that of an eternal summer renovates the eye, so long accustomed to the glitter of the ocean. Anon, on *your* left, appears the semi-Gothic Bishop's College; and in front of you, every moment growing more distinct, are beheld a forest of stately masts, a noble and beautiful fortress, a thousand small boats, of shapes new and undreamed of by the visitant, skimming over the stream; the larger vessels of the country, pleasant to look upon even for their strange dis-symmetry and consequent unwieldiness; the green barge or budgerow, lying idly for hire; and the airy little bauleahs, with their light venetianed rooms.' All this relates to the portion of the city lying south or seaward of the Chandpaul Ghat, the principal landing-place. Northward of this stretches a

noble strand, on which are situated the Custom-house, the New Mint, and other government offices.

It must be noted that, although the chief British city in India, Calcutta in ordinary times contains no less than *seventy times* as many natives as English – only six thousand English out of more than four hundred thousand inhabitants. Even if Eurasians (progeny of white fathers and native mothers) be included, the disparity is still enormous; and is rendered yet more so by the many thousands of natives who, not being inhabitants, attend Calcutta at times for purposes of trade or of worship. Many wild estimates were made a few years ago concerning the population of Calcutta, which was sometimes driven up hypothetically to nearly a million souls; but a census in 1850 determined the number to be four hundred and seventeen thousand persons, living in sixty-two thousand houses and huts. The Hindoos alone exceed two hundred and seventy thousand. Circumstances of site, as well as the wishes and convenience of individuals, have led the Europeans to form a community among themselves, distinct from the native Calcutta. Many natives, it is true, live in the southern or British town; but very few British live in the northern or native town. The latter differs little from Indian towns generally, except in the large size of the dwellings belonging to the wealthy inhabitants. The southern town is European in appearance as in population; it has its noble streets, sumptuous government offices, elegant private residences surrounded with verandahs. On the esplanade is situated Fort William (the official

name given to Calcutta in state documents), one of the strongest in India; it is octagonal, with three sides towards the river, and the other five inland; and it mounts more than six hundred guns. Whatever force holds Fort William may easily reduce Calcutta to ashes. The public buildings, which are very numerous, comprise the following among others – the Government House, that cost £130,000; the Town Hall, in the Doric style; the Supreme Court of Judicature; the Madrissa and Hindoo Colleges; the Martinière, an educational establishment founded by Martine the Frenchman, who has been mentioned in connection with Lucknow; the Metcalfe Hall; the Ochterlony Monument; the Prinsep Testimonial; the Calcutta Asiatic Society's Rooms; St Paul's Cathedral, the finest Christian church in India; the Bishop's Palace and College; the European Female Orphan Asylum; the Botanic Gardens. The Episcopalians, the National and the Free Churches of Scotland, the Independents, the Baptists, the Roman Catholics, the Armenians, the Jews, the Greeks – all have places of worship in Calcutta. The native temples and mosques are of course much more numerous, amounting to two hundred and fifty in number.

Concerning the inhabitants, the English comprise the Company's civil and military servants, a few members of the learned professions, merchants, retail-dealers, and artisans. Of the native Hindoos and Mohammedans, exclusive of the degraded castes of the former, it is supposed that one-third are in the service of the English, either as domestic servants, or

as under-clerks, messengers, &c. A majority of the remainder pick up a living on the street or the river – carrying palanquins as bearers, carrying parcels as coolies, rowing boats, attending ships, &c. The native artisans, shopkeepers, and market-people, fill up the number.

It will be remembered, from the details given in Chapter II., that the authorities at Calcutta, during the first four months of the year, were frequently engaged in considering the transactions at Dumdum, Barrackpore, and Berhampore, connected with the cartridge grievances. These did not affect the great city itself, the inhabitants of which looked on as upon events that concerned them only remotely. When the middle of May arrived, however, and when the startling news from Meerut and Delhi became known, an uneasy feeling resulted. There was in Calcutta a kind of undefined alarm, a vague apprehension of some hidden danger. At that time there were six companies of the 25th Bengal infantry, and a wing of the 47th Madras infantry, barracked on the esplanade between the Coolie Bazaar and the fort. They were without ammunition. There were, however, detachments of two other regiments acting as guards in the fort, provided with ten rounds of ammunition per man. It came to light that, on the 17th of May, the men of the 25th asked the guards privately to be allowed to share this ammunition, promising to aid them in capturing the fort during the following night. This treason was betrayed by the guards to the town-major, who at once ordered bugles to sound, and preparations to be made for defending

the fort; the drawbridges were raised, the ladders withdrawn from the ditches, additional guards placed upon the arsenal, European sentries placed at various points on the ramparts, and armed patrols made to perambulate the fort during the night. The refractory sepoys, thus checked, made no attempt to carry out their nefarious project. An express was at once sent off to Dumdum for the remaining portion of her Majesty's 53d regiment, to join their comrades already at Calcutta. Although the immense value of these English troops was at once felt, the inhabitants of Calcutta were thrown into great excitement by the rumoured outbreak; they talked of militia corps and volunteer corps, and they purchased muskets and powder, rifles and revolvers, so rapidly, that the stores of the dealers were speedily emptied.

Two demonstrations of loyalty – or rather two sets of demonstrations – were made on this occasion, one from the Christian inhabitants, and one from the natives. The mutineers found head-quarters not quite suited for their operations; order was soon restored; and then all parties came forward to state how faithful, contented, and trustworthy they were. It is not without interest to glance at some of these demonstrations. One was from the Calcutta Trade Association, which held a meeting on the 20th of May. The resolution agreed to was to the effect that 'This body do send up to government a statement that they are prepared to afford the government every assistance in their power towards the promotion of order and the protection of the Christian

community of Calcutta, either by serving as special constables or otherwise, in such manner as may appear most desirable to government; and at the same time suggesting to government that their services should be availed of in some manner, as they deem the present crisis a most serious one, and one in which every available means should be brought into action for the suppression of possible riot and insurrection.' The answer given by the governor-general in council to the address sent up in virtue of this resolution is worthy of note; shewing, as it does, how anxious he was to believe, and to make others believe, that the mutiny was very partial, and that the sepoy army generally was sound at heart. He thanked the Trade Association for the address; he announced that he had no apprehension whatever of riot or insurrection amongst any class of the population at Calcutta; he asserted his possession of sufficient means to crush any such manifestation if it should be made; but at the same time he admitted the prudence of civilians enrolling themselves as special constables, ready for any emergency. In reference, however, to an opinion in the address that the sepoys generally exhibited a mutinous spirit, he expressed uneasiness at such an opinion being publicly announced. 'There are in the army of this presidency many soldiers, and many regiments who have stood firm against evil example and wicked counsels, and who at this moment are giving unquestionable proof of their attachment to the government, and of their abhorrence of the atrocious crimes which have lately been perpetrated in the Northwestern Provinces. It is the earnest

desire of the governor-general in council that honourable and true-hearted soldiers, whose good name he is bound to protect, and of whose fidelity he is confident, should not be included in a condemnation of rebels and murderers.' Alas, for the 'honourable and true-hearted soldiers!'

Another movement of the same kind was made by the Freemasons of Calcutta – a body, the numbers of which are not stated. They passed a resolution on the same day, 'That at the present crisis it is expedient that the masonic fraternity should come forward and offer their services to government, to be employed in such manner as the governor-general may deem most expedient.'

The Armenians resident in the city met on the following day, and agreed to a series of resolutions which were signed by Apcar, Avdall, Agabeb, and others of the body – declaratory of their apprehension for the safety of Calcutta and its inhabitants; their sincere loyalty to the British government; their grateful appreciation of its mild and paternal rule; and their fervent hope that the energetic measures adopted would suffice to quell the insurrectionary spirit: concluding, 'We beg most respectfully to convey to your lordship in council the expression of our willingness and readiness to tender our united services to our rulers, and to co-operate with our fellow-citizens for maintaining tranquillity and order in the city.' The Armenians, wherever settled, are a peaceful people, loving trade better than fighting: their adhesion to the government was certain.

The French inhabitants in like manner held a meeting, and sent up an address to the governor-general by the hands of Consul Angelucci. They said: 'Viewing the dangers that, from one moment to another, may menace life and property at Calcutta, all the French resident in the city unite with one accord, and place themselves at the disposal of your excellency in case of need; beseeching that their services may be accepted for the common good, and as a proof of their loyalty and attachment towards her Majesty, the Queen of England.'

It is more interesting, however, in reference to such a time and such a place, to know in what way the influential native inhabitants comported themselves on the occasion. The meetings held, resolutions passed, and addresses presented, were remarkable for their earnestness, real or apparent. Although Viscount Canning gladly and promptly acknowledged them as valuable testimonials; yet the subsequent lying and treachery in many quarters were such that it is impossible to decide how much or how little sincerity was involved in declarations of loyalty. There was a body of Hindoo gentlemen at Calcutta, called the British Indian Association. The committee of the Association held a meeting on the 22d of May, and the secretary, Issur Chunder Singh, forwarded an address from the committee to the government. The address asseverated that the atrocities at Meerut and Delhi had been heard of with great concern; that the committee viewed with disgust and horror the excesses of the soldiery at those stations; and that such excesses would not

meet with countenance or support from the bulk of the civil population, or from any reputable or influential classes among them. The committee recorded 'their conviction of the utter groundlessness of the reports which have led a hitherto faithful body of the soldiers of the state to the commission of the gravest crimes of which military men or civil subjects can be guilty; and the committee deem it incumbent on them on the present occasion to express their deep abhorrence of the practices and purposes of those who have spread those false and mischievous reports.' Finally, they expressed their belief that the loyalty of the Hindoos, and their confidence in the power and good intentions of the government, would be unimpaired by 'the detestable efforts which have been made to alienate the minds of the sepoys and the people of the country from their duty and allegiance to the beneficent rule under which they are placed.'

Three days later, a meeting was held of Hindoo persons of influence generally, at Calcutta, without reference to the British Indian Association; and the chairman of this meeting, Bahadoor Radhakant Rajah, was commissioned to forward a copy of resolutions to the governor-general. These resolutions were similar in character to those passed by the Association; but two others were added of very decided character: 'That this meeting is of opinion that, should occasion require, it would be the duty of the native portion of her Majesty's subjects to render the government every aid in their power for the preservation of civil order and tranquillity; and that, with a

view to give an extensive circulation to the proceedings of this meeting, translations of the same into the vernacular dialects of the country shall be printed and distributed amongst the native population.’

Another Hindoo manifestation was remarkable for the mode in which the intentions of the persons concerned were proposed to be carried out. A meeting was held on the 23d, of ‘some young men, at the premises of Baboo Gooroo Churn Dey, Bhowanipore, Chuckerbaria, in the suburbs of Calcutta: to consider the best means of keeping the peace in the said suburban town at this crisis of panic caused by some mutinous regiments.’ These ‘young men,’ who appointed Baboo Gooroo Churn Dey and Essan Chunder Mullick as secretary and assistant-secretary, threw into their deliberations an abundance of youthful enthusiasm not to be found in the resolutions of their seniors. Their plan – not expressed in, or translated into, very good English – was: ‘That some of the members will alternately take round at every night, with the view of catching or detecting any wrong-doer that may be found in the work of abetting some such malicious tales or rumours, as the town will be looted and plundered by the sepoys on some certain day, and its inhabitants be cut to pieces; and will, by every means in their power, impress on the minds of timid and credulous people the idea of the mightiness of the power of the British government to repel aggression of any foreign enemy, however powerful and indomitable, or put down any internal disturbance and disorder.’

They announced their success in obtaining many ‘strong and brave men’ to aid them in this work.

The Mohammedans of Calcutta were a little behind the rest of the inhabitants in time, but not in expressed sentiment, concerning the position of public affairs. On the 27th, many of the leading men of that religion held a meeting; one was a deputy-magistrate; two were pleaders in the sudder or native courts of law; others were moulvies, moonshees, hadjis, agas, &c.; and all signed their names in full – such as Hadji Mahomed Hashim Ishphahanee, and Aga Mahomed Hassan Kooza Kenanee. Nothing could be more positive than some of the assertions contained in the resolutions passed by this meeting: ‘We subjects are well aware that the members of the British government, from the commencement of their dominion in Hindostan, have repeatedly declared and made known their determination not to interfere with the religion or religious observances of any of their subjects; and we repose entire faith in this declaration, and assert, that up to the present time, a space of nearly one hundred years, our religion has never been interfered with. A number of us having left our homes, have found a dwelling and asylum under this government, where we live in peace and safety, protected by the equity and fostering care of the British government, and suffering no kind of injury or loss. As we have ever lived in safety and comfort under the British rule, and have never been molested or interfered with in religious matters; we therefore, with the utmost eagerness and sincerity,

hereby determine, that in case of necessity we will serve the government to the utmost of our abilities and means.' In true oriental form the resolutions ended, in allusion to the governor-general, 'May his prosperity increase!'

What *could* Viscount Canning say to all this? How could he, in that early stage of the commotions, but believe in the sincerity of these men: and, believing, to thank them for their expression of loyalty and support? His official reply, in each case, conveyed in pointed terms his conviction that the disaffection among the sepoys was only local and temporary. He could not at that time foresee how severely this conviction would be put to the test.

The hostility to the governor-general, manifested at a later date by some of the English inhabitants of Calcutta, will be noticed in its due place.

Leaving Calcutta, the reader is invited to direct his attention to towns and districts north and northwest, following the course of the Hoogly and the Ganges, up to the busy scenes of mutiny and warfare. The whole district from Calcutta to Benares *by land* is singularly devoid of interest. The railway is open through Burdwan to Raneegunge; but thence to the great Hindoo capital there is scarcely a town or village worthy of note, scarcely one in which the mutineers disturbed the peaceful occupations of the inhabitants.

Three military stations on the Hoogly – Dumdum, Barrackpore, and Berhampore – all concerned, as we have seen, in the cartridge disturbances – remained quiet during the month

of May, after the disbandments. One inquiry connected with those occurrences, not yet adverted to, must here be noticed. The conduct of Colonel S. G. Wheler, commanding the 34th regiment B. N. I.,¹² occupied much attention on the part of the Calcutta government, during and after the proceedings relating to the disbanding of the seven companies of that regiment at Barrackpore. Rumours reached the government that the colonel had used language towards his men, indicating his expectation that they would be converted to Christianity, and that he had addressed them on religious subjects generally. In the usual epistolary formalism of routine, the secretary to the government was requested to request Major-general Hearsey to request Brigadier Grant to request Colonel Wheler to furnish some reply to those rumours. The substance of the colonel's reply was contained in these words: 'During the last twenty years and upwards, I have been in the habit of speaking to the natives of all classes, sepoys and others, making no distinction, since there is no respect of persons with God, on the subject of our religion, in the highways, cities, bazaars, and villages – not in the lines and regimental bazaars. I have done this from a conviction that every converted Christian is expected, or rather commanded, by the Scriptures to make known the glad tidings of salvation to his lost fellow-creatures: our Saviour having offered himself as a

¹² The initials N. I., B. N. I., M. N. I., &c., are frequently used in official documents as abbreviations of 'Native Infantry,' 'Bengal Native Infantry,' 'Madras Native Infantry,' &c.

sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, by which alone salvation can be secured.' He quoted from the Epistle to the Romans to prove that a Christian must necessarily be a better subject to any state than a non-Christian. He declared, however, that he had not given the sepoys cause for believing that any proselyting violence would be used against their own religion. Viscount Canning, passing over in silence the Scriptural phraseology used by Colonel Wheler, wished to ascertain whether the colonel's religious conversations had been held with the men of the 34th regiment as well as with other natives: seeing that the critical subject at that particular time was the dogged suspicion of the sepoys of that regiment on matters affecting their faith. In a second letter, Colonel Wheler adopted a still more decidedly evangelical tone. He stated that it was his custom to address *all* natives, whether sepoys or not, on religious matters. 'I have told them plainly that they are all lost and ruined sinners both by nature and by practice, like myself; that we can do nothing to save ourselves in the way of justifying ourselves in the sight of God. Our hearts being sinful, all our works must consequently be sinful in His sight; and therefore there can be no salvation by works, on which they are all resting and depending.' This homily, singular as forming part of a military reply to a military question, was carried to a considerable length. On matters of plain fact, Colonel Wheler stated that it was most certain that he had endeavoured by argument and exhortation to convert sepoys as well as others to Christianity; that he was in the habit of enforcing by the only

standard which he could admit to be valid, objections concerning 'the efficacy of their own works of washing in the Ganges, proceeding on pilgrimage, worshipping all kinds of creatures instead of the Creator, and other methods of man's invention.' Finally, he announced his determination to adhere to the same policy, even if his worldly position were injured thereby: taking shame to himself for his past lukewarmness as a soldier of Christ.

The whole of the members of the Supreme Court at Calcutta at once decided that an officer, holding Colonel Wheler's views of duty, ought not to remain in command of a native regiment, especially at such a critical period. The question was not, whether that officer was a good Christian, anxious to communicate to others what he himself fervently believed; but whether the black gown was not more suitable to him than the red coat, in such a country and at such a time.

The native troops at Barrackpore and Chittagong, after the disbandment of the mutinous corps, made professions of loyalty and fidelity to the government, concerning the sincerity of which it is now exceedingly difficult to judge. One theory is, that the men were designing hypocrites from the first; but the frequent examples of wavering and irresolution, afforded during the progress of the mutiny, seem to shew rather that the sepoys were affected by the strength of the temptation and example at each particular time and place. Be this as it may, some of the petitions and addresses deserve notice. Towards the close of May a petition, written in the Persian character (much used in India),

was prepared by the native officers of the 70th regiment B. N. I., stationed at Barrackpore, and presented to their commander, Colonel Kennedy. In the names of themselves and the sepoy they said: 'It is reported that European troops are going up to Delhi and other places, to coerce the mutinous and rebellious there; and we wish to be sent with them also. In consequence of the misconduct of these traitors and scoundrels, confidence in us is weakened, although we are devoted to government; and we therefore trust that we may be sent wherever the European troops go; when, having joined them, we will, by bravery even greater than theirs, regain our good name and trustworthiness. You will then know what really good sepoy are.' Colonel Kennedy, in a letter to Major-general Hearsey, expressed his full belief that the men were sincere in their protestations; and added, that hitherto he had always been satisfied with the regiment. So important did this manifestation appear to Viscount Canning, that he went to Barrackpore in order to thank the men in person. He appeared before them on parade, on the 27th, and said, among other things: 'Men of the 70th, I will answer your petition. You have asked to be sent to confront the mutineers of Delhi. You shall go. In a few days, as soon as the arrangements can be made for your progress, you shall proceed to the northwest.' He expressed his conviction that they would keep their promise to vie with the Europeans in fidelity and bravery; and added: 'You have another duty to perform. You are going where you will find men, your brothers in arms, who have been deluded into the suspicion against which

you have kept firm, that the government has designs against their religion or their caste. Say to them that you at least do not credit this; that you know it to be untrue; that for a hundred years the British government has carefully respected the feelings of its Indian subjects in matters of caste and religion.'

Arrangements were immediately made for sending this faithful, or apparently faithful, regiment to districts where it might render useful service. As there was an insufficient supply of steamers available, the government resolved to send the regiment the whole distance from Barrackpore to Allahabad by country boats on the Ganges – an excessively protracted voyage of eight hundred miles, as the reader is already aware. When the men were about to start, they expressed to Colonel Kennedy a wish that the new Enfield rifle should be served out to them. They declared themselves entirely satisfied with the explanations concerning the cartridges; and they added, in a written petition to which the names of twelve subadars and jemadars were appended: 'We have thought over the subject; and as we are now going up the country, we beg that the new rifles, about which there has been so much said in the army and all over the country, may be served out to us. By using them in its service, we hope to prove beyond a doubt our fidelity to government; and we will explain to all we meet that there is nothing objectionable in them: otherwise, why should we have taken them? Are we not as careful of our caste and religion as any of them?' All the native officers of this regiment, so far as can be judged from the names

appended to the petition, were Hindoos. When the 70th started to the northwest, every effort was made by the government to set the unhappy cartridge troubles wholly at rest, and to enlist the services of the sepoys of that regiment in diffusing among their compatriots a knowledge of the real facts. Orders, instructions, memoranda, circulars were brought into requisition to explain – that the new rifle fired nine hundred yards, against the two hundred yards' range of the old musket; that it was lighter than the musket; that its great range and its lightness caused it to be introduced into the Anglo-Indian army; that the new rifle-bullets, requiring machinery for their manufacture, were sent out from England in a finished state; that a few cartridges for those bullets were in the first instance sent out ready prepared with a lubricant, but that the Indian government resolved not to issue them to the native troops, in deference to their religious scruples; that the cartridge-paper had long been, and would continue to be, made at Serampore, without any admixture of grease; that every native regiment would be allowed to lubricate its cartridges with any suitable substance preferred by the men; and that the practice of biting off the ends of the cartridges might be wholly dispensed with. In short, everything that could be done, was done, to remove a suspicion unsound in its origin, and pernicious in its continuance.

Another regiment, the 34th B. N. I., adopted nearly the same course as the 70th. The larger portion of this regiment, it will be remembered, was at Barrackpore at the time of the

cartridge troubles; but the rest was at Chittagong. The sepoy in this last-named detachment came forward with a very pointed declaration of their loyalty. Captain Dewaal, in command of that detachment, assembled his men one day towards the end of April, and told them how shamefully their companions had acted at Barrackpore, and how much disgrace had thereby been brought upon the regiment. Two days afterwards, an address or petition was presented to him, signed by the subadars and havildars in the names of all; in which regret was expressed for the conduct of the mutineers at Barrackpore. 'By a careful performance,' the petitioners said, 'of our duties, we have gained a reputation for fidelity to government. These men have deprived us of it. We well know that the government will not interfere with our religion. We hope that the government will consider us as faithful as ever; and we pray that this petition may be sent to the governor-general, in order that his lordship may know the state of our feelings.' Three or four weeks later, when this remnant of the regiment had been removed to Barrackpore, the men made another profession of their loyalty. In a petition to their commander, they said: 'Some evil-disposed men of the regiment have deprived us of the reputation for loyalty which we have ever held. They have received the fruits of their misconduct by being disbanded. We that remain are willing to serve against the mutineers at Delhi, and are anxious to recover our lost name. We pray that the government will ever regard us as faithful soldiers.'

Two further examples of a similar kind were presented, one

by the 43d and another by the 63d regiments B. N. I. About the end of May, the commandant of the first of these two regiments at Barrackpore, received a petition signed by the native commissioned officers, praying that the regiment might be allowed to proceed against the mutineers at Delhi – a wish that had been previously expressed to him on parade. Nearly at the same time Captain Pester, commanding the 63d at Berhampore, received a petition signed by the whole of the native officers on parade, intended to be forwarded to the governor-general; and, this petition being afterwards read in the native language to the whole regiment, the sepoy's unanimously expressed their concurrence in the sentiments it conveyed. The petitioners said: 'We have this day heard on parade the order issued by your lordship consequent on the petition forwarded by the native officers and sepoy's of the 70th regiment of native infantry. On hearing the same, we were greatly rejoiced; for, in truth, all the men of that regiment have behaved as becomes loyal and faithful soldiers, and your lordship has in every way been pleased with them. Now do we also all petition that we may be numbered among the good and trustworthy soldiers of the state, as we have always been; and we are prepared and ready, with heart and hand, to go wherever, and against whomsoever you may please to send us, should it even be against our own kinsmen.'

The governor-general could do no other than receive these demonstrations. Whether he acceded to the request for permission to 'march against the mutineers,' depended

necessarily on the military arrangements of the time; whether he fully believed the protestations, may perhaps be doubted, although no disbelief was expressed.

Happily for Bengal, it was affected by few of the disturbances that agitated the more western provinces. Consulting a map, we shall see that the banks of the Hoogly and the Lower Ganges are thickly studded with towns; and it may here at once be stated, that the peaceful industry of these towns was very little interrupted during the month of May. Tracing upwards from Calcutta, we meet with Dumdum, Barrackpore, and Serampore, the first two of which experienced a lull after the storm. Serampore was once the *Alsatia* of Calcutta, a place of refuge for schemers, insolvent debtors, and reckless adventurers; but the Company bought it from the Danish government, to which it had belonged, and the Baptist missionaries helped to civilise it; it is now a clean cheerful town, with a large paper-manufactory. Higher up is the once flourishing but now decayed town of Chandernagore, one of the few places in India still belonging to the French. Near this is Chinsura, held by the Dutch until 1825, but now a flourishing settlement belonging to the Company, provided with an extensive military depôt for Europeans, with a magnificent hospital and barracks. Then we come to Hoogly, a town bearing the same name as the river on whose banks it stands: a busy place, with many civil and educational establishments. Further north is Plassy, the place near which Clive fought the great battle that virtually gave India to the British. Beyond this is Berhampore,

which, very refractory in March and April, had become tractable and obedient in May. Next we meet with Moorshedabad and its suburb Cossimbazar. Once the capital of Bengal when a Mohammedan dominion, Moorshedabad contained a splendid palace belonging to the nawab; but though no longer possessed of this kind of greatness, the city is commercially very important, as standing on the great highway, or rather water-way, from Calcutta to the northwest. All the places above named are situated either on the Hoogly or on the Bhagruttee, those two rivers combining to form the most convenient outlet from the Ganges to the sea.

The Ganges itself, too – the majestic, far-famed, sacred Ganges – was little disturbed by commotions in May throughout the lower part of its course. Rajmahal, Bhagulpore, Curruckpore, Monghir, Behar, Futwah, Patna, Hajeepoor, Dinapoor, Chupra, Arrah, Bishunpore, Buxar, Ghazeepore – all lie on or near the Ganges between the Hoogly and Benares. Some of these places are centres of commerce for the opium-trade; some are busy with the trading in rice grown in neighbouring districts; others are shipping-places for corn and other agricultural produce; while all regard the Ganges as an invaluable channel, affording intercourse with the rich districts of the west, and with the great focus of authority and trade at Calcutta. Such of these towns as were involved in trouble in later months of the year, will be noticed in the proper chapters; of the others, this narrative is not called upon to treat. One fact, however, may be mentioned in connection

with Dinapoor. So early in the year as the middle of February, the Calcutta authorities wrote to the commander at that town, apprising him that a messenger was known to have been sent to the native regiment at Dinapoor, from some men of the 2d Bengal grenadiers, inciting them to mutiny. Major-general Lloyd promised to look out sharply for the messenger, but candidly expressed a doubt whether the astute native would suffer himself to be caught.

Benares may conveniently be described at once; for, whether disturbed or not by mutineers, it is so remarkably situated as to lie in the line of route of all commerce, all aggression, all military movement, between Calcutta and the upper provinces, whether by road, by rail, or by water. Regarded in this light, its possession and security are, and were in an especial degree during the mutiny, objects of the highest importance. This renowned city stands on the left bank of the Ganges, about four hundred and twenty miles by road from Calcutta, and seventy-four from Allahabad. The magnificent river, half a mile wide in the rainy season, forms a kind of semicircular bay in front of the city, which has thus three miles of river-frontage. Among the chief characteristics of Benares are the ghats or flights of fine broad freestone steps, giving access to the river: mostly very solid in construction, and in some cases highly decorated. So numerous are they, that they extend almost in a continuous line along the river's banks, interrupted here and there by temples. 'Upon these ghats,' says a lively traveller, 'are passed the busiest and

happiest hours of every Hindoo's day: bathing, dressing, praying, preaching, lounging, gossiping, or sleeping, there will be found. Escaping from the dirty, unwholesome, and confined streets, it is a luxury for him to sit upon the open steps and taste the fresh air of the river; so that on the ghats are concentrated the pastimes of the idler, the duties of the devout, and much of the necessary intercourse of business.' Artists in India have delighted to portray the beauty and animation of this scene; but they cannot, if they would, reveal the hideous accompaniments – the fakeers and ascetics of revolting appearance, 'offering every conceivable deformity which chalk, cow-dung, disease, matted locks, distorted limbs, and repulsive attitudes of penance, can shew.'

Benares, beyond any other place in India, perhaps, is studded with religious structures. Thirty years ago the Moslem mosques were more than three hundred in number, while the Hindoo temples exceeded a thousand. The pinnacles of the Hindoo pagodas combine to give a very picturesque appearance to the city, viewed from a distance. Large as the number is, the Benares temples, as has been sarcastically observed, are not too many, for religion is 'the staple article of commerce, through which the holy city flourishes and is enriched.' The Mohammedan mosques, mostly situated in the northeast quarter of the city, are generally elegant little edifices crowned by small slender minarets, each standing in a garden planted with tamarinds. Most of them have been constructed on the sites, and with the materials, of

demolished Hindoo temples. By far the grandest is the great mosque of Aurungzebe, built by that emperor on the site of a temple of Vishnu, which he destroyed to signalise the triumph of Islamism over Brahminism. It rises from the platform above the Madhoray Ghat. The minars or minarets, admired for their simplicity and boldness, taper from eight feet in diameter at the bottom to seven at the top; and though so slender, they are carried up to a height of a hundred and fifty feet, and have each an interior staircase from bottom to top. The streets of Benares have the usual oriental character of narrowness, crookedness, and dirtiness; they are mere alleys, indeed, that will admit no wheel-carriages; nor can beasts of burden pass without sorely disturbing pedestrians. The houses are more lofty than in most Indian cities, generally from three to six stories high; and as the upper stories usually project beyond the lower, the narrow street is almost closed in above: nay, in some cases, the inmates of one house can walk over to the opposite tenement through the upper windows. The houses are, in the better streets, built of stone, small-windowed and gaily painted. During the hot season the citizens are much accustomed to sleep in screened enclosures on the roof, open to the sky above, and to the night-breezes around. There are somewhat under two hundred thousand inhabitants, who live in about thirty thousand houses.

