

AN ESSAY

On the Causes of the Indian Revolt

BY

SYUD AHMED KHAN,

PRINCIPAL SUDDER AMIEN OF MORADABAD.

TRANSLATED BY CAPTAIN W. N. LEES, L.L.D.

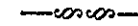
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## PREFACE.

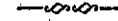


THE events of the year 1857 A.D., unparalleled in history, at least in the history of this country, have occupied the attention of many, who either from inclination or from their connection with the management of this country, have set themselves to search for the true causes of the startling occurrences which have transpired, and each one has put forward his views in conformity with the amount of information or capacity of which he was possessed.

The Government, after a careful investigation into all the circumstances which have occurred since the disaffection of the Sepoys was first made apparent at Barrackpore, has shown by the terms of the Royal Proclamation, that it has ascertained the true state of the case, but at the same time there are many minor matters which in all probability have not come to the notice of Government; and as it is the duty of all to bring forward such information as they may possess, and as Natives of this country are probably best acquainted with the causes of the rebellion, I have deemed it incumbent upon me, more especially as I have been honored and rewarded by Government for my poor services during this unhappy time, to record for the information of the authorities in this country and in England, my opinion in reference to this eventful crisis.

SYUD AHMED KHAN,  
*Principal Sudder Ameen of Moradabad.*

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1. Definition of "Rebellion" exemplified with instances.
2. Why it is resorted to?
3. The Rebellion of 1857 did not originate from a single cause, but from a complication of causes.
4. The distribution of "Chuppatties" had not league for its object.
5. Russia and Persia not chargeable with a league in this matter.
6. The subject of the Proclamation which was found in the tent of a Persian Prince discussed.
7. The despatch of a Firman by the ex-King of Delhi to the King of Persia not improbable, but not the origin of rebellion.
8. The annexation of Oude not the cause of the general rise.
9. The league not formed with the view of overthrowing the Government of strangers.
10. The position of the ex-King of Delhi well known within the town and its environs, but over-rated in the distant Provinces.
11. The declaration of Lord Amherst in the year 1827—to the effect that the sovereignty of India belonged to the British Government, and that it no longer existed in the Timour family, did not offend any one.
12. The Mahomedans did not contemplate Jihad against the Christians prior to the outbreak.
13. The preaching of Jihad in India 35 years before, with this reservation—that its practice against the British Government was opposed to the doctrines of the Mahomedan religion, and from the same cause its practice on the other side of the Indus Provinces, *viz.*, against the Seiks, was held lawful.
14. None of the acts committed by the Mahomedan Rebels during the disturbances were in accordance with the tenets of the Mahomedan religion. The Futwa of Jihad printed at Delhi was a counterfeit one—a large number of the Moulvees who considered the King of Delhi a violator of the law, left off praying in the Royal Mosque.
15. The same persons whose seals are said to be affixed to the Futwa at Delhi protected the lives and honor of the Christians.
16. The Bengal Army were not previously in league for an outbreak.
17. Nor was there any league between the army and the ex-King, though it is not improbable some Sepoy or Non-Commissioned Officer may have been his disciple.

18. The non-admission of a Native as a Member into the Legislative Council was the original cause of the outbreak.
19. The importance of such an admission discussed.
20. The inadmission of such a Member proved a hindrance to the development of the good feelings of the India subject towards the Government, and of their good intention towards them; on the contrary, contrary effects were produced.
21. The outbreak of the Rebellion proceeded from the following five causes :
  - I. Misunderstanding on the part of the Indians.
    1. Apprehensions of interference of Government with the religions and customs of the Indians.
    2. Mentions of the Secundra Orphan system.
    3. Religious discussions being carried to a great height during the present time.
    4. The Covenanted Officers assumed the Missionary functions, Preaching of the Gospel by the Missionaries.
    5. The establishment of Missionary Schools, and the Covenanted Officers attending examinations at them.
    6. Village Schools.
    7. The introduction of female education.
    8. Alterations in the usual system of education in large Colleges.
    9. The issue of Government Proclamation, on the subject of admitting Government College English students to appointments in preference to other candidates.
    10. Introduction of the messing system in the Jails.
    11. The circulation of Mr. Edmond's letters from Calcutta.
    12. The interference in religious matter more repugnant to the feelings of the Mahomedans and its causes.
  - II. The promulgation of objectionable law and procedures.
    1. Act XXI. of 1850.
    2. Act XV. of 1856. Giving liberty to females.
    3. The promulgation of certain Acts in cases wherein the parties are of one religion.
    4. The resumption of mafees.
    5. The speeches of Lord Munro and the Duke of Wellington on the subject.
    6. The public sales of Zemindaree rights.
    7. Heavy assessment of lands.
    8. The abolition of Talookdaree rights, particularly in the Oude Provinces.

