HENTY GEORGE ALFRED

WITH CLIVE IN INDIA; OR, THE BEGINNINGS OF AN EMPIRE

George Henty

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Содержание

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Preface

In the following pages I have endeavoured to give a vivid picture of the wonderful events of the ten years, which at their commencement saw Madras in the hands of the French–Calcutta at the mercy of the Nabob of Bengal–and English influence apparently at the point of extinction in India–and which ended in the final triumph of the English, both in Bengal and Madras. There were yet great battles to be fought, great efforts to be made, before the vast Empire of India fell altogether into British hands; but these were but the sequel of the events I have described.

The historical details are, throughout the story, strictly accurate, and for them I am indebted to the history of these events written by Mr. Orme, who lived at that time, to the "Life of Lord Clive," recently published by Lieutenant Colonel Malleson, and to other standard authorities. In this book I have devoted a somewhat smaller space to the personal adventures of my hero than in my other historical tales, but the events themselves were of such a thrilling and exciting nature that no

fiction could surpass them.

A word as to the orthography of the names and places. An entirely new method of spelling Indian words has lately been invented by the Indian authorities. This is no doubt more correct than the rough-and-ready orthography of the early traders, and I have therefore adopted it for all little-known places. But there are Indian names which have become household words in England, and should never be changed; and as it would be considered a gross piece of pedantry and affectation on the part of a tourist on the Continent, who should, on his return, say he had been to Genova, Firenze, and Wien, instead of Genoa, Florence, and Vienna; it is, I consider, an even worse offence to transform Arcot, Cawnpoor, and Lucknow, into Arkat, Kahnpur, and Laknao. I have tried, therefore, so far as possible, to give the names of well-known personages and places in the spelling familiar to Englishmen, while the new orthography has been elsewhere adopted.

G. A. Henty.

Chapter 1: Leaving Home

A lady in deep mourning was sitting, crying bitterly, by a fire in small lodgings in the town of Yarmouth. Beside her stood a tall lad of sixteen. He was slight in build, but his schoolfellows knew that Charlie Marryat's muscles were as firm and hard as those of any boy in the school. In all sports requiring activity and endurance, rather than weight and strength, he was always conspicuous. Not one in the school could compete with him in long-distance running, and when he was one of the hares there was but little chance for the hounds. He was a capital swimmer, and one of the best boxers in the school. He had a reputation for being a leader in every mischievous prank; but he was honorable and manly, would scorn to shelter himself under the semblance of a lie, and was a prime favourite with his masters, as well as his schoolfellows. His mother bewailed the frequency with which he returned home with blackened eyes and bruised face; for between Dr. Willet's school and the fisher lads of Yarmouth there was a standing feud, whose origin dated so far back that none of those now at school could trace it. Consequently, fierce fights often took place in the narrow rows, and sometimes the fisher boys would be driven back on to the broad quay shaded by trees, by the river, and there being reinforced from the craft along the side, would reassume the offensive and drive their opponents back into the main street.

It was but six months since Charlie had lost his father, who was the officer in command at the coast guard station, and his scanty pension was now all that remained for the support of his widow and children. His mother had talked his future prospects over, many times, with Charlie. The latter was willing to do anything, but could suggest nothing. His father had but little naval interest, and had for years been employed on coast guard service. Charlie agreed that, although he should have liked of all things to go to sea, it was useless to think of it now, for he was past the age at which he could have entered as a midshipman.

The matter had been talked over four years before, with his father; but the latter had pointed out that a life in the navy, without interest, is in most cases a very hard one. If a chance of distinguishing himself happened, promotion would follow; but if not, he might be for years on shore, starving on half pay and waiting in vain for an appointment, while officers with more luck and better interest went over his head.

Other professions had been discussed, but nothing determined upon, when Lieutenant Marryat suddenly died. Charlie, although an only son, was not an only child, as he had two sisters both younger than himself. After a few months of effort, Mrs. Marryat found that the utmost she could hope to do, with her scanty income, was to maintain herself and daughters, and to educate them until they should reach an age when they could earn their own living as governesses; but that Charlie's keep and education were beyond her resources. She had, therefore, very reluctantly

written to an uncle, whom she had not seen for many years, her family having objected very strongly to her marriage with a penniless lieutenant in the navy. She informed him of the loss of her husband, and that, although her income was sufficient to maintain herself and her daughters, she was most anxious to start her son, who was now sixteen, in life; and therefore begged him to use his influence to obtain for him a situation of some sort. The letter which she now held in her hand was the answer to the appeal.

"My dear Niece," it began, "Since you, by your own foolish conduct and opposition to all our wishes, separated yourself from your family, and went your own way in life, I have heard little of you, as the death of your parents so shortly afterwards deprived me of all sources of information. I regret to hear of the loss which you have suffered. I have already taken the necessary steps to carry out your wishes. I yesterday dined with a friend, who is one of the directors of the Honorable East India Company, and at my request he has kindly placed a writership in the Company at your son's service. He will have to come up to London to see the board, next week, and will probably have to embark for India a fortnight later. I shall be glad if he will take up his abode with me, during the intervening time. I shall be glad also if you will favour me with a statement of your income and expenses, with such details as you may think necessary. I inclose four five-pound bank notes, in order that your son may obtain such garments as may be immediately needful for his appearance before the board

of directors, and for his journey to London. I remain, my dear niece, yours sincerely,

"Joshua Tufton."

"It is cruel," Mrs. Marryat sobbed, "cruel to take you away from us, and send you to India, where you will most likely die of fever, or be killed by a tiger, or stabbed by one of those horrid natives, in a fortnight."

"Not so bad as that, Mother, I hope," Charlie said sympathizingly, although he could not repress a smile; "other people have managed to live out there, and have come back safe."

"Yes," Mrs. Marryat said, sobbing; "I know how you will come back. A little, yellow, shrivelled up old man with no liver, and a dreadful temper, and a black servant. I know what it will be."

This time Charlie could not help laughing.

"That's looking too far ahead altogether, Mother. You take the two extremes. If I don't die in a fortnight, I am to live to be a shrivelled old man. I'd rather take a happy medium, and look forward to coming back before my liver is all gone, or my temper all destroyed, with lots of money to make you and the girls comfortable.

"There is only one thing. I wish it had been a cadetship, instead of a writership."

"That is my only comfort," Mrs. Marryat said. "If it had been a cadetship, I should have written to say that I would not let you go. It is bad enough as it is; but if you had had to fight, I could not have borne it."

Charlie did his best to console his mother, by telling her how everyone who went to India made fortunes, and how he should be sure to come back with plenty of money; and that, when the girls grew up, he should be able to find rich husbands for them; and at last he succeeded in getting her to look at matters in a less gloomy light.

"And I'm sure, Mother," he said, "Uncle means most kindly. He sends twenty pounds, you see, and says that that is for immediate necessities; so I have no doubt he means to help to get my outfit, or at any rate to advance money, which I can repay him out of my salary. The letter is rather stiff and businesslike, of course, but I suppose that's his way; and you see he asks about your income, so perhaps he means to help for the girls' education. I should go away very happy, if I knew that you would be able to get on comfortably. Of course it's a long way off, Mother, and I should have liked to stay at home, to be a help to you and the girls; but one can't have all one wishes. As far as I am concerned, myself, I would rather go out as a writer there, where I shall see strange sights and a strange country, than be stuck all my life at a desk in London.

"What is Uncle like?"

"He is a short man, my dear, rather stiff and pompous, with a very stiff cravat. He used to give me his finger to shake, when I was a child, and I was always afraid of him. He married a most disagreeable woman, only a year or two before I married, myself. But I heard she died not very long afterwards;" and so

Mrs. Marryat got talking of her early days and relations, and was quite in good spirits again, by the time her daughters returned from school; and she told them what she was now coming to regard as the good fortune which had befallen their brother.