Benares is a religious, not a military city. The district around was at a very remote period the seat of an independent Hindoo state, founded, according to native tradition, twelve hundred

years before the Christian era. It subsequently formed part of the dominions of the Rajpoot sovereigns. Then began the Mussulman rule, and Benares became a dependent province under the Moguls. The nawab-viziers of Oude, when the Mogul power was declining, seized Benares; and during some of the political jugglery of the year 1775, the territory was transferred to the East India Company, by whom it has ever since been held. But under whatever dynasty it has been placed, Benares has from remote ages been known as the sacred city of the Hindoos, where all that is remarkable, all that is abominable, in Brahminism, flourishes. It has been described as the Jerusalem of Hindostan – swarming with religious teachers, devotees, mendicants, and sacred bulls. To wash in the Ganges in front of Benares, to die in that city, are precious privileges to the Hindoo. Some writers have given the inhabitants a bad character in what concerns loyalty to their present British rulers. ‘Benares is one of the most unsafe and rebellious cities in Hindostan. It once successfully opposed a house-tax imposed on the people by the British government. There was also recently a strong commotion when the magistrate attempted to equalise the weights and measures. To shew the hostility of the Hindoos of Benares to the English, it may be mentioned that when we lay before Bhurtpore in 1826, no less than thirty thousand sabres were sharpened at the cutlers’ in expectation of our repulse.’ If this statement be well founded, it does indeed denote a perilous state of feeling at the time in question.

Benares, we have said, is not a military city; but so important a place could not safely be left unguarded. Accordingly a British cantonment has been built at Secrole, two or three miles to the northwest. Secrole contains not only the barracks and huts for soldiers, but various civil establishments, and the residences of most of the British population of Benares. The cantonment consists of the usual buildings belonging to the head-quarters of a military division of the Company's army, and capable of accommodating three or four regiments; it lies on both sides of a small stream called the Burnah Nuddee, crossed by the great road from Benares to Allahabad. On the side of the cantonment furthest from the city are the bungalows of the various officials and European residents: substantially built, well fitted and appointed, and surrounded by pleasant gardens. There are, among the public buildings, a Christian church and chapel, a court of justice, the treasury, the jail, and a mint – the last named never yet appropriated to its destined purpose. Secrole is thus, in effect, the British portion of Benares.

Another military station, subordinate to Benares, Chunar or Chunargur, is about sixteen miles distant; indeed, being nearly midway between Benares and Mirzapore, it may be an auxiliary to either in time of need. Chunar is a town of about twelve thousand inhabitants, standing on a plateau or elevated cliff close to the Ganges. It was regarded as a stronghold more than three centuries ago; and, like many other places in the neighbourhood, belonged to the great Mogul; from whom, in lapse of time, it

was wrested by the ambitious nawab-viziers of Oude; until at length it fell into the hands of the British. It was for some years the Company's principal artillery depôt for the Northwestern Provinces. The fortified portion of the town, on the heights, is surrounded by a rampart a little over a mile in circuit, and from ten to twenty feet high, guarded by towers, and in its turn completely commanding the river and its banks. The space enclosed by this wall or rampart, however, has very little of a military aspect; part is open grass-land; part occupied by bungalows and gardens of Europeans; part by the governor's house, the hospital, and the state prison; and part by the ancient Hindoo palace, a massy vaulted edifice presenting little of its original splendour. An article of Hindoo faith is recorded in connection with a slab of black marble in a small square court of this palace; to the effect that 'the Almighty is seated personally, though invisibly, on this stone, for nine hours each day, removing during the other three hours to Benares;' so that the fort, in sepoy belief, can only be taken between the hours of six and nine in the morning. Considered in a military sense, the fort is by no means strong; nevertheless the steepness of the ascent would render storming difficult; and to increase this difficulty, the garrison was wont in former times to keep a number of large rudely made stone-cylinders at hand, to roll down upon a besieging force. The citadel or stronghold is in the northeastern part of the enclosure; it is mounted with several cannon, and has a bomb-proof magazine. The native town, consisting principally

of two-storied stone-houses, is spread over a slope lying eastward of the fortifications. The English dwellings, and the station for invalid soldiers, are lower down the slope.

As soon as the Revolt began, the safety of Benares became an object of much solicitude to the governor-general at Calcutta, to Sir Henry Lawrence at Lucknow, and indeed to all the Company's servants: seeing that the maintenance of free communication would greatly depend on the peaceful condition of that city. We have seen that telegrams passed almost daily between Benares and the other chief cities in May; intended partly to facilitate the transport of reinforcements to the northwest, and in part also to insure the tranquillity of Benares itself. About the middle of the month the military commandant had to announce that there had been some excitement in the 37th native infantry; that a Sikh regiment had been sent on to Mirzapore and Allahabad; that the 13th irregular cavalry were at Sultanpore; and that his position was rather weak. On the 18th he telegraphed for aid: stating that 'if one hundred European infantry could be spared for duty here, it would restore confidence, and make Benares more secure, so as to maintain communication with the northwest.' General Lloyd was asked whether he could spare that much-coveted reinforcement – a hundred Europeans – from Dinapoor. About the same time the commandant was directed to defend Chunar fort with European invalids and veterans, and to keep the native infantry regiment at hand in Benares. Mr Tucker, civil commissioner, writing to the

government on the same day, spoke of the 'bold policy' which had been adopted when the 37th shewed disaffection; the Europeans remaining in their houses, and acting so as neither to exhibit nor inspire distrust – instead of attempting to escape. On the 19th, arrangements were completed for sending a company of her Majesty's 84th from Dumdum to Benares, in five separate parties of twenty-one each, in transit-carriages. By the 19th, the irregular cavalry had been brought in from Sultanpore, and every precaution taken to guard against a surprise – insomuch that the Europeans at neighbouring stations were looking to Benares as a sort of stay and support. More than once allusion was made, by the civil commissioner at that city, to the tactics of serenity, as a medium between severity and fright. One of the telegrams told that 'Brigadier Ponsonby carries out Colonel Gordon's quiet policy of shewing no fear or distrust; not a muscle is moved.' Until towards the close of the month, Benares was included in the military command of which Dinapoor was the centre; but as the distance between the two towns is a hundred and fifty miles, Brigadier Ponsonby received permission to act for himself, irrespective of control from General Lloyd.

The 31st of May found Benares and its neighbourhood at peace. How close at hand were days of violence and bloodshed – a future chapter will shew.

We have now left Bengal, both in its original and in the Company's acceptation of that term, and have arrived within the territories grouped together as the Northwest Provinces. From

Benares and Chunargur, as a glance at the map will shew, the course of the Ganges, of the great trunk-road, and of the railway in process of construction, brings us to Mirzapore – a town not actually thrown into rebellion during the month of May, but placed between two foci of inflammable materials, Benares and Allahabad, and liable at any time to be inflamed by them. Mirzapore is on the right bank of the Ganges, which is half a mile wide at this spot, and is crossed by a ferry in the absence of a bridge. It is a great commercial city, with about eighty thousand inhabitants; the emporium of the cotton trade of Bundelcund and the adjacent provinces; not rich in Mohammedan or Hindoo antiquities or splendour, associated with few military events, but wealthy on account of its industry. The Company's military cantonment, as in so many other parts of India, is two or three miles out of the town; indeed, this is a fact that must be borne in mind throughout, as a necessary condition to the understanding of events connected with the Revolt.

Approaching now the Jumna regions, the plot thickens and the characters increase in number. We come to that rich country, the Doab, watered on the one side by the Ganges and on the other by the Jumna, with Oude and Rohilcund on the north, Bundelcund and Scindiah's territory on the south. We find a considerable number of large and important towns – Lucknow, Fyzabad, Bareilly, Allahabad, Futtehpoor, Cawnpore, Furruckabad, Gwalior, Bhurtpore, Agra, Delhi, Meerut – in the immediate vicinity of one or other of these two rivers. The

Company's military stations are far more thickly posted in that region than in any other part of India – a source of weakness in the midst of apparent strength; for as the native troops were predominant in all these places, their numbers became a manifest evil as soon as a mutinous spirit appeared among the men.

This chapter being mainly intended, as already explained, to shew how remarkably the materials for explosion were accumulating during the month of May, to burst forth with frightful violence in June, we shall glance rapidly and touch lightly here on many of the towns situated westward of Mirzapore, in order to place the reader in a position to understand what will follow – treating of sudden outrages and strange escapes in some few cases, and in others of a deceitful calm before a storm.

Allahabad, in a military sense, is a more important post than any between it and Calcutta: indeed, there are few to equal it throughout India. This is due principally to the fact that it lies at the junction of the two great rivers Ganges and Jumna, the northern side being washed by the one, the southern by the other. It occupies the most eastern, or rather southeastern point of the rich and fertile Doab; it lies in the direct water-route from Calcutta to both of the upper rivers; it is a main station on the great trunk-road from Calcutta to the Punjaub, and on the East India Railway now in course of construction; and a bridge will carry that railway across the Jumna close to it. No wonder, therefore, if the eyes of all were directed

anxiously towards Allahabad during the mutinies and consequent struggles. The fort and arsenal are among the largest and finest in India. The fort rises direct from the point of confluence of the two rivers, and is on that side nearly impregnable. It is a mile and a half in circuit, five-sided, stone built, and bastioned. Two of the sides, near the water, are old, and weak as against a European force; the other three are modern, and, with their bastions and ravelins, command the city and the country beyond. Bishop Heber remarked that Allahabad fort had lost in grandeur what it had gained in strength: the lofty towers having been pruned down into bastions and cavaliers, and its high stone ramparts obscured by turf parapets and a sloping external glacis. The principal gate of the fort, surmounted by a dome with a wide hall beneath, and surrounded by arcades and galleries, forms a very majestic ornament. The arsenal, situated within the fort, is one of great magnitude, containing (before the Revolt) arms for thirty thousand men, an immense park of artillery, and the largest powder-magazine in Upper India. Altogether, it is a place of great strength, probably impregnable to natives, and fitted to bear a prolonged and formidable siege. In a part of the fort overlooking the Jumna is an ancient and spacious palace, formerly fitted up as residences for the superior European officers, but latterly used for state prisoners. From a balcony perched near the summit of a tower on which the windows of one of the chambers open, a scene is presented, of which European travellers in India speak with much admiration. The

spectator looks down upon a grove of mango-trees, flanking a fine esplanade, and peopled with innumerable ring-necked paroquets. Above, on pediment, pinnacle, and turret, others of the feathered tribe build their nests and plume their wings. Along the thickly wooded shores on the north or Allahabad side of the Jumna, buildings of various degrees of interest are seen interspersed with the small islands which speckle the river; while the opposite or Bundelcund shore forms a noble background to the picture. In the days before the Revolt, the European troops of the garrison were accommodated in well-constructed barracks within the fort; while the military cantonment for the native troops lay northwest of it.

The city of Allahabad, westward of the fort, and on the Jumna shore, is scarcely worthy of its magnificent situation. It contains seventy thousand inhabitants; but its streets and houses are poor; nor do the mosques and temples equal those in many other parts of Hindostan, though the gardens and tomb of Sultan Khosroo and his serai are almost unequalled in India. There is a particular spot, outside the fort, where the actual confluence of the two great rivers is considered to take place; and this presents the liveliest scene in the whole city. One traveller tells of the great numbers of pilgrims of both sexes, anxious to bathe in the purifying waters; and of devotees who, causing earthen vessels to be fastened round their waists or to their feet, proceed in a boat to the middle of the stream, and precipitate themselves into the water – supposing that by this self-immolation they secure

eternal bliss. Another states that when a pilgrim arrives here – Benares, Gyayah, and Allahabad being frequently included in the same pilgrimage – he sits down on the brink of the river, and causes his head and body to be so shaved that each hair may fall into the water – for the sacred writings promise the pilgrim a million years' residence in heaven for every hair thus deposited – and that, after shaving and bathing, he performs the obsequies of his deceased ancestors. The Brahmins are the money-makers at these spots; each has his little platform, standing in the water, where he assists in the operations by which the pilgrim is supposed to become holy. Skinner describes the whole scene as a kind of religious fair.

When the events at Meerut and Delhi became known at Allahabad, the native troops shewed much excitement. One of them, the 6th Bengal infantry, drew down encomiums for fidelity, in offering to march and fight against the insurgents; whether all the officers believed the men, may be doubted; but the chief authorities did not deem themselves justified in shewing distrust. Thanks came from Calcutta for the manifestation of loyalty made by the regiment – a loyalty destined to be of brief duration. A detachment of her Majesty's 84th reached Allahabad on the 23d of May, sent up from Calcutta by the laboriously tedious methods lately described. There being some disturbance expected at the jail, the detachment was sent into the fort, and held in readiness to proceed to the cantonment with two guns; but as the alarm ceased for a time, the troops

were sent on to Cawnpore, where much more anxiety was felt. Lieutenant Brasyer commanded four hundred Sikhs of the Ferozpore regiment in the fort; while Captain Hazelwood took charge of the European artillerymen. About two hundred Englishwomen and children were in the fort; and all hoped that the native troops in the cantonment could and would be kept in subjection. How far this hope was well founded, will be shewn in a future chapter.

Lucknow and the important territory of Oude, so far as concerns the events in May, have already been treated. The relations of the British government to the court of Oude, the assiduous exertions of Sir Henry Lawrence to maintain subordination and tranquillity, and the vigorous measures adopted by him against the mutineers at Lucknow towards the close of the month of May, were followed by occurrences in June which will come for notice in their proper place.

Of Cawnpore – a name never to be uttered by an English tongue without a thrill of horror, an agony of exasperated feeling – all notice will be postponed until the next chapter; not because the hapless beings there residing were free from peril in the month of May, but because the tragedy must be treated continuously as a whole, each scene leading forward to the hideous climax. Suffice it at present to know that Cawnpore contained so many English men and women, and so many mutinous native troops, that all eyes were anxiously directed towards the progress of events at that city.

Let us turn to towns and districts further westward.

Agra, once the capital of the Patan emperors, is the chief city of the Northwestern Provinces. Delhi is historically, and in population, more important; but was still at that time nominally under another sovereign; whereas Agra has been British territory since 1803, and is very well suited for a seat of government. The city, like Delhi, is situated on the right bank of the Jumna, and will, like it, be at some future time accommodated by the East India railway. In round numbers, its distance from Delhi is a hundred and fifty miles; from Calcutta, a little under eight hundred; and from Lahore, five hundred. The boundary of the old city encloses a space of twelve square miles; but not more than half of this is at present occupied by houses. There is one fine street, with houses built of red sandstone; the remaining streets are mostly narrow, with very small, insignificant-looking shops. The public buildings are numerous, and some of them very magnificent, telling of the past days of imperial glory and splendour. One is the palace of Shahjehan; small, but rendered very beautiful by its white marble surfaces, arabesques and mosaics, carvings of flowers, inlayings of black and yellow marble, enrichments of gilding, screen-works of marble and metal, fountains in the mosaic pavements. Near this is Shahjehan's audience-chamber, as large as the palace itself, originally enclosed by arcades hung with tapestries. And also close at hand is the Moti Musjid or Pearl Mosque; with an exterior of red sandstone and an interior of white marble; a

court with arcades and a fountain; a vestibule raised on steps; three terraces surmounted by beautiful domes; and nine elegant kiosks equidistant along the front. But the crowning beauty of Agra in its Mohammedan aspect is the celebrated Taj Mahal, a little way outside the city. This was the mausoleum of Shahjehan and his favourite sultanness Nurjehan, the 'Light of the world,' and occupied in its construction twenty thousand men during a period of more than twenty years. Page after page of travellers' descriptions are occupied with this glorious structure – its façade of a thousand feet in length; its dazzling whiteness of marble; its mosques, at either end, with their domes; its stupendous marble terraced platform, with steps and pillars, minarets and kiosks; its great dome surmounted by gilded globes and crescents; its octagonal shrine or sepulchral apartment, with enclosures of extraordinary marble latticework; and its sarcophagi, literally covered with arabesques, fanciful mouldings, sculptured flowers, and inscriptions from the Koran.

What a mockery of past grandeur is all this now! Shahjehan, two centuries ago, was kept closely a prisoner in his splendour at Agra, while his ambitious son, Aurungzebe, was seizing the throne at Delhi; and now another race is dominant in both of those cities. Shahjehan's audience-chamber has had its arcades walled up, and is converted into an arsenal for and by the British; and near it are now an armoury, a medical dépôt, and a district collectorate treasury. Nearly all the once-imperial buildings are within the fort, a large place nearly a

mile in circuit; it contained a hundred and sixty guns when Lord Lake captured it in 1803. Adjacent to the city, on the west, is the government-house, the official residence of the lieutenant-governor of the Northwestern Provinces; and in various places are numerous buildings belonging to the Company, for revenue, magisterial, and judicial establishments. The military lines are outside the city-wall. Before the Revolt, this station was within the Meerut military division, and was usually occupied by a considerable body of European and native troops. It was a fact of small importance in peaceful times, but of some moment when rebellion arose, that the civilians and writers in the public offices were accustomed to live three or four miles from the cantonment containing the military, quite on the opposite suburb of Agra. None would live in the city itself, unless compelled, owing to the intense heat. It will be well to bear in mind that the fort at Agra was, as just noticed, not merely a post or stronghold, indicated by its name, but a vast enclosure containing most of the palatial as well as the defensive buildings, and ample enough to contain all the Europeans usually residing in the city and its vicinity – large enough in dimensions, strong enough in defences, provided a sufficient supply of food were stored within its walls. Here, as at Delhi, Lucknow, Allahabad, and other places, the due understanding of the mutinous proceedings requires an appreciation of this fact – that the *city*, the *fort*, and the *cantonment* were all distinct.

Agra, being the seat of government for the Northwest

Provinces, was naturally the city to which the Calcutta authorities looked for information touching the Revolt; and Mr Colvin, the lieutenant-governor, was assiduously engaged in collecting details, so far as telegraphs and dâks permitted. On the night of the 10th of May he received sinister news from the postmaster at Meerut, telling of deeds of violence being at that moment committed. Next he heard that a young sepoy, mounted on a travelling troop-horse, was stopped at Bolundshuhur, on suspicion of being *en route* to excite other sepoy regiments to rebellion. On the 13th, it was ascertained that a few sepoys were on their way from Meerut through Allygurh to Agra, bent on mischief; and that others were supposed to be advancing from Delhi. So little, however, did Mr Colvin apprehend serious results, that when Scindiah, the maharajah of Gwalior, came forward to offer his body-guard of three hundred men, and a battery of artillery, as an aid to the Company, the governor accepted the offer as ‘a personal compliment for a short time;’ but in the same message saying, ‘though we really do not require more troops.’ This was obviously said on the supposition that the native troops in and near Agra would not be affected by the rebellious epidemic prevailing further northward; a supposition destined to be sadly overturned. Nevertheless the government made arrangements for placing at the disposal of Mr Colvin two regiments of irregular horse from regions further west. Day after day did evidence arrive shewing that the various districts around were gradually becoming disturbed. On the 15th, the governor

reviewed the native regiments in Agra, and, finding them deeply impressed with a conviction that the government intended in some way to degrade their caste, gave them the most positive assurance that they had been grossly deceived by such reports. He believed his explanation to have given satisfaction.

Towards the close of the month a step was taken by Mr Colvin which brought him into collision with his superiors in power. As lieutenant-governor of the Northwest Provinces, surrounded on every side by a teeming population, he wished to believe that the native troops as a body would still remain faithful, and that an indulgent tone towards them would effect more than severity to bring the erring back to a sense of their duty. It was not a thoughtless proceeding: if wrong, the mistake arose from the estimate formed of the native character, and of the effect which indulgence would produce. 'Hope,' he said, in a letter to the governor-general, 'I am firmly convinced, should be held out to all those who were not ringleaders or actually concerned in murder and violence. Many are in the rebels' ranks because they could not get away; many certainly thought we were tricking them out of their caste; and this opinion is held, however unwisely, by the mass of the population, and even by some of the more intelligent classes.' When he found some of the troopers of the Gwalior Contingent, on whose fidelity much reliance had been placed, become mutinous on the 24th of May, he resolved on issuing a proclamation, based on the supposition that 'this mutiny was not one to be put

down by indiscriminating high-horsed authority.’ The pith of his proclamation was contained in these words: ‘Soldiers, engaged in the late disturbances, who are desirous of going to their own homes, and who give up their arms at the nearest government civil or military post, and retire quietly, shall be permitted to do so unmolested.” To this another sentence was added, in a less prominent form: ‘Every evil-minded instigator in the disturbances, and those guilty of heinous crimes against private persons, shall be punished.’ Mr Colvin earnestly solicited the assent of the Calcutta government to this proclamation; but the assent was as earnestly withheld. Viscount Canning telegraphed orders back to Agra to recall the proclamation as quickly as possible, and to substitute another sent for that purpose. ‘Use every possible means to stop the circulation of the proclamation ... do everything to stop its operation.’ Mr Colvin was obliged to announce the abrogation of his own proclamation by a second which contained these words: ‘Every soldier of a regiment which, although it has deserted its post, has not committed outrages, will receive free pardon if he immediately deliver up his arms to the civil or military authority, and if no heinous crimes be shewn to have been perpetrated by himself personally. This offer of free and unconditional pardon *cannot be extended to those regiments which have killed or wounded their officers or other persons, or which have been concerned in the commission of cruel outrages.*’ Mr Colvin wished to pardon all who would give up their arms, except a few ringleaders, and persons individually

engaged in outrage; while Viscount Canning wished to exempt from this pardon such regiments as had been engaged in the murderous atrocities at Meerut, Delhi, and elsewhere. General Anson, the commander-in-chief, died before his opinion could be sought; but the Calcutta government, and (at a later date) the British government and the British public, agreed with the governor-general. Mr Colvin was placed in a most perplexing position; for he was called upon to overturn his own proceedings, thereby departing from a plan which he believed adequate for the purpose in view, and weakening his authority in the eyes of the natives. Canning telegraphed to Colvin: 'The embarrassment in which your proclamation will place the government and the commander-in-chief is very great;' while Colvin telegraphed to Canning: 'Openly to undo my public act, where really no substantial change is made, would fatally shake my power for good.' Brigadier Sibbald, commanding the Rohilcund division, with Bareilly for his head-quarters, joined Mr Colvin in opinion on this matter; he said: 'Were the men under my command fully convinced that *the past should be forgotten*, I feel assured their loyalty and good conduct may be relied upon.' The general tendency of opinion has been that stern measures were necessary at that crisis; but it was unquestionably infelicitous that these contradictory views should have been held at such a time in high quarters.

Mr Colvin, perpetually harassed with the accounts daily received from the various important towns included in his

government, was nevertheless secure at Agra itself until towards the close of the month of May. Then, however, he found stern measures necessary. Having two regiments of native infantry with him, the 44th and the 67th, he sent two companies, one of each regiment, to Muttra (on the Delhi road), to bring down treasure to Agra. On the road, they mutinied, murdered some of their officers, and hastened to join the insurgents at Delhi. Mr Colvin at once resolved to disarm the remaining companies of those regiments: this he was enabled to do by the presence of the 3d Europeans and Captain D'Oyley's European field-battery; and the disarming was quietly effected on the 1st of June. Shortly afterwards, a corps of volunteer horse was raised among the Europeans at Agra, and placed under the command of Lieutenant Greathed – one of three brothers at that time actively engaged in the Company's service. This corps rendered good service by putting down rebellious petty chieftains in the neighbourhood. Mr Colvin felt the full weight of his position; the governor-general was far from him in one direction, Sir John Lawrence far in another; while Sir Henry Lawrence had no troops to spare, and the commander-in-chief could scarcely be heard of.

The great Mahratta stronghold, Gwalior, did not become a scene of mutiny until June; we therefore need not notice the city or its chief, Scindiah, in this place; but by following the fortunes of a portion of the Gwalior Contingent, a regiment of irregular horse, we shall learn much concerning the state of the country round Agra, and of the active services required from the English

officers. Mr Colvin having accepted the proffered services of the contingent from the maharajah, Lieutenant Cockburn received orders to head half the regiment, together with a battery of guns. He started on the 13th of May from Gwalior, and accomplished the distance of ninety miles to Agra by the 15th, without knocking up man or horse. On the 18th, news arrived that troubles had broken out at Allygurh, fifty-five miles north of Agra, and that the services of the contingent were necessary for the protection of the ladies and the civilians. Cockburn with his troopers marched thirty-four miles to Hattrass on that day, and the remaining twenty-one miles on the 19th – seeking shelter from the tremendous mid-day heat in any dilapidated building that might offer; and each officer keeping in store his only clean shirt ‘to meet the fugitive ladies from Allygurh.’ What he saw, and what he had yet to see, at Allygurh, was serious enough. This town was destined to affect the operations of the British, not so much by its intrinsic importance, as by its position on one of the great lines of route between the eastern and western provinces of India. Allygurh commands the road from Agra to Meerut; and thus, in hostile hands, it would necessarily add to the difficulties attending the temporary loss of Delhi; seeing that the road both to Simla and to Lahore would thus be interrupted. The town is so surrounded by marshes and shallow pools, as to be almost unassailable in the rainy season. The fort consists of a regular polygon, with a broad and very deep ditch outside; it was of simple construction at the time of its capture by the British in

1803, but has since been much strengthened and improved. The military cantonment, the civil establishments, and the bazaar, are situated towards Coel, a little southward of the fort. At the beginning of the troubles in May, Allygurh was under the care of Mr Watson, as magistrate and collector. There were in the place, at the time, the head-quarters and three or four companies of the 9th regiment B. N. I.: the remainder of the regiment being in detachments at Minpooree, Etawah, and Bolundshuhur, towns further to the southeast. The troops at Allygurh behaved well and steadily during the first half of the month; but gradually a change supervened. A spy was one day caught endeavouring to excite the men. Lieutenant Cockburn, in a private letter, thus narrates the manner – quite melodramatic in its way – in which this villain was foiled: ‘An influential Brahmin of this neighbourhood having been seen lurking about the lines for the past day or two, a native non-commissioned officer concealed a number of sepoy, and induced the Brahmin to accompany him to where the men lay hidden; under pretence of its being a secluded spot where they might safely concert matters. The Brahmin then made overtures to the soldier, and told him that if he would persuade the men of the regiment to mutiny, he would furnish two thousand men to assist in murdering the Europeans and plundering the treasury. At a preconcerted signal, the sepoy jumped up and secured the ruffian.’ He was hanged the same day. The troops at Bolundshuhur, really or affectedly expressing horror at the hanging of a Brahmin, marched to Allygurh, and,

on the 20th, succeeded in inducing their companions to mutiny. This result was so wholly unforeseen, the 9th had hitherto behaved so well, and had displayed such alacrity in capturing the treacherous Brahmin, that neither the civilians nor the English officers were prepared to resist it. Cockburn at first intended to dash at them with his troopers; but the approaching darkness, and other considerations – possibly a doubt concerning the troopers themselves – led to a change of plan. ‘One holy duty remained to be performed – to save the ladies and children. This we accomplished; and whilst they were being put into carriages, we shewed a front to the mutineers, and hindered their advance. An occasional bullet whistled by our heads, but it was too dark for taking aim. One man was shot through the wrist, and five are missing. We then heard that the inhabitants were rising, so we determined on retreating. The ladies were sent on direct to Agra, and we went on to Hatrass. We had not gone far, when the bright light behind us told too plainly that the cantonment was in flames.’ The civilians and the officers of the 9th lost all except their horses and the clothes on their backs. Allygurh remained for a considerable time in the hands of the insurgents: almost cutting off communication between the southeast and the northwest.

While the refugees remained in safety at Hatrass, the troopers scoured the country to put down marauders and murderers – for it was a saturnalia of lawlessness. On the 21st, many of the ruffians were captured, and speedily hanged. On the 22d, two headmen of neighbouring villages joined the marauders in an

attack on some English refugees, but were frustrated. On the 23d, Cockburn and his troop galloped off from Hatrass to Sarsnee, and rescued eighteen refugees from Allygurh. 'Poor people! They have sad tales to tell. One indigo planter, Mr —, has had one son murdered; another son, his wife, and himself, are wounded. His house and all he possessed have been destroyed. The very clothes were torn from their backs; and even the poor women, naked and bleeding, insulted and abused, had to walk many miles. At length they received shelter from a kind-hearted native banker in the village where I found them; but even there the house in which they were sheltered was twice attacked.' The good Samaritan — for there were some good and kind amid all the villainies that surrounded them — gave two or three sheets to the poor sufferers, to cover their nakedness, and to enable them to proceed to Hatrass.

The 24th of May shewed how little the Gwalior troopers could be depended upon. Of two hundred and thirty that had been intrusted to Lieutenant Cockburn, a hundred and twenty suddenly mutinied, and galloped off to join the insurgents at Delhi. As the villagers began to shew symptoms of attacking him in his weakness, and as a hundred and ten troopers still stuck by their colours, he marched off that night nineteen miles from Hatrass to Kundowlie. On the road, the troopers told the lieutenant of many little grievances that had affected them at Gwalior, and that had partly led to the mutiny of the rest of their body; and he felt grateful that some at least of the

number had remained true. During the remainder of the month, and in the early part of June, this diminished body of troopers was incessantly engaged in skirmishing, attacking, or resisting attacks; the country around being in such a frightful state, that a dozen villages were sometimes seen in flames at once – the work of desperadoes, who took advantage of a time of anarchy. On one occasion, Cockburn baffled a horde of scoundrels by a capital stratagem. They had collected to the number of about five hundred, and were plundering every one on the road in a shameful manner. The lieutenant went after them with fifty troopers. He sent four of his men in a bullock-cart, a curtained vehicle such as women usually ride in. When the marauders saw this, they made a rush for plunder, and perhaps something worse, believing the cart to contain defenceless women; they approached, but the four men jumped up, fired their muskets, and by that signal brought Cockburn and his party forward. An exciting chase ensued, which ended in the death of fifty of the marauders, and the capture of many others.

