CHAPTER XIII.

DISCONTENT AND DISAFFECTION

The readers of the British period of Indian history are familiar with the phrase *Pax Britannica*—a new era of peace, prosperity and contentment, introduced by the British rule, such as India had never known before. This claim is, however, only partially true, so far as the first half of the nineteenth century is concerned. There was, no doubt, an end of the state of anarchy, chaos, and confusion which set in after the decline of the Mughul Empire, but a long time was to elapse before peace reigned supreme in India. There were frequent sporadic outbursts, often leading to serious armed resistance against the British authority, throughout India, and these culminated in the great upsurge of 1857 which shook the British empire in India to its very foundation. This was partly a legacy of the period that had just been ended, but was also largely due to grave discontent which was a direct consequence of the establishment of British rule in India. This fact has not, so far, been adequately recognized by historians of British India, and therefore requires a somewhat detailed treatment.

For the sake of convenience we may classify the discontent under separate heads, according to the sources giving rise to it, though, very often, several causes operated together in creating it.

I. POLITICAL

It was almost inevitable that the expansion of British dominions would leave behind a blazing trail of discontent and disaffection throughout India. This was by no means confined to the ruling chiefs and royal families of the countries conquered by the British, or annexed by them on other grounds, and not even to the immediate entourage and dependants of those royal courts. British rule, during the period under review, was not favourably looked upon even by the people at large in any region where it was newly introduced, far less joyously welcome, as many of the British administrators and writers would have us believe. Discontent and disaffection were particularly strong in those regions like Burma, Assam, Coorg, Sindh, the Panjāb, and Avadh which were *unjustly* annexed, at least according to the views of their people. The arbitrary deposition of the ruler of Sātārā,¹ the despotic coercion of the Sindhis,² and similar other tyrannical acts generated a feeling of hatred and hostility
against the British which was generally, but not always, confined to
the upper strata of society. The Doctrine of Lapse, particularly its
practical application by Lord Dalhousie, produced grave discontent
in the States directly affected, and created a sense of alarm among
the other Indian States. It is against this background that one has
to assess the value of those rumours about conspiracies against the
British which were widely circulated during the second quarter of
the nineteenth century. Some idea of this may be obtained from
the long statement made by Sitaram Bawa before H. B. Devereuse,
Judicial Commissioner of Mysore, on January 18, 1858, and the
following days. According to him a conspiracy against the British
was begun by Baiza Bai, widow of Daulat Rao Sindhia, soon after she
was expelled from Gwalior about twenty years before (to be more
precise in A.D. 1833). Another conspiracy, according to Sitaram
Bawa, was set on foot by the ruler of Mysore, along with the rulers
of Shorapur, Sattara, Kolhapur, and some other principalities in
order that these (and other) ruling dynasties might recover their
kingdoms. The Raja of Mysore, we are told, used to write to his
confederates:—“The Mysore Rajah used to tell these people that
with the help of God, all would be well (i.e. they would be restored
to their rule and kingdoms). Such correspondence has been going on
for about eight months. . . . . The Rajah used to write thus: ‘a great
army is soon coming this way. . . . . Bajee Row’s son and Holkar and
other great princes had all joined together, and that as soon as they
advanced all would join, the old dynasties would be restored, and all
would be placed on their thrones. . . . .”

Some time about 1852, Baiza Bai joined with Nana Sahib and
hatched a more comprehensive plot along with the second group, led
by the Raja of Mysore. According to Sitaram Bawa, this conspiracy
embraced, besides Nana Sahib and Baiza Bai, almost all the native
States, and he mentions specifically Holkar, Sindhia, Assam (or
Burma), Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kolah Boonder, Jhalawar, Rewah, Baroda;
Kutch, Bhooj, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shorapur, Kolhapur, Sattara and
Indore. Nana, we are told, wrote to all the native rulers, and all
agreed to join the plot except the Raja of Travancore. Nana even
approached Ghulab Singh of Jammu and through him also Russia.
The former joined and Russia promised that if Nana could take and
hold Delhi then assistance would be given to him to drive the English
from Calcutta.

According to Sitaram Bawa all this was common knowledge and
“every Baboo in Calcutta knew of it”. This may be so, but there is
no evidence, and no sane man would believe, that there was really
any serious conspiracy of this character. But Sitaram’s evidence
proves that there were wild, vague and floating rumours about it all over India. The echo of these rumours must have reached the British Government. That is why they held Pratap Singh of Sátārā guilty of conspiracy with other native rulers and the Portuguese of Goa, though there was no evidence in support of it.

Such rumours possibly originated in vague talks and dark hints about conspiracies indulged in by irresponsible men posing as confidential agents. But they would never have been invented, or gained credence, unless the people believed that such a grave discontent prevailed among the native rulers as would have rendered the conspiracies at least probable, though not possible or practicable.

Thus though these rumours were without any real basis in fact, they undoubtedly indicate a wide-spread feeling of dismay and discontent among the native rulers, which was well-known to the people at large.

But the policy of wholesale annexations, which found its most successful exponent in Lord Dalhousie, and culminated in the map of India being all red, if not in theory, at least in practice, did not unnerve the native rulers alone but affected the people as well. The fall of the old and renowned royal houses like those of Peshwa, Bhonsle, Avadh, Jhansi, Panjāb and Sātārā, and the precarious existence of the rest, on mere sufferance of the British, not only gave a rude shock to the sentiments of the people, but cast adrift in the world, hopeless and helpless, a large body of people, both high and low, who had hitherto earned their livelihood by service, both civil and military, in those defunct States. Proud aristocracies were reduced to beggary and servitude, artisans and craftsmen, flourishing upon the luxury of the court and the wealthy, were faced with utter ruin, and old ideas, traditions, and pageants of pomp and glory, so dear to the common people, were rapidly passing away, never to return. There were fear and bewilderment on all sides and a state of uneasy suspense about the future, which was aggravated, rather than allayed, by the new system of administration which replaced the old.

II. ADMINISTRATIVE

Apart from the inherent dislike of a foreign rule, the ill feeling generated by the British administration was due to several factors. In the first place, the people found it very difficult to adjust themselves to the new system which was so radically different from the one to which they were accustomed for centuries. Secondly, it affected the vested interests of classes and individuals who had profited both by the merits as well as the defects of the system of
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government replaced by the British. One or two concrete instances will illustrate the point. A large number of pious and learned men, as well as religious and educational institutions, flourished under the patronage of the Indian courts, mainly by the grant of rent-free lands. The Company's system of administration, which was incompatible with the patronage of oriental royal courts, and deliberate resumption of rent-free lands on a massive scale through the Inam Commission ruined a large number of these individuals and institutions, and thereby created a vacuum in the social order which disturbed a much wider circle than that which was directly or immediately affected. Thirdly, the changes and experiments in the land-revenue system brought misery and ruin both upon the landlords and the tenants, who formed the backbone of the country. The cultivators groaned under the inordinately excessive land-rent, and the landlords, where they were allowed to function, were displeased as they were deprived of the effective authority which they were accustomed to exercise for the maintenance of law and order. They were reduced in practice, if not in theory, to the position of mere farmers of revenue, liable to ejectment for default in payment of revenue, and subject to new rules and regulations like sun-set laws with which they were quite unfamiliar. Fourthly, even such salutary practices as the introduction of rule by law, in place of personal rule dictated by whims and caprices, gave rise to discontent. For it involved the principle of equality in the eyes of law and its rigorous enforcement upon all alike—the rich and the poor, the weak and the strong, or the high and the low in social cadre—and was resented by persons claiming a privileged position or preferential treatment which they had hitherto enjoyed. On the other hand, the poorer and the weaker section, to whom the newly established law-courts should have proved a blessing, did not derive much material benefit from them. This was due to the complicated procedure followed by them which was unfamiliar and often unintelligible to the masses, and involved long delay and heavy expenses. The rough and ready method of justice prevalent in the old days was no doubt very unsatisfactory, but it was replaced by a system, which practically denied justice to those very classes who needed it most. Fifthly, the new system of police was highly inefficient and there was a general sense of insecurity of life and property.