The girls were greatly affected. They adored their brother, and the thought that he was going away for years was terrible to them. Nothing that could be said pacified them in the slightest degree, and they did nothing but cry, until they retired to bed. Charlie was much affected by their sorrow; but when they had retired, he took his hat and went out to tell the news of his approaching departure to some of his chums.

The next day, Mrs. Marryat wrote thanking her uncle for his kindness, and saying that Charlie would go round to London by the packet which sailed on the following Monday; and would, if the wind were fair and all went well, reach London on the Wednesday.

School was, of course, at once given up, and the girls also had a holiday till their brother's departure. When the necessary clothes were ordered, there was little more to do; and Charlie spent the time, when his boy friends were in school, in walking with the girls along the shore, talking to them of the future, of the presents he would send them home, and of the life he should lead in India; while at other times he went out with his favourite schoolfellows, and joined in one last grand battle with the smack boys.

On Monday morning, after a sad farewell to his family, Charlie embarked on board the Yarmouth Belle, a packet which

performed the journey to and from London once a fortnight. She was a roomy lugger, built for stowage rather than speed, and her hold was crammed and her deck piled with packages of salted fish. There were five or six other persons also bound for London, the journey to which was, in those days, regarded as an arduous undertaking.

As soon as the Yarmouth Belle issued from the mouth of the river, she began to pitch heavily; and Charlie, who from frequently going out with his father in the revenue cutter, was a good sailor, busied himself in doing his best for his afflicted fellow passengers. Towards evening the wind got up, and shifting ahead, the captain dropped anchor off Lowestoft. The next morning was finer, and the Yarmouth Belle continued her way. It was not, however, till Thursday afternoon that she dropped anchor in the Pool.

Charlie was soon on shore, and giving his trunk to a porter, desired him to lead the way to Bread Street, in which his uncle resided; for in the last century, such things as country villas were almost unknown, and the merchants of London for the most part resided in the houses where they carried on their business. Keeping close to the porter, to see that he did not make off with his trunk, for Charlie had received many warnings as to the extreme wickedness of London, he followed him through the busy streets, and arrived safely at his uncle's door.

It was now dusk, and Charlie, on giving his name, was shown upstairs to a large room, which was lighted by a fire blazing in the

hearth. Standing with his back to this was a gentleman whom he at once recognized, from his mother's description, as her uncle, although he was a good deal more portly than when she had seen him last.

"So you are my grandnephew," he said, holding out what Charlie considered to be a very limp and flabby hand towards him.

"Yes, Uncle," Charlie said cheerfully; "and we are very much obliged to you, Mamma and I, for your kindness."

"Humph!" the old gentleman grunted.

"And how is it," he asked severely, "that you were not here yesterday? My niece's letter led me to expect that you would arrive yesterday."

"We came as fast as we could, Uncle," Charlie laughed; "but of course the time depends upon the wind. The captain tells me that he has been as much as three weeks coming round."

Mr. Tufton grunted again as if to signify that such unpunctuality was altogether displeasing to him.

"You are tall," he said, looking up at Charlie, who stood half a head above him, "and thin, very thin. You have a loose way of standing, which I don't approve of."

"I'm sorry I'm loose, sir," Charlie said gravely, "if you do not approve of it; but you see, running about and playing games make one lissome. I suppose, now that's all over and I am going to spend my time in writing, I shall get stiffer."

"I hope so, I hope so," Mr. Tufton said encouragingly, and as

if stiffness were one of the most desirable things in life. "I like to see young men with a sedate bearing.

"And you left my niece and grandnieces well, I hope?"

"Quite well, thank you, sir," Charlie said; "but, of course, a good deal upset with parting from me."

"Yes," Mr. Tufton said; "I suppose so. Women are so emotional. Now there's nothing I object to more than emotion."

As Charlie thought that this was probably the case, he was silent, although the idea vaguely occurred to him that he should like to excite a little emotion in his uncle, by the sudden insertion of a pin, or some other such means. The silence continued for some little time, and then Mr. Tufton said:

"I always dine at two o'clock; but as probably you are hungry–I have observed that boys always are hungry–some food will be served you in the next room. I had already given my housekeeper orders. No doubt you will find it prepared. After that, you may like to take a walk in the streets. I have supper at nine, by which hour you will, of course, have returned."

Charlie, as he ate his meal, thought to himself that his uncle was a pompous old gentleman, and that it would be very hard work getting on with him, for the next three weeks. However, he consoled himself by the thought:

"Kind is as kind does after all, and I expect the old gentleman is not as crusty as he looks."

Charlie had handed to Mr. Tufton a letter which his mother had given him, and when he returned from a ramble through the

streets, he found that gentleman sitting by the fire, with lights upon a small table beside him. Upon this Mrs. Marryat's letter lay open.

"So you have soon become tired of the streets of London, Grandnephew!" he said.

"There is not much to see, sir. The lamps do not burn very brightly, and the fog is coming on. I thought that, if it grew thicker, I might lose my way, and in that case I might not have been in at the hour you named for supper."

"Humph!" the other gentleman grunted. "So your mother has taught you to be punctual to meals. But, no; boys' appetites teach them to be punctual then, if never at any other time.

"And why, sir?" he asked severely, "Did my niece not write to me before?"

"I don't know, sir," Charlie said. "I suppose she did not like–that is, she didn't think–that is–"

"Think, sir! Like, sir!" said his uncle. "What right had she either to think or to like? Her duty clearly was to have made me acquainted, at once, with all the circumstances. I suppose I had a right to say whether I approved of my grandnieces going tramping about the world as governesses, or not. It isn't because a woman chooses, by her folly, to separate herself from her family, that they are to be deprived of their rights in a matter of this kind. Eh, sir, what do you say to that?" and Mr. Tufton looked very angry, indeed.

"I don't know, sir," Charlie said. "I have never thought the

matter over."

"Why, sir, suppose she had made you a tinker, sir, and you turned out a thief, as likely as not you would have done, and you'd been hung, sir, what then? Am I to have such discredit as this brought upon me, without my having any option in the matter?"

"I suppose not, sir," Charlie said. "I hope I shouldn't have turned out a thief, even if I'd been a tinker; but perhaps it was because my mother feared that this might be the case, that she did give you the option."

His uncle looked at him keenly; but Charlie, though with some difficulty, maintained the gravest face.

"It is well she did so," Mr. Tufton said; "very well. If she had not done so, I should have known the reason why. And you, sir, do you like the thought of going to India?"

"Yes, Uncle, I like the thought very much, though I would rather, if I may say so, have gone as a cadet."

"I thought so," Mr. Tufton said, sarcastically. "I was sure of it. You wanted to wear a red coat and a sword, and to swagger about the streets of Calcutta, instead of making an honorable living and acquiring a fortune."

"I don't think, sir," Charlie said, "that the idea of the red coat and sword entered into my mind; but it seemed to me the choice of a life of activity and adventure, against one as a mere clerk."

"Had you entered the military service of the Company, even if you didn't get shot, you could only hope to rise to the command of a regiment, ranking with a civilian very low down on the list. The

stupidity of boys is unaccountable. It's a splendid career, sir, that I have opened to you; but if I'd known that you had no ambition, I would have put you into my own counting house; though there, that wouldn't have done either, for I know you would have blotted the ledger, and turned all the accounts topsy-turvy.

"And now, sir, supper is ready;" and the old gentleman led the way into the next room.

Upon the following day Charlie was introduced, by his uncle, to the director who had given him his nomination, and was told by him that the board would sit upon the following day, and that he must call at the India House, at eleven o'clock. The ordeal was not a formidable one. He was shown into a room where eight or ten elderly gentlemen were sitting round a large table. Among these was his friend of the day before. He was asked a question or two about his age, his father's profession, and his place of education. Then the gentleman at the head of the table nodded to him, and said he could go, and instructions would be sent to him, and that he was to prepare to sail in the Lizzie Anderson, which would leave the docks in ten days' time, and that he would be, for the present, stationed at Madras.