The 9th native regiment, it will be remembered, was quartered in four detachments at Allygurh, Minpooree, Etawah, and Bolundshuhur. At all four places the troops mutinied. At Etawah and Bolundshuhur, the course of events was not so exciting as at Allygurh, although amply sufficient to try the tact and courage of the few officers and civilians stationed at those places. Minpooree, on the road from Agra to Furruckabad, was, however, the scene of so smart an affair, that the governor-

general, amid all his harassing employments, made it a matter of special comment. The officer chiefly concerned was Lieutenant de Kantzow; the date was May the 23d, when three companies of the 9th broke out into revolt. On the night of the 22d, news arrived that the chief portion of the regiment had mutinied at Allygurh, and it thence became at once doubtful whether the three companies at Minpooree could be depended upon. The magistrate and the collector of the district, acting with Lieutenant Crawford, resolved on removing all the English women and children for safety to Agra: this was done, promptly and successfully. A plan was agreed on, relating to the three companies of native troops on the morrow; but the sepoys anticipated this plan by mutinying at four in the morning, and endeavouring to shoot down their officers. They loaded themselves with a great store of ammunition, and tried – first to bring down their officers, and then to plunder the treasury and the bungalows. Lieutenant de Kantzow, second in command under Crawford, confronted them undauntedly, reasoned with them, and endeavoured to stop them in their mad career. Some of the men, attached to the chivalrous officer, dashed down several muskets levelled at him, and saved his life. But a terrible scene occurred at the treasury. De Kantzow, with a mere handful of ill-armed jail-guards and jail-officials, maintained a three hours' struggle against three companies of fully armed troops. The commandant had gone off; the collector also had made a hasty escape, deeming the magistrate's conduct 'romantic' in

remaining behind; and thus De Kantzow was left to do the best he could at the treasury, the magistrate elsewhere. De Kantzow sent a hasty message, requesting the magistrate *not* to come to the treasury, as it would make one European the more for the sepoys to yell at and attack. How long the unequal struggle would have been maintained, cannot be said; but the magistrate found an influential native, Ras Bhowanee Singh, willing and able to visit the excited sepoys, and induce them to desist from further violence. They did so: they decamped with a good deal of property, but *without* three lacs of rupees deposited in the treasury, and without taking one English life. Right indeed was it that De Kantzow should receive the thanks of the government;¹³ for if he had flinched, Minpooree with its twenty thousand inhabitants would have been at the mercy of three hundred brutal armed men, ready to plunder natives as well as Feringhees.

It was about one week after this event that Captain Carey, of the 17th B. N. I., rode into Minpooree, the only remaining one of four English officers who had been endeavouring to render useful service in the neighbourhood. They were at the head of a

¹³ Viscount Canning, in a letter written on the 7th of June to Lieutenant de Kantzow, said: 'I have read the account of your conduct with an admiration and respect I cannot adequately describe. Young in years, and at the outset of your career, you have given to your brother-soldiers a noble example of courage, patience, good judgment, and temper, from which many may profit. I beg you to believe that it will never be forgotten by me. I write this at once, that there may be no delay in making known to you that your conduct has not been overlooked. You will, of course, receive a more formal acknowledgment, through the military department of the government, of your admirable service.'

small body of native cavalry. The sowars suddenly turned upon them in an open road. Major Hayes, military secretary to Sir Henry Lawrence – a great oriental scholar and most able officer, whom General Wheeler had just before solicited Sir Henry to send him, to open the communications with Agra – was instantly cut down with a sword, his head frightfully hacked, his right hand cut off, his left mutilated. Another, Lieutenant Fayers, had his head nearly severed from his body by a dastardly villain, while the unfortunate young officer was drinking at a well. An old Sikh rushed forward to prevent the atrocity, but was repelled with the words: ‘What! are you with these Kaffirs? Look to yourself!’ Lieutenant Barber, adjutant of the 2d irregular cavalry, made an attempt to escape, but was shot down, cut to pieces, robbed, and left dead. The fourth, Captain Carey, trusted to the heels of his good horse; on he galloped over fields and roads, followed by a troop of blood-thirsty miscreants, yelling and firing as they rode. Happily, just as his steed was about to sink through exhaustion, his pursuers gave up the chase. He reached Minpooree in safety; and on the 1st of June, followed the mangled remains of his three poor companions to the grave.

Another exploit connected with Minpooree shall be given in the words of Lieutenant de Kantzow, affording as it does one among many examples of the extraordinary risks to which the officers were exposed at that turbulent period, and of the rattling, quick-witted, fearless, persevering way in which such dangers were met, and afterwards described in the letters written

to friends at home – letters that admit the reader behind the scenes in a way not possible in official dispatches: ‘I was returning from reconnoitring, when information was brought me that five troopers of the 7th light cavalry (native) were coming along the road. An immediate pursuit was of course ordered by me, and my thirty-nine troopers tore away at full speed after them. I was just coming up to them, and had already let drive among the murdering villains; when, lo! I came upon two hundred of their comrades, all armed with swords, and some with carbines. A smart fire was kept up at a distance of not more than twenty-five yards. What could thirty-nine do against two hundred regular troopers, well horsed and armed – particularly when walked into by the bullets of a hundred of the infantry! I ordered a retreat, but my cavalry could not get away from troopers mounted upon good stud-bred horses; so we were soon overtaken, and then commenced the shindy in earnest. Twelve troopers surrounded me: the first, a Mohammedan priest, I shot through the breast just as he was cutting me down. This was my only pistol, so I was helpless as regards weapons, save my sword; this guarded off a swingeing cut given me by number two, as also another by number three; but the fun could not last. I bitterly mourned not having a couple of revolvers, for I could have shot every man. My sword was cut down, and I got a slash on the head that blinded me; another on the arm that glanced and only took a slice off; the third caught me on the side, but also glanced and hit me sideways. I know not how I escaped: God only knows, as twelve against one

were fearful odds, especially as I was mounted on a pony bare back. Escape, however, I did.' Twenty-four out of his thirty-nine troopers were killed, wounded, or missing.

The region lately noticed, including the towns of Allygurh, Hattrass, Etawah, Minpooree, &c., was formerly included in Rohilcund, or the land of the Rohillas; but according to the territorial or political division adopted by the Company, it is now partly in the Meerut division, and partly in that of Agra; while the present Rohilcund division is wholly on the left bank of the Ganges. These technical distinctions are, however, a matter of very little importance in connection with the progress of the Revolt; for the insubordinate sepoy's tempted and imitated each other wholly in disregard of mere conventional boundaries. We must now follow the stream of insurrection across the Ganges, and shew how deplorable was the anarchy, how sad the sufferings, that began there towards the close of May.

The districts of Rohilcund in its modern or limited sense are Bareilly, Boodayoun or Budaon, Shahjehanpoor, Mooradabad, and Bijnour, each named after a chief town; and not only were the whole of these towns more or less disturbed, but throughout the intervening country the military cantonments were set into a flame – figuratively and often literally. In some instances the civil servants of the Company, chiefly magistrates and revenue collectors, made their escape with their wives and children, leaving the mutineers to occupy the stations and pillage the treasuries; in others the civil servants, led by one of their number

possessing tact and resolution, held the marauders at bay until assistance could be procured; while in many cases the English officers of native regiments, as well as the civilians, yielded – by flight or by death – only after a determined resistance.

Two of the towns above named, Bareilly and Boodayoun, will suffice at present to illustrate the state of affairs in Rohilcund. Sunday, as we have often had occasion to observe, was a favourite day for the native outbreaks; and it was on Sunday the 31st of May that the miseries at Bareilly began. The 18th and 68th regiments N. I. were cantoned there. The bungalow of Colonel Troup was suddenly surrounded by two companies of his own regiment, the 68th: and it was only by a hasty exit through a side-door that he escaped death. During many previous days and nights the troops had been in a rebellious state; the English, civilians and military, had slept in their clothes, with pistols ready loaded, and horses kept ready saddled. The ladies had all been sent up for safety to Nynee Tal; and thus, when the struggle arose, the officers had only themselves to protect. This word ‘ladies,’ however, is to be interpreted in its conventional sense; for many women in a humbler grade of life, together with their children, remained in the town; and among these some deplorable scenes occurred. The members of one family were brought before a ruthless fellow who assumed some kind of authority; and in a very few minutes their heads were severed from their bodies. At the same time, Mr Robertson the judge, two medical men, the professors of the college, and others, were subjected to a

mock trial and publicly hanged. The mutinous sepoys took aim in the most deliberate way at their officers, while the latter were fleeing; Mr Alexander, commissioner of Bareilly, though ill at the time, was forced to mount his horse and gallop off as the only means of saving his life, amid a shower of bullets and grape-shot – for the treacherous villains not only used muskets and rifles, but fired grape from the cannon. Many of the gentlemen rode off in haste without any head-coverings, the rays of an Indian sun pouring down upon them in full force. When the English were driven out, the Mohammedans and Hindoos began to fight fiercely against each other for possession of the treasure – one among many indications that plunder was at least as strong a desire as revenge in impelling the natives to deeds of violence.

The name of Nynee Tal is mentioned in the above paragraph; and it may be well to understand on what ground that town was so often named with earnest solicitude by officers engaged in arduous struggles in various parts of the north of India. Nynee Tal is a healthy spot on the banks of a beautiful lake, a few miles from Almora in Kumaon, and not far from the Nepaulese border: indeed it belonged to the Goorkhas of Nepaul until recent times, when it was conquered from them by the British; since which occurrences the late owners have been friendly neighbours within their own territory of Nepaul. Nynee Tal became a second Simla during the disturbances. Women and children, if their lives were spared at the scenes of tumult, were hurried off to the places just named, and to one or two other towns among the

hills – there to remain till days of peace returned, or till means of safe conveyance to Calcutta or Bombay could be procured. When the troubles in Rohilcund commenced; when Bareilly and Boodayoun, Mooradabad and Shahjehanpoor, fell into the hands of the rebels – all fled to Nynee Tal who could. Captain Ramsey, commanding at that town, at once made arrangements for protecting the poor fugitives; he formed the gentlemen of the station into a militia, who took it in turn to fulfil the duties of an armed patrol, to keep in order the dacoits and other ruffians in the neighbourhood; he laid in a store of three months' provisions for all the mouths in the place; and he armed the station and the roads with companies of a Goorkha regiment. These Goorkhas, it may be well here to explain, are of Mongol origin, but smaller and darker than the real Chinese. They belong to Nepaul, and first became familiar to the British by their resolute soldierly qualities during the Nepaulese war. Although Hindoos by religion, they have little or nothing of caste prejudice, and sympathise but slightly with the Hindoos of the plains. Being natives of a somewhat poor country, they have shewn a readiness in recent years to accept Company's pay as auxiliary troops; and it was a very important fact to those concerned in quelling the revolt, that the Goorkhas manifested a disposition rather to remain faithful to their British paymasters, than to join the standard of rapine and murder.

Bareilly, we have just seen, was one of the towns from which fugitive ladies were sent for safety to Nynee Tal; and now the

town of Boodayoun, on the road from Agra to Bareilly, comes for notice under similar conditions. Considering that the course of public events often receives illustration of a remarkable kind from the experience of single individuals, we shall treat the affairs of Boodayoun in connection with the strange adventures of one of the Company's civil servants – adventures not so deeply distressing as those of the fugitives from Delhi, but continued during a much longer period, and bringing to light a much larger number of facts connected with the feelings and position of the natives in the disturbed districts. The wanderer, Mr Edwards, collector of the Boodayoun district, was more than *three months* in reaching Cawnpore from Boodayoun – a distance scarcely over a hundred miles by road. About the middle of May, the districts on both sides of the Ganges becoming very disturbed, Mr Edwards sent his wife and child for refuge to Nynee Tal. He was the sole European officer in charge of the Boodayoun district, and felt his anxieties deepen as rumours reached him of disturbances in other quarters. At the end of the month, news of the revolt at Bareilly added to his difficulties; for the mutineers and a band of liberated prisoners were on their way from that place to Boodayoun. Mr Edwards expresses his opinion that the mutiny was aggravated by the laws, or the course adopted by the civil courts, concerning landed property. Landed rights and interests were sold by order of the courts for petty debts; they were bought by strangers, who had no particular sympathy with the people; and the old landowners, regarded with something like

affection by the peasantry, were thrown into a discontented state. Evidence was soon afforded that these dispossessed landowners joined the mutineers, not from a political motive, but to seize hold of their old estates during a time of turmoil and violence. 'The danger now is, that they can never wish to see the same government restored to power; fearing, as they naturally must, that they will have again to give up possession of their estates.' This subject, of landed tenure in India, will call for further illustration in future pages, in relation to the condition of the people.

Narrowly escaping peril himself, Mr Edwards, on the 1st of June, saw that flight was his only chance. There were two English indigo-planters in the neighbourhood, together with another European, who determined to accompany him wherever he went, thinking their safety would be thereby increased. This embarrassed him, for friendly natives who might shelter one person, would probably hesitate to receive four; and so it proved, on several occasions. He started off on horseback, accompanied by the other three, and by a faithful Sikh servant, Wuzeer Singh, who never deserted him through all his trials. The worldly wealth of Mr Edwards at this moment consisted of the clothes on his back, a revolver, a watch, a purse, and a New Testament. During the first few days they galloped from village to village, just as they found the natives favourable or hostile; often forced to flee when most in need of food and rest. They crossed the Ganges two or three times, tracing out a strange zigzag in the hope

of avoiding dangers. The wanderers then made an attempt to reach Futteghur. They suffered much, and one life was lost, in this attempt; the rest, after many days, reached Futteghur, where Mr Probyn was the Company's collector. Native troops were mutinying, or consulting whether to mutiny; Europeans were departing; and it soon became evident that Futteghur would no longer be a place of safety either for Probyn or for Edwards. Flight again became necessary, and under more anxious circumstances, for a lady and four children were to be protected; but how to flee, and whither, became anxious questions. Day after day passed, before a friendly native could safely plan an escape for them by boat; enemies and marauders were on every side; and at last the danger became so imminent that it was resolved to cross the Ganges, and seek an asylum in a very desolate spot, out of the way of the mutineers. Here was presented a curious exemplification of 'lucky' and 'unlucky' days as viewed by the natives. 'A lucky day having been found for our start,' says Mr Edwards, 'we were to go when the moon rose; but this moon-rise was not till three o'clock on the morning after that fixed for the start. This the Thakoors were not at first aware of. I was wakened about eleven o'clock by one of them, who said that the fact had just come to his knowledge, and that it was necessary that something belonging to us should start at once, as this would equally secure the lucky influence of the day, even though we ourselves should not start till next morning. A *table-fork* was accordingly given him, with which he went off quite

satisfied, and which was sent by a bearer towards the village we were to proceed to.’ Under the happy influence of this table-fork, the wanderers set forth by night, Mrs Probyn and her children riding on an elephant, and the men walking on roads almost impassable with mud. They reached the stream; they crossed in a boat; they walked some distance amid torrents of rain, Mr Edwards ‘carrying poor baby;’ and then they reached the village, Runjpoonah, destined for their temporary home. What a home it was! ‘The place intended for the Probyns was a wretched hovel occupied by buffaloes, and filthy beyond expression, the smell stifling, and the mud and dirt over our ankles. My heart sank within me as I laid down my little charge on a charpoy.’ By the exercise of ingenuity, an extemporaneous chamber was fitted up in the roof. During a long sojourn here in the rainy season, Mr Edwards wrote a letter to his wife at Nynee Tal, under the following odd circumstances: ‘I had but a small scrap of paper on which to write my two notes, and just the stump of a lead-pencil: we had neither pens nor ink. In the middle of my writing, the pencil-point broke; and when I commenced repointing it, the whole fell out, there being just a speck of lead left. I was in despair; but was fortunately able to refix the atom, and to finish two short notes – about an inch square each: it was all the man could conceal about him. I then steeped the notes in a little milk, and put them out to dry in the sun. At once a crow pounced on one and carried it off, and I of course thought it was lost for ever. Wuzeer Singh, however, saw and followed the creature,

and recovered the note after a long chase.' Several weeks passed; 'poor baby' died; then an elder child – both sinking under the privations they had had to endure: their anxious mother, with all her tender solicitude, being unable further to preserve them. Mr Edwards, who was one of those that thought the annexation of Oude an unwise measure, said, in relation to a rumour that Oude had been restored to its king: 'I would rejoice at such an equitable measure at another time; but now it would be, if true, a sign of a falling cause and of great weakness, which is I fear our real case.' On another occasion, he heard 'more rumours that the governor-general and the King of Oude had arrived at Cawnpore; and that Oude is then formally to be made over to the king.' Whether Oudians or not, everywhere he found the Mohammedans more hostile to the British than the Hindoos; and in some places the two bodies of religionists fought with each other. After many more weeks of delays and disappointments, the fugitives were started off down the Ganges to Cawnpore. In effecting this start, the 'lucky-day' principle was again acted on. 'The astrologer had fixed an hour for starting. As it was not possible for us to go at the fortunate moment and secure the advantage, a shirt of mine and some garments of those who were to accompany me, were forwarded to a village some way on the road, which is considered equivalent to ourselves starting.' Half-a-dozen times on their voyage were they in danger of being shot by hostile natives on shore; but the fidelity and tact of the natives who had befriended them carried them through all their perils.

At length they reached Cawnpore on the 1st of September, just three calendar months after Mr Edwards took his hasty departure from Boodayoun.

This interesting train of adventures we have followed to its close, as illustrating so many points connected with the state of India at the time; but now attention must be brought back to the month of May.

West of the Rohilcund district, and northwest of Allygurh and its neighbouring cluster of towns, lie Meerut and Delhi, the two places at which the atrocities were first manifested. Meerut, after the departure of the three mutinous regiments on the night of the 10th of May, and the revolt of the Sappers and Miners a few days afterwards, remained unmolested. Major-general Hewett was too strong in European troops to be attacked, although his force took part in many operations against the rebels elsewhere. Several prisoners, proved to have been engaged in the murderous work of the 10th, were hanged. On the other hand, many sowars of the 3d native cavalry, instead of going to Delhi, spread terror among the villagers near Meerut. One of the last military dispatches of the commander-in-chief was to Hewett, announcing his intention to send most of his available troops from Kurnaul by Bhagput and Paniput, to Delhi, and requesting Hewett to despatch from Meerut an auxiliary force. This force he directed should consist of two squadrons of carabiniers, a wing of the 60th Rifles, a light field-battery, a troop of horse-artillery, a corps of artillerymen to work the siege-train, and as many sappers as he could depend

upon. General Anson calculated that if he left Umballa on the 1st of June, and if Hewett sent his force from Meerut on the 2d, they might meet at Bhagput on the 5th, when a united advance might be made upon Delhi; but, as we shall presently see, the hand of death struck down the commander-in-chief ere this plan could be carried out; and the force from Meerut was placed at the disposal of another commander, under circumstances that will come under notice in their proper place.

Delhi, like Cawnpore, must be treated apart from other towns. The military proceedings connected with its recapture were so interesting, and carried on over so long a period; it developed resources so startlingly large among the mutineers, besieging forces so lamentably small on the part of the British – that the whole will conveniently form a subject complete in itself, to be treated when collateral events have been brought up to the proper level. Suffice it at present to say, that the mutineers over the whole of the north of India looked to the retention of Delhi as their great stronghold, their rock of defence; while the British saw with equal clearness that the recapture of that celebrated city was an indispensable preliminary to the restoration of their prestige and power in India. All the mutineers from other towns either hastened to Delhi, or calculated on its support to their cause, whatever that cause may have been; all the available British regiments, on the other hand, few indeed as they were, either hastened to Delhi, or bore it in memory during their other plans and proceedings.

Just at the time when the services of a military commander were most needed in the regions of which Agra is the centre, and when it was necessary to be in constant communication with the governor-general and authorities, General Anson could not be heard of; he was supposed at Calcutta to be somewhere between Simla and Delhi; but dâks and telegraphs had been interfered with, and all remained in mystery as to his movements. Lawrence at Lucknow, Ponsonby at Benares, Wheeler at Cawnpore, Colvin at Agra, Hewett at Meerut, other commanders at Allahabad, Dinapoor, and elsewhere – all said in effect: ‘We can hold our own for a time, but not unless Delhi be speedily recaptured. Where is the commander-in-chief?’ Viscount Canning sent messages in rapid succession, during the second half of the month of May, entreating General Anson to bring all his power to bear on Delhi as quickly as possible. Duplicate telegrams were sent by different routes, in hopes that one at least might reach its destination safely; and every telegram told the same story – that British India was in peril so long as Delhi was not in British hands, safe from murderers and marauders. Major-general Sir Henry Barnard, military commander of the Umballa district, received telegraphic news on the 11th of May of the outrages at Meerut and Delhi; and immediately sent an aid-de-camp to gallop off with the information to General Anson at Simla, seventy or eighty miles distant. The commander-in-chief at once hastened from his retirement among the hills. Simla, as was noticed in a former page, is one of the sanatoria for the

English in India, spots where pure air and moderate temperature restore to the jaded body some of the strength, and to the equally jaded spirits some of the elasticity, which are so readily lost in the burning plains further south. The poorer class among the Europeans cannot afford the indulgence, for the cost is too great, but the principal servants of the Company often take advantage of this health-restoring and invigorating climate – where the average temperature of the year is not above 55° F. The question has been frequently discussed, and is not without cogency, whether the commander-in-chief acted rightly in remaining at that remote spot during the first twenty weeks in the year, when so many suspicious symptoms were observable among the native troops at Calcutta, Dumdum, Barrackpore, Berhampore, Lucknow, Meerut, and Umballa. He could know nothing of the occurrences at those places but what the telegraphic wires and the postal dâks told him; nevertheless, if they told him the truth, and *all* the truth, it seems difficult to understand, unless illness paralysed his efforts, why he, the chief of the army, remained quiescent at a spot more than a thousand miles from Calcutta.

Startled by the news, the commander-in-chief quitted Simla, and hastened to Umballa, the nearest military station on the great Indian highway. It then became sensibly felt, both by Anson and Barnard, how insufficient were the appliances at their disposal. The magazines at Umballa were nearly empty of stores and ammunition; the reserve artillery-wagons were at Phillour, eighty miles away; the native infantry were in a very disaffected state;

the European troops were at various distances from Umballa; the commissariat officers declared it to be almost impossible to move any body of troops, in the absence of necessary supplies for a column in the field; and the medical officers dwelt on the danger of marching troops in the hot season, and on the want of conveyance for sick and wounded. In short, almost everything was wanting, necessary for the operations of an army. The generals set to work, however; they ordered the 2d European Fusiliers to hasten from Subathoo to Umballa; the Nusseree Battalion to escort a siege-train and ammunition from Phillour to Umballa; six companies of the Sappers and Miners to proceed from Roorkee to Meerut; and the 4th Irregular Cavalry to hold themselves in readiness at Hansi. Anson at the same time issued the general order, already adverted to, inviting the native regiments to remain true to their allegiance, explaining the real facts concerning the cartridges, and reiterating the assurances of non-intervention with the religious and caste scruples of the men. On the 17th there were more than seven regiments of troops at Umballa – namely, the Queen's 9th Lancers, the 4th Light Cavalry Lancers, the Queen's 75th foot, the 1st and 2d European Fusiliers, the 5th and 60th native infantry, and two troops of European horse-artillery; but the European regiments were all far short of their full strength. Symptoms soon appeared that the 5th and 60th native infantry were not to be relied upon for fidelity; and General Anson thereupon strengthened his force at Umballa with such European regiments as were obtainable. He

was nevertheless in great perplexity how to shape his course; for so many wires had been cut and so many dâks stopped, that he knew little of the progress of events around Delhi and Agra. Being new to India and Indian warfare, also, and having received his appointment to that high command rather through political connections than in reference to any experience derived from Asiatic campaigning, he was dependent on those around him for suggestions concerning the best mode of grappling with the difficulties that were presented. These suggestions, in all probability, were not quite harmonious; for it has long been known that, in circumstances of emergency, the civil and military officers of the Company, viewing occurrences under different aspects or from different points of view, often arrived at different estimates as to the malady to be remedied, and at different suggestions as to the remedy to be applied. At the critical time in question, however, all the officers, civil as well as military, assented to the conclusion that Delhi must be taken at any cost; and on the 21st of May, the first division of a small but well-composed force set out from Umballa on the road to Delhi. General Anson left on the 25th, and arrived on the 26th at Kurnaul, to be nearer the scene of active operations; but there death carried him off. He died of cholera on the next day, the 27th of May.

With a governor-general a thousand miles away, the chief officers at and near Kurnaul settled among themselves as best they could, according to the rules of the service, the distribution

of duties, until official appointments could be made from Calcutta. Major-general Sir Henry Barnard became temporary commander, and Major-general Reid second under him. When the governor-general received this news, he sent for Sir Patrick Grant, a former experienced adjutant-general of the Bengal army, from Madras, to assume the office of commander-in-chief; but the officers at that time westward of Delhi – Barnard, Reid, Wilson, and others – had still the responsibility of battling with the rebels. Sir Henry Barnard, as temporary chief, took charge of the expedition to Delhi – with what results will be shewn in the proper place.

The regions lying west, northwest, and southwest of Delhi have this peculiarity, that they are of easier access from Bombay or from Kurachee than from Calcutta. Out of this rose an important circumstance in connection with the Revolt – namely, the practicability of the employment of the Bombay native army to confront the mutinous regiments belonging to that of Bengal. It is difficult to overrate the value of the difference between the two armies. Had they been formed of like materials, organised on a like system, and officered in a like ratio, the probability is that the mutiny would have been greatly increased in extent – the same motives, be they reasonable or unreasonable, being alike applicable to both armies. Of the degree to which the Bombay regiments shewed fidelity, while those of Bengal unfurled the banner of rebellion, there will be frequent occasions to speak in future pages. The subject is only mentioned here to explain why

the western parts of India are not treated in the present chapter. There were, it is true, disturbances at Neemuch and Nuseerabad, and at various places in Rajpootana, the Punjaub, and Sinde; but these will better be treated in later pages, in connection rather with Bombay than with Calcutta as head-quarters. Enough has been said to shew over how wide an area the taint of disaffection spread during the month of May – to break out into something much more terrible in the next following month.

Notes

Indian Railways.— An interesting question presents itself, in connection with the subject of the present chapter – Whether the Revolt would have been *possible* had the railways been completed? The rebels, it is true, might have forced up or dislocated the rails, or might have tampered with the locomotives. They might, on the other hand, if powerfully concentrated, have used the railways for their own purposes, and thus made them an auxiliary to rebellion. Nevertheless, the balance of probability is in favour of the government – that is, the government would have derived more advantage than the insurgents from the existence of railways between the great towns of India. The difficulties, so great as to be almost insuperable, in transporting troops from one place to another, have been amply illustrated in this and the preceding chapters; we have seen how dâk and palanquin bearers, bullocks and elephants, ekahs and

wagons, Ganges steamers and native boats, were brought into requisition, and how painfully slow was the progress made. The 121 miles of railway from Calcutta to Raneegunge were found so useful, in enabling the English soldiers to pass swiftly over the first part of their journey, that there can hardly be a doubt of the important results which would have followed an extension of the system. Even if a less favourable view be taken in relation to Bengal and the Northwest Provinces, the advantages would unquestionably have been on the side of the government in the Bombay and Madras presidencies, where disaffection was shewn only in a very slight degree; a few days would have sufficed to send troops from the south of India by rail, *viâ* Bombay and Jubbulpoor to Mirzapore, in the immediate vicinity of the regions where their services were most needed.

Although the Raneegunge branch of the East Indian Railway was the only portion open in the north of India, there was a section of the main line between Allahabad and Cawnpore nearly finished at the time of the outbreak. This main line will nearly follow the course of the Ganges, from Calcutta up to Allahabad; it will then pass through the Doab, between the Ganges and the Jumna, to Agra; it will follow the Jumna from Agra up to Delhi; and will then strike off northwestward to Lahore – to be continued at some future time through the Punjaub to Peshawur. During the summer of 1857, the East India Company prepared, at the request of parliament, an exact enumeration of the various railways for which engineering plans had been adopted, and

for the share-capital of which a minimum rate of interest had been guaranteed by the government. The document gives the particulars of about 3700 miles of railway in India; estimated to cost £30,231,000; and for which a dividend is guaranteed to the extent of £20,314,000, at a rate varying from $4\frac{1}{2}$ to 5 per cent. The government also gives the land, estimated to be worth about a million sterling. All the works of construction are planned on a principle of solidity, not cheapness; for it is expected they will all be remunerative. Arrangements are everywhere made for a double line of rails – a single line being alone laid down until the traffic is developed. The gauge is nine inches wider than the ‘narrow gauge’ of English railways. The estimated average cost is under £9000 per mile, about one-fourth of the English average.

Leaving out of view, as an element impossible to be correctly calculated, the amount of delay arising from the Revolt, the government named the periods at which the several sections of railway would probably be finished. Instead of shewing the particular portions belonging respectively to the five railway companies – the East Indian, the Great Indian Peninsula, the Bombay and Central India, the Sinde, and the Madras – we shall simply arrange the railways into two groups, north and south, and throw a few of the particulars into a tabulated form.

NORTHERN INDIA.		
<i>Railways.</i>	<i>Lengths.</i>	<i>Probable Time of Opening.</i>
	Miles.	
Calcutta to Raneegunge,	121	Opened in 1855.
Burdwan to Rajmahal,	130	December 1859.
Rajmahal to Allahabad,	440	1860.
Allahabad to Cawnpore,	126	December 1857.
Cawnpore to Delhi,	260	October 1858 (excepting bridge at Agra over the Jumna).
Mirzapore to Jubbulpoor,	300	No date specified.
Jubbulpore to Bhosawal,	314	End of 1861.
Bhosawal to Oomrawuttee,	125	December 1860.
Oomrawuttee to Nagpoor,	138	March 1861.
Bhosawal to Callian,	241	October 1859.
Callian to Bombay,	33	Opened in 1854.
Surat to Ahmedabad,	160	1858 and 1859.
Kurachee to Hyderabad,	120	October 1859.
SOUTHERN INDIA.		
Bombay to Poonah,	124	February 1858.
Poonah to Sholapore,	165	1860.
Sholapore to Kistnah,	101	End of 1861.
Kistnah to Madras,	310	1861 and 1862.
Madras to Arcot,	65	Opened in 1856.
Arcot to Variembaddy,	60	January 1858.
Madras to Beypore,	430	March 1859.

The plans for an Oude railway were drawn up, comprising three or four lines radiating from Lucknow; but the project had not, at that time, assumed a definite form.