There were, besides, several characteristic features of British administration which made it highly unpopular. In the first place, the English officials were not accessible to the people, who could not,
therefore, lay their grievances personally before them, as they were accustomed to do before. Secondly, the English system of administration operated like a machine, and the lack of personal element in it was disliked by the people, who attributed to it many evils such as slowness of proceedings, delay in taking action, frequent change of policy etc. Thirdly, the English laws were quite strange and unintelligible to the people. The substitution of English as the court-language in place of Persian was highly disliked, specially by the Muslims.

More important than all these was the exclusion of Indians from all high offices, both in the civil administration and in the army. It was not merely a sore grievance from the point of view of material interest of individuals, but went much deeper than that. Many regarded it as a serious defect in the system of administration by a body of foreign rulers. It was pointed out by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan that the permanence and prosperity of the Government depended on an accurate knowledge of the manners, customs, usages, habits, hopes and aspirations, and temper and ability of the people, but the foreign Government could hardly possess such knowledge as long as the people were not allowed to participate in the administration of the country. The exclusion of Indians from high offices was particularly irritating to the Muslims who had, within living memory, occupied almost all the high posts in the Government and the army. 9

The repugnance of the British Government to the appointment of Indians to higher offices in India is well illustrated by the case of Rajaram Roy, the adopted son of Raja Rammohan Roy. Rajaram remained in London after his father's death at Bristol in 1833, and was appointed an extra clerk in the offices of the Board of Control. Hobhouse, the President of the Board, hoped that this would have a "beneficial effect on the natives of India generally" by showing them that there was "every disposition on the part of the supreme authority to furnish them with the means and motives of rendering themselves capable of assisting, to a much greater extent than at present, in the administration of India". Urged by the same motive, and impressed by the ability of Rajaram, Hobhouse proposed to nominate Rajaram a writer (corresponding to I. C. S. of later days) in the service of the East India Company. Nothing could be more natural than this, as it was a practical application—the first of its kind—of the principle laid down in the 87th section of the Charter Act of 1833, that no Indian "shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour, or any of them, be disabled from holding any place, office or employment under the East India Company". Nevertheless,
as soon as the news of the proposed appointment began to appear in the Press, there was a flutter in the dovecot at the very idea that the covenanted civil service, hitherto reserved for Europeans, was to be opened to an Indian. The British Bureaucracy was astonished, and Carnac, who originally approved of the idea of Hobhouse, began to waver, and told him that "it will never pass the court". So far one can at least explain, possibly even excuse, though not approve of, the action. What is less intelligible and far less excusable is the disingenuous plea put forward by Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, and accepted by Carnac, that the appointment of Rajaram to this high post would be looked upon with envy by the Indians and that the "feeling amongst the older Indians of Calcutta is far from favourable to such an experiment." Such a reactionary spirit and arrogant racial prejudice, hidden under the cloak of a pretended anxiety for the interests and feelings of the Indians, have been the characteristic features of the British rulers of India throughout the period under review. So far as this aspect of administration was concerned, one might say that the British bureaucracy, like Charles II, never said an unwise word, but never did a wise act, until Lord Curzon pricked the bubble by a frank and open avowal that the Indian Civil Service must remain a British preserve. According to all accounts the deliberate policy of excluding Indians from high offices was keenly resented by all classes of Indians.

This grievance was aggravated by the undisguised contempt with which, as a general rule, the British officials treated the Indians. Sir Syed Ahmad, himself an official and pro-British to a remarkable degree, observes about the British officials that "their pride and arrogance led them to consider the natives of India as undeserving the name of human beings". Such ill treatment, he observes, was "more offensive to Muslims who for centuries past have received special honour and enjoyed special immunities in Hindusthan". 

Concrete instances of arrogant official attitude will be given in Book III, Chapter XLVII.

Another potent cause of discontent which mainly affected the upper and educated classes was the denial of any political right to the Indians. The first generations of English-educated Indians were enthusiastic about the British rule in the hope that with the progress of education the political status of the Indians would be raised and they would gain their rightful position in the administration of their country. In this they were sadly disappointed. The Indians could not secure a single seat in the Legislative Council or a single appointment in the covenanted service. They also keenly resented the rejection of all their demands for reform in the system of ad-
ministration by removing abuses which were abhorrent or even shocking to their enlightened views. Failure of individual or isolated efforts in this direction led to the growth of political organizations; these reiterated the demands but the British Government held out no hopes of conceding any political reforms to Indians in a liberal spirit. This gradually alienated the sympathy of the intellectual classes, and discontent prevailed among certain sections who refused to hope against hope in the ultimate triumph of the sense of justice and political liberalism of the great English people.

III. ECONOMIC

An indirect consequence of the British rule in India was the economic exploitation of the country. The huge drain of wealth from Bengal, the destruction of its industry, and the gradually increasing land-revenue during the latter half of the eighteenth century have been mentioned above. Bengal could not recover from the effect of these factors. The population was reduced by one-third, and one-third of the province was reduced to “a jungle inhabited only by wild beasts”. But it was not the cultivators and artisans of Bengal alone that suffered. The rule of a mercantile company strangled the trade and industry of other parts of India as well, and their cultivators fared as badly or even worse. Armed with the political authority, the British rulers of the early period deliberately fostered the growth of British trade and commerce at the cost of the Indian. This, combined with the impoverishment of the cultivators, brought down one of the richest countries in the whole world to the level of the poorest. It is unnecessary to discuss in the present context how far other external causes were responsible for this sad state of things. For the transformation took place immediately after the establishment of British rule, and the hands of British agency were clearly visible in ruining trade and industry as well as the peasants of India. The people, therefore, naturally held the British administration in India alone responsible for the wretched poverty in India, and they had every justification in doing so.

Some of the broad facts, though well known, may be repeated in this connection, for it was a growing knowledge of them that gradually embittered the feelings against the British rule more and more.

It is almost universally admitted, even by the Englishmen, that when “merchant adventurers from the West made their first appearance in India, the industrial development of this country was at any rate not inferior to that of the more advanced European
nations”. It is no less universally admitted that India is very rich in natural resources, both mineral and agricultural. It is also an admitted fact that the British deliberately crippled Indian trade and manufacture by erecting a high tariff wall in Britain against Indian goods, and encouraging by all means the import of British goods to India.