Much delighted at having got through the ordeal so easily, Charlie returned to his uncle's. He did not venture to penetrate into the latter's counting house, but awaited his coming upstairs to dinner, to tell him the news.

"Humph!" said his uncle; "it is lucky they did not find out what a fool you were, at once. I was rather afraid that even the two

minutes would do it. After dinner, I will send my clerk round with you, to get the few things which are necessary for your voyage.

"I suppose you will want to, what you call amuse yourself, to see the beasts at Exeter Change, and the playhouses. Here are two sovereigns. Don't get into loose company, and don't get drinking, sir, or out of the house you go."

Charlie attempted to express his thanks, but his uncle stopped him abruptly.

"Hold your tongue, sir. I am doing what is right; a thing, sir, Joshua Tufton always has done, and doesn't expect to be thanked for it. All I ask you is, that if you rob the Company's till and are hung, don't mention that you are related to me."

After dinner was over, Charlie went out under the charge of an old clerk, and visited tailors' and outfitters' shops, and found that his uncle's idea of the few necessaries for a voyage differed very widely from his own. The clerk, in each case, inquired from the tradesmen what was the outfit which gentlemen going to India generally took with them, and Charlie was absolutely appalled at the magnitude of the orders. Four dozen shirts, ten dozen pairs of stockings, two dozen suits of white cotton cloth, and everything else in proportion. Charlie in vain remonstrated, and even implored the clerk to abstain from ordering what appeared to him such a fabulous amount of things; and begged him, at any rate, to wait until he had spoken to his uncle. The clerk, however, replied that he had received instructions that the full usual outfit was to be obtained, and that Mr. Tufton never permitted his

orders to be questioned. Charlie was forced to submit, but he was absolutely oppressed with the magnitude of his outfit, to carry which six huge trunks were required.

"It is awful," Charlie said to himself, "positively awful. How much it will all come to, goodness only knows; three or four hundred pounds, at least."

In those days, before steam was thought of, and the journey to India was often of six months' duration, men never came home more than once in seven years, and often remained in India from the day of their arrival until they finally retired, without once revisiting England. The outfits taken out were, therefore, necessarily much larger than at the present time, when a run home to England can be accomplished in three weeks, and there are plenty of shops, in every town in India, where all European articles of necessity or luxury can be purchased.

After separating from the clerk, Charlie felt altogether unable to start out in search of amusement. He wandered about vaguely till supper time, and then attempted to address his uncle on the subject.

"My dear Uncle," he began, "you've been so awfully kind to me, that I really do not like to trespass upon you. I am positively frightened at the outfit your clerk has ordered. It is enormous. I'm sure I can't want so many things, possibly, and I would really rather take a much smaller outfit; and then, as I want them, I can have more things out from England, and pay for them myself."

"You don't suppose," Mr. Tufton said sternly, "that I'm going

to have my nephew go out to India with the outfit of a cabin boy. I ordered that you were to have the proper outfit of a gentleman, and I requested my clerk to order a considerable portion of the things to be made of a size which will allow for your growing, for you look to me as if you were likely enough to run up into a lanky giant, of six feet high. I suppose he has done as I ordered him. Don't let me hear another word on the subject."

Chapter 2: The Young Writer

For the next four days, Charlie followed his uncle's instructions and amused himself. He visited Exeter Change, took a boat and rowed down the river to Greenwich, and a coach and visited the palace of Hampton Court. He went to see the coaches make their start, in the morning, for all places in England, and marvelled at the perfection of the turnouts. He went to the playhouses twice, in the evening, and saw Mr. Garrick in his performance as Richard the Third.

On the fifth day, a great surprise awaited him. His uncle, at breakfast, had told him briefly that he did not wish him to go out before dinner, as someone might want to see him; and Charlie, supposing that a messenger might be coming down from the India House, waited indoors; and an hour later he was astonished, when the door of the room opened and his mother and sisters entered.

With a shout of gladness and surprise, Charlie rushed into their arms.

"My dear mother, my dear girls, this is an unexpected pleasure, indeed! Why, what has brought you here?"

"Didn't you know we were coming, Charlie? Didn't Uncle tell you?" they exclaimed.

"Not a word," Charlie said. "I never dreamt of such a thing. What, has he called you up here to stay till I go?"

"Oh, my dear, he has been so kind," his mother said; "and so funny! He wrote me such a scolding letter, just as if I had been a very naughty little girl. He said he wasn't going to allow me to bring disgrace upon him, by living in wretched lodgings at Yarmouth, nor by his grandnieces being sent out as governesses. So he ordered me at once–ordered me Charlie, as if I had no will of my own–to give up the lodgings, and to take our places in the coach, yesterday morning. He said we were not to shame him by appearing here in rags, and he sent me a hundred pounds, every penny of which, he said, was to be laid out in clothes. As to the future, he said it would be his duty to see that I brought no further disgrace upon the family."

"Yes, and he's been just as kind to me, Mother. As I told you when I wrote, he had ordered an enormous outfit, which will, I am sure, cost hundreds of pounds. He makes me go to the playhouses, and all sorts of amusements; and all the time he has been so kind he scolds, and grumbles, and predicts that I shall be hanged."

"I'm sure you won't," Kate, his youngest sister, said indignantly. "How can he say such a thing?"

"He doesn't mean it," Charlie laughed. "It's only his way. He will go on just the same way with you, I have no doubt; but you mustn't mind, you know, and mustn't laugh, but must look quite grave and serious.

"Ah! Here he is.

"Oh, Uncle, this is kind of you!"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said his uncle, "and try and learn not to speak to your elders, unless you are addressed.

"Niece Mary," he said, kissing her upon the forehead, "I am glad to see you again. You are not so much changed as I expected.

"And these are my grandnieces, Elizabeth and Kate, though why Kate I don't know. It is a fanciful name, and new to the family, and I am surprised that you didn't call her Susanna, after your grandmother."

Kate made a little face at the thought of being called Susanna. However, a warning glance from Charlie closed her lips, just as she was about to express her decided preference for her own name. Mr. Tufton kissed them both, muttering to himself:

"I suppose I ought to kiss them. Girls always expect to be kissed at every opportunity.

"What are you laughing at, grandniece?"

"I don't think girls expect to be kissed, except by people they like," Kate said; "but we do like kissing you, Uncle," throwing her arms round his neck, and kissing him heartily; "because you have been so kind to Charlie, and have brought us up to see him again."

"You have disarranged my white tie, Niece," Mr. Tufton said, extricating himself from Kate's embrace.

"Niece Mary, I fear that you have not taught your daughters to restrain their emotions, and there is nothing so dreadful as emotional women."

"Perhaps I have not taken so much pains with their education,

in that way, as in some others," Mrs. Marryat said, smiling. "But of course, Uncle, if you object to be kissed, the girls will abstain from doing so."

"No," Mr. Tufton said, thoughtfully. "It is the duty of nieces to kiss their uncles, in moderation–in moderation, mind–and it is the duty of the uncles to receive those salutations, and I do not know that the duty is altogether an unpleasant one. I am, myself, unaccustomed to be kissed, but it is an operation to which I may accustom myself, in time."

"I never heard it called an operation, Uncle," Lizzie said demurely; "but I now understand the meaning of the phrase of a man's undergoing a painful operation. I used to think it meant cutting off a leg, or something of that sort, but I see it's much worse."

Her uncle looked at her steadily.

"I am afraid, Grandniece, that you intend to be sarcastic. This is a hateful habit in a man, worse in a woman. Cure yourself of it as speedily as possible, or Heaven help the unhappy man who may some day be your husband.

