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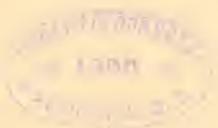


THE REBELLION IN INDIA.

THE WONDROUS TALE OF THE
GREASED CARTRIDGES.

25/10
1342

BY D. URQUHART.



LONDON :

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THE WONDROUS TALE OF THE GREASED CARTRIDGES.

THE ROCHDALE COMMITTEE TO MR. URQUHART.

August 14, 1857.

Sir,—We would be much obliged to you, if you would give us an answer on the three following points. First, what the cartridge affair positively amounts to. Secondly, how the rebellion in India will affect us. Thirdly, what can be done in the sense of the resolution adopted at the meeting last night, *i.e.*, how we can control the acts of our rulers?

I am, sir, your obedient servant,
ABRAHAM GREENWOOD, Secretary.

REPLY.

Rochdale, August 14th.

Sir,—Your three questions are of the utmost importance, and I shall endeavour to give to them the briefest answer compatible with clearness.

1. THE CARTRIDGES.—The discussion has turned upon the composition of the grease and of the paper—that is not the point. You are aware, by the statement laid before you last night, that it was impossible for the Hindus to place between their lips the composition served out; the very idea could not be for a moment entertained. But there was no objection whatever to the mere use of these same cartridges for loading their muskets if allowed to tear them. *The point then upon which the Indian rebellion hinged, was tearing or biting the cartridge.*

It was not necessary that the cartridges should be bitten. The object of biting the cartridges had disappeared with the introduction of the new weapon, for which they were served out.

With the old musket priming had to be used; that priming was taken from the cartridge before it was introduced into the barrel. Whilst priming, the soldier had only one hand free—that which held the cartridge; the other, the left hand, being employed in supporting the musket. It was, therefore, impossible for him to use that hand to tear the cartridge open, and he was constrained to have recourse to his teeth; a very foul operation it was, even when no. grease was

employed, and by which the men were made sick even on a field day. The new weapon requires no priming from the cartridge—a percussion cap is used. The cartridge is not handled until after the musket has been primed and brought to the ground; his left hand holds the muzzle of the musket, when with his right, he takes the cartridge from his pouch; consequently he can use the fingers of his left to tear it, before introducing it into the musket. The priming by means of the cap, thus wholly obviates the filthy operation of biting, a matter of no small importance, seeing that the greasing of the new cartridges renders them so much more loathsome than the old ones.

This, you will observe, is without reference to the religious tenets of the men, and it is difficult to imagine how, for European troops, the introduction of the Enfield rifle was not accompanied by an alteration, in this respect, of the manual exercise.

When these cartridges were sent out to India, the sentiments of the Hindus regarding them were not overlooked. These were so well known that a warning was transmitted from the military authorities at home to those in India, not to serve out the Enfield cartridges to the native troops; as we are informed by Major-General Tucker. This occurred in 1853, so that during three years this instruction had been acted on.

In the papers which have appeared in consequence of the outbreak, the first announcement made, is of a state of apprehension regarding these very cartridges. The General in command at Barrackpore recommends the immediate adoption of measures to allay it, such as the allowing the men to procure their own grease: the introduction of a new platoon exercise, by which the cartridge shall be torn, not bitten, and until such course shall be adopted, the stopping short in the exercise before loading. General Hearsey, who with Mr. Colvin, seems the only man who did not lose his head, never for a moment contemplates any other course as possible than that of removing the ground of complaint, even to the very suspicion. The Governor-General in Council entirely bears out the view of the General. On the 17th of February, the men are allowed to apply the grease, and on the 6th of March, the new platoon exercise passes the Council. Here, then, closes, in due course, the cartridge episode, and the Indian army is restored to its normal condition of tranquility and loyalty, for which it has ever been distinguished from all other forces not national, and from the larger portion of these; political reasons have never agitated even their minds, and on no occasion has there occurred the slightest insubordination, save on some rare occasion of withheld-pay, or interference with their religious habits.