This was a deliberate policy adopted by the Board of Directors as far back as 1769. In the early nineteenth century the duty on Muslin and Calico was, respectively, more than 27 and 71 P. C. ad valorem. Even then, unable to compete with Indian manufactures, Britain prohibited the import of Calico cloths. Heavy protective duties in England—70 and 80 per cent, respectively—on Indian silk and cotton goods ruined those industries, while British goods were imported into India at a nominal duty. The British historian of India, Wilson, observes: “It was stated in evidence (in 1813) that the cotton and silk goods of India up to the period could be sold for a profit in the British markets at a price from 50 to 60 per cent. lower than those fabricated in England. It consequently became necessary to protect the latter by duties of 70 and 80 per cent. on their value, or by positive prohibition. Had this not been the case, had not such prohibitory duties and decrees existed, the mills of Paisley and Manchester would have been stopped in their outset, and could scarcely have been again set in motion, even by the power of steam. They were created by the sacrifice of the Indian manufacture.” This process continued throughout the period under review. “In the Parliamentary enquiry of 1840 it was reported that while British cotton and silk goods imported into India paid a duty of 3½ per cent. and woollen goods 2 per cent, Indian cotton goods imported into Britain paid 10 per cent, silk goods 20 per cent and woollen goods 30 per cent”. The result was that by the middle of the nineteenth century Indian exports of cotton and silk goods practically ceased.

In 1832 R. M. Martin observed: “By increase of export of cotton goods to India from Britain many millions of Indo-British subjects have been totally ruined”. When British goods flooded Indian market, and threatened wholesale destruction of Indian manufactures, the trading company which ruled India did not take any step to prevent the catastrophe. As several Englishmen have pointed out, “free trade and refusal to levy protective duties against machine-made goods of Britain ruined Indian manufacturers.” A few concrete instances will explain the seriousness of the resulting situation.

“From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1 to 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 6,000,000 yards, while in
1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 yards. But at the same time population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindustan, the union between agricultural and manufacturing industry".\(^{21}\)

The English cotton machinery produced an acute effect in India. The Governor-General reported in 1834-5: "The misery hardly finds a parallel in the history of commerce. The bones of the cotton-weavers are bleaching the plains of India."\(^{22}\) A few statistical figures may be quoted:

"Between 1814 and 1835 British cotton manufactures exported to India rose from less than 1 million yards to over 51 million yards. In the same period Indian cotton piecegoods imported into Britain fell from one and a quarter million pieces to 306,000 pieces, and by 1844 to 63,000 pieces.

"The contrast in values is no less striking. Between 1815 and 1832 the value of Indian cotton goods exported fell from £ 1.3 million to below £ 100,000 or a loss of twelve-thirteenth of the trade in seventeen years. In the same period the value of English cotton goods imported into India rose from £ 26,000 to £ 400,000, or an increase of sixteen times. By 1850 India, which had for centuries exported cotton goods to the whole world, was importing one-fourth of all British cotton exports.

"The effects of this wholesale destruction of the Indian manufacturing industries on the economy of the country can be imagined. In England the ruin of the old hand-loom weavers was accompanied by the growth of the machine industry. But in India the ruin of the millions of artisans and craftsmen was not accompanied by any alternative growth of new forms of industry. The old populous manufacturing towns, Dacca, Murshidabad (which Clive had described in 1757 to be "as extensive, populous and rich as the city of London"), Surat and the like, were in a few years rendered desolate under the "pax britannica" with a completeness which no ravages of the most destructive war or foreign conquest could have accomplished. "The population of the town of Dacca has fallen from 150,000 to 30,000 or 40,000," declared Sir Charles Trevelyan to the parliamentary enquiry in 1840. "and the jungle and malaria are fast encroaching upon the town…Dacca, which was the Manchester of India, has fallen off from a very flourishing town to a very poor and small one; the distress there has been very great indeed." "The decay and destruction," reported Montgomery Martin, the early historian of the British Empire, to the same enquiry, "of Surat, of Dacca, of Murshidabad and other places where native manufactures have been carried on, is too painful a fact to dwell upon. I do not consider that it has been in the fair course of trade; I think it has been the power of the stronger exercised over the weaker." "Less than a hundred years ago," wrote Sir Henry Cotton in 1890, "the whole commerce of Dacca was estimated at one crore (ten millions) of rupees, and its population at 200,000 souls. In 1787 the exports of Dacca muslin to England amounted to 30 lakhs (three millions) of rupees; in 1817 they had ceased altogether. The arts of spinning and weaving, which for ages afforded employment to a numerous and industrial population, have now become extinct. Families which were formerly in a state of affluence have been driven to desert the towns and betake themselves to the villages for a livelihood…...This decadence has
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occurred not in Dacca only, but in all districts. Not a year passes in which the Commissioners and District Officers do not bring to the notice of Government that the manufacturing classes in all parts of the country are becoming impoverished."23

Similar effect, though to a much less extent, was produced on other industries. The Indian iron-smelting industry was practically stamped out by cheap imported iron and steel within range of the railways, though it carried on a precarious existence in the more remote and inaccessible parts.24

The ruin of Indian industry and commerce was followed by another disastrous result: "It was not only the manufacturing towns and centres that were laid waste, and their population driven to crowd and overcrowd the villages; it was above all the basis of the old village economy, the union of agriculture and domestic industry, that received its mortal blow. The millions of ruined artisans and craftsmen, spinners, weavers, potters, tanners, smelters, smiths, alike from the towns and from the villages, had no alternative save to crowd into agriculture. In this way India was forcibly transformed, from being a country of combined agriculture and manufactures, into an agricultural colony of British manufacturing capitalism".26

The British policy, henceforth steadily pursued, was to make India the agricultural colony of British capitalism, supplying raw materials and buying manufactured goods. This policy was condemned by a few liberal-minded Britishers. Montgomery Martin said, in the Parliamentary enquiry of 1840: "India is as much a manufacturing country as an agricultural. She is a manufacturing country, her manufactures of various descriptions have existed for ages, and have never been able to be competed with by any nation wherever fair play has been given to them...To reduce her now to an agricultural country would be an injustice to India".26 But the real voice of Britain was heard in the evidence of a manufacturer, Mr. Cope, in the same enquiry: "I certainly pity the East Indian labourer", declared Mr. Cope, a Macclesfield manufacturer, to the 1840 Parliamentary enquiry, "but at the same time I have a greater feeling for my own family than for the East Indian labourer's family; I think it is wrong to sacrifice the comforts of my family for the sake of the East Indian labourer because his condition happens to be worse than mine." This has been the real voice and real spirit of John Bull throughout his rule over India in spite of sweet and honeyed phrases of a few honest souls or clever diplomats.

The effect of the new policy can best be judged by the following figures:

"Raw cotton exports rose from 9 million pounds weight in 1813 to 32 million in 1833 and 88 million in 1844; sheeps' wool from 3.7
thousand pounds weight in 1833 to 2.7 million in 1844; linseed from 2,100 bushels in 1833 to 237,000 in 1844”.27

One aspect of this new policy brought incalculable misery upon Indian peasants. This was the result of permitting Englishmen to acquire land and set up as planters in India. By an irony of fate this decision was taken in the very year, 1833, when slavery was abolished in the West Indies. The slave-drivers of that region now settled as planters in India, and the new plantation system was nothing but a thinly veiled slavery. This was particularly noticeable in the Indigo plantation in Bengal and Bihar. The inhuman treatment and persecution of the indigo-cultivators by these planters constitutes one of the blackest and most tragic episodes in the history of British rule in India during the period under review. A wave of horror and indignation passed over Eastern India of which a faint echo may be perceived in the Report of the Indigo Commission of 1860.27a