"And now," he said, "ring the bell. The housekeeper will show you to your rooms. My nephew will tell you what are the hours for meals. Of course, you will want to be gadding about with him. You will understand that there is no occasion to be in to meals; but if you are not present when they are upon the table, you will have to wait for the next. I cannot have my house turned upside down, by meals being brought up at all sorts of hours.

"You must not expect me, Niece, to be at your beck and call during the day, as I have my business to attend to; but of an evening I shall, of course, feel it my duty to accompany you to the playhouse. It will not do for you to be going about with only the protection of a hare-brained boy."

The remainder of Charlie's stay in London passed most pleasantly. They visited all the sights of town, Mr. Tufton performing what he called his duty with an air of protest, but showing a general thoughtfulness and desire to please his visitors, which was very apparent even when he grunted and grumbled the most.

On the evening before he started, he called Charlie down into his counting house.

"Tomorrow you are going to sail," he said, "and to start in life on your own account, and I trust that you will, as far as possible, be steady, and do your duty to your employers. You will understand that, although the pay of a writer is not high, there are opportunities for advancement. The Company have the monopoly of the trade of India, and in addition to their great factories at Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, they have many other trading stations. Those who, by their good conduct, attract the attention of their superiors, rise to positions of trust and emolument. There are many who think that the Company will, in time, enlarge its operations; and as they do so, superior opportunities will offer themselves; and since the subject of India has been prominently brought before my notice, I have examined

the question, and am determined to invest somewhat largely in the stock of the Company, a step which will naturally give me some influence with the board. That influence I shall, always supposing that your conduct warrants it, exercise on your behalf.

"As we are now at war with France, and it is possible that the vessel in which you are proceeding may be attacked by the way, I have thought it proper that you should be armed. You will, therefore, find in your cabin a brace of pistols, a rifle, and a double-barrel shotgun: which last, I am informed, is a useful weapon at close quarters. Should your avocations in India permit your doing so, you will find them useful in the pursuit of game. I hope that you will not be extravagant; but as a matter of business I find that it is useful to be able to give entertainments, to persons who may be in a position to benefit or advance you. I have, therefore, arranged that you will draw from the factor at Madras the sum of two hundred pounds, annually, in addition to your pay. It is clearly my duty to see that my nephew has every fair opportunity for making his way.

"Now, go upstairs at once to your mother. I have letters to write, and am too busy for talking."

So saying, with a peremptory wave of his hand he dismissed his nephew.

"Well, Mother," Charlie said, after telling her of his uncle's generosity, "thank goodness you will be all right now, anyhow. No doubt Uncle intends to do something for you and the girls, though he has said nothing at present, beyond the fact that you

are not to be in wretched lodgings, and they are not to go out as governesses. But even if he should change his mind, and I don't think he ever does that, I shall be able to help you.

"Oh, he is kind, isn't he?"

The parting was far less sad than that which had taken place at Yarmouth. Charlie was now assured that his mother and sisters would be comfortable, and well cared for in his absence; while his mother, happy in the lightening of her anxiety as to the future of her daughters, and as to the prospects of her son, was able to bear with better heart the thought of their long separation.

Mrs. Marryat and the girls accompanied him on board ship. Mr. Tufton declined to join the party, under the plea that, in the first place, he was busy; and in the second, that he feared there would be an emotional display. He sent, however, his head clerk with them, to escort the ladies on their return from the docks.

The Lizzie Anderson was a fine ship, of the largest size, and she was almost as clean and trim as a man of war. She carried twelve cannon, two of them thirty-two pounders, which were in those days considered large pieces of ordnance. All the ships of the Company, and, indeed, all ocean-going merchantmen of the day, were armed, as the sea swarmed with privateers, and the black flag of the pirates was still occasionally to be seen.

The girls were delighted with all they saw, as, indeed, was Charlie; for accustomed, as they were, only to the coasting vessels which frequented the port of Yarmouth, this floating castle appeared to them a vessel of stupendous size and power.

This was Charlie's first visit, also, to the ship, for his uncle had told him that all directions had been given, that the trunks with the things necessary for the voyage would be found in his cabin, at the time of starting, and the rest of the luggage in the hold. Everything was in order, and Charlie found that his cabin companion was a doctor in the service, returning to Madras. He was a pleasant man, of some five or six and thirty, and assured Mrs. Marryat that he would soon make her son at home on board ship, and would, moreover, put him up to the ways of things upon his arrival in India. There were many visitors on board, saying goodbye to their friends, and all sat down to lunch, served in the saloon.

When this was over, the bell rang for visitors to go ashore. There was a short scene of parting, in which Charlie was not ashamed to use his handkerchief as freely as did his mother and sisters. Five minutes later, the great vessel passed through the dock gates. Charlie stood at the stern, waving his handkerchief as long as he could catch a glimpse of the figures of his family; and then as, with her sails spread and the tide gaining strength every minute beneath her, the vessel made her way down the river, he turned round to examine his fellow passengers.

These were some twenty in number, and for the most part men. Almost all were, in some capacity or other, civil or military, in the service of the Company; for at that time their monopoly was a rigid one, and none outside its boundary were allowed to trade in India. The Company was, indeed, solely a great

mercantile house of business. They had their own ships, their own establishments, and bought and sold goods like other traders. They owned a small extent of country, round their three great trading towns; and kept up a little army, composed of two or three white regiments; and as many composed of natives, trained and disciplined like Europeans, and known as Sepoys. Hence the clergyman, the doctor, a member of the council of Madras, four or five military officers, twice as many civilians, and three young writers, besides Charlie, were all in the employment of the Company.

"Well, youngster," a cheery voice said beside him, "take your last look at the smoke of London, for it will be a good many years before you see it again, my lad. You've blue skies and clear ones where you're going, except when it rains, and when it does there is no mistake about it."

The speaker was the captain of the Lizzie Anderson, a fine sailor-like man of some fifty years, of which near forty had been spent in the service of the Company.

"I'm not a Londoner," Charlie said, smiling, "and have no regret for leaving its smoke. Do you think we shall make a quick voyage?"

"I hope so," the captain said, "but it all depends upon the wind. A finer ship never floated than the Lizzie Anderson; but the Company don't build their vessels for speed, and it's no use trying to run, when you meet a Frenchman. Those fellows understand how to build ships, and if they could fight them as well as they

build them, we should not long be mistress of the sea."

Most of the people on board appeared to know each other, and Charlie felt rather lonely, till the doctor came up and began to chat with him. He told him who most of his fellow passengers were:

"That gentleman there, walking on the other side of the deck, as if not only the ship but the river and banks on both sides belonged to him, is one of the council. That is his wife over there, with a companion holding her shawl for her. That pretty little woman, next to her, is the wife of Captain Tibbets, the tall man leaning against the bulwarks. Those two sisters are going out to keep house for their uncle, one of the leading men in Madras; and, I suppose, to get husbands, which they will most likely do before they have been there many weeks. They look very nice girls.

"But you soon get acquainted with them all. It is surprising how soon people get friendly on board ship, though, as a rule, they quarrel like cats and dogs before they get to the end of it."

"What do they quarrel about?" Charlie asked, surprised.

"Oh, about anything or nothing," the doctor said. "They all get heartily sick of each other, and of the voyage, and they quarrel because they have nothing else to do. You will see, we shall be as happy a party as possible till we get about as far as the Cape. After that, the rows will begin, and by the time we get to India, half the people won't speak to each other.

"Have you been down the river before? That's Gravesend. I

see the captain is getting ready to anchor. So, I suppose the tide has nearly run out. If this wind holds, we shall be fairly out at sea when you get up tomorrow.

"You snore, I hope?"

"No, sir, I don't think so," Charlie said.

"I hoped you did," the doctor said, "because I'm told I do, sometimes. However, as I usually smoke a cigar on deck, the last thing, I hope you will be fairly asleep before I am. If at any time I get very bad, and keep you awake, you must shake me."