The misfortune, however, is, that the conduct of the Government did not agree with its Resolutions. General Hearsey's suggestion was made on the 23rd January. On the 11th February, he enforces it by the declaration that they stood "on a mine ready to explode." The order, closing the question, issued on the 17th February, yet on the 25th of February, the 19th Regiment refused the percussion caps, because the order of the 17th of the same month did not exist for them.

The revolt of the Oude contingent at Lucknow was occasioned on the 2nd May, or seventy-two days after the order to use their own grease, and fifty-seven days after the regulation dispensing with the biting of cartridges. Between Lucknow and Calcutta there is a telegraph; it must therefore be inferred that what was done by the subordinates was enjoined by the principals, and that the orders were intended to show to the people of England how treacherous was the Sepoy, and how prompt and careful the Indian Government.*

This view, awful as it is, is not without collateral confirmation.

No inquiry was instituted into the disregard of the recommendation of the late Commander-in-Chief at home, as to the issuing to the Sepoys, of the greased cartridges.†

The inquiry into the conduct of Colonel Mitchell was not instituted until after the 19th had been punished, for an act which the very fact of the inquiry, proves to have been connected with his conduct.

The inquiry into the conduct of Colonel Wheler was not instituted until after the disbanding of the companies of the 34th under similar circumstances. It was after the disbanded men of those two regiments reached the neighbourhood of the cantonments, that the successive mutinies exploded.‡

Complaint being received from General Hearsey, that *without his*

* Such is exactly the use the *Times* has made of "THE MUTINIES IN THE EAST INDIES," and all the public knows or can know of these documents is what appears in the *Times*.

† "I do not presume to say with whom, specifically, the blame of this most culpable neglect may rest,—only investigation can settle that point,—but I conceive that either the Military Secretary or the officer presiding in chief over the Ordnance department in Calcutta is, one or both, the party implicated.

"My humble opinion is that the Government of India should have insisted on knowing with whom rested the blame of the grave errors committed.

"A search in the Military Secretary's office will, without doubt, bring to light the neglected recommendation of the late Commander-in-chief."—*Major-General Tucker*.

‡ "The country swarms with bands of the 19th and 34th."—*Telegraphic Message from Benares, May 10th*.

knowledge the officer in command of the wing of the 53rd, stationed at Dum Dum, had issued balled cartridges, on the ground that a mutiny had broken out among the Sepoys at Barrackpore, the Secretary-General writes to the Town Major to know by whom the said orders had been given. The Town Major replies, that he does not know, and writes to Major Clarke (commanding the 53rd) who replies evasively. The Governor-General insists on an explicit answer. The Town Major again applies to Major Clarke, who, thus pressed, replies, "I received the order FROM YOU." On this the matter drops. (No act could be better calculated to insure the mutiny so announced beforehand. The letters as published are so misarranged that it is difficult to follow them in the Parliamentary papers; I have, therefore, had them copied in order, and enclose them.—Enclosure No. 1.)

To the proposed inquiry by the Governor-General into the circumstances under which the Oude contingent "refused to bite the cartridges," no answer appears to have been given, and no notice taken, either of the MINUTE or of the Despatch founded thereon. (Extracts illustrating this point are also enclosed.—Enclosure No. 2.)

In the graver of these cases, and especially in the last, there was no inquiry to be instituted into "the circumstances." The announcement of the event was the information, that the orders of the Governor-General had been disobeyed. The following is the order communicated by telegraph on the 17TH OF FEBRUARY, or *nine days previous to the first act of insubordination* :—

"That all cartridges are to be issued free of grease, and the Sepoys are to be allowed to apply with their own hands whatever mixture suited to the purpose, they may prefer."

The natural and necessary course of business was to reprimand or otherwise punish the officer who had infringed the order or not complied with it. But so far from this, the Governor-General never refers to his own order, unless incidentally to suppose reasons for its neglect.

It follows, that the Sepoys were perfectly justified in refusing to obey orders of their commanding officer: first, because these orders were in contravention of the orders of the Governor-General; secondly, because the engagement of the Sepoy extended only to service not involving, generally, infraction of his religious duties, and especially, violation of caste; thirdly, because the word of the Government was pledged to this effect, as conveyed by the sub-joined extract from General Hearsey.