'Headman' of a Village.— It frequently happened, in connection with the events recorded in the present chapter, that the *headman* of a village either joined the mutineers against

the British, or assisted the latter in quelling the disturbances; according to the bias of his inclination, or the view he took of his own interests. The general nature of the village-system in India requires to be understood before the significance of the headman's position can be appreciated. Before the British entered India, private property in land was unknown; the whole was considered to belong to the sovereign. The country was divided, by the Mohammedan rulers, into small holdings, cultivated each by a village community under a headman; for which a rent was paid. For convenience of collecting this rent or revenue, *zemindars* were appointed, who either farmed the revenues, or acted simply as agents for the ruling power. When the Marquis of Cornwallis, as governor-general, made great changes in the government of British India half a century ago, he modified, among other matters, the zemindary; but the collection of revenue remained.

Whether, as some think, villages were thus formed by the early conquerors; or whether they were natural combinations of men for mutual advantage – certain it is that the village-system in the plains of Northern India was made dependent in a large degree on the peculiar institution of caste. ‘To each man in a Hindoo village were appointed particular duties which were exclusively his, and which were in general transmitted to his descendants. The whole community became one family, which lived together and prospered on their public lands; whilst the private advantage of each particular member was scarcely

determinable. It became, then, the fairest as well as the least troublesome method of collecting the revenue to assess the whole village at a certain sum, agreed upon by the *tehsildar* (native revenue collector) and the headman. This was exacted from the latter, who, seated on the chabootra, in conjunction with the chief men of the village, managed its affairs, and decided upon the quota of each individual member. By this means, the exclusive character of each village was further increased, until they have become throughout nearly the whole of the Indian peninsula, little republics; supplied, owing to the regulations of caste, with artisans of nearly every craft, and almost independent of any foreign relations.’¹⁴

Not only is the headman’s position and duties defined; but the whole village may be said to be socially organised and parcelled out by the singular operation of the caste principle. Each village manages its internal affairs; taxes itself to provide funds for internal expenses, as well as the revenue due to the state; decides disputes in the first instance; and punishes minor offences. Officers are selected for all these duties; and there is thus a local government within the greater government of the paramount state. One man is the scribe of the village; another, the constable or policeman; a third, the schoolmaster; a fourth, the doctor; a fifth, the astrologer and exorciser; and so of the musician, the carpenter, the smith, the worker in gold or jewels, the tailor, the worker in leather, the potter, the washerman –

¹⁴ Irving: *Theory and Practice of Caste*.

each considers that he has a prescriptive right to the work in his branch done within the village, and to the payment for that work; and each member of his family participates in this prescriptive right. This village-system is so interwoven with the habits and customs of the Hindoos, that it outlives all changes going on around. Sir T. Metcalfe, who knew India well, said: 'Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution; Hindoo, Patan, Mogul, Mahratta, Sikh, English, are all masters in turn; but the village community remains the same. In times of trouble they arm and fortify themselves. If a hostile army passes through the country, the village communities collect their cattle within their walls, and let the enemy pass unprovoked. If plunder and devastation be directed against themselves, and the force employed be irresistible, they flee to friendly villages at a distance; but when the storm has passed over, they return and resume their occupations. If a country remain for a series of years the scene of continued pillage and massacre, so that the village cannot be inhabited, the scattered villages nevertheless return whenever the power of peaceable possession revives. A generation may pass away, but the succeeding generation will return. The sons will take the places of their fathers; the same site for their village, the same positions for the houses, the same lands will be reoccupied by the descendants of those who were driven out when the village was depopulated; and it is not a trifling matter that will drive them out, for they will often maintain their post through times of disturbance and

convulsion, and acquire strength sufficient to resist pillage and oppression with success. This union of the village communities, each one forming a separate little state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all the revolutions and changes which they have suffered.’¹⁵

It is easily comprehensible how, in village communities thus compactly organised, the course of proceeding adopted by the headman in any public exigency becomes of much importance; since it may be a sort of official manifestation of the tendencies of the villagers generally.

¹⁵ Report of Select Committee of House of Commons, 1832.

CHAPTER VIII.

TREACHERY AND ATROCITIES AT CAWNPORE

No other events connected with the Revolt in India made so deep an impression on the public mind, or produced so utter an astonishment and dismay, as those relating to Cawnpore – the treachery of an arch-villain, and the sufferings that resulted therefrom. The mystery that for so many weeks veiled the fate of the victims heightened the painful interest; for none in England knew how the troubles in May gave rise to the miseries in June, and these to the horrors of July, until nearly all were dead who could faithfully have recorded the progress of events. Now that the main incidents are known, they come upon the reader almost with the force of a tragic drama; associating themselves in succession with five scenes – the intrenchment, the boats, the ghat, the house of slaughter, the well – the intensity deepening as the plot advances towards its end.

So unutterably revolting were the indignities to which some of the unfortunates were subjected, at Cawnpore as at other places, that no one dared to speak or write fully of them; even men, hardy and world-worn men, almost shrank from whispering the details to each other. Vague generalities of language were employed, in sheer dismay lest the use of precise words should lift too high

the veil that hid the hideous scene. So much was this felt, so much were the facts understated, that persons of unblemished moral character almost regretted the reticence of the press. A nobleman held in very high estimation, the Earl of Shaftesbury, on one occasion expressed at a public meeting a wish that the daily journals would proceed one stage further in making the mournful tale known: on the ground that Englishmen, by learning more of the real truth, would appreciate more fully the sufferings of our countrymen and countrywomen, the heroism and Christian patience with which those sufferings were borne, and the necessity for (not vengeance, but) retributive justice on those who had ordered and executed the devilish barbarities. It is not a trifling compliment to the delicacy of the English press, that a Christian nobleman should thus have suggested less scruple, less reserve, in the treatment of a most trying subject. In every narrative of these mournful events, the reader feels, and must continue to feel, that the *worst* is left unsaid.

The first matters to treat are – the locality in which, and the native chieftain by whom, these wrongs were inflicted. Cawnpore, a terrible word to English readers, is the name both of a district and of its chief town. The district, a part of the Doab or delta between the Ganges and the Jumna, is included within the government of the Northwestern Provinces. The city of Cawnpore is on the right bank of the Ganges, about two hundred and seventy miles below Delhi; and the river flows down nearly a thousand miles below this point to Calcutta; the

land-distance, however, from Cawnpore to Calcutta is between six and seven hundred miles. The Ganges here is sometimes more than a mile in width at and soon after the rainy season, and is at such time very difficult to be crossed by bodies of troops. Cawnpore is an important city to the British in India, both commercially and in a military sense. The ghat or landing-place, in peaceful times, is a scene of great liveliness and bustle. When Skinner was there, 'Every description of vessel that can be imagined was collected along the bank. The pinnacle, which with its three masts and neat rigging might have passed for a ship; budgerows, the clumsiest of all clumsy things, with their sterns several times higher than their bows; the bauleahs, ugly enough, but lightly skimming along like gondolas compared with the heavy craft around them; the drifting haystacks, which the country-boats appear to be when at a distance, with their native crews straining every nerve upon their summits, and cheering themselves with a wild and not unfrequently a sweet song; panswees shooting swiftly down the stream, with one person only on board, who sits at the head, steering with his right hand, rowing with his foot, and in the left hand holding his pipe. A ferry-boat constantly plying across the stream adds to the variety of the scene, by its motley collection of passengers – travellers, merchants, fakeers, camels, bullocks, and horses – all crowded together. The vessels fastened to the shore are so closely packed, that they appear to be one mass, and, from their thatched roofs and low entrances, might easily pass for a floating

village.' Cawnpore is (or rather was) remarkable in its military arrangements. The cantonment, six miles long by half a mile broad, often contained, before the Revolt, a native population of fifty thousand persons, besides sixty thousand in the city itself, irrespective of military and Europeans. The native infantry of the station encamped here in the cool part of the year, when there were regular streets and squares of canvas stretching over an immense space; each regiment was provided with its bazaar; in the rear and far beyond the lines, were the bivouacs of every kind of camp-followers, in immense numbers. All these, with many hundred bungalows or lodges of officers and European residents, gave great animation to the cantonment. The bungalows, though tiled or thatched, were here, as in other parts of India, large and commodious; each standing pleasantly in the midst of its compound or enclosure, richly planted with grapes, peaches, mangoes, shaddocks, plantains, melons, oranges, limes, guavas, and other fruits especially acceptable in a hot climate. There was accommodation for seven thousand troops, but the number actually stationed there was generally much less. In accordance with the Company's regulations, the English military officers, whether of European or native regiments, always resided within the cantonment where their services were required; while the civilians, although residing chiefly in the suburbs, had their offices and places of business within the city itself. There were thus, to some extent, two sets of English residents.

The next point to render clear is, the position of the man

who so fatally influenced the affairs at Cawnpore in the summer months of 1857. Nena Sahib was his name to an English eye and tongue, and as Nena Sahib he will ever be execrated; but that was his titular or honorary, not his real name, which appears to have been Dhundu Punt or Dhoondhoopunt. When called the Nena or Náná, the Nena Sahib, the Peishwa, the Maharajah, the Nena Bahadoor, he was recognised by one of his oriental titles of honour. Let him to us be the Nena Sahib. There was a motive, however inadequate in the estimate of persons possessing a spark of human feeling, for the black treachery and monstrous cruelty of this man. He had a quarrel with the East India Company: a quarrel which the Company had nearly forgotten, but not he. The disagreement arose out of the prevalent Eastern custom of adoption, in default of legitimate male heirs. Bithoor, a town six or eight miles from Cawnpore, and within the same district, had long been the residence of the chief of the Mahrattas or Peishwa, with whom, as with other native princes, the Company had had many negotiations and treaties. Bithoor itself, a town of about fourteen thousand inhabitants, possesses numerous Hindoo temples, and several ghats or flights of steps giving access to the Ganges, to which the Brahmins and their followers frequently resort for the purpose of ritual ablution. The place is not without fortification, but it does not take rank among the strongholds of India. The last chief, Maharajah Bajee Rao Peishwa, died in 1851; and in consequence of that event, a jaghire or estate, near the town, which had been

bestowed upon him during pleasure by the Company, lapsed to the government, and was subjected to the general regulations in force in Cawnpore. Being sonless, he had adopted a son, or indeed two sons – not merely to inherit the vast wealth which belonged to him independently of the arrangements with the Company, but also to perform certain filial duties which high-caste Hindoos deem it necessary to their religion that a son should perform. This adoption was legal so far as concerned the Peishwa's personal property; but the Company would not admit its validity in relation to a pension of £50,000 per annum which he had been in the habit of receiving. A slight obscurity in the wording of an official document led to some doubt on this matter. On the 1st of June 1818, Sir John Malcolm, on the part of the Company, signed a treaty with Bajee Rao, granting a pension to the rajah *and his family*. This has since been interpreted, by the Bithoor intriguers, as a perpetual grant *to the heirs*; but there is abundant evidence that Sir John and the Company meant the pension to be for Bajee Rao's life only, to be shared by his family then living. Nine years afterwards, namely, in 1827, Bajee Rao adopted two children, Suddchoo Rao and Dhundu Punt, the one four years and the other two years and a half old; they were the sons of two Brahmins, natives of the Deccan, who had come to reside at Bithoor about a year before. There is no evidence that Bajee Rao ever considered these two adopted sons, or either of them, entitled to a continuance of the Company's pension; although Dhundu Punt may very possibly have thrown

out frequent hints, to sound the Company on this subject. It has been supposed that when the old King of Delhi was reproclaimed after the Meerut outbreak, he offered to acknowledge the Nena Sahib, Dhundu Punt, as the proper successor of the Peishwa of Bithoor, on condition of receiving his aid and allegiance. This was probably true, but would not suffice, without the incentive of private animosity, to account for his subsequent actions. So little was known of him in England when the Revolt began, that doubt prevailed whether he was really the adopted son of Bajee Rao; some writers asserting that that honour had been conferred upon another Dhundu Punt, and that the Nena himself was the eldest son of the rajah's subadar, Ramchunder Punt.

If hatred ruled his heart during the six years from 1851 to 1857, he must indeed have been a consummate hypocrite; for the English were always courteously received by him at his petty court, and generally came away impressed in his favour – impressed, however, at the same time, with a conviction that he entertained a sort of hope that the Queen of England would graciously befriend him in his contest with the Calcutta government, the Court of Directors, and the Board of Control, all of whom disputed his adoptive claims. He had a curious taste for mingling the English with the oriental in his palace at Bithoor. An English traveller, who visited him a few years before the Revolt, and was received with an amount of flattery that appeared to have a good deal of shrewd calculation in it, found the rooms set apart for him decked with English furniture arranged in the most

incongruous manner – a chest of drawers and a toilet-table in the sitting-room; a piano and a card-table in the bedroom; tent-tables and camp-stools in the same room with elegant drawing-room tables and chairs; a costly clock by the side of cheap japan candlesticks; good prints from Landseer's pictures, in juxtaposition with sixpenny coloured plates of Wellington and Napoleon; sacred prints, and prints of ballet-girls and Epsom winners – all kinds were mingled indiscriminately, as if simply to make a show. The guest was most struck by the oriental compliments he received from the Nena, and by the odd attempt to provide English furniture where English habits and customs were so little known; yet there were not wanting dark tints to the picture. He heard rumours 'that two women of rank were kept in a den not far from my apartments, and treated like wild beasts; and that a third, a beautiful young creature, had recently been *bricked up in a wall*, for no other fault than attempting to escape.' An agent of the Nena, one Azimullah, resided some time in London, about the year 1855; he came to England to advocate the Nena's claims, and managed to ingratiate himself with many persons moving in the upper circles of society, by his manifest abilities, his winning grace, his courtesy to all with whom he came into relation. Yet there were strange fits of moody silence observable in him; and when the failure of his mission became evident, he was heard to throw out dark mysterious threats, which were disregarded at the time, but were brought vividly to recollection afterwards, when the deeds of his master

forced themselves into notice.

It will presently be seen that Nena Sahib, whatever were his thoughts at the time, did not depart, when the Revolt commenced, from his usual demeanour towards the English; he was courteous to them, and was always courteously saluted by them when he rode past.

How interesting it is – nay, how affecting – to trace the mode in which the unfortunate Europeans at Cawnpore became gradually shut out from communication with the external world; neither knowing what was occurring east and west of them, nor able to communicate news of their own sufferings! In May, messages and letters passed to and from them; in June, authentic intelligence was superseded by painful rumours; in July, a deadly silence was followed by a horrible revelation.

When the Meerut and Delhi outbreaks occurred, the attention of the civil and military authorities was turned to the importance of securing Cawnpore: because of its native troops, its store of ammunition, its large treasury, its considerable English population, and its position on the Ganges and the great road. Sir Henry Lawrence, knowing that Sir Hugh Wheeler's force in European troops was weak, sent him fifty English infantry in the third week in May, and also sent the aid (aid as it was hoped to be) of two squadrons of Oude irregular horse. But Lucknow could ill spare these armed men, and hence the telegrams already briefly adverted to. First, Lawrence to Canning: 'Cawnpore to be reinforced with all speed. When may her Majesty's 84th be

expected?' Then Canning to Lawrence: 'It is impossible to place a wing of Europeans at Cawnpore in less time than twenty-five days.' Then Wheeler to Canning: 'All is quiet here, but impossible to say how long it will continue so.' Next a telegram from Benares, announcing that every possible exertion would be made to send on troops to Cawnpore as fast as they came from Calcutta. Then, on the 25th, Wheeler telegraphed to Canning: 'Passed anxious night and day, in consequence of a report on very good authority that there would be an outbreak during one or the other. All possible preparations to meet it, but I rejoice to say that none occurred.' On this, Lawrence sent his earnest message recommending the establishment of *ekah dâks* – anything at any expense – to carry troops on to Cawnpore. Towards the close of the month, about seventy men of the Queen's 84th reached the city; and Sir Hugh telegraphed 'All quiet:' at the same time making very evident the existence of anxiety on his mind concerning his prospects. The governor-general telegraphed to him: 'Your anxious position is well understood; and no means have been neglected to give you aid.' On another day Sir Hugh telegraphed: 'All quiet still, but I feel by no means certain it will continue so. The civil and military are depending entirely upon me for advice and assistance.' He announced to Lawrence that he had been obliged to send irregular cavalry to clear the roads of insurgent ruffians; and added, 'Europeans are arriving but very slowly here.' The dilemma and doubt were painful to all; for Viscount Canning had few troops to send up from Calcutta,

and no facilities for sending them rapidly; while, on the other hand, he did not know that death had cut off General Anson ere an advance could be made to Delhi and Cawnpore from the northwest. Hence such telegrams as the following from Canning to Anson: 'Cawnpore and Lucknow are severely pressed, and the country between Delhi and Cawnpore is passing into the hands of the rebels. It is of the utmost importance to prevent this, and to relieve Cawnpore; but nothing but rapid action will do this... It is impossible to overrate the importance of shewing European troops between Delhi and Cawnpore.' Sir Hugh Wheeler's anxieties did not relate wholly to Cawnpore; he knew that a wide region depended on that city for its continuance in loyalty. By the 2d of June only ninety European troops had reached him. On the next day he telegraphed that the population was much excited, and that unfavourable reports were coming in from the districts between Cawnpore and Lucknow. To make matters worse, Lawrence was becoming weak at the last-named place, and Wheeler sent him fifty-two of his highly cherished English troops – a number that shews how precious, from its scarcity, this military element was regarded by the two commanders. 'This leaves me weak,' said Wheeler; and well might he say so. Then occurred the cutting of the telegraph wires on all sides of Cawnpore, and the stoppage of the dâk-runners. After this, all was doubt and mystery, for it was only by stealthy means that letters and messages could leave or enter that city. By degrees there reached the Company's officers

at Lucknow, Allahabad, and Benares, indirect news telling of disaster – of a rebellious rising of the native troops at Cawnpore; of the mutineers being aided and abetted by the Nena Sahib of Bithoor; of all the Europeans taking refuge in an intrenched barrack; of the forlorn band being regularly besieged in that spot; of terrible sufferings being endured; and of the soldiers and civilians, the women and children, being brought to death by numerous privations. The commissioner at Benares, when these rumours of disaster reached him, telegraphed to Calcutta: ‘May God Almighty defend Cawnpore; for no help can we afford.’ And so it was throughout June – Benares, Allahabad, Lucknow, Agra, all were equally unable to send aid to the beleaguered garrison. Gradually the messages became fewer, and the rumours darker; escaped fugitives and native messengers came in stealthily to one or other of the neighbouring towns; and men talked of a massacre at Cawnpore of English fugitives from Futtehgur, of another massacre of English in boats bound for Calcutta, of women and children placed in confinement, and of Nena Sahib’s cruelty.

Such was the condition of Cawnpore as viewed from without, by those who could necessarily know but little of the truth. Let us now enter and trace the course of events as experienced by the sufferers themselves.

There is abundant evidence that, previous to the actual outbreak at Cawnpore, the native troops – consisting of the 1st, 53d, and 56th B. N. I., and the 2d native cavalry – were much agitated by the rumours of mutiny elsewhere; and that

the European inhabitants felt sensibly the paucity of English soldiers at that place. A lady, the wife of the magistrate and collector of Cawnpore – one of those who, with all her family, were barbarously slaughtered in cold blood a few weeks afterwards – writing to her friends on the 15th of May, said, ‘Cawnpore is quiet, and the regiments here are stanch; but there is no saying that they would remain long so if they came in contact with some of their mutinous brethren. We have only about a hundred European soldiers here altogether, and six guns... Down-country, from Meerut to Dinapore, there is but one regiment of Europeans, of which we have a hundred.’ Nevertheless, although the sepoy at Cawnpore were restless, an impression prevailed that, even if they joined in the mutiny, and marched off to Delhi, they would not inflict any injury on the military commander, Sir Hugh Wheeler, or the other English officers, who were much respected by them. The general thought it right to obtain correct though secret information from spies who mixed among the men in the cantonment; and these spies reported that the three infantry regiments, except a few refractory sepoy, appeared well disposed towards the government; whereas the 2d native cavalry, discontented and surly, had sent their families to their homes, to be out of danger, and were in the habit of holding nightly meetings or *punchayets* (a kind of jury of five persons, one of the Hindoo institutions of very ancient formation), in their lines, to concert measures of insubordination. These troopers endeavoured to

bring over the foot regiments to a scheme for rising in revolt, seizing the government treasure, marching off to Delhi, and presenting that treasure to the newly restored Mogul as a token of their allegiance. The European inhabitants were numerous; for they comprised not only the officers and civilians with their families, but European merchants, missionaries, engineers, pensioners, &c., and also many nonresidents, who had either come to Cawnpore from parts of the country supposed to be less protected, or had been stopped there on their way up-country by the mutineers in the Doab. These, relying on the report concerning the apparently favourable feeling among the native infantry, made no immediate attempt to quit the place. Sir Hugh Wheeler, however, did not deem it consistent with his duty to remain unprepared. Cawnpore is built on a dead level, without stronghold or place of refuge, and could not long be held against a rebel besieging force; the cantonment was at a considerable distance; and the general resolved on making some sort of defensive arrangement irrespective both of the city and the cantonment. He secured sufficient boats to convey the whole of the Europeans down the Ganges if danger should appear; and he formed a plan for protection at night in an intrenched position. This stronghold, if so it may be called, afterwards rendered memorable as 'the Intrenchment,' was a square plot of ground on the grand military parade, measuring about two hundred yards in each direction; within it were two barrack hospitals, a few other buildings, and a well; while the boundary was formed by

a trench and parapet or breastwork of earth, intended to be armed and defended in case of attack. The intrenchment was entirely distinct both from the city and from the cantonment, and was further from the Ganges than either of them, about a quarter of a mile out of the Allahabad and Cawnpore high road. On the side of it furthest from the river were several barracks in course of construction. It was not intended that the European civilians should at once enter the intrenchment, but that they should regard that spot as a place of shelter in time of need. Sir Hugh brought into this place a supply of grain, rice, salt, sugar, tea, coffee, rum, beer, &c., calculated at thirty days' consumption for one thousand persons. He gave orders to the assistant-commissary to blow up the magazine if a mutiny should take place; while the collector was instructed to convey all the Company's cash, estimated at ten or twelve lacs of rupees, from the treasury in the city to the cantonment – an instruction which, as we shall see, he was able only to obey in part. As another precaution, the executive commissariat and pay-officers, with all their records and chests, were removed into bungalows adjacent to the intrenchment. There is reason to believe that the ringleaders among the native troops sought to terrify the rest into mutiny by representing that the digging, which had been seen actively in progress at the intrenchment, was the beginning of the construction of a series of mines, intended to blow them all up.

One of the most painful considerations associated with these events in May was, that the heartless man who afterwards

wrought such misery was trustingly relied upon as a friend. The magistrate's wife, in a series of letters before adverted to, wrote under date May 16th: 'Should the native troops here mutiny, we should either go into cantonments, or to a place called Bithoor, where the Peishwa's successor resides. He is a great friend of C – 's [the magistrate's], and is a man of enormous wealth and influence; and he has assured C – that we should all be quite safe there. I myself would much prefer going to the cantonment, to be with the other ladies; but C – thinks it would be better for me and our precious children to be at Bithoor.' Again, on the 18th: 'If there should be an outbreak here, dearest C – has made all the necessary arrangements for me and the children to go to Bithoor. He will go there himself, and, with the aid of the rajah, to whose house we are going, he will collect and head a force of fifteen hundred fighting-men, and bring them into Cawnpore to take the insurgents by surprise. This is a plan of their own, and is quite a secret; for the object of it is to come on the mutineers unawares.' Here, then, in the month of May, was Nena Sahib plotting with the English against the mutineers. It was on the 20th that Sir Hugh, rendered uneasy by the symptoms around, sent to Lucknow for three hundred European soldiers; but as Sir Henry Lawrence could hardly spare one-sixth of that number, arrangements were made for accommodating as many English families as possible in the cantonment, and for fitting up the intrenchment as a place of refuge. On the 21st, the magistrate, with Wheeler's consent, wrote to the Nena, begging him to send

the aid of a few of his Mahratta troops. The native soldiers being huddled in the cantonment, and the few English soldiers barracked in the intrenchment, it was speedily determined that – while the English officers should sleep at the cantonment, to avoid shewing distrust of the native troops – their wives and families, and most of the civilians, should remain at night in the intrenchment, under protection of English soldiers. On the first night of this arrangement, ‘there were an immense number of ladies and gentlemen assembled in the intrenchment; and oh! what an anxious night it was! The children added much to our distress and anxiety,’ said the lady whose letters were lately quoted; ‘it was some hours before I could get them to sleep. I did not lie down the whole night. Extraordinary it was, and most providential too, that we had a thunderstorm that night, with a good deal of rain, which cooled the air a little; had it not been for this, we should have suffered much more.’ An English officer, in relation to this same night, said: ‘Nearly all the ladies in the station were roused out of their houses, and hurried off to the barracks. The scene in the morning you can imagine. They were all huddled together in a small building, just as they had left their houses. On each side were the guns drawn up; the men had been kept standing by them all night through the rain, expecting an instant attack. There are few people now in the station but believe this attack had been intended, and had merely been delayed on finding us so well prepared.’ On the last day of the month – a day that seems to have ended all communication from this hapless

lady to her friends in England – she wrote: ‘We are now almost in a state of siege. We sleep every night in a tent pitched by the barracks, with guns behind and before. We are intrenched, and are busy getting in a month’s provisions in case of scarcity. For the first four or five nights, we scarcely closed our eyes... Last night, the sepoys of the 1st regiment threatened to mutiny, and poor Mrs Ewart was in dreadful distress when Colonel Ewart went to sleep in the lines, according to orders; and he himself fully expected to be killed before morning; but, thank God, all passed off quietly. The general remains in the barracks day and night, to be at hand if anything should happen. We still pass the day at the Ewarts’ house; but at night every one returns to the barracks, which is a wretched place... Poor Mrs – has quite lost her reason from terror and excitement. Oh! it is a hard trial to bear, and almost too much; but the sight of the children gives us strength and courage.’

Colonel Ewart, mentioned in the above paragraph, and Major Hillersdon, were the commandants of the 1st and 53d native regiments, respectively; they lived in pleasant bungalows outside Cawnpore; but at this perilous time they slept near their men in the cantonment, while their families took refuge within the intrenchment. Mrs Ewart – destined, like the magistrate’s wife, to be in a few weeks numbered among the outraged and slaughtered – wrote like her of the miseries of their position, even at that early period of their privation. Speaking of the interior of the intrenchment, she said: ‘We have a tent, which is, of course, more

private and comfortable for the night; and at present there is no occasion to spend days as well as nights there, though many people do so. This is fortunate, since the weather is fearfully hot. God grant that we may not be exposed to such suffering as a confinement within that intrenchment must entail; even should we be able to bear it, I know not how our poor little ones could go through the trial.' The general feelings of the English in the place towards the close of May cannot be better conveyed than in the following words: 'We are living face to face with great and awful realities – life and property most insecure, enemies within our camp, treachery and distrust everywhere. We can scarcely believe in the change which has so suddenly overcast all the pleasant repose and enjoyment of life. We are almost in a state of siege, with dangers all around us – some seen, some hidden... Major Hillersdon joins us daily at our four o'clock dinner, and we stay together till half-past seven, when we go to our melancholy night-quarters, behind guns and intrenchments. My husband betakes himself to his couch in the midst of his sepoy; and you can fancy the sort of nights we have to pass. These are real trials, but we have not experienced much actual physical suffering yet.' In another letter she further described the intrenchment and barracks as they were at night: 'We returned to those melancholy night-quarters. Oh, such a scene! Men, officers, women and children, beds and chairs, all mingled together inside and outside the barracks; some talking or even laughing, some very frightened, some defiant, others

despairing. Such sickening sights these for peaceful women; and the miserable reflection that all is caused not by open foes, but by the treachery of those we had fed and pampered, honoured and trusted, for so many years.' Colonel Ewart, in probably the last letter received from him by his friends in England, wrote on the 31st: 'The treasury, containing some ten or twelve lacs of rupees, is situated five miles from the cantonment. It has hitherto been thought inexpedient to bring the treasure into the cantonment; but the general has now resolved on making the attempt to-morrow. Please God, he will succeed. He is an excellent officer, very determined, self-possessed in the midst of danger, fearless of responsibility – that terrible bugbear that paralyses so many men in command.' This was the character generally given to Sir Hugh Wheeler, who was much liked and trusted. The state of suspense in which the officers themselves were placed, not knowing whether revolt and outrage would speedily mark the conduct of regiments that had up to that moment remained faithful, was well expressed in a letter written by one of the infantry officers: 'I only wish that I might get orders to go out with my regiment, or alone with my company, against some of the mutineers; so that we could put the men to the test, and see whether they really mean to stick to us or not, and end this state of suspense.'

Numerous scraps of local information, portions of letters, diaries, conversations, and scarcely intelligible messages, in English, Hindustani, and Persian, help to make up the materials

out of which alone a connected narrative of the events at Cawnpore can be prepared. These would all have been very insufficient, had it not fortunately happened that an officer of the Company, an educated man, lived to record upon paper his experience of four weeks spent in the intrenchment, and three subsequent weeks of imprisonment in the city. This was Mr Shepherd, belonging to the commissariat department. How his life was saved, and how those dear to him were savagely butchered, will be seen further on; at present, it will suffice to remark that he lived to prepare, for the information of the government, a record of all he knew on this dreadful subject; and that the record thus prepared contains more information than any other brought to light amid that dismal wreck of human hopes and human existence.

When the month of June opened, symptoms became so unfavourable that the non-military Christian residents thought it expedient to move from the city, and obtain shelter in the English church and other buildings near the intrenchment. Day after day small portions of cash, and Company's papers of various kinds, were brought by the commissariat officers to head-quarters. The collector, acting on Sir Hugh's instructions, had endeavoured to bring the Company's treasure from the city to the intrenchment; but he met too much opposition to enable him to effect this, save in part; and the aid of three or four hundred men was obtained from Nena Sahib, to guard the treasury and its contents. What was passing through the heart of that treacherous man at the

time, none but himself could know; but the English officers, whether forgetful or not of his grudge against the Company, seem to have acted as though they placed reliance on him. On the 3d, it being thought improper to keep any public money under the sepoy guard at the office, the commissariat treasure-chest, containing about thirty-four thousand rupees in cash, together with numerous papers and account-books, was brought into the intrenchment, and placed in the quarter-guard there. In short, nothing was deemed safe by Wheeler and the other officials, unless it was under their own immediate care.