The indigo cultivators’ lot was abnormal, but even the general condition of the peasants was positively bad. As has been shown above, the new and changing agrarian systems and exorbitant land revenue impoverished the peasantry to such an extent that they never had the minimum requirements even of food and clothing. The upper classes connected with land also suffered much. The resumption of Inam or rent-free lands on a large scale did equal havoc upon a large section of middle class people. These lands were held as rent-free tenures, for generations, when the present owner was asked to produce his title-deeds which were lacking or missing in most cases. It had begun earlier27b but was pursued with relentless severity during the regime of Lord Dalhousie, and reduced to penury a large number of landholders who had believed that long years of possession were more valid than title-deeds. Many of them belonged to “high family, proud of their lineage, proud of their ancestral privileges, who had won what they held by the sword, and had no thought by any other means of maintaining possession”.28

An Act was passed in 1852 setting up the Inam Commission to enquire into the titles of land-owners, and during the five years preceding the Mutiny it confiscated more than twenty thousand estates in the Deccan. The landed gentry and nobility were also seriously hit by the new system of land settlement eliminating all intermediate interests between the Government and the cultivators. The most striking illustration of this is afforded by the Talukdars of Avadh, most of whom lost their property. Even where the Zamindars were suffered to exist, their lot was not always an enviable one, as has been shown above.
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It would thus appear that the Zamindars or landed nobility, the middle class, the peasants, artisans, traders and industrialists—in short all classes of people—were hard hit by the new economic policy introduced by the British, and a large number was reduced to abject poverty.

It is hardly any wonder, therefore, that grave discontent and disaffection prevailed all over India, and this was kept alive, rather underlined, by the most visible sign of the wretched condition of the people, namely periodical recurrence of famine. There were no less than seven famines in the first half of the nineteenth century with an estimated total of one and a half million deaths.

IV. SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS

Not only political and economic, but social and religious causes were at work in creating profound discontent among the people. The social exclusiveness of the Englishmen and their haughty and arrogant attitude towards the Indians, both high and low, will be described in detail in Chapter XLVII. One concrete instance will suffice to indicate the general attitude of a section of the Europeans towards the Indians. A magistrate at Agra published a police regulation to the following effect: “Every native, whatever his pretended rank may be, ought to be compelled, under heavy penalties, to salaam all English gentlemen in the streets, and if the native is on horse-back or in a carriage, to dismount and stand in a respectful attitude until the European has passed him”. This was the unwritten law all over British India, and even Raja Rammohan Roy of Bengal was insulted for failure to observe this regulation, as will be related later.

But there were yet worse things. The indiscriminate assault on Indians by Englishmen was by no means an uncommon incident; there were serious cases of bodily injury, sometimes culminating in death. In all these cases the offenders escaped with light or no punishment, as they were tried by English jures and backed up by practically the entire British community, with rare exceptions. The immunity with which the members of the royal race could insult, humiliate, injure and even kill the Indian subjects, was far more galling to the people than their political subjection or even the more material losses they suffered at the hands of the British.

The Englishmen in India formed an exclusive society whose door was barred even against the Indians of the highest class. The Indian intellectual classes, accustomed to free intercourse with Englishmen in their own country, felt this humiliating restriction
all the more keenly. Thus the English-educated Indians were gradually alienated from the Englishmen in India.

But a far more serious cause of discontent was the vague dread, which seized the minds of all classes of people, that the British Government was determined to convert the Indians into Christianity. There was no cause of such fear before 1813, as the Christian missionaries were not allowed to enter into the territories of the East India Company. But the Charter Act of 1813 compelled the Company to permit the Christian missionaries to come out to India under license. Since that date their proselytising activities created a sense of alarm among both the Hindus and Muslims who were specially sensitive in religious matters.

The first alarm was caused by the educational institutions set up by the Christian missionaries. They made no secret of their intention not only to promote the knowledge and understanding of their pupils, but, what was deemed to be still more important, also to save their souls, by making them converts to Christianity which they honestly believed to be the only means of salvation. As far back as 1792 Sir Charles Grant maintained that the most important object of English education was to impart the knowledge of Christian religion; for “thence they would be instructed in the nature and perfection of the one true God”. The open defiance of their old religious faiths, beliefs and practices, sometimes in a sacrilegious manner, by some youths trained in the missionary institutions lent colour to the belief that the missionary colleges were nurseries of conversion to Christianity. Many Englishmen—not missionaries—openly expressed the view that the conversion to Christianity was the inevitable corollary of western education. Far more dreadful in the eyes of the Hindus was the opening of western education for girls, which was regarded as an instrument by which the missionaries could invade their zenana, the natural citadel of their orthodoxy. The teaching of Christian doctrines was made compulsory in the girls’ schools specially founded by them. That the main object of these missionaries was to use these schools as means of preaching Christianity will be clear from the following passage in the proceedings of one of these schools:—“Some others, now engaged in the degrading and polluting worship of idols, shall be brought to the knowledge of the true God and Jesus Christ”.

Referring to the names of girls such as Vishnupriya, Annapurna, Digambari, Golakmani etc. the following observations were made: “What kind of conduct ought we to expect from these poor children, named by their parents after imaginary goddesses, whose adultery,
cruelty and gratification of their passions, as detailed by their own sacred writings, are so abominable?"\textsuperscript{20}

The Bible was introduced not only in missionary institutions but also in Government schools and colleges. Some schools, mainly supported by the Government, were actually run by clergymen on a strictly Christian basis. About the \textit{modus operandi} of conversion through these schools, it is sufficient to note that the pupils were asked such questions as “Who is your God? Who is your redeemer?” and the inevitable reply, as a result of regular coaching, was, of course, “Jesus Christ”. All the evils and abuses of Hinduism, real and fancied, were painted in the most lurid colour, while the blessings of Christianity were described in glowing phrases, and the salvation offered by it was held out in the most attractive form before the youthful pupils in their most impressionable age. No wonder that the Deputy Inspectors of schools were popularly known as native clergymen. Not only educational institutions, but even public prison houses were used as instruments for conversions to Christianity. Gopi Nath Nandi, a Bengali convert and clergymen, has thus recorded his experience: “The prisoners in the jail were also daily instructed in Christianity and general knowledge by a Christian teacher, and every Sabbath morning the Gospel was preached by me. This privilege was granted by our pious magistrate......The judge and the magistrate, as well as other gentlemen, took a deep interest in the mission, and helped us with their prayers, good advice, and pecuniary aid. When the number of native converts began to increase, six of them, at the suggestion of the late Honourable Mr. Colvin, became small farmers”\textsuperscript{30}

Such activities on the part of the officials of the Government, including Magistrates and Judges, in promoting proselytisation, were highlighted by a new regulation, adopted in 1845. Hitherto each prisoner was permitted to cook his own food. The new regulation laid down that the food for all Hindu prisoners would henceforth be cooked in one place by a Brahman.\textsuperscript{31} As different sections, even among the Brahmans, are not permitted by caste-rules to interdine, the new rules meant loss of caste. A contemporary writer has recorded that a Hindu released from prison was tabooed by his family and looked upon as having lost his caste.\textsuperscript{32}

Filthy abuses of Hindu gods and goddesses formed the main plank of the public preaching and propaganda of the Christian missionaries. The missionary preaching was rendered more odious to the people by the official assistance rendered to them. Syed Ahmad says that the civil and military officers helped the missionaries. The latter openly preached in mosques and temples and abused other
religions, and because a chaprasi or policeman accompanied them, no one dared object for fear of authorities.\textsuperscript{33}