“By introducing this new mode of drill, namely, *breaking the cartridge with the hand instead of biting it, all discontent or uneasy feeling in regard to their caste and prejudices on that account, will be, or ought to be effectually removed; we shall thus be keeping our word with the Sepoys, and at the same time, introducing a better plan of loading, with reference to their religious scruples.*” Major-General HEARSEY,
March 5th.

Now, as to the Hindu point of view. One effect of biting a cartridge containing fat of kine, is *disinheritance*. No outcast can inherit property. This, however, is a British as well as a Hindu view, for it is enacted by 21st George III. c. 70, “that inheritances in the case of Gentoos (Hindus) shall be determined by the LAWS and USAGES of Gentoos.” Another effect is excommunication, such as formerly was practised among Christians, only carried to a point of infinitely greater severity. Intercourse of a Sepoy so circumstanced, with his wife, is visited according to Hindu law, by mutilation and death.

The stain so inflicted is capable of removal only by a series of penances, crowned by passing over a mass of red-hot charcoal vehemently fanned, nine yards square, and nine inches deep; this purgation can be effected only on one day of the year. You will thus perceive, that there can be nothing more immediately or directly effectual for the fall of an Indian Empire, than the use of greased cartridges. You will hereafter learn, that the injunctions of the late Commander-in-Chief not to issue the greased cartridges have been obeyed in regard to the Bombay and Madras armies: it not being the purpose of those who planned the Berghal mutiny, that it should extend to the other two Presidencies.

I conclude this branch by calling your most serious attention to the subjoined statement of the case by the ex-Chairman of the East India Company, made in the House of Commons on Tuesday last (11th August). These are the only words that are true—the only words not atrocious, which have been uttered in the House of Commons. Colonel Sykes indeed assumes that the Sepoys laboured under a delusion (or at least is constrained to feign it). You, after perusing the extracts I give, will understand the value of that assumption:—

“There had been no outbreak against the Government during that period (100 years). On the contrary, those men had fought in a hundred battles and gained us a hundred victories, always showing the utmost readiness to support the honour of the British arms. Now, if there had been any frantic delusion like the present, which had run like wild-fire from station to station, a mutiny might have occurred at any time during those 100 years. The Sepoys believed that an attack was being made on their religion—a belief entirely unreasonable; but in such a case it was utterly impossible to apply the rules of reason. The proof that there

existed no previous combination among the Sepoys was that the mutiny crept so slowly from station to station. Thus, so far back as the 26th of February, the 19th Regiment at Berhampore refused to use the cartridges, and was disbanded at Barrackpore on the 31st of March. The men, too, did not rise against their officers. They said, "We will go to any part of the world against an enemy, but we cannot lose our caste." Hon. gentlemen acquainted with the history of the middle ages would know what was the meaning of excommunication. When the Pope excommunicated an Emperor he could not find one of his subjects even to do a menial office for him; and loss of caste operated in much the same way in India. Every Sepoy who put one of the greased cartridges into his mouth became a degraded being in the eyes of his fellows; his own mother could not touch him, nor his father or brother sit with him. Was it to be wondered, then, if the Sepoys would far rather brave death than submit to such degradation? Would they have lifted up their hands against their officers at Meerut had common forbearance been exhibited towards them, or if a thorough knowledge of the native character had been possessed by the authorities there? The facts were these:—The skirmishers of the 3rd Cavalry, one of the finest regiments in the Bengal army, were ordered to parade, *and use* these cartridges, which they were assured were harmless. This, however, the men did not believe; and they begged their native officers to go to their European superiors and ask that the matter should not be forced to a crisis. Their wishes were acceded to in the first instance, but the better feeling of the officer in command was overruled by another officer of the regiment, who said, "If you give way the men will say you are afraid of them." The parade was then ordered. With five exceptions the Sepoys refused to use these cartridges, and for this disobedience of orders and mutiny, (for mutiny, of course, it was) they were sent to their lines. There they remained for three weeks, when an order came down from General Anson at Simla that they should be tried by court-martial. This was accordingly done, and they were sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in irons and hard labour. The next day they were paraded, irons were placed on their legs, and they were sent to the common gaol among 1400 felons. This was on the Saturday. The remainder of the native troops of course thought that their fate would be the same, as they also must necessarily refuse to *bite* these unhappy cartridges; and on the Sunday the disturbances took place.* He hoped no gentleman in that house would be mad enough to suppose, however, that India could be ruled by European troops alone sent out from this country. It was idle to suppose that our little island, with its 28,000,000 of inhabitants, could supply troops sufficient to keep in subjection 181,000,000 of people. Such a notion was an utter absurdity, and would lead to permanent disaster and to the ruin of our Indian empire.