9. The introduction of the stamp paper. The system of Civil administration in the Bengal Provinces superior to that in the Punjab, but requires revision in certain points.
- III. Ignorance of Government of the state of the country and their subjects.
    1. Local authorities generally unacquainted with the condition of their subjects.
    2. Overwhelming poverty of the Indians, particularly of the Mahomedans.
    3. Scarcity of employment generally of the Mahomedans, whose profession is commonly service, were particularly impoverished. The same causes induced them to serve the rebels on one anna, and one and half anna, or one seer of flour per diem.
    4. The stoppage of charitable pensions and stipends tending in a great measure to the poverty of the Indians.
    5. The investment of capital in Government loans.
    6. Poverty the cause of the subjects rejoicing at the idea of a change of Government, and wishing for it.
  - IV. Neglect in matters which should have received consideration of Government.
    1. Want of cordiality towards the Indians. In ancient times as long as this was not observed by the reigning powers, tranquillity was not established.
    2. Treating the Indians with contempt.
    3. The ill temper and uncourty address of local authorities towards the Natives.
    4. The ill-treatment more repugnant to the feelings of the Mahomedans, and their causes.
    5. Exclusion of Natives from promotion to high appointments. Lord Bentinck's system of employing Natives in high grades of service an inadequate one.
    6. The not holding of Durbars by the Governor General of India, and not conferring on Indians the rank and honors due to merit according to the usage of former Emperors.
    7. The observation of these rules by Lord Auckland and Lord Ellenborough, a very proper one.
    8. The facts of the rebellion in India appeared more serious to the authorities than they really were, their causes.
    9. The promulgation of Her Majesty's Proclamation highly commendable, indeed may be said to have originated under Divine inspiration.
  - V. The insubordinate state of the Indian forces.
    1. The paucity of English forces.
    2. The employment of Hindoos and Mahomedans in the same Regiment.

3. If these two castes formed distinct Regiments, perhaps the Mahomedans would not have objected to use of the new cartridge.
4. The pride of the Indian forces, and its causes.
5. The league of the Indian Army against the use of the new cartridges, formed after January 1857.
6. The impropriety of punishing the Non-Commissioned Officers at Meerut, which touched the vanity of the Indian forces.
7. Want of confidence in the Indian forces towards Government after the occurrences at Meerut.
8. Why the mutiny did not break out in the Punjab, and its causes.

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BY

SAIYID AHMAD KHAN,

PRINCIPAL SUDDER AMBEN OF MORADABAD.

Humility adorns the slave,  
 Mercy befits the Deity ;  
 Should I commit an act unworthy of me,  
 Do thou that which is worthy of thee.

It was my desire to suppress and even to forget what I had written on the causes of the rebellion in Hindoostan ; for the Proclamation which Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria—may she reign for ever—has been pleased to issue in this country, has in reality acted as a complete remedy for all those evils in which it had its origin. The truth is, the pens have dropped from the hands of those who intended to write on this subject, for it is no longer necessary to investigate into the causes of evils that have been fully remedied. But notwithstanding that a remedy, such as has fully met the circumstances of the case, has been applied, yet I consider it my duty, as a loyal subject of this Government, to inquire with true sincerity of purpose, into the real causes of the rebellion, and having done so, to publish my own views on the subject. It is true that several wise and experienced men have already written on the causes of this rebellion ; but I think that perhaps no Native of India may have as yet attempted the task, and it will be as well that such a person should record his opinion.

What led to the revolt in Hindoostan ? Before I proceed to answer this question it is necessary to define the term rebellion. To oppose