But the missionaries did not rely for their success solely on these abuses or sweet reasonableness of their arguments. It was alleged that not unoften they converted unwary persons by holding out false hopes to them, and did not even refrain from using force in keeping their hold on their victims. A few instances in contemporary records support these allegations. Even the educated and aristocratic sections in Calcutta strongly resented these aggressive methods of proselytisation followed by Christian missionaries in Calcutta. They not only made public complaints against this evil but also took active steps to prevent it. Even early in the nineteenth century there was a strong feeling and also a considerable amount of agitation against what the Hindus regarded as conversion to Christianity by force or fraud, and a memorial was sent by the Hindu community against Christian missionaries as well as highly placed English officials, including a Governor. That such apprehensions were not altogether unfounded are proved by a minute recorded by the Governor of Madras in which he draws attention to the importance of converting the Hindus and Muslims into Christian\textsuperscript{ty}.\textsuperscript{33a}

It is also proved by a series of letters written and widely distributed by Mr. Edmond. "These letters were addressed generally to the public, but particularly to those holding respectable appointments in the service of the State. The purport of these letters was that as all India obeyed one Government—as all parts of the country kept up constant communication one with the other by means of the electric telegraph,—and as the Railway systems united the different extremes of this great Peninsula, it was necessary that there should be but one religion also, and proper, therefore, that everyone should embrace Christianity".\textsuperscript{34}

Its effect is thus described by Syed Ahmad: "These letters so terrified the natives that they were as people struck blind, or from under whose feet the ground had suddenly slipped away. All felt convinced that the hour so long anticipated had at last arrived, and that the servants of the Government first, and then the whole population would have to embrace Christianity. No doubt whatever was entertained as to these letters having been forwarded by the orders of the Government".\textsuperscript{35} This suspicion continued, even though the Lieutenant-Governor disavowed any intention to convert the people to Christianity.

An indirect effect of the letter was no less disastrous. It is a matter of general knowledge that when the railways and telegraphs were first introduced in India, people looked askance at them as inge-
nious devices for breaking the social order and caste-rules, and thus prepare the way for mass conversion to Christianity. In the case of railways, where people of all classes and castes—high-caste Brahmanas as well as untouchables—had to sit together, and it was not possible to observe proper rules about bath and food, the intention of the Mlechchha rulers was quite obvious to the credulous Hindus! The connection of telegraphs with loss of caste was more difficult to divine. Mr. Edmond’s philosophic interpretation of the ultimate end of Railway and Telegraph came in very handy, as a confirmation of the worst suspicions of the people.

It is only by taking note of this cloud of suspicion that one can easily understand how even certain beneficial measures adopted by the Government gave a sharp edge to the popular dread of their deliberate plan to convert the people en masse to Christianity. But some acts of the Government were certainly calculated to increase the public apprehensions. A few instances are quoted below.

Gopinath Nandi, mentioned above, “tells us that when all Patwaris or village accountants were required to learn Hindi in the Nagari script, they were sent to the Missionary school despite the objection of the Muslim Deputy Collector, Hikmatullah Khan. Their instruction was not limited to the language or the script”. For Gopinath adds, “I am happy to say, upwards of three hundred grown-up men not only read the Gospel and attended prayers, but each of them was furnished with a copy of the New Testament to carry home”.

The regulations about hospitals established by the Government made no distinction of caste in respect of accommodation, and sufficient attention was not given to the strict observance of the Purdah system. One of the worst instances is thus described by Hedayet Ali: “In 1849 or 1850 the authorities at Shaharunpore caused a large hospital to be built for the sick of all creeds and persuasions. The principal authorities (I purposely abstain from giving names, although I could do so) issued a proclamation, saying that all sick men or women, high or low, ‘purdah nisheen’ (those who never go out in public), or others, must resort to this hospital for treatment, and all native practitioners were forbidden to prescribe or attend sick people. . . . . people imagined in their ignorance that it was the intention of the British to take away the dignity and honour of all”.

Sir Syed Ahmad has pointed out that during the general famine of 1837, numbers of orphans were converted to Christianity, and this fact was considered throughout the North-Western Provinces as convincing proof of the intention of Government to reduce the country to poverty, and thus make its peoples Christians.
Even when, in course of building roads or other public works, a temple was destroyed, it was felt by many that the work of public utility was merely a pretext to destroy the sanctuary.

It is against this background that we have to study the popular reaction to some of the legislation which sought to remove long-standing socio-religious abuses. The legislation, in 1829, abolishing the horrid practice of burning widows along with their husbands—commonly known as Sati—was undoubtedly a humane act for which its author, Lord Bentinck, will ever be blessed by the Indians. A section of enlightened Hindu public fully lent their active support to it. Nevertheless, there is no denying the fact, that they formed almost a microscopic minority, and the Hindus in general regarded it as an undue interference with their religion. The two laws of 1832 and 1850, removing disabilities due to change of religion, particularly conferring the right of inheritance to Christian converts (Act XXI of 1850),38 were still more unpopular, and had less support behind them even from the educated classes. The Act of 1850 was offensive to both Hindus and Muslims who regarded it as an incentive to apostasy. To the Hindus it was specially galling that a converted son would inherit the property of his father without performing those religious rites and ceremonies after his death which is a necessary condition of inheritance in Hindu Law. Judicial decisions favouring conversion were strongly resented. The highest courts in all the Presidencies decreed that young inexperienced Hindu converts, instead of being placed under the guardianship of their parents, were to be forcibly made over with their wives to the missionaries against their will. On one occasion the Judge, who delivered such a judgment, was stoned by the people who surrounded the court, and the military had to be called in to save the situation. Commenting on this incident, an Indian wrote a letter to the Hindoo Patriot on April 30, 1857, that "one such instance, and not ten thousand false rumours circulated by the native press, is sufficient to disaffect whole nation towards their rulers".39

The Widow Remarriage Act, drafted by Lord Dalhousie but actually passed by Canning in 1856, was permissive in character. It did not, and was not likely to affect more than a few Hindu widows, but still the people raised the cry that Hinduism was in danger.

The cumulative effect of all this was to create a vague sense of dread in the minds of the people at large that their religion was in danger. Syed Ahmad laid great stress on the genuine apprehension of the people regarding mass conversion to Christianity. There is no doubt, says he, "that all persons, whether intelligent or ignorant, respectable or otherwise, believed that the Government was really and
sincerely desirous of interfering with the religion and customs of the people, converting them all, whether Hindus or Mahomedans, to Christianity, and forcing them to adopt European manners and habits". The statement of Syed Ahmad is fully supported by other contemporary records. It is true that the fear was absolutely unfounded, and the British Government had no intention of encouraging, far less making, conversions to Christianity. But the Indians of the first half of the nineteenth century did not know what is fully known today, and it is difficult, therefore, to regard the fear and anxiety which the people felt as totally unjustified. In any case, there cannot be any doubt that such feelings not only did exist, but were deep-rooted, and provoked discontent, even hatred, of the people against the English.