On the 5th of June arrived the crisis which was to tax to the utmost the firmness and courage, the tact and discrimination, the kindness and thoughtfulness, of the general on whom so many lives now depended. He had appealed, and appealed in vain, for reinforcements from other quarters: no one possessed troops that could readily be sent to him; and he had therefore to meet his troubles manfully, with such resources as were at hand. At two o'clock in the morning, after a vain attempt to draw the native infantry from their allegiance, the 2d cavalry rose in a body, gave a great shout, mounted their horses, set fire to the bungalow of their quarter-master-sergeant, and took possession of thirty-six elephants in the commissariat cattle-yard. The main body then marched off towards Nawabgunge; while the ringleaders remained behind to assail once more the honesty of the infantry. The 1st regiment N. I. yielded to the temptation, and marched out of the lines about three o'clock; but before doing so, the

sepoys shewed a lingering affection for the English officers of the regiment; those officers had for some time been in the habit of sleeping in the quarter-guard of the regiment, to indicate their confidence in the men; and now the men begged them – nay, forced them – to go into the intrenchment, as a means of personal safety. An alarm gun was fired, and all the non-combatants were brought from the church-compound into the intrenchment – a necessary precaution, for burning bungalows were seen in various directions. A few days previously, a battery of Oude horse-artillery had been sent from Lucknow by Lawrence to aid Wheeler at Cawnpore; and this battery was, about seven o'clock on the eventful morning of the 5th, ordered with a company of English troops to pursue the two mutinous regiments. But here a dilemma at once presented itself. Could the 53d and 56th regiments be relied upon? Sir Hugh thought not; and therefore he countermanded the order for the pursuit of the other two regiments. The wisdom of this determination was soon shewn; for about ten o'clock the whole of the native officers of the 53d and 56th came to the general and announced that their hold over the fidelity of the men was gone. While they were yet speaking, a bugle was heard, and the two regiments were seen to march off to join their companions at Nawabgunge; any attempt on the English being checked by the pointing of a gun at them. The apparently faithful native officers were directed to organise a few stragglers who had not joined the mutineers; they left the intrenchment for this purpose, but did not return: whether they

joined in the revolt, or went quietly to their own homes to avoid the resentment of the sepoys, was not fully known. As soon as possible, carts were sent to the cantonment to bring away the sick from the hospital, and such muskets and other property as might be useful. In consequence of this, the two hospitals or barracks in the intrenchment became very much crowded, many of the people being compelled to sleep in the open air through want of room. All the civilians were then armed, and directed what they should do for the common good. The Oude artillery, shewing signs of being smitten by the prevailing mania for revolt, were disarmed and dismissed that same evening.

The scene must now be shifted, to shew Nena Sahib's share in the work. Rumours came to the intrenchment that when the rebels reached Nawabgunge, he quitted Bithoor and came out to meet them; that he placed himself at their head; that they all went together to the treasury; that he carried off a large amount of government treasure on the government elephants; and that he gave up the rest to the sepoys as a prize. Thereupon the papers were burnt, and the treasury and the collector's office destroyed. The sepoys guarding the magazine would not allow that building to be blown up by the government officer; the mutineers brought as many country carts as they could procure, and carried off a considerable quantity of baggage and ammunition. All then marched off to Kullianpore, being one stage on the road to Delhi, except a few troopers who remained to finish the work of destruction among the bungalows. The Oude artillery, lately

disarmed and dismissed by Wheeler, now went to Nena Sahib, and laid before him a plan for attacking the intrenchment, concerning which they were able to give much information. They reported that the cantonment contained many guns, and much powder and ammunition, with which the intrenchment might safely be attacked. There was another fact favourable to the rebels. One end of the great Ganges Canal enters the river near Cawnpore; and it had been contemplated by the government to send a large store of shot and shell by that canal up to Roorkee, through Allygurh and Meerut; but as the Doab and Rohilcund were in too disturbed a state to permit this, thirty-five boats laden with shot and shell were this day lying in the canal near the cantonment. This large store of ammunition the rebel artillerymen suggested should be at once seized; and the advice was acted on. A native inhabitant, who afterwards gave information to the English, said that when the Nena openly took part with the rebels, he released four hundred prisoners in the town, whose fetters he ordered to be knocked off; 'and having opened the door of the armoury, he gave the order that whatever prisoner was willing to follow him should arm himself with gun, pistol, or sword, as he liked best' – a story highly probable, though not within the power of Mr Shepherd to confirm. Before the Nena finally committed himself to a course of rebellion and war, the 1st native infantry made their head subadar a general; and the general then promoted all the havildars and naiks to be subadars and jemadars.

Two officers of the 56th regiment were fortunate enough to be away from Cawnpore and the cantonment altogether, on the day of the mutiny. They had been sent with two hundred men to Ooral, a village or town at some distance, on the 2d of June. When that regiment mutinied at the cantonment, and when the news of the mutiny reached Ooral, the two hundred did not long delay in following their example. The officers, seeing their danger, at once galloped off, taking nothing with them but the clothes on their backs, and their swords and revolvers. Their tale was as full of adventure as many that have already occupied these pages. They found their way to Calpee, to Humeerpoor, to various places; they met with two brother-officers escaping from mutineers at Humeerpoor; the four rowed boats, swam rivers, entered villages where they were plundered of their weapons and clothes, roamed through jungles, fed on chupatties and water when they could obtain such fare, picked up bits of native clothing, encountered friendly Hindoos at one time and marauding enemies at another. Of the two officers from Cawnpore, one died mad in the jungle, from heat, thirst, and suffering; but the other, Ensign Browne, joined the body of English troops at Futtehpoor, after thirty-seven days of wandering. All the other English officers of the four native regiments appear to have been at or near Cawnpore at the time of the outbreak; and all were called upon to bear their bitter share in the woes that followed – woes rendered more distressing by falling equally on innocent women and children as on themselves

– nay, much more heavily.

The sun rose upon an anxious scene on the 6th of June. Sir Hugh Wheeler and nearly all the Europeans – men, women, and children – military, civilians, and servants – were crowded within the intrenchment; while the rebel troops, four regiments and an artillery battery, had not only abandoned their allegiance, but were about to besiege those who were lately their masters. The rebels brought into requisition all the government work-people and the bullocks, in the town and cantonment, to drag guns into position near the intrenchment, and to convey thither a store of powder and ammunition. They brought six guns (two of them 18-pounders) to bear in a line, and opened fire about ten o'clock in the forenoon. Instantly a bugle sounded within the intrenchment; and every man, from the highest officers down to the clerks and the drummers, flew to arms, and took up the position assigned to him. There was only a breast-high earthen parapet, bounded by a small trench, between the besiegers and the besieged: hence there was nothing but indomitable courage and unceasing watchfulness that could enable the English to hold their own against the treacherous native troops. Here, then, were nine hundred persons¹⁶ hemmed into a small space, forming their citadel, while the surrounding country was wholly in the hands of the rebels. Out of the nine hundred, barely

¹⁶ The number of persons in the intrenchment on that day will probably never be accurately known; but Mr Shepherd, from the best materials available to him, made the following estimate:

one-third were fighting-men; while considerably more than one-third were women and children, to be fed and protected at all hazards. The few guns within the intrenchment answered those from without; but all the men not employed with those guns crouched down behind the breastwork, under the hot wind and scorching sun of a June day, ready to defend the spot with musketry if a nearer attack were made. The rebels did not attempt this; they adopted the safer course of bringing up their guns nearer to the beleaguered place. Sir Hugh Wheeler had eight pieces of ordnance – two brass guns of the Oude battery, two long 9-pounders, and four smaller; he had also a good store of ammunition, buried underground, and had thus a defensive power of some importance. On the other hand, his anxieties were great; for one of the two buildings (they had been used as hospitals for European troops) was thatched, liable to be fired by a chance shot; the commissariat officers were unable to bring in more supplies; the shelter was direfully insufficient for nine hundred persons in a fierce Indian climate; and the women and children could do little or nothing to assist in the defence of all.

The native informant, above adverted to, states that when Nena Sahib found the mutineers about to depart to Delhi, 'he represented to the native officers that it would not be correct to proceed towards Delhi until they had entirely destroyed the officers and European soldiers, and women and children of the Christian religion; and that they should, if possible, by deceiving the officers, accomplish this grand object, or they would be

good for nothing.’ Such words were certainly consistent with the machinations of a villain who sought a terrible revenge for some injury, real or pretended; but they do not the less illustrate the remarkable subtlety and secretiveness of the Hindoo character, so long concealing a deadly hatred under a friendly exterior. This same native, who was in Cawnpore at the time, further said: ‘In the city it was as if the day of judgment had come, when the sepoys of the infantry and the troopers of the cavalry, the jingling of whose sword-scabbards and the tread of whose horses’ feet resounded on all sides, proceeded with guns of various sizes, and ammunition, from the magazine through the suburbs of Cawnpore towards the intrenchment.’ In relation to the conduct of native servants of the Company on that day, Mr Shepherd said: ‘None of the native writers, Bengalees and others in government offices or merchants’ employ, went into the intrenchment; they remained in the city, where they appear to have received much annoyance from the mutineers; and some had to hide themselves to save their lives. The (native) commissariat contractors’ [those who supplied provisions and stores for the troops, ordered and paid for by the head commissary] ‘all discontinued their supplies from the 6th; or rather, were unable to bring them in, from the way the mutineers surrounded the intrenchment on all sides, permitting no ingress or egress at any time except under cover of night.’ Those natives must, in truth, have been placed in a perplexing position, between employers whom they wished to serve but could not, and rebels who sought to tamper with their

honesty.

Another day broke, revealing a further strengthening of the rebels' attack. They increased their number of guns, four of which were 24-pounders; and with the shot from these guns not only were many valuable men struck down, but the walls and verandahs of the hospitals pierced, spreading terror among the helpless inmates. There was but one well within the intrenchment; and so hot was the fire from without, that, to use the words of Mr Shepherd, 'it was as much as giving a man's life-blood to go and draw a bucket of water; and while there was any water remaining in the large jars, usually kept in the verandah for the soldiers' use, nobody ventured to the well; but after the second day, the demand became so great that a bheestee bag of water was with difficulty got for five rupees, and a bucket for a rupee. Most of the servants deserted, and it therefore became a matter of necessity for every person to fetch his own water, which was usually done during the night, when the enemy could not well direct their shots.' What was the degree of thirst borne under these circumstances, none but the forlorn garrison could ever know. As there was no place under which to shelter live cattle, some of the animals were let loose, and others slaughtered; entailing a necessary exhaustion of meat-rations after three or four days. The commissariat servants, however, now and then managed to get hold of a stray bullock or cow near the intrenchment at night, which served for a change. Not only was it difficult to obtain suitable food to eat, but the

native servants took every opportunity to escape, and the cooking was in consequence conducted under very sorry conditions.

The tale of accumulated suffering need not, and indeed cannot, be followed day by day: several days must be grouped together, and the general character of the incidents noted – so far as authentic recitals furnish the materials. Meat, as has just been intimated, soon became scarce; hogsheads of rum and malt liquor were frequently burst by cannon-balls, but the supply still remained considerable; chupatties and rice were the chief articles of food for all. The English found their troubles increase in every way: the rebels at first fired only cannon on them; but by degrees, after burning the English church and all other buildings around and near the intrenchment, the sepoy's masked themselves behind the ruined walls, and kept up an almost incessant fire of musketry, shooting down many who might have escaped the cannon-balls. There were seven unfinished barracks outside the intrenchment, three of them at about a furlong distance. These were scenes of many an exciting encounter. Captain Moore of the 32d foot, a gallant and intrepid officer, often encountered the rebels near those places. He would send some of his men, with field-telescopes, to watch the position of the enemy's guns, from the roof of one of the barracks, as a guidance for the besieged; and as soon as these men were attacked, a handful of gallant companions would rush out of the intrenchment, and drive off the assailants with a fire of musketry. The enemy having no cannon on this side, a sort of drawn battle ensued: the

besiegers holding three or four of the barracks, and the besieged maintaining a hold of the three nearest to the intrenchment. After a while, the enemy brought one gun round to this quarter; but twenty English made a sortie at midnight on the 11th, spiked the gun, and returned safely. Whenever fighting on anything like terms of equality took place, the European troops proved themselves a match for many times their number of natives; but any daring achievements for effectual liberation were rendered nugatory by the presence of so many helpless women and children, whose safety was the first thought in the minds of the men, whether civilians or military. Numbers of the poor creatures died within the first week, from illness, heat, fright, want of room, want of proper food and care. In the obituary of many an English newspaper, when news of the terrible calamity had crossed the ocean, might be read that such a one, probably an officer's wife, had 'died in the intrenchment at Cawnpore;' what that intrenchment meant, few readers knew, and fewer knew what sufferings had preceded the death. The dead bodies were thrown into a well outside the intrenchment, lest they should engender disease by any mode of burial within the crowded and stifling enclosure; and even this sad office could only be rendered under a shower of shot and shell. 'The distress was so great,' says Mr Shepherd, 'that none could offer a word of consolation to his friend, or attempt to administer to the wants of each other. I have seen the dead bodies of officers, and tenderly brought-up young ladies of rank (colonels' and captains' daughters), put outside the

verandah amongst the rest, to await the time when the fatigue-party usually went round to carry the dead to the well; for there was scarcely room to shelter the living.'

During all these days, Cawnpore itself, and the country between it and the intrenchment, became prey to a marauding host of sepoy, liberated prisoners, and ruffians of every kind. The native before adverted to, one Nujeer Jewarree, referring to this period, said: 'In whatever shop the sepoy entered to ask for sugar or rice, they plundered everything belonging to the citizen that they could find; so much so, that plunder and oppression were the order of the day. Every violent man did what came into his mind; and the troopers got possession of a note, the value of which amounted to twenty-five thousand rupees, belonging to Eman-u-Dowlah and Bakir Ali. One troop, or thereabouts, left the cantonment and proceeded to the buildings in which the civil and revenue and judicial courts were held, and commenced firing them. In the city and gardens there was so much villainy committed that travelling became dangerous, and to kill a man was quite easy. They (the marauders) committed deeds of oppression and plundered each other; some forcibly cut the grain out of the fields, and others were occupied in picking up plundered property. He then spoke of the houses and offices of certain English merchants and traders – Greenway, Crump, Mackintosh, Reid, Marshall, Kirk, &c. – and of the 'lacs' of treasure that were plundered from each; too vaguely estimated to be relied on in detail, but

evidently denoting a scene of unscrupulous pillage. Another native, Nerput, presently to be noticed more particularly, said: 'Zemindars of the neighbourhood are fighting among themselves in payment of old quarrels; sepoy, making for their homes with plundered treasure, have been deprived of their plunder, and, if any opposition is made, immediately murdered. Such few Europeans as had remained beyond the intrenchment, were caught and put to death.'

The native authority just referred to states (although the statement is not confirmed by Mr Shepherd), that on the 9th of June Sir Hugh Wheeler sent a message to Nena Sahib, demanding why he had thus turned against the English, who had hitherto been treated by him in a friendly spirit; and why he was causing the death of innocent women and children – to which the Nena gave no other reply than from the cannon's mouth.

One day was so much like another, after the actual commencement of the siege, that the various narrators make little attempt to record the particular events of each. Every day brought its miseries, until the cup nearly overflowed. The food was lessening; the water was difficult to obtain; strength was sinking; lives were being rapidly lost; the miscreant rebels were accumulating in greater and greater number outside the intrenchment; the two buildings were becoming every day more and more riddled with shot; the wounded had their wretchedness increased by the absence of almost everything needful to the comfort of the sick; the hearts of the men were wrung with

anguish at seeing the sufferings borne by the women; and the women found their resolution and patience terribly shaken when they saw their innocent little ones dying from disease and want.

A scene was presented on the 13th that filled every one with horror. The officers and their families had hitherto lived chiefly in tents, within the intrenchment; but the rebels now began to fire *red-hot* shot, which not only necessitated the removal of the tents, but ignited the thatch-roof of one of the two hospitals. This building contained the wives and children of the common soldiers, and the sick and wounded. The flames spread so rapidly, and the dire confusion among the wretched creatures was such, that forty of the helpless invalids were burned to death before aid could reach them. The rebels appeared to have calculated on all the men within the intrenchment rushing to save the victims from the flames, leaving the besiegers to enter with musket and sword; and so threatening was the attack, so close the approach of the enemy, that the Europeans were forced to remain watchful at their frail earthen defence-work, despite their wish to rescue the shrieking sufferers in the hospital. Nearly all the medicines and the surgical instruments were at the same time destroyed by the fire, affording a hopeless prospect to those who might afterwards fall ill or be wounded. The rebels by this time amounted to four thousand in number, and their attacks increased in frequency and closeness; but the besieged had not yielded an inch; every man within the intrenchment, a few only excepted, was intrusted with five or six muskets, all of which were kept ready loaded,

to pour a fire into any insurgents who advanced within musket-shot. Bayonets and swords were also ready at hand, for those who could use them. The condition of every one was rendered more deplorable than before by this day's calamity; the fire had wrought such mischief that many of the men, who had until then occasionally sheltered themselves under a roof for a few hours at a time, were now forced to remain permanently in the open air, exposed to a fierce Indian sun at a date only one week before the summer solstice. That many were struck down by *coup de soleil* at such a time may well be conceived. The poor ladies, too, and the wives of the soldiers, were rendered more desolate and comfortless than ever, by the destruction of much of their clothing during the fire, as well as of many little domestic comforts which they had contrived to bring with them in their hurried flight from their homes in the city or the cantonment.

What transpired outside the intrenchment, none of the captives knew; and even at later times it was difficult to ascertain the real truth. The native chronicler already referred to speaks of many deeds of cruelty, but without affording means of verification. On one day, he says, a family was seen approaching from the west in a carriage; the husband was at once killed; the others, 'one lady and one grown-up young lady and three children,' were brought before the Nena, who ordered them to be instantly put to death. 'The lady begged the Nena to spare her life; but this disgraceful man would not in any way hearken to her, and took them all into the plain. At that time the sun

was very hot, and the lady said: "The sun is very hot, take me into the shade;" but no one listened. On four sides the children were catching hold of their mother's gown and saying: "Mamma, come to the bungalow and give me some bread and water." At length, having been tied hand to hand, and made to stand up on the plain, they were shot down by pistol-bullets.' This story, touching amid all its quaintness of recital, was probably quite true in its main features. Another lady, whom he calls the wife of Mukan Sahib, merchant, and who had been hiding for four or five days in the garden of her bungalow, 'came out one evening, and was discovered. She had through fear changed her appearance by putting on an Hindustani bodice, and folding a towel around her head. She was taken before the Nena, who ordered her to be killed. The writer of this journal having gone in person, saw the head of that lady cut off, and presented as a nazir (gift of royalty).' There can be no question that the vicinity of Cawnpore was at that time in a frightful state. Not only were mutinous sepoys and sowars engaged in hostilities against the 'Feringhees,' whom they had so lately served, and whose 'salt' they had eaten; but many of the ambitious petty rajahs and chieftains took advantage of the anarchy to become leaders on their own special account; plunderers and released prisoners were displaying all their ferocious recklessness; while timid, sneaking villagers, too cowardly to be openly aggressive, were in many instances quite willing to look complacently at deeds of savage brutality, if those deeds might leave a little *loot*, or plunder, as

their share. Consequently, when any English refugees from other towns passed that way, their chance of safety was small indeed.

Before tracing the course of events in the intrenchment during the third week in June, we must advert to another calamity. The griefs and sufferings endured by the English soldiers and residents at Cawnpore did not fill up the measure of Nena Sahib's iniquity. Another stain rests on his name in connection with the fate of an unfortunate body of fugitives from Futteghur. It is an episode in the great Cawnpore tragedy; and must be narrated in this place, in connection with the events of the month.

Futteghur, as will be seen by reference to a map, is situated higher up the Ganges than Cawnpore, near Furruckabad. Practically, it is not so much a distinct town, as the military station or cantonment for the place last named. Furruckabad itself is a city of sixty thousand inhabitants; handsome, cleaner, and more healthy than most Indian cities, carrying on a considerable trading and banking business, and standing in the centre of a fertile and cultivated region. It has no other fortifications than a sort of mud-fort connected with the native nawab's residence. When this nawab became, like many others, a stipendiary of the modern rulers of India, the British built a military cantonment at Futteghur, about three miles distant, on the right bank of the river. Towards the close of May, Futteghur contained the 10th regiment Bengal native infantry, together with a few other native troops. Among the chief English officers stationed there, were General Goldie, Colonels Smith

and Tucker; Majors Robertson, Phillot, and Munro; Captains Phillimore and Vibert; Lieutenants Simpson, Swettenham, and Fitzgerald; and Ensigns Henderson and Eckford. The troops displayed much insubordination as the month closed; and on the 3d of June the symptoms were so threatening, that it was deemed prudent to arrange for sending off the women and children for safety to Cawnpore – in ignorance that the Europeans in that city were in a still more perilous state. Boats had already been procured, and held in readiness for any such exigency. On the next day the 10th infantry exhibited such ominous signs of mutiny, that a large party of the English at once took to their boats. After a short voyage, finding the natives on the banks of the Ganges likely to be troublesome, the fugitives resolved on separating themselves into two parties; one, headed by Mr Probyn, the Company's collector, and consisting of about forty persons, sought refuge with a friendly zemindar named Herden Buksh, living about twelve miles from Futteghur, on the Oude side of the river; while the other party proceeded on the voyage down the Ganges to Cawnpore. This last-named party amounted to more than a hundred and twenty persons, nearly all non-combatants; missionaries, merchants, indigo planters, estate stewards, agents, collectors, clerks, shopkeepers, schoolmasters, post and dâk agents – such were the male members of this hapless band of fugitives; most of them had wives; and the children far exceeded the adults in number. It is pitiable, knowing as we now know the fate that was in store for them, to read such entries as

the following, in a list of the occupants of the boats – ‘Mr and Mrs Elliott and five children;’ ‘Mr and Mrs Macklin and eight children;’ ‘Mr and Mrs Palmer and nine children.’

So few persons survived from Futteghur, that it is not certain at what places and on what days they separated into parties, nor how many lives were lost on the way; but there is evidence that while some pursued their way down the Ganges without much interruption until they reached Bithoor, others went back to Futteghur. This retrograde movement was due to two causes; for while, on the one hand, the officers trusted to a report that the sepoys had returned to a sense of their duty; Herden Buksh, on the other, was threatened by the Oude mutineers if he harboured any of the English. We will follow the fortunes of this second party. From about the 12th to the 18th of June there was a lull in the station; but on the last-named day the 10th infantry broke out in earnest, and being joined by the mutinous 41st from the other side of the Ganges, seized the treasure and threatened the officers. There were about a hundred Europeans now in the place; and as the river was at the time too low to render a boat-voyage to Cawnpore safe, it was resolved to defend a post or fort at Futteghur, and there remain till succour arrived. Out of the hundred there were scarcely more than thirty fighting-men, so numerous were the women and children; nevertheless, Colonel Smith, of the 10th, organised the whole, and prepared for the worst. He had a fair store both of ammunition and of food within the fort. Until the 4th of July they maintained a manly struggle

against the mutineers, holding their fort until they could hold it no longer. Colonel Tucker and one of the civil officers were shot in the head while acting as artillerymen; General Goldie was slightly wounded, as was likewise one of his daughters; and many other casualties occurred. The besieged had great difficulty in making a covered-way to protect their servants, to enable them to pass to and fro with the meals for the ladies and children, who were collected in a room or godown overlooked by a two-storied house held by the insurgents. Then commenced a voyage full of miseries, in boats that contained all the Europeans still remaining at that spot. First the rebels fired on the boats as they rowed along; then one of the boats ran aground; then a boatful of rebels approached, and the ladies in the stranded boat jumped overboard to avoid capture. Death by bullets, death by drowning, took place every hour; and the fugitives were thrown into such dire confusion that none could help the rest. Some crept on shore, and wandered about the fields to escape detection; others found shelter under friendly roofs; one boat-load succeeded in prosecuting their voyage down to Cawnpore, or rather Bithoor.

There were thus two sets of Futteghur fugitives; one that reached the clutches of the Nena towards the middle of June; the other, much smaller, that was spared that fate until the middle of July. So complete was the destruction of both, however; so sweeping the death-stroke hurled against them by Nena Sahib, that the details of their fate have been but imperfectly recorded. Towards the close of June, Mr Court and Colonel

Neill, at Allahabad, received information touching the events at Cawnpore from a native named Nerput, an opium *gomashta* or agent at the last-named city; he gave them or sent them a narrative written in Persian, portions of which were afterwards translated and published among the official papers. Nerput was one of the few who wrote concerning the arrival of the first party of Futteghur fugitives at Cawnpore. Under the date of June the 12th he said: 'Report that Europeans were coming in boats to relieve Cawnpore; and two companies sent westward to make inquiries. They found that a hundred and twenty-six men, women, and children, were in boats, sick.' Another narrative of the Futteghur calamity simply states, that when the unhappy fugitives arrived at the part of the Ganges opposite Bithoor, Nena Sahib 'stopped their boats, brought the fugitives on shore, and shot every one. He then tied their bodies together, and threw them into the river.' A native resident at Cawnpore, who was examined a few weeks afterwards by Colonel Neill concerning his knowledge of the atrocities committed by the rajah, and of the sufferings borne by the English, gave an account of the Futteghur catastrophe corresponding nearly with those derived from other quarters. He states that on the 12th of June, just as the customary daily cannonading of the intrenchment was about to recommence, a report came in that Europeans were approaching from the west. Immediately a troop of cavalry and two companies of infantry were sent to reconnoitre (probably to the vicinity of Bithoor). There were found three boats, containing about a

hundred and thirty men, women, and children. 'The troopers seized them all and took them to the Nena, who ordered that they should all be killed; and sundry Rampoorie troopers of the Mussulmans of the 2d Cavalry, whom the Nena kept with him for the express purpose, killed them all. Among them was a young lady, the daughter of some general. She addressed herself much to the Nena, and said: "No king ever committed such oppression as you have, and in no religion is there any order to kill women and children. I do not know what has happened to you. Be well assured that by this slaughter the English will not become less; whoever may remain will have an eye upon you." But the Nena paid no attention, and shewed her no mercy; he ordered that she should be killed, and that they should fill her hands with powder and kill her by the explosion.'

The fate of the second party of fugitives from Futteghur will be noticed presently. We must return now to the unfortunate occupants of the intrenchment at Cawnpore.

When three weeks of the month of June had transpired, the rebels, joined by a number of ruffians who had crossed over the Ganges from Oude, made a more determined effort than ever to capture the intrenchment; they had made the subadar-major of the 1st N. I. a sort of general over them; and he swore to vanquish the weakened garrison, or die in the attempt. They brought large bales of cotton, which they rolled along the ground, and approached in a crouching position under cover of these bales, firing their muskets at intervals. About a hundred

sepoys thus advanced within a hundred and fifty yards of the intrenchment, backed up by a strong body, who seemed bent on storming the position. In this, as in every former attempt, they failed; their leader was struck down, nearly two hundred were killed or wounded by a fire of grape-shot, and the rest driven back to their former distance. At the very same time, contests were maintained on all sides of the enclosure; for what with musketeers in the unfinished barracks, guns and mortars in four different directions, and rifle-pits approached under cover of zigzags, the rebels maintained a tremendous fire upon the besieged. Wheeler's guns, under a gallant young officer, St George Ashe, were manned at all hours, loaded and fired with great quickness and precision, and pointed in such directions as might produce most mischief among the enemy. But the contest was unequal in this as in most other particulars; one gun after another was disabled by the more powerful artillery of the insurgents – until the eight were reduced to six, then to four, three, and at last two. As the forlorn garrison became weaker and weaker, so did the heroic men redouble their exertions in defence. One day a shot from the enemy blew up an ammunition-wagon within the intrenchment; and then it became a question of terrible import how to prevent the other wagons from being ignited. Lieutenant Delafosse, a young officer of the once trusted but now disloyal 53d, ran forward, laid himself down under the wagons, picked up and threw aside the burning fragments, and covered the flaming portions with handfuls of earth – all the

while subject to a fearful cannonading from a battery of six guns, aimed purposely by the enemy at that spot! Two soldiers ran to him, with two buckets of water; and all three succeeded in rescuing the other ammunition-wagons from peril, and in returning from the dangerous spot in safety.

Unspeakable must have been the misery of those nine hundred persons – or rather, nine hundred wofully diminished by deaths – after twenty days of this besieging. The hospitals were so thoroughly riddled with shot, and so much injured by the fire, as to afford little or no shelter; and yet the greater portion of the non-combatants remained in them rather than be exposed to the scorching glare of the sun outside. Some made holes for themselves behind the earthen parapet that bounded the intrenchment; these holes were covered with boxes, cots, &c., and whole families of wretched beings resided in them – more after the fashion of the Bushmen of Africa, than of Christian civilised people. Apoplexy struck down many in these fearfully heated abodes. At night, all the men had to mount guard and keep watch in turn; and the women and children, to be near their male protectors in the hour of trouble, slept near them behind the parapet – or rather they tried to sleep; but the bombshells vomited forth from three mortars employed by the enemy, kept the terrified people in an agony that ‘murdered sleep;’ and thus the existence of the women and children was spent in perpetual fear. The soldiers had their food prepared by the few remaining cooks; but all the rest shifted for themselves in

the best way they could; and it was often difficult, for those who received their scanty rations of rice and grain, to provide a mouthful of cooked victuals for themselves and their children. Money would hardly, one would suppose, be thought of at such a time and place; yet it appears that the richer bought with money the services of the poorer, at a rupee or two per meal, for cooking. The innumerable troubles and distresses felt by all were deepened at the sight of the sick and wounded, to whom it was now utterly impossible to render proper assistance. The stench, too, from the dead bodies of horses and other animals that had been shot in the enclosure and could not be removed, added to the loathsomeness of the place. Oppressed as they were with heat, the English nevertheless dreaded the setting in of the rains; for one single day of Indian rain would have converted the earthen abodes of the poor people into pools of water, deluged the shot-riddled buildings, and rendered the muskets useless. Nothing can better denote the extraordinary scene of ruin and devastation which the interior of the intrenchment must have presented, than the descriptions given a few weeks afterwards by English officers concerned in the recovery of Cawnpore. Or rather, it would be more correct to say, that those descriptions, by relating only to the intrenchment when deserted, necessarily fell far short of the reality as presented when many hundreds of suffering persons were residing there day after day. One officer wrote: 'We are encamped close to poor old Wheeler's miserable intrenchment. Of all the wonders

which have passed before us since this outbreak commenced, the most wonderful is that this ruinous intrenchment should have held that horde of blood-thirsty ruffians off so long. This is a strong statement; but none who have visited it can call it too strong.' Another said: 'I have had a look at the barracks in which the unfortunate people were intrenched. They consist of a couple of oblong buildings; in one of them, the roof is completely fallen in; and both are battered with round shot. The verandahs as well as the walls have been torn up by the shot; and round the buildings are some pits dug in the ground, and breastworks. The ground inside and out is strewn with broken bottles, old shoes, and quantities of books and other documents and letters. It was a melancholy sight; and the suffering must have been more than humanity could bear.' A third officer corroborated this general description, but mentioned one or two additional particulars: 'These buildings formed what was called the European Cavalry Hospital. Right well and heroically must it have been defended. The walls are riddled with cannon-shot like the cells of a honey-comb. The doors, which seem to have been the principal points against which the Nena's fire was directed, are breached and knocked into large shapeless openings. Of the verandahs, which surrounded both buildings, only a few splintered rafters remain, and at some of the angles the walls are knocked entirely away, and large chasms gape blackly at you. Many of the enemy's cannon-shot have gone through and through the buildings; portions of the interior walls and roof have fallen;

and here and there are blood-stains on wall and floor. Never did I yet see a place so terribly battered.'