Charlie said it took a good deal to keep him awake, and that he should probably get accustomed to it, ere long.

"It's better to do that," he said with a laugh, "than to keep on waking you, for the next four or five months."

A week later, the Lizzie Anderson was running down the Spanish coast, with all sail set. She was out of sight of land, and so far had seen nothing likely to cause uneasiness. They had met many vessels, homeward bound from the Mediterranean, and one or two big ships which the captain pronounced to be Indiamen. That morning, however, a vessel was seen coming out from the land. She seemed, to Charlie's eyes, quite a small vessel, and he was surprised to see how often the captain and officers turned their glasses towards her.

"I fancy our friend over there is a French privateer," the doctor remarked to him; "and I should not be surprised if we found ourselves exchanging shots with her, before many hours are over."

"But she's a little bit of a thing," Charlie said. "Surely she would never venture to attack a ship like ours."

"It's the size of the guns, not the size of the ship, that counts, my boy. She has the advantage of being able to sail three feet to our two; and probably, small as she is, she carries half as many men again as we do. However, we carry heavy metal, and can give a good account of ourselves. Those thirty-twos will astonish our friend, if she comes within range."

The stranger was a large schooner, and the tautness of the spars and rigging showed that she was in beautiful order. She crossed the line upon which the merchantman was sailing, some two miles in her rear; and then, bearing up, followed in her wake.

Charlie stood near the captain, who, instead of watching her, was sweeping the horizon with his glass. Presently he paused, and gazed intently at a distant object.

"I thought so," he said to the first officer. "I fancied that fellow wasn't alone. He would hardly have ventured to try his strength with us, if he had been. Send a man up to the tops, and let him see what he can make her out to be. I can only see her topmasts, but I can make out no yards."

Presently the lookout came down, and reported that the distant vessel appeared to be a large fore-and-aft schooner, bearing down upon them.

"She will not be up for two hours, yet," the captain said. "It will be getting dark, then. It is not likely they will engage at night, but they will keep close, and show their teeth at daybreak."

It soon became known that the belief of the captain was that the vessel in their wake, and that which could be seen approaching on the beam, were French privateers; and soon all were preparing, in their own way, for what might happen. The sailors cleared the decks, and loosed the guns. The gentlemen went below, and shortly returned bringing up rifles and fowling pieces. Small arms and cutlasses were brought up, and piled round the masts.

"Why don't you put on more sail, sir?" Mr. Ashmead, the member of the council, said to the captain. "My wife, sir, objects to the sound of firearms, and I must really beg that you will increase your speed. As it is, we are losing rather than gaining upon that vessel behind. The duty of the ships of the Company is to try not to fight."

"If they can help it," the captain added quietly. "Not to fight, if they can help it, Mr. Ashmead. But unfortunately, the choice upon the present occasion lies with the gentlemen yonder, and not with us. It is not of the slightest use adding to the sail we carry, for at our very best speed, those schooners could sail round and round us. As night comes on I intend to shorten sail, and put the ship into fighting trim. In the morning I shall again increase it, but I shall not make any attempt to escape a combat which it depends entirely on those privateers to bring on, or not, as they choose. I am sorry that Mrs. Ashmead should be exposed to the unpleasantness of listening to the explosion of firearms, and that my other lady passengers should be exposed to the danger which

cannot but arise, more or less, from a naval conflict.

"However, I hope, sir, that there need be no great anxiety as to the result. The Company has given us a heavy armament, and you may be sure that we shall all do our best."

Seeing the gentlemen go below for their guns, Charlie asked one of the other young writers, a lad of about his own age, named Peters, with whom he had become very friendly, to go below with him. He had not yet examined the arms that his uncle had given him, for he had not thought of them since he saw the gun cases under his berth, on his first arrival on board ship. He found the doctor already in his cabin, putting together a heavy double-barrelled gun.

"Well, youngster," he said, "so we're likely to have a brush. I see you have a couple of gun cases under your berth. You are a good deal better provided than most lads who go out as writers.

"Ah! That's a beautiful piece of yours," he said, as Charlie unlocked one of the cases and took out a rifle, "a small bore and a heavy barrel, and beautifully finished. With a greased patch and a heavy charge, that ought to carry a bullet far and true. Have you had any practice?"

"Not with this gun, sir. I used, sometimes, to practise shooting at gulls with a musket, on board the cutter my father commanded; and I got to be a fair shot with it."

"Then you ought to be able to do good work, with such a piece as that. What is in the other case?

"Ah! That's a beauty, too," he said, as he examined the double-

barrelled gun. "Made extra strong and heavy, I see, so as to carry bullets. You'll find your shoulder ache, at first; but you'll get accustomed to it, in time. I'm always in favour of heavy barrels. They shoot stronger and straighter than your light guns, are not so liable to get bent or bruised, if a stupid servant drops one across a stone; and, after all, two or three pounds difference in weight does not make any material difference, when you're accustomed to it. Although, I grant, a heavy gun does not come quite so quickly up to the shoulder, for a snap shot."

"Now, Peters," Charlie said, "you take the double barrel. I will use the rifle. Mine will come into play first, but, as my uncle said when he gave it me, yours will do most execution at close quarters."

At dusk the schooners, having exchanged some signals by flags, took up their positions, one on each quarter of the ship, at a distance of some two miles.

"Do not you think," Charlie asked his friend the doctor, "that they are likely to try and board us tonight?"

"No," the doctor said. "These privateers generally depend upon their long guns. They know that we shall be on the watch all night, and that, in a hand-to-hand fight, they would lose a considerable number of men; while by keeping at a distance, and maintaining a fire with their long guns, they rely upon crippling their opponents; and then, ranging up under their stern, pouring in a fire at close quarters until they surrender.

"Another thing is that they prefer daylight, as they can then

see whether any other vessel is approaching. Were one of our cruisers to hear a cannonade in the night, she would come down and take them unaware. No, I think you will see that at daylight, if the coast is clear, they will begin."

Such was evidently the captain's opinion also, as he ordered sail to be still further shortened, and all, save the watch on deck, to turn in at once. The lights were all extinguished, not that the captain had any idea of evading his pursuers, but that he wished to avoid offering them a mark for their fire, should they approach in the darkness.

Chapter 3: A Brush With Privateers

The night passed quietly. Once or twice lights were seen, as the schooners showed a lantern for a moment to notify their exact position to each other.

As soon as dawn broke, every man on board the Lizzie Anderson was at his post. The schooners had drawn up a little, but were still under easy sail. The moment that the day grew clear enough for it to be perceived that no other sail could be seen above the horizon, fresh sail was spread upon the schooners, and they began rapidly to draw up.

On the previous evening the four heavy guns had been brought aft, and the Indiaman could have made a long running fight with her opponents, had the captain been disposed. To this, however, he objected strongly, as his vessel was sure to be hulled and knocked about severely, and perhaps some of his masts cut down. He was confident in his power to beat off the two privateers, and he therefore did not add a stitch of canvas to the easy sail under which he had been holding on all night.

Presently a puff of smoke shot out from the bow of the schooner from the weather quarter, followed almost instantaneously by one from her consort. Two round shot struck up the water, the one under the Indiaman's stern, the other under her forefoot.

"The rascals are well within range," the captain said quietly.

"See, they are taking off canvas again. They intend to keep at that distance, and hammer away at us. Just what I thought would be their tactics."

Two more shots were fired by the schooners. One flew over the deck between the masts, and plunged harmlessly in the sea beyond. The other struck the hull with a dull crash.

"It is lucky the ladies were sent into the hold," the captain said. "That shot has gone right through their cabin.

"Now, my lads, have you got the sights well upon them? Fire!"

The four thirty-two pounders spoke out almost at the same moment, and all gazed over the bulwarks anxiously to watch the effect, and a cheer arose as it was seen how accurate had been the aim of the gunners. One shot struck the schooner to windward in the bow, a foot or two above the water level. Another went through her foresail, close to the mast.