V. GENERAL SPIRIT OF DISCONTENT

How far the above causes affected the people at large, and the extent to which it stirred their minds to active disaffection, may be estimated from the feelings freely expressed by different classes of people during the great outbreak of 1857. These feelings were clearly reflected in the various proclamations issued in different localities during the revolt of 1857. A good specimen is supplied by the proclamation issued in Azamgarh. It called upon Indians of all classes to rise against the faithless British whose sole object was to ruin them all. The zemindars were told, “It is very well known that the British assess lands very highly and this has been the cause of your ruin. Besides, when sued by a mean laborer, or a male or female servant, you are summoned without investigation to attend to their Court and are thus dishonored and degraded, and when you have to prosecute a case in their Court you are put to the expense of doing so on stamp paper and have to pay Court fees which are ruinous. Besides which you have to pay a percentage for roads and schools”. The merchants were reminded: “You are also well aware that the faithless British have appropriated to themselves the monopoly of all lucrative trade such as indigo, opium, cloth etc., and left the less remunerative merchandise to you, and when you have to resort to their Courts you have to pay large sums for stamp papers and Court fees. Moreover, they realize money from the public in the shape of postage and school funds, and you, like the zemindars, are degraded by being summoned to their Courts and imprisoned or fined on the assertion of mean and low people”. The officials could not but be aware “that in the Civil and Military Department all the less lucrative and dignified situations are given to the natives, and the well-paid and honorable ones to Europeans. For instance, in the
Military Line the highest post that a native attains is that of a Subadar on a salary of Rs. 60 or 70 a month, and in the Civil that of a Sudder Ameen on a salary of 500 Rupees, and Jagheers, rewards, maafees etc. are not known to be in existence*. The artisans doubtless knew "that the Europeans import every sort of article from Europe leaving but a small trade in your hands". And lastly the "Scholars of both creeds of Hindus and Mosulmans (Moulvees and Pundits)" should not forget "that the British are opposed to your religion", "you should join us and gain the goodwill of your Creator, otherwise you will be considered sinners".  

The general discontent is also faithfully reflected in the petitions sent by various political organizations to the British Parliament on the eve of the renewal of East India Company's charter in 1853, to which reference has been made above. 

VI. DISCONTENT AND DISAFFECTION OF THE SEPOYS 

The discontent and disaffection against the British Raj were by no means confined to the civil population, but also extended to the Indian section of the army of the East India Company. In order to explain this, it is necessary to begin with a short account of the Company's army.

The East India Company's army in India consisted of two sections, one in which both officers and rank and file were Englishmen, and the other in which the commissioned officers were all British, but the rank and file, known as sepoys (anglicised from Sipahi, meaning soldier), and junior officers, subordinate to the lowest class of English officers, were recruited from various parts of India.

The armies of Bombay, Madras and Bengal were at first independent of one another, each under its own Commander-in-Chief. But towards the close of the eighteenth century the Bengal army became the army of the Central Government, and its Commander-in-Chief became the head of the Company's military establishment in India.

The first general reorganization of the Indian armies of the East India Company took place in 1796. The Company had then about 13,000 European soldiers, and 57,000 Indian, of whom Bengal and Madras had 24,000 each and Bombay 9,000. The reorganized Bengal army comprised (1) 3 battalions of European artillery; (2) 3 regiments of European infantry; (3) 4 regiments of regular native cavalry; and (4) 12 regiments of native infantry. The reorganized Madras army had (1) 2 battalions of European infantry; (2) 4 regi-
ments of cavalry; (3) 2 battalions of artillery; and (4) 11 regiments of native infantry. The reorganized Bombay army consisted of 6 companies of European artillery and four regiments of native infantry which were shortly increased to six. Each regiment of native infantry comprised two battalions. Another reorganization took place in 1824, replacing double battalion regiments by single battalion regiments. As a result of this reorganization, the armies of the three Presidencies stood as follows:

Bengal—Three brigades of horse artillery (9 European and 3 native troops); 5 battalions of foot artillery; 2 regiments of European infantry; 8 regiments of regular native cavalry; 5 regiments of irregular cavalry; and 68 battalions of native infantry. It also included local and provincial Corps.

Madras—Two brigades of horse artillery (one European and one native); 3 battalions of foot artillery; 8 regiments of native cavalry; 2 regiments of European infantry; 52 battalions of native infantry; and 3 extra and local battalions.

Bombay—Four troops of horse artillery and 8 companies of foot artillery; 3 regiments of regular cavalry and two regiments of irregular cavalry; 2 regiments of European infantry; and 24 battalions of native infantry.

The irregular cavalry, referred to above, consisted of horsemen who were not clothed or armed by the State but furnished their own horse and equipment. Not more than two or three European officers were attached to each of these corps. It followed the old sillaadari system still prevalent in Indian States.

As the British dominions extended in all directions, need was felt of additional troops outside the regular cadre. These irregular battalions and regiments consisted of local corps, "more rough and ready than the regular army", raised for the defence of new territories and protection of Indian ruling chiefs. But their number was augmented by recruitment of troops who had proved their high military qualities while fighting against the British. Thus irregular battalions of Gurkhas and Sikhs were raised, respectively, after the Nepal and Sikh Wars.42

In addition to regular and irregular troops maintained by the Company, there were troops maintained by the Indian rulers under the terms of the Subsidiary Alliance, mentioned above, or separate treaties. These were maintained at the expense of the Indian rulers who paid in cash or by cession of territories, but were officered by the British and for all practical purposes formed part of the Company's army. For, although theoretically the Subsidiary forces or
special contingents were intended for the service of the States concerned, they were freely used in all the wars of the Company.\footnote{43}

The sepoys or Indian soldiers for the Bombay and Madras armies were generally recruited from the Moplahs and other Muslims, Hindus from Mangalore and Tellicherry, Tamils, and Telugus, more popularly known as the Tilingas. The name ‘Bengal Army’ is somewhat a misnomer, for Bengal had little or nothing to do with the personnel of the army, and the sepoys of the Bengal Army were chiefly high-caste Hindus (mainly Brahmans), Rajputs, and Jats of Upper India, and sturdy Pathans, also of the same part of the country. The dominant elements, forming a majority, belonged to the State, now known as Uttar Pradesh, specially Avadh, which, until 1856, was an independent kingdom, at least in name and form,

The first battalion of sepoys was formed by Clive shortly before the Battle of Palasi and took part in it. They had a brilliant record of service under the Company for a century. They were held in high esteem, and many regarded them as “the finest soldier, tallest, best-formed, and of the noblest presence”. There were native officers in command of the sepoys, but they were subordinate to European officers of whom there were three in each battalion comprising about one thousand men. In course of time, however, the native officers lost their real power by the inclusion of more Englishmen.

“An English subaltern was appointed to every company, and the native officer then began to collapse into something little better than a name”\footnote{44}. The army thus offered no career to the gentry and aristocracy. “The native service of the Company came down to a dead level of common soldiering, and rising from the ranks by painfully slow process to merely nominal command”\footnote{45}. Thenceforth the soldiers were recruited from the lower strata of society, though in the Bengal Army the sepoys were chiefly of high caste. The sepoys naturally smacked under a sense of unjustified inferiority. “Though he might give signs of the military genius of a Hyder, he knew that he could never attain the pay of an English subaltern, and that the rank to which he might attain, after some thirty years of faithful service, would not protect him from the insolent dictation of an ensign fresh from England”\footnote{46}.

So, the sepoys always nursed a sense of strong resentment at their low scale of salary and poor prospects of promotion, neither of which, in their opinion, had any real correspondence to their worth, particularly when contrasted with those of their British colleagues. The difference was scandalous to a degree. A retired officer noted: “The entire army of India amounts to 315,520 men costing £9,802,235. Out of this sum no less than £5,668,110 are expended on
DISCONTENT AND DISAFFECTION

51,316 European officers and soldiers”. Moreover, “the European corps take no share in the rough ordinary duties of the service... They are lodged, fed, and paid in a manner unknown to other soldiers”. This contrast could not but adversely affect the sepoys’ morale.