As a sad story is often most touchingly told in the fewest words, we may here advert to the contents of two scraps of paper, shewing how the members of a family were cut off one by one during these days of misery. When Cawnpore fell again into the hands of the British, by a train of operations hereafter to be described, there were found among other wrecks two small pieces of paper, covered with blood, and containing a few words in pencil; they appeared to have been written by two persons, both females. One gave a brief and confused narrative of some of the events in the intrenchment; while the other consisted simply of a record of the dates on which members of the writer's family were struck down by the hand of death.¹⁷ The dates were irregular, and extended into July; but every line told, in its simplicity, how agonising must have been the position of one who had to record such things of those who were dear to her. The contents of the two pieces of paper were printed in a Calcutta journal; and when the mournful tale reached Scotland, it was at once concluded, almost as a certainty, from the Christian names mentioned, that the sufferers were all members of a family of Lindsays, who had been stationed at Cawnpore. The writers of the two notes were themselves numbered with the dead before

¹⁷ 'Mamma died, July 12.' 'Alice died, July 9.' 'George died, June 27.' 'Entered the barracks, May 21.' 'Cavalry left, June 5.' 'First shot fired, June 6.' 'Uncle Willy died, June 18.' 'Aunt Lilly, June 17.'

the gloomy tragedy was ended.

All these evidences render only too plain to us the deplorable position of the Europeans, after eighteen days of siege, and thirty-three of enforced residence in the intrenchment. When duly considered, who can wonder that the beleaguered garrison pondered on two possible contingencies – a defeat of the rebels by a daring sally, or a release by parley? If the officers could have known the treachery which was about to be practised on them, they would probably have attempted the former; but they could receive no intelligence or warning, and they did not like to quit their wives and children at such a perilous time, in uncertainty of their chances of success.

Their first knowledge of the state of affairs at Cawnpore was obtained in an unexpected way. Among the commercial firms in the city was that of Greenway Brothers, of which the members and the family had hastily left Cawnpore at the beginning of the troubles, and taken refuge at Nujjubgurh, a village about sixteen miles distant. They were discovered by Nena Sahib, however, and only saved from death by promising a ransom of a lac of rupees. Mrs Greenway, a very aged lady, the mother and grandmother of a number of the sufferers, was sent by this treacherous villain with a message to Sir Hugh Wheeler at the intrenchment, intended to mask a nefarious and bloody scheme. The message was to this effect – that the general and all his people should be allowed to proceed to Allahabad unmolested, on condition that he abandoned Cawnpore, the intrenchment,

the public treasure, the guns, and the ammunition. This message was delivered on the 24th of June; but whether in consequence of Mr Shepherd's adventure on that same day, presently to be mentioned, does not clearly appear. On the next day an interview took place, outside the intrenchment, between Sir Hugh and an agent of Nena named Azimoolah (probably the same who had visited London two years before), who was accompanied by a few of the leading mutineers. The terms were agreed to, with a few modifications; and Nena Sahib gave his signature, his seal, and his oath to a contract binding him to provide the Europeans with boats and a safe escort to Allahabad.

Such was the account given by Mr Shepherd of a transaction narrated somewhat differently by other persons; but before noticing certain anomalies in this matter, it will be well to treat of an occurrence in which that gentleman was unquestionably the best judge of the facts. When the 24th of June arrived, Mr Shepherd adopted a course which led to his own preservation, and enabled him to write his brief but mournful narrative. The besieged civilians, not being under the command of Sir Hugh Wheeler further than might be consistent with their own safety, naturally thought with yearning hearts of their former abodes in the city, and compared those abodes with the present deep misery and privation. Wheeler would gladly have allowed them to return to Cawnpore; but could they cross the intervening ground in safety, or would they find safety in the city itself? To ascertain these points, was a project adopted on the suggestion

of Mr Shepherd, who – as a commissariat officer in a place where scarcely any commissariat services could be rendered – occupied a position somewhat midway between the military and the civil. He had a large family within the intrenchment, comprising his wife, daughter, brother, sister, three nieces, and two other relatives; an infant daughter had been killed by a musket-shot a few days earlier. Mr Shepherd's mission was – to make his way to the city; to ascertain the state of public affairs there; to enter into negotiations with influential persons who were not friendly to the mutineers; and to spend or promise a lac of rupees in any way that might bring about a cessation of the siege. The arrangement made with Sir Hugh was, that if Mr Shepherd succeeded in returning to the intrenchment with any useful information, he should be allowed to go with his family to Cawnpore. He started; but he never returned, and never again saw those hapless beings whose welfare had occupied so much of his solicitude. He disguised himself as a native cook, left the intrenchment, passed near the new barracks, and ran on towards Cawnpore; but he was speedily descried and captured, and carried before Nena Sahib. Two native women-servants had shortly before escaped from the intrenchment to the city, and had reported that the garrison was starving; the new captive, designedly, gave a very different account; and as the Nena did not know which to believe, he imprisoned all three. Mr Shepherd remained in prison, suffering great hardships, from the 24th of June to the 17th of July, as we shall presently see.

It is not easy to reconcile the various accounts of the convention between the besiegers and the besieged, the Nena and the general. According to Mr Shepherd, as we have just seen, the Nena sent a message by Mrs Greenway on the 24th; and Sir Hugh had an interview with one of Nena's agents on the 25th. An ayah, or native nurse, however, who had been in the service of Mrs Greenway, and who afterwards gave a narrative in evidence before some English officers at Cawnpore, said that the message was taken, not by Mrs Greenway, but by a Mrs Jacobi. She proceeded to aver that Nena Sahib himself went to the intrenchment; and then she gave a curious account of the interview, which, to say the least of it, is quite consistent with the relative characters and positions of the two leaders. According to her narrative: "The Nena said: "Take away all the women and children to Allahabad; and if your men want to fight, come back and do so: we will keep faith with you." General Wheeler said: "You take your solemn oath, according to your custom; and I will take an oath on my Bible, and will leave the intrenchment." The Nena said: "Our oath is, that whoever we take by the hand, and he relies on us, we never deceive; if we do, God will judge and punish us." The general said: "If you intend to deceive me, kill me at once: I have no arms." The Nena replied: "I will not deceive you; rely on us. I will supply you with food, and convey you to Allahabad." On this the general went inside the intrenchment, and consulted with the soldiers. They said: "There's no reliance to be placed on natives; they will deceive you." A few said: "Trust

them; it is better to do so.” On this the general returned, and said: “I agree to your terms; see us away as far as Futtehpoor, thence we can get easily to Allahabad.” The reply was: “No; I will see you all safe to Allahabad.”

That Sir Hugh Wheeler was mortally wounded before his unfortunate companions left the intrenchment under a solemn pledge of safety, seems to be generally admitted, but the date of his death is not clearly known; nor do the narrators agree as to the names of the persons by whom the convention was signed. But on the main point all evidence coincides – that a safe retirement to Allahabad was guaranteed. How villainously that guarantee was disregarded, we shall now see.

It was on the 27th of June that those who remained of the nine hundred took their departure from the intrenchment where they had borne so many miseries. Collateral facts lead to a conjecture that the sepoys, belonging to the native regiments that had mutinied, had become wearied with their three-weeks’ detention outside the intrenchment, and wished to start off to a scene of more stirring incidents at Delhi. This would not have suited the Nena’s views; he wanted their aid to grasp the remainder of the Company’s treasure and ammunition at Cawnpore; and hence he formed the plan for getting rid of the Europeans and obtaining their wealth without any more fighting. Cannonading ceased on both sides from the evening of the 24th; and from thence to the 27th all was done that could be done to fit out the boat-expedition. But under what miserable circumstances was this

done! The unburied bodies of relations and friends lay at the bottom of a well; the sick and wounded were more fit to die than to be removed; the women and children had become haggard and weak by almost every kind of suffering; the clothes of all had become rent and blood-stained by many a terrible exigency; and misgivings occupied the thoughts of those who remembered that the same Nena Sahib, at whose mercy they were now placed, was the man who had proved a traitor three weeks before. Twenty boats were provided, each with an awning. The English were forced to give up the three or four lacs of rupees which had been brought to the intrenchment. Early on the morning of the 27th, the Nena sent a number of elephants, carts, and doolies, to convey the women, children, sick, and wounded, to the river-side, a distance of about a mile and a half: the hale men proceeding on foot – if hale they can be called, who were worn down with hunger, thirst, fatigue, heat, grief for the dear ones who had fallen, anxiety for those who still lived to be succoured and protected. If Mr Shepherd is right in his statement that the number who took their departure in this mournful procession from the intrenchment was four hundred and fifty, then one half of the original number of nine hundred must have fallen victims to three weeks of privation and suffering. Those who first reached the river took boat, and proceeded down-stream; but the later comers were long detained; and while they were still embarking, or preparing to embark, they were startled by the report of a masked battery of three guns. The dreadful truth

now became evident; the execrable rebel-chief, in disregard of all oaths and treaties, had given orders for the slaughter of the hapless Europeans. Some of the boats were set on fire, and volley upon volley of musketry fired at the unfortunates – scores of whom were shot dead, others picked off while endeavouring to swim away. A few boats were hastily rowed across the river; but there a body of the 17th N. I., just arrived from Azimghur, intercepted all escape. The ruffians on both banks waded into the water, seized the boats within reach, and sabred all the men yet remaining alive in them. The women were spared for a worse fate; though many of them wounded, some with two or three bullets each, these poor creatures, with the children, were taken ashore, and placed in a building called the Subadar Kothee, in Nena Sahib's camp.

The fortunes of two separate boat-parties must be traced. Lieutenant Delafosse, whose name has already been mentioned in connection with a gallant achievement in the intrenchment, has placed upon record the story of one boat's adventure, shewing how it happened that he was among the very few who escaped the Cawnpore tragedy. After stating that nearly all the boats which attempted to descend the Ganges were either stopped one by one, or the persons in them shot down where they sat, he proceeds thus: 'We had now one boat, crowded with wounded, and having on board more than she could carry. Two guns followed us the whole of that day, the infantry firing on us the whole of that night. On the second day, 28th June, a gun was seen on the

Cawnpore side, which opened on us at Nujjubgurh, the infantry still following us on both sides. On the morning of the third day, the boat was no longer serviceable; we were aground on a sand-bank, and had not strength sufficient to move her. Directly any of us got into the water, we were fired upon by thirty or forty men at a time. There was nothing left for us but to charge and drive them away; and fourteen of us were told off to do what we could. Directly we got on shore the insurgents retired; but, having followed them up too far, we were cut off from the river, and had to retire ourselves, as we were being surrounded. We could not make for the river; we had to go down parallel, and came to the river again a mile lower down, where we saw a large force of men right in front waiting for us, and another lot on the opposite bank, should we attempt to cross the river. On the bank of the river, just by the force in front, was a temple. We fired a volley, and made for the temple, in which we took shelter, having one man killed and one wounded. From the door of the temple we fired on every insurgent that happened to shew himself. Finding that they could do nothing against us whilst we remained inside, they heaped wood all round and set it on fire. When we could no longer remain inside on account of the smoke and heat, we threw off what clothes we had, and, each taking a musket, charged through the fire. Seven of us out of the twelve got into the water; but before we had gone far, two poor fellows were shot. There were only five of us left now; and we had to swim whilst the insurgents followed us along both banks, wading

and firing as fast as they could. After we had gone three miles down the stream [probably swimming and wading by turns], one of our party, an artilleryman, to rest himself, began swimming on his back, and not knowing in what direction he was swimming, got on shore, and was killed. When we had got down about six miles, firing from both sides [of the river] ceased; and soon after we were hailed by some natives, on the Oude side, who asked us to come on shore, and said they would take us to their rajah, who was friendly to the English.' This proved to be the case; for Lieutenant Delafosse, Lieutenant Mowbray Thomson, and one or two companions, remained in security and comparative comfort throughout the month of July, until an opportunity occurred for joining an English force.

Although the boat-adventure just narrated was full of painful excitement, ending in the death of nearly all the persons by shooting or drowning – yet there is one still to be noticed more saddening in its character, for the sufferers were reserved for a worse death. The name of Sir Hugh Wheeler is connected with this adventure in a way not easily to be accounted for; Mr Shepherd and Lieutenant Delafosse were not witnesses of it, and no reliable personal narrative is obtainable from any one who was actually present when it occurred. The probability is, that Sir Hugh, although wounded in the intrenchment, did not die until the boat-expedition had commenced, and that the same boat contained his daughter and his (living or dead) body. At anyrate, this was the last the world could hear of a brave old soldier, who

went to India fifty-four years before; who fought with Lord Lake before Delhi in 1804; who took an active part in the Punjaub war; and who had been military commander of the Cawnpore district from 1850 to 1857. It was also the last to be heard of Brigadier Jack, who commanded the Cawnpore cantonment; and of many brave English officers, from colonels down to ensigns, of both the English and the native regiments.

Whether the general was alive or dead, and by whomsoever accompanied, it appears certain that a large party rowed many miles down the Ganges. One account states that Baboo Rambuksh, a zemindar of Dowreea Kheyra near Futtehpoor, stopped the boats, captured the persons who were in them, and sent them in carts as prisoners back to Cawnpore. The names of Mr Reid, Mr Thomas Greenway, Mr Kirkpatrick, Mr Mackenzie, Captain Mackenzie, and Dr Harris, were mentioned in connection with this band of unfortunates; but accuracy in this particular is not to be insured. The narrative given by Nujoor Jewarree, the native afterwards examined by English officers at Cawnpore, was different in many points, and much more detailed. He stated that the boat in question, after proceeding some distance, got upon a sand-bank, where there was a severe encounter; the sepoys not only ran along the shore, but followed in boats shooting at the victims as soon as they got within musket-range, and receiving many fatal shots in return. A freshet in the river released the boat, and the voyage recommenced. Meanwhile, the probable escape of this party being reported to

Nena Sahib, he ordered three companies of the 3d Oude infantry to pursue the boat, and effect a complete capture. The boat was soon after taken, and all the occupants seized as prisoners. 'There came out of that boat,' said Nujoor Jewarree, 'sixty sahibs (gentlemen), twenty-five memsahibs (ladies), and four children – one boy and three half-grown girls.' His story then proceeded to details which, if correct, shew that Sir Hugh Wheeler was in the boat, and still alive; for a contest ensued between Nena and some of the soldiers whether or not the old general should be put to death: many of the sepoys wishing to preserve his life.

It will become apparent to the reader, from the nature of the above details, that the true story of the boat-catastrophe at Cawnpore will probably never be fully told. All that we positively know is, that one portion of the wretched victims met their death in the river, by muskets, swords, and drowning; and that two other portions were carried back to a captivity worse even than that of the intrenchment.

The proceedings of Nena Sahib, after the iniquitous treachery of the 27th of June, bore evident relation to his own advancement as an independent chieftain. At sunset on that day he held a review of all the rebel troops around Cawnpore on a plain between the now deserted intrenchment and the Ganges. They appear to have consisted of five regiments of Bengal native infantry, two of Oude native infantry, one of Bengal cavalry, two of Oude cavalry, two of irregular cavalry, a battery of field-guns, besides sundry detachments of regiments, and marauders who

became temporary soldiers in the hope of sharing pillage. Guns were fired in honour of the Nena as sovereign, of his brother as governor-general, and of an ambitious Brahmin as commander-in-chief, of the newly restored Mahratta kingdom. From day to day more troops joined his standard, after mutinying at various stations on all sides of Cawnpore. Twenty thousand armed men are said to have been in that city by the 10th of July; and as the Nena was very slow in awarding to them any of his ill-gotten wealth, they recompensed themselves by plundering the inhabitants, under pretext of searching for concealed Europeans. Cawnpore was thus plunged into great misery, and speedily had cause to lament the absence of its former masters. Nena created new offices, for bestowal upon those who had served him; and he ordered the neighbouring zemindars to pay to him the revenue that had wont to be paid to the Company. He caused to be proclaimed by beat of tom-tom, throughout Cawnpore and the surrounding district, that he had entirely conquered the British; and that, their period of reign in India having been completed, he was preparing to drive them out foot by foot. During this heyday of self-assumed power, he issued many remarkable proclamations, worthy of note as indications of his ambitious views, of his hopes as dependent on the mass of the native people, and of the stigma which he sought to throw on the British government. Some of these proclamations are given in full at the end of the present chapter. There are many facts which lend support to the supposition that this grasp at power

and wealth was suggested to him by the gradual development of events. He probably entertained crafty designs and suppressed vindictiveness from the outset; but these did not shew themselves openly until the native troops at the cantonment had rebelled. Seeing a door opened by others, which might possibly lead him to power and to vengeance, he seized the occasion and entered.

The last acts of the Cawnpore tragedy now await our attention.

What horrors the poor women suffered during their eighteen days of captivity under this detestable miscreant, none will ever fully know; partial glimpses only of the truth will ever come to light. According to the ayah's narrative, already noticed, the women and children who were conveyed from the boats into captivity were a hundred and fifteen in number. The poor creatures (the women and elder girls) were sought to be tempted by an emissary of the Nena to enter quietly into his harem; but they one and all expressed a determination to die where they were, and with each other, rather than yield to dishonour. They were then destined to be given up to the sensual licence of the sepoys and sowars who had aided in their capture; but the heroic conduct of Sir Hugh Wheeler's daughter is said to have deterred the ruffians. What this 'Judith of Cawnpore' really did, is differently reported. Her heroism was manifested, in one version of the story, by an undaunted and indignant reproach against the native troops for their treachery to the English who had fed and clothed them, and for their cowardice in molesting defenceless women; in another version, she shot down five sepoys

in succession with a revolver, and then threw herself into a well to escape outrage; in a third, given by Mr Shepherd, this English lady, being taken away by a trooper of the 2d native cavalry to his own hut, rose in the night, secured the trooper's sword, killed him and three other men, and then threw herself into a well, while a fourth version, on the authority of the ayah, represents the general's daughter as cutting off the heads of no less than five men in the trooper's hut. These accounts, incompatible one with another, nevertheless reveal to us a true soldier's daughter, an English gentlewoman, resolved to proceed to any extremity in defence of her own purity.

The victims were detained three days at Nena's camp, with only a little parched grain to eat, dirty water to drink, and the hard ground to lie upon, without matting or beds of any kind. The ayah states that the Nena, after the events of the 27th of June, sent to ask the temporarily successful King of Delhi what he should do with the women and children; to which a reply was received, that they were not to be killed. Whether this statement be right or wrong, the captives were taken from the camp to Cawnpore, and there incarcerated in a house near the Assembly Rooms, consisting of outbuildings of the medical dépôt, shortly before occupied by Sir George Parker. Here they were joined by more than thirty other European women and children, the unhappy relics of the boat-expedition that had been recaptured near Futtehpoor in the vain attempt to escape. Without venturing to decide whether the ayah, Nujoor Jewarree, Mr Shepherd,

or Lieutenant Delafosse was most nearly correct in regard of numbers; or whether Sir Hugh Wheeler was at that time alive or dead – it appears tolerably certain that many unhappy prisoners were brought back into Cawnpore on the 1st of July. All the men were butchered in cold blood on the evening of the same day. One officer's wife, with her child, clung to her husband with such desperate tenacity that they could not be separated; and all three were killed at once. The other women were spared for the time. This new influx, together with five members of the Greenway family, swelled the roll of prisoners in the small building to a number that has been variously estimated from a hundred and fifty to two hundred, nearly all women and children. Their diet was miserably insufficient; and their sufferings were such that many died through want of the necessities of life. 'It is not easy to describe,' says Mr Shepherd, 'but it may be imagined, the misery of so many helpless persons: some wounded, others sick, and all labouring under the greatest agony of heart for the loss of those, so dear to them, who had so recently been killed (perhaps before their own eyes); cooped up night and day in a small low pukha-roofed house, in the hottest season of the year, without beds or punkahs, for a whole fortnight – and constantly reviled and insulted by a set of brutish ruffians keeping watch over them.'

Added to all these suffering women and children, were those belonging to the second boat-expedition from Futteghur. It will be remembered, from the details given in a former page, that one party from this fort reached Bithoor about the middle of

June, and were at once murdered by orders of Nena Sahib; while another body, after a manly struggle against the rebels for two or three weeks, did not prosecute their voyage downwards until July. It will throw light on the perils and terrors of these several boat-adventures to transcribe a few sentences from an official account by Mr G. J. Jones, a civil servant of the Company, who left Futteghur with the rest on the 4th of July, but happily kept clear of the particular boat-load which went down to Cawnpore: 'We had not proceeded far, when it was found that Colonel Goldie's boat was much too large and heavy for us to manage; it was accordingly determined to be abandoned; so all the ladies and children were taken into Colonel Smith's boat. A little delay was thus caused, which the sepoys took advantage of to bring a gun to bear on the boats; the distance, however, was too great; every ball fell short. As soon as the ladies and children were all safely on board, we started, and got down as far as Singheerampore without accident, although fired upon by the villagers. Here we stopped a few minutes to repair the rudder of Colonel Smith's boat; and one out of the two boatmen we had was killed by a matchlock ball. The rudder repaired, we started again, Colonel Smith's boat taking the lead; we had not gone beyond a few yards, when our boat grounded on a soft muddy sand-bank; the other boat passed on; all hands got into the water to push her; but, notwithstanding all our efforts, we could not manage to move her. We had not been in this unhappy position half an hour, when two boats, apparently empty, were seen coming down the stream.

They came within twenty yards of us, when we discovered they carried sepoy, who opened a heavy fire, killing and wounding several. Mr Churcher, senior, was shot through the chest; Mr Fisher, who was just behind me, was wounded in the thigh. Hearing him call out, I had scarcely time to turn round, when I felt a smart blow on my right shoulder; a bullet had grazed the skin and taken off a little of the flesh. Major Robertson was wounded in the face. The boats were now alongside of us. Some of the sepoy had already got into our boat. Major Robertson, seeing no hope, begged the ladies to come into the water rather than fall into their hands. While the ladies were throwing themselves into the water, I jumped into the boat, took up a loaded musket, and, going astern, shot a sepoy... Mr and Mrs Fisher were about twenty yards from the boat; he had his child in his arms, apparently lifeless. Mrs Fisher could not stand against the current; her dress, which acted like a sail, knocked her down, when she was helped up by Mr Fisher... Early the next morning a voice hailed us from the shore, which we recognised as Mr Fisher's. He came on board, and informed us that his poor wife and child had been drowned in his arms.'

The occupants of the boat that prosecuted the voyage down to Cawnpore, or rather Bithoor, suffered greatly: the hands of the gentlemen who were on board, and who pulled the boat, were terribly blistered; the women and children suffered sad hardships; and all were worn down by fatigue and anxiety. At Bithoor, so far as the accounts are intelligible, Nena Sahib's son

seized the boat, and sent all the unfortunate Europeans in her into confinement at Cawnpore. As in other parts of this mournful tragedy, it will be vain to attempt accuracy in the statement of the numbers of those that suffered; but there is a subsidiary source of information, possessing a good deal of interest in connection with the July occurrences. When, at a later date, the reconquerors of Cawnpore were in a position to attempt a solution of the terrible mystery; when the buildings of Cawnpore were searched, and the inhabitants examined, for any documents relating to the suffering Europeans – a paper was found, written in the Mahratta language, in the house of a native doctor who had been in charge of the prisoners, or some of them. It was, or professed to be, a list of those who were placed under his care on Tuesday the 7th of July; but whether invalids only, does not clearly appear. All the names were given, with some inaccuracy in spelling; which, however, cannot be considered as rendering the document untrustworthy. In it were to be found large families of Greenways, Reids, Jacobis, Fitzgeralds, Dempsters, and others known to have been in Cawnpore about that time. They were a hundred and sixty-three in number. To this hapless group was added another list, containing the names of forty-seven fugitives belonging to the *second* boat-party from Futteghur, who are reported as having arrived on the 11th of July, and who included many members of the families of the Goldies, Smiths, Tuckers, Heathcotes, &c., already named in connection with the Futteghur calamities. The Mahratta document gave altogether the names of

two hundred and ten persons; but it was silent on the question how many other Europeans were on those days in the clutches of the ruthless chieftain of Bithoor. A further list contained the names of about twenty-six persons, apparently all women and children, who died under this native doctor's hands between the 7th and the 15th, diminishing to that extent the number of those left for massacre. To most of the names 'cholera,' or 'diarrhœa,' or 'dysentery' was appended, as the cause of death; to two names, 'wounds;' while one of the patients was 'a baby two days old.' In what a place, and under what circumstances, for an infant to be born, and to bear its two wretched days of life!

Let us follow Mr Shepherd's two narratives – one public, for government information; one in a letter, relating more especially to his own personal troubles and sufferings – concerning the crowning iniquity of Nena Sahib at Cawnpore.

After his capture, on attempting to hasten from the intrenchment to the city, the commissary was subjected to a sort of mock-trial, and condemned to three years' imprisonment with hard labour; on what plea or evidence, is not stated. He implies that if he had been known as an Englishman, he would certainly have been put to death. On the third day after his capture he heard a rumour of certain movements among his unfortunate compatriots in the intrenchment. 'Oh! how I felt,' he exclaims, 'when, in confinement, I heard that the English were going in safety! I could not keep my secret, but told the subadar of the prison-guard that I was a Christian; I nearly lost my life by this

exposure.' Mr Shepherd was confined for twenty-four days in a miserable prison, with heavy fetters on his legs, and only so much parched grain for food as would prevent actual starvation. As days wore on, he obtained dismal evidence that the departure from the intrenchment had not been safely effected; that coward treachery had been displayed by the Nena; that innocent lives had been taken; and that the survivors were held in horrible thralldom by that cruel man. The commissary was a prisoner within the city during all the later days of the tragedy; whether he was within earshot of the sufferers, is not stated; but the following contains portions of his narrative relating to that period: 'Certain spies, whether real or imaginary is not known, were brought to the Nena as being the bearers of letters supposed to have been written to the British [at Allahabad] by the helpless females in their captivity; and with these letters some of the inhabitants of the city were believed to be implicated. It was therefore decreed by Nena Sahib that the spies, together with all the women and children, as also the few gentlemen whose lives had been spared, should be put to death.' Mr Shepherd connected these gentlemen with the Futteghur fugitives, concerning whom, however, he possessed very little information. It was a further portion of Nena's decree, that all the baboos (Bengalees employed as clerks) of the city, and every individual who could read or write English, should have their right hands and noses cut off. At length, on the 15th, just before quitting Cawnpore in the vain hope of checking the advance of a British column, this savage put his decrees into

execution. 'The native spies were first put to the sword; after them the gentlemen, who were brought from the outbuildings in which they had been confined, and shot with bullets. Then the poor females were ordered to come out; but neither threats nor persuasions could induce them to do so. They laid hold of each other by dozens, and clung so closely that it was impossible to separate or drag them out of the building. The troopers therefore brought muskets, and after firing a great many shots through the doors, windows, &c., rushed in with swords and bayonets. Some of the helpless creatures in their agony fell down at the feet of their murderers, and begged them in the most pitiful manner to spare their lives; but to no purpose. The fearful deed was done deliberately and determinedly, in the midst of the most dreadful shrieks and cries of the victims. From a little before sunset till dark was occupied in completing the dreadful deed. The doors of the buildings were then locked for the night, and the murderers went to their homes. Next morning it was found, on opening the doors, that some ten or fifteen females, with a few of the children, had managed to escape from death by hiding under the murdered bodies of their fellow-prisoners. A fresh command was thereupon sent to murder these also; but the survivors not being able to bear the idea of being cut down, rushed out into the compound, and seeing a well there, threw themselves into it. The dead bodies of those murdered on the previous evening were then ordered to be thrown into the same well; and julluds were appointed to drag them away like dogs.'

Mr Shepherd himself did not witness this slaughter; no looker-on, so far as is known, has placed upon record his or her account of the scene. Nor does there appear any trustworthy evidence to shew what the poor women endured in the period, varying from four to eighteen days, during which they were in the Nena's power; but the probability is fearfully great that they passed through an ordeal which the mind almost shrinks from contemplating. Mr Shepherd was evidently of this opinion. While telling his tale of misery relating to those poor ill-used creatures, he hinted at 'sufferings and distresses such as have never before been experienced or heard of on the face of the earth.' It was in his agony of grief that he wrote this; when, on the 17th of July, a victorious English column entered Cawnpore; and when, immediately on his liberation, he hastened like others to the house of slaughter. Only when the manacles had been struck from his limbs, and he had become once more a free man, did he learn the full bitterness of his lot. 'God Almighty has been graciously pleased to spare my poor life,' was the beginning of a letter written by him on that day to a brother stationed at Agra. 'I am the only individual saved among all the European and Christian community that inhabited this station.' [Nearly but not exactly true.] 'My poor dear wife, my darling sweet child Polly, poor dear Rebecca and her children, and poor innocent children Emmeline and Martha, as also Mrs Frost and poor Mrs Osborne' [these being the members of his family whom he had left in the intrenchment on the 24th of June, when he set out

disguised on his fruitless mission], ‘were all most inhumanly butchered by the cruel insurgents on the day before yesterday;’ and his letter then conveyed the outpourings of a heart almost riven by such irreparable losses.