"A foot more, and you would have cut his foremast asunder."

The vessel to leeward had been struck by only one shot, the other passing under her stern. She was struck just above her deck line, the shot passing through the bulwark, and, as they thought on board the merchantman, narrowly missing if not actually striking the mainmast.

"There is some damage done," Dr. Rae said, keeping his glass fixed on the vessel. "There is a good deal of running about on deck there."

It was evident that the display of the heavy metal carried by the Indiaman was an unpleasant surprise to the privateers.

Both lowered sail and ceased firing, and there was then a rapid exchange of signals between them.

"They don't like it," the captain said, laughing. "They see that they cannot play the game they expected, and that they've got to take as well as to give. Now it depends upon the sort of stuff their captains are made of, whether they give it up at once, or come straight up to close quarters.

"Ah! They mean fighting."

As he spoke, a cloud of canvas was spread upon the schooners and, sailing more than two feet to the merchantman's one, they ran quickly down towards her, firing rapidly as they came. Only the merchantman's heavy guns replied, but these worked steadily and coolly, and did considerable damage. The bowsprit of one of their opponents was shot away. The sails of both vessels were pierced in several places, and several ragged holes were knocked in their hulls.

"If it were not that I do not wish to sacrifice any of the lives on board, unnecessarily," the captain said, "I would let them come alongside and try boarding. We have a strong crew, and with the sixty soldiers we should give them such a reception as they do not dream of. However, I will keep them off, if I can.

"Now, Mr. James," he said to the first officer, "I propose to give that vessel to leeward a dose. They are keeping about abreast, and by the course they are making will range alongside at about a cable's length. When I give the word, pour a broadside with the guns to port upon that weather schooner.

"At that moment, gentlemen," he said, turning to the passengers, "I shall rely upon you to pick off the steersman of the other vessel, and to prevent another taking his place. She steers badly now, and the moment her helm is free, she'll run up into the wind. As she does so, I shall bear off, run across her bow, and rake her deck with grape as we pass.

"Will you, Mr. Barlow, order your men to be in readiness to open fire with musketry upon her, as we pass?"

The schooners were now running rapidly down upon the Indiaman. They were only able to use the guns in their bows, and the fire of the Indiaman from the heavy guns on her quarter was inflicting more damage than she received.

"Let all hands lie down on deck," the captain ordered. "They will open with their broadside guns, as they come up. When I give the word, let all the guns on the port side be trained at the foot of her mainmast, and fire as you get the line. On the starboard side, lie down till I give the word."

It was a pretty sight as the schooners, throwing the water high up from their sharp cut-waters, came running along, heeling over under the breeze. As they ranged alongside, their topsails came down, and a broadside from both was poured into the Indiaman. The great ship shook as the shot crashed into her, and several sharp cries told of the effect which had been produced.

Then the captain gave the word, and a moment afterwards an irregular broadside, as the captain of each gun brought his piece to bear, was poured into the schooner from the guns on the port

side. As the privateer heeled over, her deck could be plainly seen, and the shot of the Indiaman, all directed at one point, tore up a hole around the foot of the mainmast. In an instant the spar tottered and, with a crash, fell alongside. At the same moment, three of the passengers took a steady aim over the bulwark at the helmsman of the other privateer and, simultaneously with the reports of their pieces, the man was seen to fall. Another sprang forward to take his place, but again the rifles spoke out, and he fell beside his comrade.

Freed from the strain which had counteracted the pressure of her mainsail, the schooner flew up into the wind. The Indiaman held on her course for another length, and then her helm was put up, and she swept down across the bows of the privateer. Then the men leaped to their feet, the soldiers lined the bulwarks, and as she passed along a few yards only distant from her foe, each gun poured a storm of grape along her crowded deck, while the troops and passengers kept up a continuous fire of musketry.

"That will do," the captain said, quietly. "Now we may keep her on her course. They have had more than enough of it."

There was no doubt of that, for the effect of the iron storm had been terrible, and the decks of the schooner were strewn with dead and dying. For a time after the merchantman had borne upon her course, the sails of the schooner flapped wildly in the wind, and then the foremast went suddenly over the side.

"I should think you could take them both, Captain Thompson," one of the passengers said.

"They are as good as taken," the captain answered, "and would be forced to haul down their flags, if I were to wear round and continue the fight. But they would be worse than useless to me. I should not know what to do with their crews, and should have to cripple myself by putting very strong prize crews upon them, and so run the risk of losing my own ship and cargo.

"No, my business is to trade and not to fight. If any one meddle with me, I am ready to take my own part; but the Company would not thank me, if I were to risk the safety of this ship and her valuable cargo for the sake of sending home a couple of prizes, which might be recaptured as they crossed the bay, and would not fetch any great sum if they got safely in port."

An examination showed that the casualties on board the Lizzie Anderson amounted to three killed and eight wounded. The former were sewn in hammocks, with a round shot at their feet, and dropped overboard; the clergyman reading the burial service. The wounded were carried below, and attended to by the ship's surgeon and Doctor Rae. The ship's decks were washed, and all traces of the conflict removed. The guns were again lashed in their places, carpenters were lowered over the side to repair damages; and when the ladies came on deck an hour after the conflict was over, two or three ragged holes in the bulwarks, and a half dozen in the sails, were the sole signs that the ship had been in action; save that some miles astern could be seen the two crippled privateers, with all sails lowered, at work to repair damages.

Two or three days afterwards, Charlie Marryat and his friend Peters were sitting beside Doctor Rae, when the latter said:

"I hope that we sha'n't find the French in Madras, when we get there."

"The French in Madras!" Charlie exclaimed in surprise. "Why, sir, there's no chance of that, is there?"

"A very great chance," the doctor said. "Don't you know that they captured the place three years ago?"

"No, sir; I'm ashamed to say that I know nothing at all about India, except that the Company have trading stations at Bombay, Madras, and Calcutta."

"I will tell you about it," the doctor said. "It is as well that you should understand the position of affairs, at the place to which you are going. You must know that the Company hold the town of Madras, and a few square miles of land around it, as tenants of the Nawab of the Carnatic, which is the name of that part of India. The French have a station at Pondicherry, eighty-six miles to the sou'west of Madras. This is a larger and more important town than Madras, and of course the greatest rivalry prevails between the English and French.

"The French are much more powerful than the English, and exercise a predominating influence throughout the Carnatic. The French governor, Monsieur Dupleix, is a man of very great ability, and far-seeing views. He has a considerable force of French soldiers at his command, and by the aid which he has given to the nawab, upon various occasions, he has obtained a

predominating influence in his councils.

"When war was declared between England and France, in the year '44, the English squadron under Commodore Barnet was upon the coast, and the Company sent out orders to Mr. Morse, the governor of Madras, to use every effort to destroy the French settlement, of whose rising power they felt the greatest jealousy. Dupleix, seeing the force that could be brought against him, and having no French ships on the station, although he was aware that a fleet under Admiral La Bourdonnais was fitting out and would arrive shortly, dreaded the contest, and proposed to Mr. Morse that the Indian colonies of the two nations should remain neutral, and take no part in the struggle in which their respective countries were engaged. Mr. Morse, however, in view of the orders he had received from the Company, was unable to agree to this.

"Dupleix then applied to the nawab who, at his request, forbade his European tenants to make war on land with each other, an order which they were obliged to obey.

"In July, 1746, La Bourdonnais arrived with his fleet, and chased the small English squadron from the Indian seas. Dupleix now changed his tactics, and regardless of the injunction which he himself had obtained from the nawab, he determined to crush the English at Madras. He supplied the fleet with men and money, and ordered the admiral to sail for Madras. The fleet arrived before the town on the 14th of September; landed a portion of its troops, six hundred in number, with two guns, a short distance along the coast; and on the following day

disembarked the rest, consisting of a thousand French troops, four hundred Sepoys, and three hundred African troops, and summoned Madras to surrender.

