

families in every military contonment; the increased facilities of communication with England; the mess; the book-club; the billiard-table; and above all the improved and more comprehensive character of the administration, which, by opening to the army new fields of honourable and lucrative employment, has diverted the ambition of men from mere regimental occupation, have loosened the ties which bound the English officer to the Hindostanee sepoy. There is no doubt of the fact, and the evil—if, on the whole, it be an evil—is probably without a remedy.

It might be supposed that this deficiency would in some measure have been atoned for by the mediation of the native officer, who ought to have bridged over the gulf between the sepoy and his English captain. But the cause, to which we have adverted, had made the English captain forfeit even the confidence of the native officer; and the system of promotion—a system of pure seniority—whatever else it may have had to recommend it, was fatal to the efficiency of the class. The soubahdar and jemadar of a company were generally old and effete. They had attained their commissions, not by merit but by age. They were in fact only the oldest sepoy in the company, but as officers they were mere names. They stood between the English officers and the sepoy; but they did not unite them. They induced a sense of security, but made nothing secure. Having no real attachment for their English comrades, they were generally blind and deaf when sight and hearing were inconvenient. The native officers, living in the lines with the sepoys, ought, to have been cognisant of all the mischief that was brewing in them; and being, though in an ill-defined and doubtful manner, responsible for the good conduct of the men off parade, they ought to have reported all dangerous sayings and doings to their European officers. But it is very certain they did nothing of the kind, and that they were for all practical purposes identical with the men they commanded. The existence of native commissioned officers was, as we showed on a former occasion, (1) a fatal error. They contributed nothing to the real discipline of the regiment, yet they served to screen the deficiency of European officers in numbers and in experience.

#### THE OUTBREAK AND ITS IMMEDIATE CAUSES.

That the movement is one primarily of Mahomedan origin is not to be doubted. No one can have watched, with any clearness of vision, the phenomena of Mahomedanism throughout all the countries of Asia during the last few years, without observing convulsive struggles which indicate a condition the very reverse of that repose which proceeds from consciousness of strength. The events preceding and attending the Russian war must have opened the eyes of many of the faithful to the dangerous position of Mahomedanism in Turkey. It was threatened on both sides—threatened alike by the hostility of Russia and by the presence of Christian allies. It is no mere hypothesis that the concessions made by the Porte to its Christian allies, as indicated by the famous firman of the Sultan granting increased privileges and immunities to Christians, were viewed with the utmost suspicion and alarm by other Mahomedan states, and attributed to the sinister influence of Great Britain. On a former occasion we pointed out in this journal how Persia, threatened with hostilities from England, had despatched emissaries to the states of Central Asia, calling upon them, in the name of the Faith, to reject all alliance with a nation, whose friendship was more dangerous to Islamism than its enmity could be. It is not difficult to believe that this may have been only one particular manifestation of the activity of Persia in that conjuncture, and that emissaries may have been despatched to India with the intention of arousing the religious fears of the Mussulmans of Hindostan, and thus exciting the soldiery to revolt. If Persia did not understand the full extent of the calamity involved in a revolt of the native army of India, and the manner in which such an event must necessarily cripple our power to carry on a foreign war, others may have taught her the lesson. The train, however, was not ignited in time to aid her designs. England had struck so promptly and so effectively, that the force assembled in the Persian Gulf had done its work in time to send aid towards the suppression of the revolt in Hindostan.