2nd.—THE CONSEQUENCES.—Mr. Disraeli has stated the case as follows:—

"We will assume, for it is probable, that in the present year we shall do nothing. The commencement of the next campaign will be in November. Now what I wish to

* Not a word of this will be found in the Parliamentary papers. If Col. Sykes stated what was untrue why was he not contradicted? The papers are so misarranged that it is utterly impossible to trace any connection without duplicate copies to collate, scattered over a whole room with days of assiduity to devote to the loathsome task.

impress on the House and the country, is, that everything depends on the next campaign. All Europe and Asia will watch your efforts, and if your efforts and energies are adequate, commencing in November, the opportunity will be at your command, and you may save your empire and establish it with renewed force and vigour. But if in the next campaign you have varying fortunes, and nothing determined and decisive—if it is to be an affair of campaigns, and you enter into a third campaign, you will then find other characters on the stage, with whom you will have to contend, besides the princes of India."

The President of the Board of Control has put it in this fashion :—

"But what I want to impress on the House is this,—the present year is gone This is a campaign, and, of course, from the nature of the circumstances—from the surprise of the whole affair,—a most disastrous campaign. The gallant General had indulged in the hope that Delhi is taken. I do not indulge in that belief, and I think it unwise that a person of the gallant General's authority, unless he has strong reason for the conviction, should give weight to such a rumour, because I conceive that you will never get the people of this country to brace up their energies to the necessary point if they suppose that the next mail will bring intelligence of some event which will induce them to rank this affair with a Chinese or Persian war."

General Hearsey writes from the spot :—

"If large, very large, reinforcements of British troops are not poured into Hindustan, *across the Isthmus of Suez, i.e. viâ Alexandria and Cairo Railroad*, and immense stores of coals sent by the same railroad to Suez, to coal the steamers for them, so that the Queen's ships can be pushed on with the least possible delay, it will go hard with all of us.

The first "most disastrous campaign" of the President of the Board of Control is simply the defection of half an empire, where you have not had the opportunity of so much as fighting a battle. For the second campaign you are destitute of troops; you are sending out merely a handful, and these chiefly recruits; you are sending them by the longest route, so as to afford the opportunity for the rebellion to confirm itself. It is, therefore, utterly impossible, that in the course of that campaign, taking in the meantime no steps to regain the confidence of the native populations, you should have successes equal to the disasters you have incurred, so as to exclude the ground for Mr. Disraeli's hypothesis regarding the third campaign. Mr. Disraeli is not an alarmist; he has faith in the elasticity of the British constitution, and, in his judgment, the year 1859, will find you engaged with other enemies than the princes of India; that is to say, with certain European powers, in consequence of the Indian rebellion, and because you are unable to cope with that rebellion. The prospect, therefore, is a war with France, after you have been drained of money, men, and vessels, by a contest in Hindustan. In meeting this difficulty, you are *ipso facto* deprived

of the resources of India, as France will have there as many partizans as England has foes. You may have to meet the French on the banks of the Ganges, the Indus, the Godavery, and the Nerbudda, as well as on the St. Lawrence and the Thames.

Simultaneously you will have the Mussulman empires of Turkey and Persia, subjected to the whole of the influences, internal and external of a diplomatic kind, which have brought the revolt of the Sepoys. From the collision with France may be evolved the loss of, or the struggle for Malta, the Ionian Isles and Aden. Neutral vessels being now no longer attackable when serving your enemy, your fleets, on the one hand, will be unavailable for arresting the supplies, or even the transport of the *troops of your enemies*; and, on the other, your own mercantile navy will be instantly extinguished, because no British merchant will risk his goods in an English bottom.