“It has been contended that though his pay was small the sepoy was financially well off because his needs were few and his standard of living was low. But the first few months’ pay had to be spent in illegal gratifications. Sitaram says that the drill Havildar and the European Sergeant of his company took a dislike to him because he had not paid the usual fee. ‘This fee was Rs. 16/-, some five or six of which went to the European sergeant of the company the recruit was posted to’. He adds that ‘seven rupees a month will not support either Punjabee, Sikh or Mussulman’. But this remark applied to the post-mutiny period when prices had gone up. In the easier days before the Mutiny the sepoy did not fare better. We learn from a Bengalee clerk attached to the cavalry regiment at Bareilly in 1857 that the sepoys had to pay for his uniform and he bought his daily ration on credit from the bania in the regimental bazar. On the pay day his account was settled and after the deduction for his ration etc., the balance was paid to him. Some sepoys got at the end of the month no more than a rupee or a rupee and a half, in other cases the monthly saving did not exceed a few annas. His daily meal consisted of dal and roti, and with his limited credit he could not indulge in any luxuries except an occasional dish of Taro. His life was hard indeed, for the maximum pay that he could expect did not exceed nine rupees unless he was promoted, and promotion went by seniority and not by merit. The sowar was not much better off than the sepoy, for the former’s pay varied from twenty-one to thirty rupees and many more deductions were made therefrom”.47 The feeling of the sepoys is reflected in many of the proclamations issued during the Mutiny. Reference has already been made to one of these issued in Azamgarh.48 A few lines may be quoted from another proclamation. “We have ungrudgingly shed our blood in the service of our foreign masters, we have conquered for them kingdom after kingdom until nothing remained to be annexed within the four corners of the country, but what has been the return? —spoliation of our people, degradation of our princes, and worst of all,— inconceivable insults to our religion”.49 It would appear from these proclamations that the sepoys were influenced by all the causes which provoked discontent and disaffection among the civil population of all classes, as described in the previous sections. This is only quite natural, because they and the members of their families formed part and parcel of the civil population. In particular, they felt
keenly the inferiority of the Indians in public service and the insult to their religion.

In spite of their material grievances in respect of pay and allowance, and the prevailing spirit of discontent and disaffection which they shared with the civil population, the sepoys, generally speaking, remained faithful to their masters. But extreme measures on the part of the authorities had occasionally provoked them to mutiny. Reference has been made in Volume VIII to several such instances. One of the most serious, which bears a very close resemblance to the mutiny of 1857, so far as the genesis is concerned, was the mutiny at Vellore in 1806. It was caused by what the sepoys regarded as an affront to their religion. When new regulations were introduced in the Madras Army, forbidding the men to wear the marks of caste upon their fore-heads, ordering them to shave off their beards, and compelling them to exchange their old turbans for new ones with leather cockades, the Indian soldiers broke into mutiny at Vellore which, with the backing of the members of the exiled family of Tipu Sultan who lived there, threatened to assume serious proportions. This was in 1806, almost exactly half a century before the great Mutiny of 1857. Midway between the two, there was a mutiny of sepoys at Barrackpur in 1824 during the First Burmese War. In view of its great importance it requires a somewhat detailed description.

About the middle of the year 1824, the 47th Native Infantry had arrived at Barrackpur in order to proceed to take part in some of the operations of the Burmese War. Disputes at once arose regarding the provision of carriages for taking the personal belongings of the sepoys. It was customary for the sepoys to defray the expenses themselves, but on the present occasion bullocks could not be hired and they could only be purchased at extravagant prices. The sepoys, therefore, applied for assistance, but this was refused. This highly irritated the sepoys and they began to manifest their grievances in many ways. In the parade held on October 30, 1824, they appeared without their knapsacks and refused to bring them even when asked to do so, on the ground that they were unfit for use. A part of the regiment then declared that they would not proceed to Rangoon or elsewhere by sea and they would not move at all unless they were to have double batta. The Commanding Officer, unable to subdue the discontent, dismissed the regiment and proceeded to Calcutta to consult the Commander-in-Chief. After his return he held a parade on November 1. At this parade the sepoys burst into acts of open violence. The same mutinous spirit also affected the other regiments which were stationed at Barrackpur, preparatory to their
proceeding on service. The Commander-in-Chief, therefore, brought in European troops from Calcutta, and in the next parade, when the sepoys refused to comply with the order "to ground arms," the European soldiers fired against them from a battery in their rear. A Calcutta letter, dated 3 November, 1825, published in the Glasgow Herald, gives a graphic description of what followed:

"About 410 held out......Sir Edward Paget gave orders to fire. In a moment after, grape shot and cannon bullets played upon the poor fellows from all quarters; they then threw down their arms and ran; some escaped by running into Hooghly—some were taken prisoners—upwards of 60 lay dead upon the field, and this afternoon about a dozen or two are either to be hanged or shot".60 As stated in the letter, the rebel troops speedily broke and fled in every direction, but many were taken prisoners. They were tried by a Court Martial and a large number were sentenced to death. A large number of death sentences were, however, commuted into imprisonment with hard labour. The native officers, although not active participants in the rebellion, were dismissed from the service and the number of the regiment was erased from the list of the army.

It may be mentioned here that many persons at that time believed that the want of bullocks and carriages was not the real cause of the mutiny and that actually it was the result of many other grievances among which two were the most important, namely, (1) their having been required to embark on board a ship, and (2) the unjust influence of the Havildar Major with regard to the promotion of the non-commissioned officers in the battalion. The petition, which the sepoys made to the Commander-in-Chief, shows that their main, if not the only, grievance was that they were asked to embark on board ship, and that all the sepoys swore by the Ganges-water and tulsi-plant that they would never put their foot in a ship. It has been held by experienced military officers that the destruction of the British detachment at Ramu spread "alarm throughout the native army, and its effect was to damp the spirit, if not to shake the fidelity of the native troops." The Burmese War was very unpopular and the prospect of fighting in a country of marsh and jungle was undoubtedly dreaded by the sepoys. The Calcutta letter, referred to above, adds: "By the accounts received yesterday from Rangoon we have received a check; the sepoys did not fight with the same spirit as formerly; they lay down before the enemy, and would neither fight nor run away". It is also a fact that all classes of camp-followers had taken advantage of this circumstance and forced the Government to pay remuneration on much higher scale than usual. The sepoys, therefore, regarded themselves as entitled to partake of
advantages "so lavishly and indiscriminately bestowed on men". whom they regarded as inferiors. These were the real causes to which they added bad knapsacks, want of carriages and irregular promotion etc., which were merely contributory causes.

But whatever might have been the causes, the mutiny at Bar rackpur in November, 1824, made a deep impression upon the sepoys, and the memory of the martyrs for the cause of religion was long cherished by them with reverence. This was brought to light in the issue of the Englishman of Calcutta, dated May 30, 1857.60a In view of the very interesting light it throws on the revolutionary mentality of the sepoys the extract may be quoted in full:

"A circumstance has come to our knowledge which, unless it had been fully authenticated, we could scarcely have believed to be possible, much less true.

"When the Mutiny at Barrackpore broke out in 1825, the ringleader, a Brahmin of the 27th Regiment Native Infantry, was hanged on the edge of the tank where a large tree now stands, and which was planted on the spot to commemorate the fact. This tree, sacred Banian, is pointed to by the Brahmans and others to this day, as the spot where an unholy deed was performed, a Brahmin hanged.

"This man was at the time considered in the light of a martyr and his brass poojah or worshipping utensils, consisting of small trays, incense-holders, and other brass articles used by Brahmans during their prayers, were carefully preserved and lodged in the quarter-guard of the Regiment, where they remain to this day; they being at this moment in the quarter-guard of the 43rd Light Infantry at Barrackpore.