It is certain that much bitter discontent, not altogether unmingled with ambitious hopes, had long been seething in the mind of the Mahomedans of India. They had seen all the most honourable and most lucrative posts under the Government wrested from them by the intruding Feringee. There was no service left for them but of an inferior grade; and even in these lower grades of employment, men of high birth and illustrious antecedents were compelled to jostle with reprobates and outcasts. There was no outlet for the aspiring ambition, there was no safety-valve for the energetic aspirations, of the once dominant race. Year after year their position

grew more hopeless and depressing. At first one native state, then another, fell, under the pressure of inevitable circumstances, into the grasp of the English conquerors; the narrow field of employment was still further contracted; their dark prospects were rendered still darker. The most sagacious of our Anglo-Indian statesmen had clearly foreseen and emphatically commented on this increasing danger. They had predicted the time when, by the universal extension of our rule, we should turn against us all the vagrant energies of the country, and perhaps be stricken down at last by a monster of our own creation. Half a century ago the danger threatening us from this source was said to be imminent—nay, it was believed already to have descended upon us, in the event known in history as the Massacre of Vellore, and might again descend upon us with the same ghastly and terrific aspect. It was a necessity that the descendants of the Mahomedan conquerors of India should hate us, and that mingled with this hatred there should be an undying hope of recovering the supremacy they had lost. Wherever the sword of Islam has carried the faith of Mahomet, the same implacable hatred of every other creed, the same sanguinary tyranny over the unbeliever, subsists. Nana Sahib, in one of his insolent proclamations, invoked the authority of the "Sultan of Roum" against us; for even the Mahrattas appear to recognise the superior force and ferocity of their Musulman conquerors. No wonder that the hatred of us by this class of fanatical warriors is intense. Ever since we have been extending our conquests in India, this has been the normal state of the upper class of Mahomedans, and we may be sure that to them toleration and submission are alike unknown.

Every new principality wrested from native rule has increased the exacerbation against us, and rendered them peculiarly susceptible to impressions adverse to the victorious race of their successors. Their secret hatred lost none of its intensity. It is a marvel and a mystery that so many years should have passed away without an explosion. At last a firebrand was applied to what a single spark might have ignited; and in the course of a few weeks there was a general conflagration; but a conflagration which still bears more marks of accident than of deliberate conspiracy and incendiarism.

In a most unhappy hour—in an hour laden with a concurrence of adverse circumstances—the incident of the greased cartridges occurred. It found the Bengal army in a season of profound peace, and in a state of relaxed discipline. It found the sepoys pondering over the predictions and the fables which had been so assiduously circulated in their lines and their bazaars; it found them with imaginations inflamed and fears excited by strange stories of the designs of their English masters; it found them, as they fancied, with their purity of caste threatened, and their religious distinctions invaded, by the proselytising and annexing Englishman. It seemed as though we were about to take everything from them—their old privileges, their old rights, even their old religion. Still, there was no palpable evidence of this. Everything was vague, intangible, obscure. Credulous and simple-minded as they were, many might have retained a lingering confidence in the good faith and good intentions of the British Government, had it not been suddenly announced to them, just as they were halting between two opinions, that, in prosecution of his long cherished design to break down the religion both of Mahomedan and Hindoo, the Feringhee had determined to render their military service the means of their degradation, by compelling them to apply their lips to a cartridge saturated with animal grease—the fat of the swine being used for the pollution of the one, and the fat of the cow for the degradation of the other. (1)

If the most astute emissaries of evil who could be employed for the corruption of the Bengal sepoy had addressed themselves to the task of inventing a lie for the confirmation and support of all his fears and superstitions, they could have found nothing more cunningly devised for their purpose. A large portion of the Hindu Sepoys in the Bengal army were men of high caste—Brahmins and Rajpoots. The Brahmins had their own especial grievances; the dominion of the English had done much to weaken their influence, and was steadily doing more and more every year to lower the dominant caste, and by exploding superstition after superstition, to destroy the ascendancy which they had obtained over the minds of their fellows. They were in a state of mind which rendered them peculiarly accessible to the conviction that the English were systematically endeavouring to degrade them. The story of the greased cartridges, therefore,—cartridges lubricated with the sacred fat of the cow,—met with ready acceptance, and at once inflamed the minds of all the Hindoos in the ranks of the army. Thus done, the prejudices of the Mahomedans were assailed, but in a different manner.

(1) Yet it is stated on good authority that the same grease had always been applied, without objection, by native artillerymen to the wheels of their gun carriages.