The consequences to you are therefore, increase of taxes, certainly not less in the two years than two hundred millions, or £40 per family, which sum each of you will have to sweat to furnish, or die if you cannot: diminution of supply of raw materials, and of demand for goods, which, when it arrives at a certain point, must bring stoppage of mills, predial insurrection, without force in the country to put it down; and, finally stoppage at the Bank. All this will follow, because on the introduction of the Enfield rifle, the tearing of the cartridge was not substituted for the biting of it. This is, however, but the immediate cause. The remote one is—that those who rule are certain of impunity for whatever they do.

3rd.—THE MEANS OF ESCAPE.—To avert the catastrophe, what requires to be done, is to adjudicate upon the case, and to inform the people of India that that adjudication is in progress. This step being taken, the sending of your troops round by the Cape, instead of through the Isthmus of Suez, will be a wise and politic measure. Your question is not, however, what England ought to do, but what you individually ought to do, seeing that England is not capable of fulfilling her duties. The only answer that I can give is my own example. Possess yourselves of the case, and then do your best to make others see it. Your efforts may be fruitless; but they may be successful. It is besides the only thing that you can do; it is what you must do, to be either men or Christians.

Yesterday in passing along through an almost continuous city of scores of miles, peopled with human beings, bound to a servitude of thankless toil; this morning listening to the clatter of wooden shoes on the pavement, from before five in the morning, of the factory-bound mob, I was appalled with the reflection that the fate of these my fellow creatures was utterly dependent upon a single line traced

by an individual, and which they were as utterly ignorant of, and indifferent to, as the cows in the field, the dray-horses in the streets, or the very steam-engines on the rail.

Beyond the line of chimneys, shafts, and smoke, still spreads out a chain of hills; these you have not been able to suppress. It brought to my mind what you were, as contrasted with what you are; what have you got for all your toil?

That which is being done in India, and which is to bring upon you these penalties, can only be done by means of money. It is you, yourselves, who furnish this money: it is by means of your own sweat and toil that you are to be undone; it is by that sweat and toil that those crimes are perpetrated, which make your ruin a just and necessary vengeance. Your prototypes of Carthage have been branded with reluctance to part with money, while there was no reluctance to part with honour. That reproach cannot attach to you; you are no less profuse of gold than of infamy, and the sacrifices that other States have made for passion or for lust, you have tenfold surpassed, without an evil thought or a selfish purpose.

Having given up all control of your aggregate acts, nothing remains, but to know nothing about them, nor trouble yourselves with anticipating disagreeable circumstances, which you have just got to suffer when they come.

This being the state of your fellow countrymen, it appears to me that there never was a period in the history of man in which more was placed within the reach of the acting hand.

In this case I have but to repeat what I have said on each preceding one. A crime can be dealt with only in one fashion—that is by the law. Until the present year it was denied in Parliament, that the acts of Lord Palmerston were crimes. That character is now given to them, and that by the highest legal authority in the realm (Lord Lyndhurst). But this makes your state worse, not better, for you do not proceed thereon: nor is it possible to do so, until you have in Parliament some man or men of knowledge and honesty.

The multiplication of such acts does not open any hope, for the result is familiarity, not indignation, or even apprehension. It was yesterday said to me, "I have heard you four times in the course of three years, announce the combination against us of all the races and creeds of Asia. The first time it took away the breath of the audience; the last time (yesterday) it fell dead on them." The first time it was a surprise, and therefore an excitement; the last time, being already known, it was a matter of indifference.

Your obedient servant,
D. URQUHART.

ENCLOSURE NO. 1.

THE BALLED CARTRIDGES AT DUM DUM.

No. 1.

The Inspector General of Ordnance, to the Adjutant General of the Army.

January 28, 1857.