"Madras was in no position to offer any effectual resistance. The fort was weak and indefensible. The English inhabitants consisted only of a hundred civilians, and two hundred soldiers. Governor Morse endeavoured to obtain, from the nawab, the protection which he had before granted to Dupleix, a demand which the nawab at once refused.

"I was there at the time, and quite agreed with the governor that it was useless to attempt resistance to the force brought against us. The governor, therefore, surrendered on the 21st. The garrison, and all the civilians in the place not in the service of the Company, were to become prisoners of war; while those in the regular service of the Company were free to depart, engaging only not to carry arms against the French until exchanged. These were the official conditions; but La Bourdonnais, influenced by jealousy of Dupleix, and by the promise of a bribe of forty thousand pounds, made a secret condition with Mr. Morse, by which he bound himself to restore Madras in the future, upon the payment of a large sum of money. This agreement Dupleix, whose heart was set upon the total expulsion of the English, refused to ratify.

"A good many of us considered that, by this breach of the agreement, we were released from our parole not to carry arms against the French; and a dozen or so of us, in various disguises,

escaped from Madras and made our way to Fort Saint David, a small English settlement twelve miles south of Pondicherry. I made the journey with a young fellow named Clive, who had come out as a writer about two years before. He was a fine young fellow; as unfitted as you are, I should think, Marryat, for the dull life of a writer, but full of energy and courage.

"At Fort Saint David we found two hundred English soldiers, and a hundred Sepoys, and a number of us, having nothing to do at our own work, volunteered to aid in the defence.

"After Dupleix had conquered Madras, the nawab awoke to the fact of the danger of allowing the French to become all-powerful, by the destruction of the English, and ordered Dupleix to restore the place. Dupleix refused, and the nawab sent his son Maphuz Khan to invest the town. Dupleix at once despatched a detachment of two hundred and thirty French, and seven hundred Sepoys, commanded by an engineer officer named Paradis, to raise the siege.

"On the 2nd of November, the garrison of Madras sallied out and drove away the cavalry of Maphuz Khan; and on the 4th, Paradis attacked his army, and totally defeated it.

"This, lads, was a memorable battle. It is the first time that European and Indian soldiers have come into contest, and it shows how immense is the superiority of Europeans. What Paradis did then opens all sorts of possibilities for the future; and it may be that either we or the French are destined to rise, from mere trading companies, to be rulers of Indian states.

"Such, I know, is the opinion of young Clive, who is a very long-headed and ambitious young fellow. I remember his saying to me one night, when we were, with difficulty, holding our own in the trenches, that if we had but a man of energy and intelligence at the head of our affairs in Southern India, we might, ere many years passed, be masters of the Carnatic. I own that it appears to me more likely that the French will be in that position, and that we shall not have a single establishment left there; but time will show.

"Having defeated Maphuz Khan, Dupleix resolved to make a great effort to expel us from Fort Saint David, our sole footing left in Southern India; and he despatched an army of nine hundred Frenchmen, six hundred Sepoys, and a hundred Africans, with six guns and mortars, against us. They were four to one against us, and we had hot work, I can tell you. Four times they tried to storm the place, and each time we drove them back; till at last they gave it up in disgust, at the end of June, having besieged us for six months.

"Soon after this Admiral Boscawen, with a great fleet and an army, arrived from England; and on 19th of August besieged Pondicherry. The besieging army was six thousand strong; of whom three thousand, seven hundred and twenty were English. But Pondicherry resisted bravely, and after two months the besiegers were forced to retire, having lost, in attacks or by fever, one thousand and sixty-five men.

"At the end of the siege, in which I had served as a medical

officer, I returned to England. A few months after I left, peace was made between England and France, and by its terms Dupleix had to restore Madras to the English. I hear that fighting has been going on ever since, the English and French engaging as auxiliaries to rival native princes; and especially that there was some hot fighting round Devikota. However, we shall hear about that when we get there."

"And what do you think will be the result of it all, Doctor Rae?"

"I think that undoubtedly, sooner or later, either the French or ourselves will be driven out. Which it will be remains to be seen. If we are expelled, the effect of our defeat is likely to operate disastrously at Calcutta, if not at Bombay. The French will be regarded as a powerful people, whom it is necessary to conciliate, while we shall be treated as a nation of whom they need have no fear, and whom they can oppress accordingly.

"If we are successful, and absolutely obtain possession of the Carnatic, our trade will vastly increase, fresh posts and commands of all sorts will be established, and there will be a fine career open to you young fellows, in the service of the Company."

After rounding the Cape of Good Hope, the ship encountered a series of very heavy gales, which drove her far out of her course up the eastern coast of Africa. In the last gale her foremast was carried away, and she put in to a small island to refit. She had also sprung a leak, and a number of stores were landed, to enable

her to be taken up into shallow water and heeled over, in order that the leak might be got at.

The captain hurried on the work with all speed.

"Had it not been for this," Charlie heard him say to Mr. Ashmead, "I would have rigged a jury-mast and proceeded; but I can't stop the leak from the inside, without shifting a great portion of the cargo, and our hold is so full that this would be difficult in the extreme. But I own that I do not like delaying a day longer than necessary, here. The natives have a very bad reputation, besides which it is suspected that one, if not more, pirates have their rendezvous in these seas. Several of our merchantmen have mysteriously disappeared, without any gale having taken place which would account for their loss.

"The captain of a ship which reached England, two or three days before we sailed, brought news that when she was within a fortnight's sail of the Cape, the sound of guns was heard one night, and that afterwards a ship was seen on fire, low down on the horizon. He reached the spot soon after daybreak, and found charred spars and other wreckage; but though he cruised about all day, he could find no signs of any boats. Complaints have been made to government, and I hear that there is an intention of sending two or three sloops out here to hunt the pirates up. But that will be of no use to us."

Upon the day of their arrival at the island, a native sailing boat was seen to pass across the mouth of the bay. When half across, she suddenly tacked round and sailed back in the direction from

which she had come.

Before proceeding to lighten the ship, the captain had taken steps to put himself in a position of defence. For some distance along the centre of the bay the ground rose abruptly, at a distance of some thirty yards from the shore, forming a sort of natural terrace. Behind this a steep hill rose. The terrace, which was forty feet above the water level, extended for about a hundred yards, when the ground on either side of the plateau dropped away, as steeply as in front.

The guns were the first things taken out of the ship, and, regardless of the remonstrances of the passengers at what they considered to be a waste of time, Captain Thompson had the whole of them taken up on the terrace. A small battery was thrown up by the sailors, at the two corners, and in each of these two of the thirty-two pounders were placed. The broadside guns were ranged in line along the centre of the terrace.

"Now," the captain said when, at the end of the second day, the preparations were completed by the transport of a quantity of ammunition from the ship's magazine to the terrace, "I feel comfortable. We can defend ourselves here against all the pirates of the South Seas. If they don't come, we shall only have lost our two days' work, and shall have easy minds for the remainder of our stay here; which we should not have had, if we had been at the mercy of the first of those scoundrels who happened to hear of our being laid up."

The next morning the work of unloading the ship began, the

bales and packages being lowered from the ship, as they were brought up from the hold, into boats alongside; and then taken to the shore, and piled there at the foot of the slope. This occupied three days, and at the end of that time the greater portion of the cargo had been removed. The ship, now several feet lighter in the water than before, was brought broadside to shore until her keel touched the ground. Then the remaining cargo was shifted, and by the additional aid of tackle and purchases on shore fastened to her masts, she was heeled over until her keel nearly reached the level of the water.