"These relics, worshipped by the sepoys, have been for thirty-two years in the safe-keeping of Regiments, having by the operation of the daily relief of the quarter-guard, passed through the hands of 233,600 men, and have served to keep alive, in the breasts of many, the recollection of a period of trouble, scene of Mutiny and its accompanying swift and terrible punishment which, had these utensils not been present to their sight as confirmation, would probably have been looked upon as fables, or at the most as very doubtful stories."

Such memories and memorialas were undoubtedly important factors in the outbreak of the mutiny in 1857.

About a year later disturbances broke out in Assam. On the morning of 14 October, 1825, the Grenadier Company refused to march on the pretext of bad climate. When the ringleaders were seized and put in confinement, all the other sepoys demanded that they, too, should be confined with them. The Court Martial sentenced all the ringleaders to death; the other sepoys were paid and discharged.

On 24 November, 1838, occurred the first of a series of incipient mutinies owing to non-payment of full batta (additional or special allowance). The native regiment at Sholapur at first did not join the parade, but later turned out when the Infantry and Horse Artillery marched towards them. One man in each ten was punished
—they were discharged after suffering imprisonment for two years. The non-payment of batta led to the mutiny of sepoys in Secunderabad, Hyderabad, Malligaum and Kotah in the Sagar Division in 1842. Some of the regiments were disbanded and the rest were pardoned.

In 1839 symptoms of disaffection could be clearly seen among the sepoys who were taken to Afghanistan during the First Afghan War. The Hindu sepoys fancied that they had lost their caste, for they had to cross the Sindhu and go outside India, which was forbidden by their religion, they had to forego their daily bath, take their bread from Muslims, and to wear jackets made of sheep-skin. They, therefore, became disgusted and highly dissatisfied, but kept quiet, determined to ventilate their grievances and discontent when suitable opportunity occurred. The Muslim sepoys were dissatisfied as they had to fight against men of their own faith. Actually a Muslim Subadar and a Hindu Subadar were, respectively, shot dead and dismissed for expressing these sentiments. These punishments further excited the sepoys.51

The same mutinous spirit was also displayed on many occasions due to discontent caused by breach of faith on the part of the Government in respect of their allowances.

"During the first Afghan War General Pollock had paid his troops a special batta when they crossed the Indus. This was treated as a precedent and the sepoys expected similar inducements when he was called upon to undergo the hardship of trans-Indus employment. But in 1843 Sind had been annexed and become an integral part of the British Indian empire. The sepoys could not, therefore, legally claim any special compensation for serving in an Indian province, however distant it might be from his usual station. This was a piece of legal casuistry he could not understand. The Indus was still there. life in Sind was as hard as it had been in 1842, and if his claim was legitimate in 1842, how could it lose its validity in 1844."52

The 64th Regiment accordingly marched towards Sindh, the sepoys being under the impression that they would receive all the benefits which their predecessors had enjoyed. On the pay day they were disillusioned and broke into violence. They threw stones and brickbats at their officers and even belaboured them. Thirty-nine ringleaders were arrested of whom six were executed, seven imprisoned for life, and the rest, save one, sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The 34th N. I. and three other regiments also refused to proceed to Sindh unless the old pecuniary benefits were restored. The 34th
regiment was taken to Meerut, and in the presence of other troops, its arms and accoutrements were taken away and it was disbanded. After this example the other sepoys agreed to march to Sindh unconditionally.

One important point in all these grievances was the unanimous complaint of the sepoys of the 64th Regiment that they had been deceived by the Commanding Officer, and it was proved that they were persuaded to go to Sindh on the temptation held out to them of receiving full batta. It is significant also that the Commanding Officer was removed, thereby proving the truth of the allegation. "But the damage done was irreparable. The sepoys found that he could trust his officers no more. No wonder that when the crisis came in 1857 the assurances of Commanding Officers had little or no weight with him".63

Similarly, the 6th Madras cavalry, when sent to Jubbulpore in 1843, was given to understand that their stay there would be short, but actually they were permanently stationed there on a lower allowance.

After the refusal of the Bengal Army to go to Sindh without special allowance, some infantry regiments were induced to go there on the guarantee of the Governor of Madras, who was also their Commander-in-Chief, that they would be entitled to the same allowances as granted for service in Burma. But when the troops had proceeded far they learnt that the additional allowance promised by the Governor could not be sanctioned as it was contrary to Bengal Regulations. The sepoys strongly resented these cruel breaches of faith and made violent demonstrations. Court Martial was held and a large number of sepoys were punished. What was still more important, the sepoys took to heart the lesson they learnt, namely that no reliance can be placed upon promises made by the Government.64

Mutinous spirit was also displayed in 1849 by the sepoys belonging to the army of occupation in the Panjāb. Towards the end of that year Sir Charles Napier collected "evidence which, in his judgment, proved that twenty-four regiments were only waiting for an opportunity to rise".65 An incipient mutiny at Wazeerabad was suppressed in time, but a mutiny broke out at Govindgarh. On the first day of February, 1850, the native infantry there refused to take off their accoutrements and demanded to be discharged at once. Though they were pacified after some time, they armed themselves without any order the very next morning, and as it was feared that they wanted to occupy the fort, the European troops suddenly attacked them and order was restored. Ninety-five sepoys were sentenced

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to various terms of imprisonment and the whole regiment was disbanded. Though Napier suppressed the mutiny, he sympathized with the mutineers and restored a regulation by which the sepoys were granted compensation for dearness of provisions at a higher rate. For this he was reprimanded by Dalhousie, the Governor-General, and resigned his post in disgust.\textsuperscript{56}

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1. Cf. Ch. VI.
2. Cf. Ch. IX.
3. For fuller account see Ch. XX.
4. See p. 222.
5. See p. 155.
6. For details, see pp. 371-72.
7. Ch. XII, section VII.
8. Ch. XII, section VIII.
9. SAK, 10, 43.
10. For the details of the episode and the passages quoted, cf. BSOAS, XX. 69.
11. SAK, 42.
12. Ibid, 43.
13. Cf. Vol. VIII of this series; RPD, 85 ff. According to Sir Reginald Coupland, an apologist of British rule, “this period of exploitation in its sinister sense was inevitable” (India—A Re-statement, p. 42).
15. RPD, 99 ff.
17. Wilson, I. 335.
18. RPD, 101.
20. Ibid.
23. RPD, 101-2.
25. RPD, 103.
26. Ibid, 104.
27a. This topic will be discussed in detail in Chapter XXIX.
31. See p. 383.
32. Sen, p. 11, f.n., 15, where other instances are referred to.
33. SAK, 17.
33a. Unpublished records, Madras Archives.
34. SAK, 20.
35. Ibid.
37. SAK, 16.
38. These will be discussed in Chapter XLV.
39. SB-II, 4, f.n., 5.
40. SAK, 15.
41. Foreign Political Consultations, No. 197, 8 October, 1853 (quoted in Sen. 36).
41a. See pp. 389-95.
42. The description of the army is based on Imp. Gaz., IV. 333 ff.
43. Cf. the history of the Hyderabad Contingent on pp. 87-8 above.
45. Ibid, 211-12.
46. Holmes, 49.
47. Sen, 21-22.

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50. SB-II, p. 2.
50a. I am indebted to Dr. S B. Chaudhuri for this reference.
51. Majumdar, 246.
52. Sen, 18.
53. Sen, 19.
54. Ibid.
55. Holmes, 57.
56. Ibid.