Paragraph 7.—I am sorry to add that I, this morning heard that the officer commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Reg. in Fort William wrote to the officer in command of the wing of that regiment at Dum Dum, to warn a company to be ready to turn out at any moment, and had distributed to the men of the company ten rounds of balled ammunition, informing that officer that a mutiny had broken out at Barrackpore amongst the Sepoys. No copy of this letter was sent to Colonel Reid, commanding at Dum Dum, nor to Brigadier Grant, nor to myself. I need not enlarge on the great impropriety of such a proceeding, as, if it become known to the Sepoys, it will immediately create an ill feeling amongst them.

No. 2.

*The Town Major to the Secretary to the Government of India.**Town Major's Office, Fort William, January 30, 1857.*

Sir

IN reply to your letter of the 29th instant, I have the honor to enclose a communication of this date, this moment received from the officer commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Foot.

I am not aware of the instructions to which Major Clarke alluded in his letter dated the 26th inst. to the officer commanding the left wing of the regiment at Dum Dum, though the fact of orders having been received for a company of the corps to be brought into garrison from Dum Dum, was certainly communicated to him by me in the presence of the officer commanding the troops in garrison, on the evening of the above date.

I have, &c.,

O. CAVENAGH, *Lieutenant-Colonel.*

No. 3.

Major Clarke to the Town Major.

Sir,

Fort William, January 30, 1857.

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 29th instant, with enclosure herewith returned, and in reply thereto beg to state that the letter forwarded by me to the officer commanding the left wing at Dum Dum, being of a private nature I did not keep any copy of it, but sent last night to Major Ross to have it returned, which shall be forwarded as soon as received.

In the meantime, I take the liberty of enclosing a copy, as near as I can recollect, of the letter referred to.

I have, &c.,

W. CLARKE, *Major Commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Reg.*

No. 4.

*Major Clarke to the Officer Commanding Left Wing, Her Majesty's 53rd Regiment,
Dum Dum.*

Sir

Fort William, January 26, 1857.

Agreeably to instructions received, I have to request you will have a complete Company ready to be under arms all night, each man provided with ten rounds of ammunition (balled), and to act as further instructions may be given, *disturbance having broken out amongst the troops at Barrackpore.*

The main-guard to be also increased by one serjeant and ten men.

I have, &c.,

W. CLARKE, *Major Commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Regiment.*

No. 5.

The Secretary to the Government of India to the Town Major.

Sir,

Fort William, January 30, 1857.

With reference to your letter of this date, forwarding a communication from Major Clarke commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Reg. inclosing a copy of a letter sent by him on the 26th inst., to the officer commanding the left wing of the Reg. at Dum Dum, I am desired by the Governor-General in Council, to request that you will call upon Major Clarke to explain what the instructions were to which he alludes in that letter, and from whom they were received.

I am, &c.,

R. S. H. BIRCH, *Colonel.*

No. 6.

Major Clarke to the Town Major.

Fort William, February 2nd, 1857.

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 31st ultimo, with enclosure, and in reply beg to state for your information, that the instructions alluded to in my *private* correspondence to Major Ross, commanding left wing 53rd Regiment, would, I fully supposed have been considered by him *strictly in that light.*

With reference to the increase of guards directed by me at Dum Dum I would beg to explain that I meant the regimental main-guard of the wing, having no authority to interfere with those of the station. I beg to return your enclosure.

W. CLARKE, *Major Commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Regiment.*

No. 7.

The Secretary to the Government of India to the Town Major.

Fort William, February 2nd, 1857.

Sir,—In acknowledging the receipt of your letter of this date, with an original one from Major Clarke, commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Foot *also of this date*, I am directed to observe that the latter does not contain a statement of what the instructions were, which he states himself to have received when he wrote to the Officer commanding the wing of that corps at Dum Dum, nor from whom they were received; and to request that you will have the goodness to call upon Major Clarke to furnish without delay, for the information of Government, a direct and explicit answer to the reference made to him.

I am, &c.,

R. S. H. BIRCH, *Colonel.*

No. 8.

*Major Clarke to the Town Major.**Fort William, February 4th, 1857.*

Sir,—I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, with enclosure, and in reply beg to state that I received the instructions to increase the guards in Fort William, and have a complete Company ready to turn out at a moment's warning FROM YOU; and I consequently wrote to Major Ross, commanding left wing, 53rd Regiment at Dum Dum, with similar instructions, marked "Private."

