A history of the Indian mutiny and of the disturbances which accompanied it among the civil population

Holmes T Rice
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A HISTORY OF THE INDIAN MUTINY
A HISTORY
OF
THE INDIAN MUTINY
AND OF
THE DISTURBANCES WHICH ACCOMPANIED IT
AMONG THE CIVIL POPULATION

BY
T. RICE HOLMES

FIFTH EDITION
REVISED THROUGHOUT AND SLIGHTLY ENLARGED

WITH FIVE MAPS AND SIX PLANS

London
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1898

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PREFACE TO THE FIFTH EDITION

About two years ago Messrs. Macmillan agreed, at my request, to take over the publication of this history; and it appeared to me that the time had come for thoroughly revising the whole book. In June, 1896, before the revision had proceeded far, the fourth edition was exhausted: but, although it was certain that a considerable time must elapse before the work could be finished, the publishers thought that it would be unwise to print any more copies from the old plates; and indeed it would have been hardly fair to offer intending purchasers a reprint while I was trying to make the book better worth buying. The structure of the work remains unchanged; and only such alterations have been made as appeared necessary. Wherever I could detect an inaccuracy, I have corrected it: wherever the narrative of military operations was deficient in lucidity, I have tried to amend it. I have struck out a few superfluous sentences, have added what, to my apprehension, was wanting, and have modified judgements which, on reconsideration, appeared misleading or unfair. Among the more important alterations and additions are those which relate to the Afghan war, the battle of Sacheta and the events which led up to it, the battle of Chinhut, the defence of the Lucknow Residency, Havelock's campaign, Lord Canning's Oudh proclamation and the vexed question of Sir Colin Campbell's responsibility for the protraction of the war. On the whole, the text is enlarged by about
twenty pages; and several new appendices have also been written.

I am sincerely grateful to Sir Henry Havelock-Allan, Sir William Olpherts, General McLeod Innes, Colonel de Kantzow, and many other officers who, in response to my queries, have given me valuable information. Lord Roberts kindly lent me, through the medium of Sir Alfred Lyall, the revised proof-sheets of the first volume of his _Forty-one Years in India_; and Colonel Vibart, with equal kindness, allowed me to read the revised sheets of his new volume, _Richard Baird Smith._

11 Douro Place,
Kensington, W.
November 4, 1897.
PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

Those who may open this book will not, I think, complain that it is wanting in detail or in that element of personal adventure which could not properly be excluded from a History of the Indian Mutiny. But it does not profess to give a minute account of what took place at every station and in every district in India during the struggle. A narrative minute enough, in most of its chapters, to satisfy the most curious reader has already been given to the world by Sir John Kaye and Colonel Malleson; and there is nothing to justify any one in undertaking to write another book on the subject on the same scale as that which they adopted. The history of the Mutiny, like every other history, must indeed be told in detail, if it is to hold the interest of readers: but, while the narrator of recent events is expected to give a full account of all that are interesting in themselves, the writer who appears later in the field ought to reserve his detailed narrative for events of historical importance. There is, I am sure, room for a book which, while giving a detailed narrative of the chief campaigns, of the stirring events that took place at the various centres of revolt, and of every episode the story of which can permanently interest the general reader, and a more summary account of incidents of minor importance,
should aim at completing the solution of the real historical problems connected with the Mutiny. I am only too conscious how far my performance of this task falls below the standard which I have set myself. Still, I hope that my attempt may be of use. The whole truth about any period of history is never known until many workers have sought for it; and it is possible that a writer who has derived almost all his information from original sources may succeed in throwing light upon neglected aspects of his subject, and in gaining the attention of some who have hitherto known nothing of one of the most interesting chapters of their national history. Though this book is so much shorter than those which have preceded it, my object has not been to write a short history or a popular history, in the ordinary sense of the term, but simply to write the best history that I could; to record everything that was worthy to be remembered; to enable readers to understand what sort of men the chief actors in the struggle were, and to realise what they and their comrades and opponents did and suffered; and to ascertain what were the causes of the Mutiny, and how the civil population of India bore themselves during its progress.

As I have found myself unable to agree, on certain points, with Sir John Kaye and Colonel Malleson, it is the more incumbent on me to say that, if their books had never appeared, the difficulty which I have felt in finding my way through the tangled maze of my materials would have been greatly increased. In some cases, I am indebted solely to those books for information which I might have found it hard to get elsewhere. To students of military history Colonel Malleson’s work will always be indispensable.
In the last appendix I have given a short critical account of the authorities which I have used.

In conclusion, I desire to express my gratitude to those who have helped me by answering queries, or by allowing me to read private letters or manuscripts.

October 8, 1883.

Note.—A few slight alterations and additions, based partly upon notes sent to me by readers who had served in the Mutiny, were made in the second edition, and are referred to in the preface to that edition. Some of the few items of information for which I was indebted to the works of Sir John Kaye and Colonel Malleson I have since verified from original sources. Others are contained in letters or memoranda from which they gave extracts.