While reserving for a future chapter all notice of the brilliant military movements by which a small band of heroes forced a way inch by inch from Allahabad to Cawnpore; and of the struggle made by the Nena, passionately but ineffectually, to maintain his ill-gotten honours as a self-elected Mahratta sovereign – it may nevertheless be well in this place to follow the story of the massacre to its close – to know how much was left, and of what kind, calculated to render still more vividly evident the fate of the victims.

Never, while life endures, will the English officers and soldiers forget the sight which met their gaze when they entered Cawnpore on the 17th of July. It was frequently observed that all were alike deeply moved by the atrocities that came to light in many parts of Northern India. Calcutta, weeks and even months afterwards, contained ladies who had escaped from various towns and stations, and who entered the Anglo-Indian capital in most deplorable condition: ears, noses, lips, tongues, hands, cut off; while others had suffered such monstrous and incredibly degrading barbarities, that they resolutely refused all identification, preferring to remain in nameless obscurity, rather than their humiliation should be known to their friends in England. Their children, in many instances, had their eyes

gougged out, and their feet cut off. Many were taken to Calcutta in such hurry and confusion, that it remained long in doubt from what places they had escaped; and an instance is recorded of a little child, who belonged no one knew to whom, and whose only account of herself was that she was 'Mamma's pet:' mournfully touching words, telling of a gentle rearing and a once happy home. An officer in command of one of the English regiments, speaking of the effect produced on his men by the sights and rumours of fiend-like cruelty, observed: 'Very little is said among the men or officers, the subject being too maddening; but there is a curious expression discernible in every face when it is mentioned – a stern compression of the lips, and a fierce glance of the eye, which shew that when the time comes, no mercy will be shewn to those who have shewn none.' He told of fearful deeds; of two little children tortured to death, and portions of their quivering flesh forced down the throats of their parents, who were tied up naked, and had been compelled to witness the slaughter of their innocent ones. The feelings of those who were not actually present at the scenes of horror are well expressed in a letter written by a Scottish officer, who was hemmed in at Agra during many weeks, when he longed to be engaged in active service chastising the rebels. He had, some months before, been an officer in one of the native regiments that mutinied at Cawnpore; and, in relation to the events at that place, he said: 'I am truly thankful that most of the officers of my late corps died of fever in the intrenchment, previous to the awful massacre.

Would that it had been the will of Heaven that all had met the same fate, fearful as that was. For weeks exposed to a scorching sun, without shelter of any kind, and surrounded by the dying and the dead, their ears ringing with the groans of the wounded, the shouts of sun-struck madmen, the plaintive cries of children, the bitter sobs and sighs of bereaved mothers, widows, and orphans. Even such a death was far better than what fell to the lot of many. Not even allowed to die without being made witnesses of the bloody deaths of all they loved on earth, they were insulted, abused, and finally, after weeks of such treatment, cruelly and foully murdered. One sickens, and shudders at the bare mention of it... Oh! how thankful I am that I have no wife, no sisters out here.' It was a terrible crisis that could lead officers, eight or ten thousand miles away from those near and dear to them, to say this.

It is necessary, as a matter of historical truth, to describe briefly the condition of the house of slaughter on the 17th of July; and this cannot be better done than in the words employed by the officers and soldiers in various letters written by them, afterwards made public. The first that we shall select runs thus: 'I have seen the fearful slaughter-house; and I also saw one of the 1st native infantry men, according to order, wash up part of the blood which stains the floor, before being hanged.' [This order will presently be noticed in the words of Brigadier Neill.] 'There were quantities of dresses, clogged thickly with blood; children's frocks, frills, and ladies' underclothing of all kinds; boys'

trousers; leaves of Bibles, and of one book in particular, which seems to be strewed over the whole place, called *Preparation for Death*; broken daguerreotypes; hair, some nearly a yard long; bonnets, all bloody; and one or two shoes. I picked up a bit of paper with the words on it, "Ned's hair, with love;" and opened and found a little bit tied up with ribbon. The first [troops] that went in, I believe, saw the bodies with their arms and legs sticking out through the ground. They had all been thrown in a heap in the well.' A second letter: 'The house was alongside the Cawnpore hotel, where the Nena lived. I never was more horrified. I am not exaggerating when I tell you that the soles of my boots were more than covered with the blood of these poor wretched creatures. Portions of their dresses, collars, children's socks, and ladies' round hats, lay about, saturated with their blood; and in the sword-cuts on the wooden pillars of the room, long dark hair was sticking, carried by the edge of the weapon, and there hung their tresses – a most painful sight. I picked up a mutilated Prayer-book; it appeared to have been open at page 36 of the Litany, where I have little doubt those poor creatures sought and found consolation in that beautiful supplication; it is there sprinkled with blood.' A third: 'We found that the Nena had murdered all the women and children that he had taken prisoners, and thrown them naked down a well. The women and children had been kept in a sort of zenana, and no attention whatever paid to cleanliness. In that place they had been butchered, as the ground was covered with clotted blood. One poor woman

had evidently been working, as a small work-box was open, and the things scattered about. There were several children's small round hats, evidently shewing that that was their prison. The well close by was one of the most awful sights imaginable.' A fourth: 'It is an actual and literal fact, that the floor of the inner room was several inches deep in blood all over; it came over men's shoes as they stepped. Tresses of women's hair, children's shoes, and articles of female wear, broad hats and bonnets, books, and such like things, lay scattered all about the rooms. There were the marks of bullets and sword-cuts on the walls – not high up, as if men had fought – but low down, and about the corners where the poor crouching creatures had been cut to pieces. The bodies of the victims had been thrown indiscriminately into a well – a mangled heap, with arms and legs protruding.' Some of the officers, by carefully examining the walls, found scraps of writing in pencil, or scratched in the plaster, such as, 'Think of us' – 'Avenge us' – 'Your wives and families are here in misery and at the disposal of savages' – 'Oh, oh! my child, my child.' One letter told of a row of women's shoes, *with bleeding amputated feet in them*, ranged in cruel mockery on one side of a room; while the other side exhibited a row of children's shoes, filled in a similarly terrible way; but it is not certain whether the place referred to was Cawnpore. Another writer mentioned an incident which, unless supported by collateral testimony, seems wanting in probability. It was to the effect that when the 78th Highlanders entered Cawnpore, they found the remains of Sir

Hugh Wheeler's daughter. They removed the hair carefully from the head; sent some of it to the relations of the unfortunate lady; divided the rest amongst themselves; counted every single hair in each parcel; and swore to take a terrible revenge by putting to death as many mutineers as there were hairs. The storm of indignant feeling that might suggest such a vow can be understood easily enough; but the alleged mode of manifestation savours somewhat of the melodramatic and improbable.

A slight allusion has been made above to Brigadier Neill's proceedings at Cawnpore, after the fatal 17th of July. In what relation he stood to the reconquering force will be noticed in its due place; but it may be well here to quote a passage from a private letter, written independently of his public dispatches: 'I am collecting all the property of the deceased, and trying to trace if any have survived; but as yet have not succeeded in finding one.' [Captain Bruce's research, presently to be mentioned, had not then been made.] 'Man, woman, and child, seem all to have been murdered. As soon as that monster Nena Sahib heard of the success of our troops, and of their having forced the bridge about twenty miles from Cawnpore, he ordered the wholesale butchery of the poor women and children. I find the officers' servants behaved shamefully, and were in the plot, all but the lowest-caste ones. They deserted their masters and plundered them. Whenever a rebel is caught, he is immediately tried, and unless he can prove a defence, he is sentenced to be hanged at once; but the chief rebels or ringleaders I make first clean up

a certain portion of the pool of blood, still two inches deep, in the shed where the fearful murder and mutilation of women and children took place. To touch blood is most abhorrent to the high-caste natives; they think by doing so they doom their souls to perdition. Let them think so. My object is to inflict a fearful punishment for a revolting, cowardly, barbarous deed, and to strike terror into these rebels... The well of mutilated bodies – alas! containing upwards of two hundred women and children – I have had decently covered in and built up as one grave.’

With one additional testimony, we will close this scene of gloomy horror. The Earl of Shaftesbury, as was noticed in a former page, took occasion soon after the news of the Cawnpore atrocities reached London, to advert at a public meeting to the shrinking abhorrence with which those deeds were regarded, and to the failure of the journalists to present the full and fearful truth. He himself mentioned an incident, not as an example of the worst that had been done by the incarnate fiends at Cawnpore, but to indicate how much remains to be told if pen dare write or tongue utter it: ‘I have seen a copy of a letter written and sent to England by an officer of rank who was one of the first that entered Cawnpore a few hours after the perpetration of the frightful massacre... To his unutterable dismay, he saw a number of European women stripped stark naked, lying on their backs, fastened by the arms and legs; and there many of them had been lying four or five days exposed to a burning sun; others had been more recently laid down; others again had been actually

hacked to pieces, and so recently, that the blood which streamed from their mangled bodies was still warm. He found children of ten, twelve, thirteen, and fourteen years of age treated in the same horrible manner at the corners of the streets and in all parts of the town: attended by every circumstance of insult, the most awful and the most degrading, the most horrible and frightful to the conception, and the most revolting to the dignity and feelings of civilised men. Cawnpore was only a sample of what was perpetrated in various parts of that vast region, and that with a refinement of cruelty never before heard of. Women and children have been massacred before; but I don't believe there is any instance on record where children have been reserved in cold blood to be most cruelly and anatomically tortured in the presence of their horrified parents before being finally put to death.'

Something must be said here concerning the devastated property at Cawnpore, in relation to the miserable beings to whom it had once belonged. When the city was again in British hands, and the Rajah of Bithoor driven out with the curses of all English hearts resting on him, it was found to be in such a devastated state, so far as regarded Europeans, that Brigadier Neill was at a loss what to do with the wrecks of spoliated property. He requested Captain Bruce, of the 5th Punjaub cavalry, whom he had appointed temporarily superintendent of police, to write to the Calcutta newspapers, inviting the aid of any one able to identify the property. The letter said: 'The property

of the unfortunate people who lost their lives here has been collected in one spot; and any which can be recognised will be handed over to the owners, or put up to auction for the benefit of the estates of the deceased. There is a good deal of property belonging to the different mercantile firms here, as well as to the heirs of deceased officers, &c.; but when I mention that every house was gutted, and the property scattered over sixty or seventy square miles of country, it will be apparent how impossible it was to take care of individual interests... Almost all the former European residents here having been murdered by the miscreant Nena Sahib, there is no one forthcoming to recognise or give any information concerning the property that has been saved.' At a later date Captain Bruce captured one of the boatmen who had come down from Futteghur with the first party of unhappy fugitives from that place; the man had a large amount of English jewellery in his possession, comprising brooches, earrings, bracelets, clasps, studs, shawl-pins, hair-lockets, gold chains, and similar articles. The boatman had probably secreted the jewel-caskets of the unfortunate ladies, at or shortly before the forcible landing of the boat-party at Bithoor.

A much more painful inquiry, than any relating to property, was that relating to the loss of life. When Captain Bruce, after many days of sedulous inquiry, had collected all the available information bearing on the fate of the hapless sufferers, he arrived at these conclusions – that the only Europeans who escaped from the boat-massacre, and really obtained their

liberty, were two officers and two soldiers – probably Lieutenant Delafosse and three of his companions; that the only one who remained in Cawnpore and yet preserved his life, was a pensioner of the 3d light dragoons, who was concealed in the city by a trooper of the 4th light cavalry; and that there were, on the 31st of July, six Englishmen, three Englishwomen, and three children, concealed and protected by the Rajah of Calpee, across the Jumna; but it was not stated, and perhaps not known, whether they had gone thither from Cawnpore. Mr Shepherd himself was not included in this list. When Lieutenant Delafosse, about a fortnight after the recapture of Cawnpore, was requested by Brigadier Neill to furnish the best list he could of the English sufferers at that place, he endeavoured to separate the victims into three groups, according as they had died in the intrenchment, in the boats, or in the house of slaughter. But this was necessarily a very imperfect list; for, on the one hand, he knew nothing of the two parties of fugitives from Futteghur; while, on the other, he speaks of many persons who came into the station with their families on account of disturbance, and whose names he did not know. Taking the matter in a military estimate, however, he gave the names of one general (Wheeler), one brigadier (Jack), three colonels, five majors, thirteen captains, thirty-nine lieutenants, five ensigns, and nine doctors or army-surgeons; Lady and Miss Wheeler, Sir George Parker, and two clergymen or missionaries, were among the other members in his melancholy list. No guess can be made of the total numbers from this document, for the

persons included under the word 'family' are seldom specified by name or number. The mournful truth was indeed only too evident that many complete families – families consisting of very numerous members – were among the slaughtered. When the lists began to be made out, of those who had been known as Cawnpore residents or Futteghur fugitives, and who were found dead when the English recaptured the place, there were such entries as these – 'Greenway: Mr, two Mrs, Martha, Jane, John, Henry' – 'Fitzgerald: John, Margaret, Mary, Tom, Ellen' – 'Gilpin: Mrs, William, Harriet, Sarah, Jane, F.' – 'Reid: Mr, Susan, James, Julia, C., Charles' – 'Reeve: Mrs, Mary, Catherine, Ellen, Nelly, Jane, Cornelia, Deon.'

Religious men, thoughtful men – and, on the other hand, men wrought up to a pitch of exasperated feeling – afterwards spoke of the fatal well as a spot that should be marked in some way for the observance of posterity. Two church missionaries were among the murdered at Cawnpore; and it was urged in many quarters that a Christian church, built with the splendour and resources of a great nation, would be a suitable erection at that spot – as an appropriate memorial to the dead, a striking lesson to the living, and the commencement of a grand effort to Christianise the heathen millions of India. Whether a church be the right covering for a hideous pit containing nearly two hundred mangled bodies of gentle English women and children; and whether rival creeds would struggle for precedency in the management of its construction, its details, and the form of its

service – may fairly admit of doubt; but with or without a church, the English in no parts of the world are ever likely to forget The Well at Cawnpore!

Note

Nena Sahib's Proclamations.— When Generals Neill and Havelock were at Cawnpore, during a period subsequent to that comprised within the range of the present chapter, they found many proclamations which had been printed in the Mahratta language by order of Nena Sahib, as if for distribution among the natives under his influence. These proclamations were afterwards translated into English, and included among the parliamentary papers relating to India. A few of them may fittingly be reproduced here, to shew by what means that consummate villain sought to attain his ends.

The following appears to have been issued on or about the 1st of July: – ‘As, by the kindness of God and the ikbal or good-fortune of the Emperor, all the Christians who were at Delhi, Poonah, Satara, and other places, and even those 5000 European soldiers who went in disguise into the former city and were discovered, are destroyed and sent to hell by the pious and sagacious troops, who are firm to their religion; and as they have all been conquered by the present government, and as no trace of them is left in these places, it is the duty of all the subjects and servants of the government to rejoice at the

delightful intelligence, and to carry on their respective work with comfort and ease.'

This was accompanied by another: 'As, by the bounty of the glorious Almighty God and the enemy-destroying fortune of the Emperor, the yellow-faced and narrow-minded people have been sent to hell, and Cawnpore has been conquered, it is necessary that all the subjects and landowners should be as obedient to the present government as they had been to the former one; that all the government servants should promptly and cheerfully engage their whole mind in executing the orders of government; that it is the incumbent duty of all the ryots and landed proprietors of every district to rejoice at the thought that the Christians have been sent to hell, and both the Hindoo and Mohammedan religions have been confirmed; and that they should as usual be obedient to the authorities of the government, and never to suffer any complaint against themselves to reach the ears of the higher authority.'

On the 5th of the same month the Nena issued the following to the kotwal or Mayor of Cawnpore: 'It has come to our notice that some of the city people, having heard the rumours of the arrival of the European soldiers at Allahabad, are deserting their houses and going out into the districts; you are, therefore, directed to proclaim in each lane and street of the city that regiments of cavalry and infantry and batteries have been despatched to check the Europeans either at Allahabad or Futtehpoor; that the people should therefore remain in their houses without any

apprehension, and engage their minds in carrying on their work.'

Another proclamation displayed in an extraordinary way the Rajah's mode of practising on the credulity of the natives, by the most enormous and barefaced fictions: 'A traveller just arrived in Cawnpore from Calcutta states that in the first instance a council was held to take into consideration the means to be adopted to do away with the religion of the Mohammedans and Hindoos by the distribution of cartridges. The council came to this resolution, that, as this matter was one of religion, the services of seven or eight thousand European soldiers would be necessary, as 50,000 Hindustanis would have to be destroyed, and then the whole of the people of Hindostan would become Christians. A petition with the substance of this resolution was sent to the Queen Victoria, and it was approved. A council was then held a second time, in which English merchants took a part, and it was decided that, in order that no evil should arise from mutiny, large reinforcements should be sent for. When the dispatch was received and read in England, thousands of European soldiers were embarked on ships as speedily as possible, and sent off to Hindostan. The news of their being despatched reached Calcutta. The English authorities there ordered the issue of the cartridges, for the real intention was to Christianise the army first, and this being effected, the conversion of the people would speedily follow. Pigs' and cows' fat was mixed up with the cartridges; this became known through one of the Bengalese who was employed in the cartridge-making establishment. Of

those through whose means this was divulged, one was killed and the rest imprisoned. While in this country these counsels were being adopted, in England the vakeel (ambassador) of the Sultan of Roum (Turkey) sent news to the sultan that thousands of European soldiers were being sent for the purpose of making Christians of all the people of Hindostan. Upon this the sultan issued a firman to the King of Egypt to this effect: "You must deceive the Queen Victoria, for this is not a time for friendship, for my vakeel writes that thousands of European soldiers have been despatched for the purpose of making Christians the army and people of Hindostan. In this manner, then, this must be checked. If I should be remiss, then how can I shew my face to God; and one day this may come upon me also, for if the English make Christians of all in Hindostan, they will then fix their designs upon my country." When the firman reached the King of Egypt, he prepared and arranged his troops before the arrival of the English army at Alexandria, for this is the route to India. The instant the English army arrived, the King of Egypt opened guns upon them from all sides, and destroyed and sunk their ships, and not a single soldier escaped. The English in Calcutta, after the issue of the order for the cartridges, and when the mutiny had become great, were in expectation of the arrival of the army from London; but the Great God, in his omnipotence, had beforehand put an end to this. When the news of the destruction of the army of London became known, then the governor-general was plunged in grief and sorrow, and beat his head.

‘Done by order of the Peishwa Bahadoor, 13 Zekaida, 1273
Hegira.’

CHAPTER IX.

BENGAL AND THE LOWER GANGES: JUNE

When, through the media of telegrams, dispatches, and letters, the tragical events at Cawnpore became known in England, and were invested with an additional horror on account of a vague suspicion that worse remained untold, a painful and widely spread sensation was produced. Nay, more; in almost every part of the civilised world, whether or not in harmony with the British government on political and international questions, astonishment was excited by these recitals of unapproachable barbarity among a people who had acquired a sort of traditional character for mildness and gentleness. It was about the end of June when news of the Meerut outbreak reached London; and from that time each fortnightly mail revealed the truth that a larger and larger area of India was becoming involved in the troubles of insurrection – that a gradually increasing number of military officers and civil servants of the Company, with their wives and children, were placed in circumstances of imminent peril. Residents in the United Kingdom, any of whose relations and friends were stationed at Cawnpore, sought eagerly and anxiously, as each mail arrived, for indications that escape had been effected, or a rescuing force obtained. No such news

came, no such hopes were realised; darker and more silent was everything relating to that much-dreaded city, until at length the frightful climax became known.

There has been a designed avoidance, in the preceding chapters of this work, of any account of the measures adopted by the British government in military matters, or by the British nation in active benevolence, to remedy the disasters and allay the sufferings to which the Anglo-Indians had so suddenly been exposed; for, in truth, India knew little of such measures until August was far advanced. Whether all was done that might have been done to expedite the passage of British troops to India, is a question that will have to be considered in its proper place; the significant truth now to be borne in mind is that the Calcutta government had to meet the difficulties as best it could, with the scanty supply of troops at that time in India – sending to the Mauritius and the Cape of Good Hope for such reinforcements as might be available, but knowing that aid from England could not arrive for many months. The mode of treatment adopted here is naturally suggested by the course of events themselves. When the ramifications of the Revolt have been traced throughout the month of June, a chapter will then be devoted to the subjects above indicated; for, although Cawnpore carried us into July, we have yet to watch what was concurrently passing at other places.

We begin with the region extending from the Burmese frontier to the Doab, and forming the eastern portion of Northern India; it may for convenience be called Bengal, without any rigid

adherence to territorial subdivision.

The Indian government was not as yet troubled with any serious outbreaks at Chittagong or Dacca, or in any of the districts bounding the Bay of Bengal on the north and east. There were a few native troops at the first named of these two towns, belonging to one of the mutinous regiments at Barrackpore; but tranquillity was not disturbed by them. It is true that, when the disloyalty of the 34th became known, the inhabitants of Chittagong and Tipperah experienced some alarm lest the detachment of this regiment stationed at the first-named town might follow the pernicious example; but the Company's collector, having three lacs of rupees in hand, quietly removed his treasure on board a steamer; and all uneasiness was soon allayed. Along the extreme eastern border of the Bengal presidency, from Assam down through Dacca to Chittagong, the month of June similarly passed over without any disturbances calling for notice, although a temporary panic was excited in more than one spot. At Dacca, for instance, the approach of disbanded native mutineers was apprehended; and a mischievous set of Mohammedans, under one Keramut Ali, were detected in the endeavour to sow the seeds of disaffection; but by the firmness of the civil authorities, and the arrival of a hundred seamen in two pinnaces from the Company's steamers *Zenobia* and *Punjaub*, tranquillity was soon restored.

In the Calcutta and Barrackpore district, although no actual mutiny occurred, symptoms were presented that gave much

anxiety to the Europeans residing at the capital, and prompted energetic preventive measures. We have seen, in Chapter II., that much discontent was exhibited at Dumdum, Barrackpore, and Berhampore, between the months of January and May, by the native troops; that this discontent was (professedly) associated with the affair of the greased cartridges; that insubordination led to disarming and disbandment; that the news of the Meerut and Delhi atrocities in May greatly alarmed the Calcutta inhabitants; and that many addresses of loyalty and sympathy with the government were thenceforth presented. During the first half of June, the European residents looked with a sort of suspicious watchfulness at everything that was occurring around them, prepared to find the native troops treacherous, yet hoping for better things. The reliable forces in Calcutta at that time comprised H.M. 53d foot, nine hundred strong, and five hundred of H.M. 37th. A company of the 3d battalion Madras artillery; No. 2 horse field-battery; forty men of the royal artillery, recently arrived from Ceylon; and a wing of H.M. 35th foot, were at Barrackpore. The 78th Highlanders were at Chinsura. On the 13th of June, Calcutta was thrown into great agitation. A messenger was captured by the authorities, and confessed that the sepoys at Barrackpore and Calcutta had agreed to mutiny on that very night. Arrangements were immediately made for defending the city by the aid chiefly of volunteers, who had before then begun to organise themselves. The civilians took arms, marshalled themselves into companies and corps, and

paraded the streets in the English part of the city. During the two following nights, this patrolling was conducted very vigilantly; and every native met in the streets was required to give an account of his movements. On one occasion, Lady Canning, accompanied by the governor-general, the commander-in-chief, Generals Windham and Beatson, and a glittering staff, went to the parade-ground; where, the volunteers being all drawn up in full array, her ladyship presented them with colours, and made a complimentary address; to which Major Turnbull replied, as commandant of the 'Calcutta Volunteer Guards.'

The military proceedings on this occasion were as follow. Before light on Sunday morning the 14th, in consequence of a message received from head-quarters, a body of the 78th Highlanders was sent off hastily from Chinsura to Barrackpore, to disarm the native troops there; while five hundred of her Majesty's 37th foot, landed from Ceylon only the day before, were marched off to a point about midway between Calcutta and Barrackpore, to command the road during the disarming. About midnight an order arrived that some of the 37th should return instantly to the capital. It had been discovered that the deposed King of Oude, residing in a handsome house at Garden Reach, was engaged in some machinations with a prince of the Delhi family, inimical to the interests of the Europeans. A military force marched to his house at four o'clock on the morning of the 15th, surrounded the grounds, entered, and seized the king and his prime minister, together with a large quantity of papers.

Arrangements were immediately made for the safe custody of the two Oudians, until the papers could be fully examined. A document came to light, containing a Mohammedan sketch-map of Calcutta, dividing the city into sections; together with the plan for a general rising of natives on the centenary day of the battle of Plassy, the murder of all the Feringhees, and the establishment of a native 'raj' or dynasty on the ruins of that of the Company. It was deemed proper to adopt prompt measures on this occasion; all the native troops in Calcutta were disarmed as a precautionary measure, including the Calcutta militia, but excluding the governor-general's body-guard. The sepoys, who made no demur whatever, were disarmed in parties wherever they happened to be – at the Government House guard, the treasury, the mint, the bank, and the fort. Each party was confronted by a party of Europeans, and gave up arms on being so commanded; the arms and ammunition were then taken away by the European soldiers, nothing being left with the sepoys but their ramrods, with which to 'shoulder arms.' It was explained to them that the disarming was only a temporary precautionary measure; that they would receive pay and perform sentinel-duty as before; and that the arms would be restored to them as soon as public tranquillity was insured.

The inhabitants of Calcutta long continued to bear well in remembrance the 14th of June. For nearly a month the civilians had been in the habit of taking revolvers with them to church, balls, and parties; but on this day, such were the vague terrors of

slaughter whispered from mouth to mouth, that the excitement rose to a height of panic. One who was there at the time said: 'The infection of terror raged through all classes. Chowringhee and Garden Reach were abandoned for the fort and the vessels in the river. The shipping was crowded with fugitives; and in houses which were selected as being least likely to be attacked, hundreds of people gladly huddled together, to share the peculiar comfort which the presence of crowds imparts on such occasions. The hotels were fortified; bands of sailors marched through the thoroughfares, happy in the expectation of possible fighting and the certainty of grog. Every group of natives was scanned with suspicion. The churches and the course were abandoned for that evening. A rising, either of Hindoos or of Mussulmans, or perhaps of both, was looked upon as certain to happen in the course of the night. From Chandernagore the whole body of European and East Indian inhabitants emigrated to Calcutta; the *personnel* of government, the staff of the army, all in short who had anything to lose, preferred to come away and run the risk of losing it, rather than encounter the unknown danger.' A somewhat unworthy timidity seems, at first sight, to mark all this; but the civilians and private families of Calcutta, utterly unused to war, had been so horror-stricken by the accounts of murders of officers, violations of women, mutilations of little children, burnings of sick and wounded, and other atrocities perpetrated in Upper India, as to become in a certain sense paralysed. After the decisive measures adopted by the government on the 14th

and next following day, the inhabitants of the capital gradually recovered their equanimity; and the month closed peacefully.

Early in June, the sepoy cantoned at Barrackpore made the same kind of demonstration as at an earlier date – that is, they professed fidelity, and asked to be furnished with the new Enfield rifle. In the 43d regiment B. N. I., there was a general application made to Major Matthews, by native officers as well as sepoy, to this effect; accompanied by the expression of a desire to be sent to fight against the rebels at Delhi. The 70th B. N. I., almost to a man, came forward on the 5th of the month, and presented a petition to Colonel Kennedy, with a similar prayer. The petition began somewhat boastfully: ‘From the day on which his lordship the governor-general condescended to come in person to answer our petition, on which occasion General Hearsey translated to us his address, and which was fully explained to us by our colonel, interpreter, adjutant, and all the other officers of the regiment, our honour and name have been raised amongst our countrymen;’ and it ended with an abundant profession of loyalty towards the government. The 34th regiment B. N. I., or such of the men as were at Barrackpore, imitated the example of their fellow-soldiers; they sent a petition to Lieutenant-colonel Wheler on the 9th of June, expressive of their loyalty, and requesting that the new rifle might be served out to them. The government, in reply to all these petitions and demonstrations, stated that the supply of Enfield rifles received from England was too small to permit the granting of the request; but that the request itself was received

with much gratification by the governor-general, 'proving as it does that the men of these regiments consider there is nothing objectionable either in the rifles or in the cartridges to their caste or religion.'

Little was it suspected in how short a time all these complimentary exchanges of good words would be brought to nought. On the evening of the 13th came to light those plottings or suspicions of plottings which led to an imperative order for the disarming of the sepoys. In a private letter on this subject, the major-general said: 'Some villains in the corps were trying to incite the good men and true to mutiny; these good men ought to have given the villains up to justice;' but as they did not, he thought it a safe plan to disarm them all. When this determination was made known by the authorities, many of the English officers of the native regiments felt much vexed and hurt; they still relied on their men, and deemed it a humiliation to themselves that such a course should be deemed necessary. Captain Greene, of the 70th N. I., wrote to Major-general Hearsey, on the Sunday morning: 'Is it of any use my interceding with you on behalf of my old corps, which, for nigh twenty-five years, has been my pride and my home? I cannot express to you the pain with which I have just heard that they are this evening to be subjected to the indignity of being disarmed. Had the men misbehaved, I should have felt no sympathy for them; but they have not committed themselves in any way; and surely after the governor-general's laudatory order and expression of confidence, it would not be

too much to expect that a fair trial of their sincerity should be afforded.' Captain Greene proceeded to say that he knew the men thoroughly, and had the most firm and undoubted reliance on their fidelity. The authorities were not affected by this appeal. At four o'clock in the afternoon, the 35th and 78th British regiments were marched to the parade-ground at Barrackpore, with loaded muskets, and supported by six 12-pounders loaded with grape-shot. The native troops were then summoned to the parade, and ordered at once to surrender their arms; this they did quietly and promptly, for even if disposed to resist, the force against them was too formidable. In little more than an hour, the muskets of the disarmed regiments were on the way to Calcutta. The sepoys bore the trial quietly, but with many expressions of mortification.