W. CLARKE, *Major, Commanding Her Majesty's 53rd Regiment.*

ENCLOSURE No. 2.

THE OUDE INSURRECTION.

No. 1.

The Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Oude to the Secretary to the Government of India.

Lucknow, May 4th, 1857.

Sir,—I am directed to report, for the information of the Governor-General in Council, that, on the 2nd instant, the 7th Oude Regiment, stationed seven miles from the Lucknow cantonments, *refused to bite the cartridge* when ordered by its own officers, and again by the Brigadier.

No. 2.

Minute by the Governor-General, May 10th, 1857.

This despatch from the Chief Commissioner in Oude, reports the outbreak of a *mutinous spirit* in the 7th regiment of the Oude Irregular Infantry, AND their refusal to use the cartridges furnished to them.

It appears that the revised instructions for the platoon exercise, by which the biting of the cartridge is dispensed with, HAD NOT COME INTO OPERATION at Lucknow when the event took place. EXPLANATION OF THIS SHOULD BE ASKED.

No. 3.

Minute of Major-General Low, May 10th, 1857.

The report from the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner in Oude, dated the 4th instant, does not describe, so distinctly as one could wish, all that actually occurred previous to the 3rd inst., and since; I cannot say, with much precision, all that ought, in my opinion, to be done by orders of the Government, especially as it appears to me that probably the main body of this regiment, in refusing to bite the cartridges, did so refuse, not from any feeling of disloyalty or disaffection towards the Government or their officers, *but from an unfeigned and sincere dread, owing to their belief in the late rumours about the construction of those cartridges, that the act of biting them would involve a serious injury to their caste, and to their future respectability of character.* In short, that if they were to bite these cartridges, they would be guilty of a heinous sin in a religious point of view.

No. 4.

Minute by Mr. Grant, May 11th, 1857.

These men, taken from the late Oude army, can have learned as yet little of the vigour of British discipline; and although there can be no doubt, that the cartridges which they refused to bite were not the new cartridges for the Enfield musket, which, *by reason of the very culpable conduct of the Ordnance department*, have caused all this excitement; *yet it may be presumed, that they were the first cartridges that these men were ever required to bite in their lives.* Also, there is no saying *what extreme mismanagement there may have been on the part of the commandant and officers in the origin of the affair*; the mere fact of MAKING CARTRIDGE-BITING A POINT AFTER IT HAD BEEN PURPOSELY DROPPED FROM THE AUTHORIZED SYSTEM OF DRILL, merely for rifle practice, is a presumption for any imaginable degree of perverse management.

No. 5.

The Secretary to the Government of India to the Chief Commissioner of Oude.

May 13, 1857.

4.—The Governor-General in Council feels it necessary that he should fully understand how the refusal on the 2nd inst. to bite the cartridges was manifested; what had passed previously on the subject, and what were the circumstances which led to the refusal; how the symptoms of disaffection, said to have been shown on the 3rd inst. appeared; whether in such a manner as to implicate the whole regiment or a portion only; and if the latter, how many individuals.

5.—Again, it is stated that on the 4th inst., the regiment was reported to the Brigadier to be in a state of mutiny. It does not appear upon what circumstances the report was founded; for on the same evening, the regiment was found perfectly quiet, obeyed the order given to form line, and expressed contrition; explanation on this point is required.

8.—A book, containing the practice with rifles, recently printed by order of Government, *is understood to have been despatched* to the regiments of Oude Local Infantry, on or about the 14th ult. In that book it is directed that the cartridge shall be torn open, and no allusion is made to the old practice of biting it. The Governor-General in Council wishes to know *when that book was received* by the corps at Lucknow.

[The despatch from Lucknow of the 4th was answered on the 10th. There was a telegraph. The reply to this question if sent on the 10th by telegraph could have been received on the 16th May, in writing. The documents come down to the 9th June, and contain, through 170 folio pages, not a line referring to the inquiries of the Governor-General.]

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