

1011
21. Mecklenburgh Square
14th Dec. 1864 W.C.

My dear Sir,

With many many thanks I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your favour of the 30th ultimo & at the same time to ask yr pardon for the delay which has taken place in answering it. - I am sorry to learn you are unwell, but hope that under God's blessing you may ere long be restored to yr wanted health. -

In your now under reply you honour me by asking my opinion "as to the extent to which the Mutiny of 1857 grew into a popular rebellion in the N.W. Provinces" & express your opinion that "it was not a mere military Mutiny". - As far as my personal knowledge respects respecting the Sepoy Revolt of 1857, & from all that I have learnt from investigation I find that even the use of the expression "Military Mutiny" conveys an idea

of something more than the real fact. - It denied that the use of "greased cartridges" did violence to the superstition of the Sepoys, who consequently determined not to bite the same. - Almost all the Sepoys had unvacillatingly & never to bite the cartridge, which determination was the only charge that could be brought against them, till a very severe punishment was inflicted upon them at Meerut, a punishment which produced a strong impression on the minds of those men that they must either bite the greased cartridges or suffer the punishment of their disobedience. - And it was then, & not before, that the discontent of the Sepoys grew into Military Mutiny. - I am strongly of opinion that, if before the infliction of punishment the alternative either of biting the cartridges, or resigning the service, had been offered them, the Sepoys would undoubtedly have peaceably withdrawn themselves from the Company's Service. - If the real facts connected with the revolt in the N.W.P. be calmly enquired into, I do not think

that the events which happened there can properly be designated as a 'popular rebellion'. - Undoubtedly the people of the N.W.P. were dissatisfied with the Company's rule, & this in a great measure was owing to the following causes:— the decay of respectable families without the void ^{they} left being filled up by others — the non-existence of any means by which the native community could procure honourable situations, & more especially — the forfeiture of the herafee (right of holding lands without paying any rent to Govt.) which act of the authorities was considered a great injustice by the natives; & belatedly some other causes of less importance. — It may also be safely asserted that the Govt's exercise of the right of 'Predominant Power', a power subject to no regulations & unlimited and the interference, in a way till then unknown, in the case of Adolph & Lapse, had created a distrust in the

mind of the native chiefs who perhaps did not long think themselves secure. — It does however by no means appear that even this stimulated them to revolt or to take any part in the rebellion, for no native chiefs whatever who were in possession of their principalities, notwithstanding the distrust with which they looked upon the Company's rule committed themselves by any act of rebellion against the Government. — Quitting the subject of the Military Mutiny I shall now briefly describe the character of the rebellion in N.W.P. — The rebellion in the N.W.P. assumed three forms —

1st Robbers and Docvils, who were kept down by the power & strength of the Govt, now assembling in numbers not only attacked wayfarers, but also plundered villages & even towns. —

2nd Some of the minor chiefs whose families had fallen into decay, endeavoured the re-ascension of their ancestral power. — This sort of mutiny occurred in four places only:— Cawnpore, Bareilly,

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Bijnour, and Ferozshahabad. - Some of those fortresses tried to have themselves restored while others were compelled by the mutineers to make an effort. -

3^d Some of the lower classes, variously employed, entered the service of such rebellious chiefs. -

The first kind of rebellion cannot strictly be deemed one against the Govt. - The third sort of rebellion also although undoubtedly a crime can not be called a regular rebellion, if we take into consideration the ^{then} state of India where serving a rebellious chief was not considered equivalent to an act of rebellion. - This notion had taken deep root in the native mind, in times previous to the Company's rule, when chiefs fought with each other and when engaging in the military service of either party was not considered as a crime. -

The second sort of revolt was indeed of a serious nature, but this had been exclusively confined to the above mentioned rebellions

chiefs and was never general. - As far as I know the population of no part of the N.W.P. tried in any thought of rendering any assistance to the native rebellious chiefs, much less than of subverting the British rule. - A great proof of the justice of this assertion lies in the fact that as soon as the mutinous troops & the rebellious chiefs were expelled from a District, peace was immediately restored.

I therefore think that the mutiny of 1857 was not a popular rebellion. - To a European mind unacquainted with the state of India, the very name of rebellion at once carries with it an idea that the people of the country must have taken part in it, and the real facts are thus ignored. -

With feelings of sincere regard, and hoping the above will suffice to give you some idea of my humble opinion.

I remain
Dear Sir
Very Truly Yours

Ghad Ahmad
J. W. Kaye
India Office