Captain Greene, in the postscript to a letter written on the following day to the major-general, mentioned certain facts which ought to have opened his eyes to the possibility of deceit and danger. A Mussulman sepoy of the 70th regiment came to him on the 9th of the month, and after conversation on some contemplated movements of the captain, said: 'Whatever you do, do not take your lady with you.' He gave as a reason: 'Because the minds of the native soldiers are now in a state of inquietude; and it would be better to let the lady remain here till everything is settled in the country, as there is no knowing what might happen.' On being asked whether he had reason to doubt the regiment, he exclaimed: 'Who can tell the hearts of a thousand men!' He implied that a few evil men were endeavouring to corrupt the

rest. This communicative sepoy went on to observe, that the cartridge grievance, although founded on a misconception in the first instance, was afterwards used as a means of imposing on the ignorant. There were men who went about saying that the English endeavoured to destroy the caste and religion of the people; that the government ought to be uprooted; and that as the Company had been driven out of Cabool, so might it be driven out of the whole of India, if the people acted resolutely and with one accord. Another sepoy, a Hindoo, in the same regiment, told Captain Greene that the Mussulmans generally in all regiments were in the habit of talking to the effect that their 'raj' or supremacy was coming round again. Many others spoke indistinctly to him about dangers, and promised to protect him if peril arose. It may not be improbable that most of the men in that regiment were really disposed to be faithful, and that the danger arose from a smaller number of malcontents. Captain Greene went to see his men in the lines after the disarming; it was a painful interview to them all. 'I have been for upwards of an hour,' he wrote, 'endeavouring to allay the excited feelings of our men, who were in such a state of depression, that many were crying bitterly, and none could cook their food. Some, too, had sold their cooking utensils for a mere trifle in the bazaar.' The regiment had not been disbanded as if in disgrace, only disarmed as if for precaution; but the men nevertheless regarded it as a degradation. Some budmashes (scoundrels) had been amongst them in the night, and had urged them to desert, telling them that

handcuffs and manacles had been sent for. The captain earnestly implored that their arms should be given back to them: 'Unless something be speedily done to reassure them, the influence of their European officers will cease to exist, and a good regiment will crumble away before hopelessness and desertion. All of us, black and white, would be so thankful to you if you would get us back our arms, and sent away from here at once.' This request was not acceded to.

Within ten days after the disarming, a hundred and thirty-three men of the disarmed regiments (2d, 34th, 43d, and 70th) deserted from Barrackpore and Calcutta, nearly all belonging to the 43d. The magistrates and military authorities in many parts of Bengal were troubled with the arrival of these deserters, who came two or three at a time, and endeavoured to excite disaffection against a government which, as they alleged, had disgraced them without a cause. A reward of fifty rupees was offered for the apprehension of every deserter.

Departing from Calcutta and Barrackpore as centres, it may be well now to sketch the state of the surrounding districts during the month of June. Towards the northeast, many towns, especially Jessore, were thrown occasionally into excitement by occurrences which would have been regarded as trivial if happening at any other time, but which required watchful attention on the part of the authorities in the peculiarly sensitive state of the native mind. In the Dinagepore district, near the Bhotan frontier, several moulvies spread reports of the

intention of the government forcibly to convert native children to Christianity: these reports caused many of the children in the vernacular school at Muthoorapore to be withdrawn by their parents; and on an examination of the moulvies being ordered by the authorities, it was found that the fakeers and other religious mendicants were accustomed to carry treasonable letters and concealed correspondence within the bamboo sticks with which most of them were provided. North and west of the Anglo-Indian capital, a similar state of public affairs was presented; a succession of troublous symptoms that required attention, but without entailing serious consequences. In some instances disarmed sepoys were detected exciting disaffection; in others, seditious placards were posted up in the towns. In the country around Ramgurh a few circumstances transpired to produce temporary disquietude. The Ramgurh battalion was believed to be stanch; but as some discontent had spread among the troops in relation to the cartridge grievance, and as two or three petty chieftains exhibited symptoms of disloyalty, judicious and early precautions were taken against disaster – especially at Hazarebagh, where the treasury contained a lac of rupees, and where the jail, containing nine hundred prisoners, was guarded solely by two companies of a native regiment: a kind of guard which had proved very perilous at Meerut a few weeks earlier. At Midnapore, a sepoy of the jail-guard, detected in an attempt to excite mutiny among the men of the Shekhawuttie battalion, was tried, found guilty, and hanged.

The most serious event in the districts around Calcutta, perhaps, was one that occurred in the Sonthal Pergunnahs; in which the 5th irregular cavalry displayed a tendency, fatal on a small scale, and likely to have become much more disastrous if not speedily checked. Lieutenant Sir N. R. Leslie was adjutant of that regiment at Rohnee. On the 12th of June, this officer, Major Macdonald, and Assistant-surgeon Grant, while sitting in Sir Norman Leslie's compound, in the dusk of the evening, were suddenly attacked by three men armed with swords. Major Macdonald received a blow which laid his head open, and rendered him insensible for many hours; Mr Grant received sword-wounds on the arm and the leg; while Sir Norman was so severely wounded that he expired within half an hour. The miscreants escaped after this ferocious attack, without immediate detection.¹⁸ At first it was hoped and believed that

¹⁸ The following is an extract of a letter written by Major Macdonald, after the attack upon him and his brother-officers: 'Two days after, my native officer said he had found out the murderers, and that they were three men of my own regiment. I had them in irons in a crack, held a drumhead court-martial, convicted, and sentenced them to be hanged the next morning. I took on my own shoulders the responsibility of hanging them first, and asking leave to do so afterwards. That day was an awful one of suspense and anxiety. One of the prisoners was of very high caste and influence, and this man I determined to treat with the greatest ignominy, by getting the lowest caste man to hang him. To tell you the truth, I never for a moment expected to leave the hanging scene alive; but I was determined to do my duty, and well knew the effect that pluck and decision had on the natives. The regiment was drawn out; wounded cruelly as I was, I had to see everything done myself, even to the adjusting of the ropes, and saw them looped to run easy. Two of the culprits were paralysed with fear and astonishment, never dreaming that I should dare to hang them without an order from government.

the regiment had not been dishonoured by the presence of these murderers on the muster-roll; Mr Grant was of this opinion; but Major Macdonald, commandant of the regiment, took a less favourable view. The offenders, it soon appeared, belonged to the regiment; a chase was ordered; two of the men were found after a time, with their clothes smeared with blood; while the third, when taken, candidly owned that it was his sword that had given the death-stroke to Leslie. The murderers were speedily executed, but without giving any information touching the motives that led to their crime. Three sowars of the regiment, Ennus Khan, Kurreem Shere Khan, and Gamda Khan, received encomiums and rewards for the alacrity with which they had pursued the reckless men who had thus brought discredit on their corps. The official dispatches relating to this affair comprised two letters written by Major Macdonald to Captain Watson, an officer commanding a squadron of the same regiment at Bhagulpore; they afford curious illustration of the cheerful, daring, care-for-naught spirit in which the British officers were often accustomed to meet their difficulties during those exciting

The third said he would not be hanged, and called on the Prophet and on his comrades to rescue him. This was an awful moment; an instant's hesitation on my part, and probably I should have had a dozen of balls through me; so I seized a pistol, clapped it to the man's ear, and said, with a look there was no mistake about: "Another word out of your mouth, and your brains shall be scattered on the ground." He trembled, and held his tongue. The elephant came up, he was put on his back, the rope adjusted, the elephant moved, and he was left dangling. I then had the others up, and off in the same way. And after some time, when I had dismissed the men of the regiment to their lines, and still found my head on my shoulders, I really could scarcely believe it.'

scenes: 'I am as fairly cut and neatly scalped as any Red Indian could do it. I got three cracks in succession on the head before I knew I was attacked. I then seized my chair by the arms, and defended myself successfully from two of them on me at once; I guarded and struck the best way I could; and at last Grant and self drove the cowards off the field. This is against my poor head, writing; but you will be anxious to know how matters really were; I expect to be in high fever to-morrow, as I have got a bad gash into the skull besides being scalped.' This was written on the day after the murderous attack; and three days later the major wrote: 'My dear fellow, I have had a sad time of it, and am but little able to go through such scenes, for I am very badly wounded; but, thank God, my spirits and pluck never left me for a moment. When you see my poor old head, you will wonder I could hold it up at all. I have preserved my scalp in spirits of wine – such a jolly specimen!'

In Cuttack, bounding the northwest corner of the Bay of Bengal, many Mohammedans were detected in the attempt to sap the loyalty of the Shekhawuttie battalion. Lieutenant-colonel Forster, with the head-quarters of that corps at Midnapore, succeeded by his personal influence in keeping the men from anything beyond slight acts of insubordination; but he had many proofs, in that town and in the Cuttack district, that the Company's 'raj' or rule was being preached against by many emissaries of rebellion.

This rapid sketch will have shewn that the eastern divisions of

Bengal were not disturbed by any very serious tumults during the month of June. Incipient proofs of disaffection were, it is true, manifested in many places; but they were either unimportant in extent, or were checked before they could rise to perilous magnitude. In the western divisions, however, the troubles were more serious; the towns were further from Calcutta, nearer to the turbulent region of Oude; and these conditions of locality greatly affected the steadiness and honesty of the native troops.

During the earlier days of the month, considerable excitement prevailed in the districts of which Patna and Dinapoor are the chief towns; in consequence of the general spread of a belief, inculcated by the deserters from Barrackpore, that the government contemplated an active interference with the religion of the people. A similar delusion, it was speedily remembered, had existed in the same parts about two years earlier; the government had adopted such measures as, it was hoped, would remove the prejudice; but the events of 1857 shewed that the healing policy of 1855 had not been effective for the purpose in view. Until the 13th of June, the disaffection was manifested only by sullen complainings and indistinct threats; but on that day matters presented a more serious aspect. The various magistrates throughout the Patna division reported to the lieutenant-governor of Bengal, that although no acts of violence had been committed, the continuance of tranquillity would mainly depend on the fidelity of the native troops at Dinapoor, the most important military station in that part of India. Dinapoor may, in fact, be

regarded as the military post belonging to the great city of Patna, which is about ten miles distant.¹⁹ The magistrates also reported, as one result of their inquiries, that the Mohammedans in that division were thoroughly disaffected; and that if any disturbance occurred at head-quarters (Dinapoor), a rapid extension of the revolt would be almost inevitable. When these facts and feelings became known, such precautionary measures were adopted as seemed best calculated to avert the impending evils. An increase was made in the police force at Behar; the ghats or landing-places were carefully watched and regulated; the frontiers of the neighbouring disaffected districts were watched; a portion of the Company's treasure at Arrah and Chupra was sent off to Calcutta, and the rest removed to Patna for safe custody under a guard of Sikhs; a volunteer guard was formed in that city; measures were taken to defend the collectorate and the opium factories; six companies of the Sikh police battalion were marched from Soorie to Patna; and places of rendezvous for European residents were appointed at many of the stations, to facilitate a combined plan of action in the event of mutinous symptoms appearing among the native troops. The Rajahs of Bettiah and Hutwah addressed letters expressive of loyalty and affection towards the government, and placed men and

¹⁹ Dinapoor is remarkable for the fine barracks built by the Company for the accommodation of troops – for the officers, the European troops, and the native troops; most of the officers have commodious bungalows in the vicinity; and the markets or bazaars, for the supply of Europeans as well as natives, are unusually large and well supplied.

elephants at the disposal of the local authorities, to assist in the maintenance of tranquillity.

Towards the middle of the month, an alarm prevailed at Chupra and Arrah, consequent on the mutinous proceedings in certain towns further to the west, presently to be noticed. Large works were under construction near those places in connection with the East India Railway; and the Europeans engaged in those operations, as well as others resident in the two towns, made a hasty retreat, and sought for refuge at Dinapoor. The magistrates and most of the civil officers remained at their posts, and by their firmness prevented the alarm from degenerating into a panic. At Gayah or Gya, a town between Patna and the great trunk-road – celebrated for its Bhuddist and Hindoo temples, and the great resort of pilgrims of both religions – considerable apprehension prevailed, on account of the unprotected state of a large amount of Company's treasure in the collectorate; an apprehension increased by the presence of many desperate characters at that time in the jail, and by the guard of the jail being wholly composed of natives who would remain steady only so long as those at Dinapoor were 'faithful to their salt.' Fortunately, the authorities were enabled to obtain a guard of European soldiers, chiefly from her majesty's 64th regiment; and thus the ruffians, more to be dreaded than even the rebellious sepoys, were overawed.

It is impossible to avoid seeing, in the course of events throughout India, how much importance ought to be attached to

the matter just adverted to – the instrumentality of robbers and released prisoners in producing the dreadful scenes presented. India swarms with depredators who war on the peaceful and industrious inhabitants – not merely individual thieves, but robber-tribes who infest certain provinces, directing their movements by the chances of war or of plunder. Instead of extirpating these ill-doers, as Asiatic sovereigns have sometimes attempted to do, the East India Company has been accustomed to capture and imprison them. Hence the jails are always full. At every important station we have several hundred, sometimes two or three thousand, such prisoners. The mutiny set loose these mischievous elements. The release of crowds of murderers and robbers from prison, the flocking of others from the villages, and the stimulus given to latent rogues by the prospect of plunder, would account for a large amount of the outrage committed in India – outrage which popular speech in England attaches to the sepoy alone.

On the 13th of June, the first indications of a conspiracy at Patna were detected. A nujeeb of the Behar station guards was discovered in an attempt to tamper with the Sikhs of the police corps, and to excite them to mutiny: he was tried, convicted, sentenced to death, and hanged; while three Sikhs, who had been instrumental in his apprehension, were publicly rewarded with fifty rupees each. In singular contrast to this, three other nujeebs of the same force, on the same day, placed in the commissioner's hands a letter received from sepoy at Dinapoor,

urging the Behar guards to mutiny, and to seize the treasure at Patna before the Sikhs could arrive to the rescue: this, as a valuable service rendered at a critical period, was rewarded by donations of two hundred rupees to each of the three men. The next symptoms were exhibited by certain members of the Wahabee sect of Mohammedans at Patna. The fanatical devotion of these Mussulmans to their spiritual leaders, their abnegation of self, and their mode of confidential communication with each other without written documents, render it at all times difficult to produce legal proof of any machinations among them; while their mutual fidelity enables them to resist all temptation to betrayal. The commissioner of Patna, having suspicions of the proceedings of the Wahabees in that city, deemed it politic to detain four of their number as hostages for the sect generally – a sect formidable for its organisation, and peculiarly hostile to Christians. They were placed in a sort of honourable confinement, while a general disarming of the inhabitants took place. On another occasion a police jemadar, Waris Ali, was ascertained to be in possession of a large amount of treasonable correspondence; he was known to be in some way related to the royal family of Delhi; and the letters found in his house threw suspicion on more than one native official in the service of the Company.

The most serious affair at Patna, however, occurred about the close of the period to which this chapter more particularly relates. At about eight o'clock in the evening of the 3d of July, a

body of Mohammedans, variously estimated from eighty to two hundred, assembled at the house of one of their number, one Peer Ali Khan, a bookseller, and proceeded thence to the Roman Catholic church and mission-house in Patna, with two large green flags, a drum beating, and cries of 'Ali! Ali!' The priest, whom they probably intended to murder, fortunately escaped. They emerged into the street, reiterated their cries, and called on the populace to join them. Dr Lyell, principal assistant to the opium agent, immediately went to the spot, accompanied by nine Sikhs. He rode ahead of his support, was shot down by the rioters, and his body mangled and mutilated before the Sikhs could come up. A force of Sikhs and nujeebs speedily recovered the unfortunate gentleman's body, killed some of the insurgents, and put the rest to flight. This appeared at first to be a religious demonstration: a Mohammedan fanatic war-cry was shouted, and the property of the Catholic mission was destroyed, but without any plunder or removal. Thirty-six of the insurgents were afterwards captured and tried; sixteen of the number, including Peer Ali Khan, who was believed to be the murderer of Dr Lyell, were condemned to death; eighteen, including a jemadar, were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment; and two were acquitted. All the facts of this temporary outbreak were full of significance; for it soon became evident that something more than mere religious hostility had been intended. Peer Ali Khan was offered a reprieve if he would divulge the nature of the conspiracy; but, like a bold, consistent fanatic, he remained defiant to the last, and nothing

could be got out of him. It was afterwards ascertained that he had been in secret communication with an influential native at Cawnpore ever since the annexation of Oude, and that the details of some widely-spread plot had been concerted between them. The capture of the thirty-six rioters had been effected by the disclosures of one of the band, who was wounded in the struggle; he declared that a plot had been in existence for many months, and that men were regularly paid to excite the people to fight for the Padishah of Delhi. Letters found in Peer Ali's house disclosed an organised Mussulman conspiracy to re-establish Mohammedan supremacy on the ruins of British power; and besides the correspondence with Cawnpore and Delhi, a clue was obtained to the complicity of an influential Mohammedan at Lucknow.

Patna was sufficiently well watched and guarded to prevent the occurrence of anything of more serious import. Nevertheless, the European inhabitants were kept in great anxiety, knowing how much their safety depended on the conduct of the sepoys at Dinapoor. The commissioner at the one place, and the military commandant at the other, were naturally rejoiced to receive any demonstrations of fidelity on the part of the native troops, even if the sincerity of those demonstrations were not quite free from doubt. On the 3d of June, Colonel Templer assembled the 7th regiment B. N. I. on the military parade at Dinapoor, to read to them the flattering address which Viscount Canning had made to the 70th regiment at Barrackpore, on the manifestation

of loyalty by that corps. On the conclusion of this ceremony, the native commissioned officers came up to the colonel, and presented to him a petition, signed by two subadars and five jemadars on the part of the whole regiment. The petition is worth transcribing,²⁰ to shew in what glowing language the native troops could express their grateful allegiance – but whether sincere or insincere, no European could at that time truly tell. Colonel Templer desired that all the men who acknowledged the petition to contain an expression of their real sentiments and wishes, would shoulder their arms in token thereof; on which every one present shouldered arms. The native officers afterwards assured the colonel, with apparent earnestness, that

²⁰ ‘At present the men of bad character in some regiments, and other people in the direction of Meerut and Delhi, have turned from their allegiance to the bountiful government, and created a seditious disturbance, and have made choice of the ways of ingratitude, and thrown away the character of sepoy's true to their salt.’ ‘At present it is well known that some European regiments have started to punish and coerce these rebels; we trust that by the favour of the bountiful government, we also may be sent to punish the enemies of government, wherever they are; for if we cannot be of use to government at this time, how will it be manifest and known to the state that we are true to our salt? Have we not been entertained in the army for days like the present? In addition to this, government shall see what their faithful sepoy's are like, and we will work with heart and soul to do our duty to the state that gives us our salt.’ ‘Let the enemies of government be who they may, we are ready to fight them, and to sacrifice our lives in the cause.’ ‘We have said as much as is proper; may the sun of your wealth and prosperity ever shine.’ ‘The petition of your servants: Heera Sing, Subadar, Ellahee Khan, Subadar, Bhowany Sing, Jemadar, Munroop Sing, Jemadar, Heera Sing, Jemadar, Isseree Pandey, Jemadar, Murdan Sing, Jemadar, of the Burra Crawford's, or 7th regiment, native infantry, and of every non-commissioned officer and sepoy in the lines. Presented on the 3d June 1857.’

it was the eager wish of the whole regiment to be afforded an opportunity of removing even a suspicion of their disaffection. When Colonel Templer repeated this to Major-general Lloyd, the military commander of the Dinapoor division, and when Lloyd forwarded the communication to Calcutta, the regiment of course received thanks for the demonstration, and were assured that 'their good conduct will be kept in remembrance by the governor-general in council.' It was not until a later month that the small value of these protestations was clearly shewn; nevertheless the Europeans at Dinapoor continued throughout June to be very uneasy. Almost every one lived in the square; the guns were kept ready loaded with grape; the few European troops were on the alert; and pickets were posted all round the station. A motley assemblage – planters, soldiers, civilians, railway men, and others – was added to the ordinary residents, driven in from the surrounding districts for protection. The officers gave up their mess-house to the ladies, who completely filled it.

In Tirhoot, a district north of Patna, on the other side of the Ganges, the planters and others were thrown into great excitement during the month of June, by the events occurring around them. About the middle of the month, planters left their estates and civilians their homes, to go for refuge to the Company's station at Mozufferpoor. Eighty gentlemen, thirty ladies, and forty children, were all crowded into two houses; the ladies and children shut up at night, while the men slept in verandahs, or in tents, or took turns in patrolling. The nujeebs,

stationed at that place, were suspected of being in sympathy with the mutineers; one of the Company's servants, disguised as a native, went to their quarters one night, and overheard them conversing about murdering the Europeans, looting the treasury (which contained seven lacs of rupees), and liberating the prisoners. This was the alarm that led to the assembling of the Europeans at the station for mutual protection; and there can be little doubt that the protection would have been needed had Dinapoor fallen. One of the Mohammedan inhabitants was seized at Mozufferpoor, with a quantity of treasonable correspondence in his possession; and the commandant at Segowlie condemned to the gallows with very little scruple several suspicious characters in various parts of the district.

Advancing up the Ganges, we come to Ghazeepore, on its northern or left bank. This town, containing forty thousand inhabitants, is rendered somewhat famous by a palace once belonging to the Nawab of Oude, but now in a very ruinous state; also by the beautiful Grecian tomb erected to the Marquis of Cornwallis; and by the rose-gardens in its vicinity, where rose-leaves are gathered for making the celebrated otto or attar. The bungalows of the Company's civil servants are situated west of the town; and beyond them is the military cantonment. During the early part of the month of June, the 65th native infantry, stationed at Ghazeepore, was sorely tempted by the mutinying of so many other regiments at stations within forty or fifty miles; but they remained stanch for some time longer.

Not so the sepoy's at Azimghur, a town northwest of Ghazeepore, containing twelve or fourteen thousand inhabitants, and a military station. At this place the 17th regiment Bengal native infantry was posted at the beginning of June. On the 3d of the month an escort of thirty troopers of the 13th irregular cavalry brought in seven lacs of rupees from Goruckpore, *en route* to Benares. At six o'clock in the evening the treasure was started again on its journey; and in three hours afterwards the 17th mutinied, influenced apparently rather by the hope of *loot* than by any political or religious motives. During several days previously the authorities had been employed in throwing up a breastwork around the cutchery or government offices; but this was not finished. The sepoy's killed their quartermaster, and wounded the quartermaster-sergeant and two or three others. The officer on guard at the fort of the cutchery sent out a picket to the lines, and ordered the native artillerymen to load their guns: this they refused to do; and hence the infantry were left to follow out their plan of spoliation. The officers were at mess when the mutiny began; seeing the danger, they placed the ladies on the roof of the cutchery. When the sepoy's came up, they formed a square round the officers, and swore to protect them; but stated that, as some men of the regiment were very hostile, it would be better for all the officers to depart. The men brought carriages for them, and escorted them ten miles on the road to Ghazeepore. Many of the civilians hurried away to the same town, reaching that place in terrible plight. The marauders from

the neighbouring villages did not fail in their usual course; they plundered the bungalows of the Europeans at Azimghur, or such of them as were left unprotected.

Far more serious were the events at Benares, than at any city or station eastward of it, during the month of June. It would in all probability have been still more deplorable, had not European troops arrived just at that time. Lieutenant-colonel Neill reached Benares on the 3d of June, with sixty men and three officers of the 1st Madras Fusiliers (Europeans), of which regiment five more companies were in the rear, expecting to reach that city in a few days. The regiment had been despatched in great haste by Viscount Canning, in the hope that it would appear before Cawnpore in time to relieve Sir Hugh Wheeler and his unfortunate companions. Neill intended, after a day's repose, to have started from Benares for Cawnpore on the 4th; but he received timely notice from Lieutenant Palliser that the 17th B. N. I. had mutinied at Azimghur; and that the treasure, passing through Azimghur in its way from Goruckpore to Benares (mentioned in the last paragraph), had been plundered by the mutinous sepoys. Brigadier Ponsonby, the commandant at Benares, at once consulted with Colonel Neill concerning the propriety of disarming the 37th regiment Bengal infantry, stationed at that city. Neill recommended this to be done, and done at once. It was then arranged that Neill should make his appearance on parade at five o'clock that same afternoon, accompanied by a hundred and fifty of H.M. 10th foot, sixty

of the Madras Fusiliers, and three guns of No. 12 field-battery, with thirty artillerymen. They were to be joined on parade by the Sikh regiment, in which Lieutenant-colonel Gordon placed full confidence, and about seventy of the 13th irregular cavalry. The 37th, suspecting what was intended, ran to the bells of arms, seized and loaded their muskets, and fired upon the Europeans; several men fell wounded, and the brigadier was rendered powerless by a sun stroke. Thereupon Colonel Neill, assuming the command, made a dash on the native lines. What was now the perplexity of the colonel, and the mortification of Gordon, at seeing the Sikhs halt, waver, turn round, wound several of their officers, fire at the Europeans, and disperse! It was one of those inexplicable movements so frequently exhibited by the native troops. Neill, now distrusting all save the Europeans, opened an effective fire with his three guns, expelled the 37th from their lines, burnt the huts, and then secured his own men and guns in the barrack for the night. Early on the morning of the 5th he sent out parties, and brought in such of the arms and accoutrements of the 37th as had been left behind; he also told off a strong body to bring the Company's treasure from the civil offices to the barracks. Colonel Neill fully believed that if he had delayed his bold proceeding twelve hours, the ill-protected treasury would have been seized by the 37th, and that the numerous European families in the cantonment would have been placed in great peril before he could reach them. The barracks were between the cantonment and the city; and near them was a building called

the mint. Into this mint, before going on parade on the 4th, he had arranged that all the families should go for refuge in the event of any disturbance taking place. A few of the Sikhs and of the irregular cavalry remained faithful; and Colonel Neill, with his two hundred and forty Europeans²¹ and these fragments of native regiments, contrived to protect the city, the barracks, the mint, and the cantonment – a trying task, to defend so large an area from mutinous sepoys and troopers, and predatory budmashes. He had to record the deaths of Captain Guise, an army-surgeon, and two privates; and the wounding of about double this number – casualties surprising for their lightness, considering that there were nearly two thousand enemies to contend against altogether. Of the insurgents, not less than two hundred were killed or wounded. It was at once determined to strengthen the neighbouring fort of Chunar or Chunargur; for which duty a small detachment of Europeans was drafted off.

Such were the military operations of the 4th and 5th of June, as told in the brief professional language of Colonel Neill. Various officers and civilians afterwards dwelt more fully on the detailed incidents of those two days. The 13th irregular cavalry and the Sikhs (Loodianah regiment) had been relied on as faithful; and the 37th had greatly distinguished itself in former years in the Punjaub and Afghanistan. This infantry regiment,

²¹ The exact components of this gallant little band appear to have been as follow: Irrespective of the officers belonging to the mutinous regiments. Irrespective of the officers belonging to the mutinous regiments.

however, exhibited signs of insubordination on the 1st of the month; and on the 3d, Lieutenant-colonel Gordon, second in command under Ponsonby, told the brigadier that the men of the 37th were plotting with the ruffians of the city. The brigadier, Mr Tucker the commissioner, and Mr Gubbins the judge, thereupon conferred; and it was almost fully determined, even before Colonel Neill's arrival, and before the receipt of disastrous news from Azimghur, that the disbandment of the regiment would be a necessary measure of precaution. The irregular cavalry were stationed at Sultanpore and Benares, and were called in to aid the Europeans and Sikhs in the disarming. A few of the officers, unlike their brethren, distrusted these troopers; and the distrust proved to be well founded. The Sikhs, at the hour of need, fell away as soon as the 37th had seized their arms; and the irregulars were not slow to follow their example; so that, in effect, the insurgents were to the Europeans in the ratio of eight or ten to one. One of the English officers of the 37th has placed upon record a few facts shewing how strangely unexpected was this among many of the Indian outbreaks, by the very men whose position and experience would naturally lead them (one might suppose) to have watched for symptoms. In the first instance, Major Barrett, indignant at the slight which he believed to have been put upon the good and faithful sepoys of the 37th, by the order for disarming, went openly towards the regiment during the struggle at the bells of arms, to shew his confidence in them; but when he saw some of his men firing at him, and others

approach him with fixed bayonets, he felt painfully that he must both change his opinions and effect a retreat. Some of the 37th did, however, remain 'true to their salt;' and these, under the major, who had escaped the shots aimed at him, were among the troops sent to guard Chunar Fort. As a second instance: after Captain Guise, of the 13th irregulars, had been shot down by men of the 37th, the brigadier appointed Captain Dodgson to supply his place; but the irregulars, instead of obeying him, flashed their swords, muttered some indistinct observations, fired at him, and at once joined the rebels whom they had been employed and expected to oppose. A third instance, in relation to the Sikhs, shall be given in the words of the officer above adverted to: 'Just as the irregulars were flashing their swords in reply to Captain Dodgson's short address, I was horrified by noticing about a dozen of the Sikhs fire straight forward upon the European soldiers, who were still kneeling and firing into the 37th. The next moment some half-dozen of their muskets were staring me in the face, and a whole tempest of bullets came whizzing towards me. Two passed through my forage-cap, and set my hair on fire; three passed through my trousers, one just grazing my right thigh. I rushed headlong at one of the fellows whom I had noticed more especially aiming at me, but had scarcely advanced three paces when a second volley of bullets saluted me.' This volley brought the officer low; he lay among the wounded, unrecognised for many hours, but was fortunate enough to obtain surgical aid in time to avert a fatal result. Many circumstances

afterwards came to light, tending to shew that, had not Neill and Ponsonby taken the initiative when they did, the native troops would probably have risen that same night, and perhaps imitated the Meerut outrages. One of the missionaries at Benares, who escaped to Chunar as soon as the outbreak occurred, said in a letter: 'Some of the 37th have confessed to their officers that they had been told out in bands for our several bungalows, to murder all the Europeans at ten o'clock that night; and that, too, at the time they were volunteering to go to Delhi, and Colonel Spottiswoode was walking about among them in plain clothes with the most implicit confidence.'

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