It was late one evening when this work was finished, and the following morning the crew were to begin to scrape her bottom, and the carpenters were to repair the leak, and the whole of the seams underwater were to be corked and repitched. Hitherto all had remained on board; but previous to the ship being heeled over, tents constructed of the sails were erected on the terrace, beds and other articles of necessity landed, and the passengers, troops, and crew took up their temporary abode there.

Chapter 4: The Pirates Of The Pacific

A regular watch was set, both on the plateau and on board ship. Towards morning, one of the watch on board hailed the officer above:

"I have fancied, sir, for some time, that I heard noises. It seems to me like the splash of a very large number of oars."

"I have heard nothing," the officer said; "but you might hear sounds down there, coming along on the water, before I do. I will go down to the water's edge, and listen."

He did so, and was at once convinced that the man's ears had not deceived him. Although the night was perfectly still, and not a breath of wind was stirring, he heard a low rustling sound, like that of the wind passing through the dried leaves of a forest, in autumn.

"You are right, Johnson, there is something going on out at sea, beyond the mouth of the bay. I will call the captain, at once."

Captain Thompson, on being aroused, also went down to the waterside to listen; and at once ordered the whole party to get under arms. He requested Mr. Barlow, the young lieutenant in charge of the troops, to place half his men across each end of the plateau. The back was defended by a cliff, which rose almost perpendicularly from it to a height of some hundred feet; the plateau being some thirty yards, in depth, from the sea face to its foot. The male passengers were requested to divide themselves

into two parties, and to join the soldiers in defending the position against flank attacks. The guns were all loaded, and the sailors then set to work dragging up bales of goods from below, and placing them so as to form a sort of breastwork before the guns along the sea face.

The noise at sea had, by this time, greatly increased; and although it was still too dark to see what was passing, Captain Thompson said that he had no doubt, whatever, that the boats had one or more large ships in tow.

"Had it not been for that," he said, "they would long ago have been here. I expect that they hoped to catch us napping, but the wind fell and delayed them. They little dream how well we are prepared. Did they know of our fort here, I question whether they would have ventured upon attacking us at all, but would have waited till we were well at sea, and then our chance would have been a slight one.

"Well, gentlemen, you will allow that the two days were not wasted. I think, now, the pirates are well inside the bay. In half an hour we shall have light enough to see them.

"There, listen! There's the splash of their anchors. There, again! I fancy there are two ships moored broadside on, stem and stern."

All this time, the work on shore had been conducted in absolute silence, and the pirates could have had no intimation that their presence was discovered. Presently, against the faintly dawning light in the east, the masts of two vessels could be seen.

One was a large ship, the other a brig. Almost at the same time the rough sound of boats' keels grounding on the shore could be heard.

"Just as I thought," the captain whispered. "They have guessed that some of us will be ashore, and will make a rush upon us here, when the ships open fire."

The word was passed along the guns that every one was to be double shotted, and that their fire was at first to be directed at the brig. They were to aim between wind and water, and strive to sink her as speedily as possible.

As the light gradually grew brighter, the party on the plateau anxiously watched for the moment when the hull of the Indiaman becoming plain to the enemy. These would open fire upon it, and so give the signal for the fight. At the first alarm the tents had all been levelled; and a thick barricade of bales erected, round a slight depression of the plateau at the foot of the cliff in its rear. Here the ladies were placed, for shelter.

As the light increased, it could be seen that in addition to the two ships were a large number of native dhows. Presently, from the black side of the ship, a jet of fire shot out; and at the signal a broadside was poured into the Indiaman by the two vessels. At the same moment, with a hideous yell, hundreds of black figures leaped to their feet on the beach, and rushed towards the, as yet, unseen position of the English.

The captain shouted "Fire!" and the twenty guns on the plateau poured their fire simultaneously into the side of the brig.

The captain then gave orders that two of the light guns should be run along the terrace, to take position on the flanks, and aid the soldiers against the attacks.

This time Charlie had lent his rifle to Peters, and was himself armed with his double-barrel gun.

"Steady, boys," Mr. Hallam, the ensign who commanded the soldiers at the side where Charlie was stationed, cried; "don't fire a shot till I give the word, and then aim low."

With terrific yells the throng of natives, waving curved swords, spears, and clubs, rushed forward. The steep ascent checked them, but they rushed up until within ten yards of the line of soldiers on its brow. Then Mr. Hallam gave the word to fire, and the soldiers and passengers poured a withering volley into them.

At so short a distance, the effect was tremendous. Completely swept away, the leading rank fell down among their comrades; and these, for a moment, recoiled. Then gathering themselves together they again rushed forward, while those in their rear discharged volleys of arrows over their heads.

Among the defenders, every man now fought for himself, loading and firing as rapidly as possible. Sometimes the natives nearly gained a footing on the crest; but each time the defenders, with clubbed muskets, beat them back again.

The combat was, however, doubtful, for their assailants were many hundred strong; when the defenders were gladdened with a shout of "Make way, my hearties. Let us come to the front, and

give them a dose." In a moment two ship's guns, loaded to the muzzle with bullets, were run forward, and poured their contents among the crowded masses below.

The effect was decisive. The natives, shaken by the resistance they had already experienced, and appalled by the destruction wrought by the cannon, turned and fled along the shore, followed by the shots of the defenders, and by two more rounds of grape, which the sailors poured into them before they could reach their boats.

Similar success had attended the defenders of the other flank of the position, and all hands now aided in swinging round the guns, which had done such good service, to enable them to bear their share in the fight with the ships. In the middle of the fight, the party had heard a great cheer from those working the seaward guns, and they now saw its cause. The brig had disappeared below the water, and the sailors were now engaged in a contest with the ship.

The pirates fought their guns well, but they were altogether over matched by the twenty guns playing upon them from a commanding position. Already the dhows were hoisting their sails, and one of the cables of the ship suddenly disappeared in the water, while a number of men sprang upon the ratlines.

"Fire at the masts," Captain Thompson shouted. "Cripple her if you can. Let all with muskets and rifles try to keep men out of the rigging."

The ship was anchored within three hundred yards of the

shore, and although the distance was too great for anything like accurate fire, several of the men dropped as they ran up the shroud. The sailors worked their guns with redoubled vigour, and a great shout arose as the mainmast, wounded in several places, fell over the side.

"Sweep her decks with grape," the captain shouted, "and she's ours.

"Mr. James, take all the men that can be spared from the guns, man the boats, and make a dash for the ship at once. I see the men are leaving her. They're crowding over the side into their boats. Most likely they'll set fire to her. Set all your strength putting it out. We will attend to the other boats."

It was evident, now, that the pirates were deserting the ship. They had fallen into a complete trap, and instead of the easy prey on which they calculated, found themselves crushed by the fire of a heavy battery in a commanding position. Captain Thompson, seeing that the guns of the ship were silent, and that all resistance had ceased, now ordered the sailors to turn their guns on the dhows and sink as many as possible. These, crowded together in their efforts to escape, offered an easy mark for the gunners, whose shot tore through their sides, smashing and sinking them in all directions.

In ten minutes the last of those that floated had gained the mouth of the bay and, accompanied by the boats, crowded with the crews of the two pirate vessels, made off; followed by the shot of the thirty-two pounders, until they had turned the low

promontory which formed the head of the bay. Long ere this Mr. James and the boats' crews had gained the vessel, and were engaged in combating the fire, which had broken out in three places.

The boats were sent back to shore, and returned with Captain Thompson and the rest of the sailors, and this reinforcement soon enabled them to get the mastery of the flames. The ship was found to be the Dover Castle, a new and very fast ship of the Company's service, of which all traces had been lost since she left Bombay two years before. She was now painted entirely black, and a snake had been added for her figurehead. The original name, however, still remained upon the binnacle and ship's bell. Her former armament had been increased and she now carried thirty guns, of which ten were thirty-two pounders.

A subsequent search showed that her hold was stored with valuable goods; which had, by the marks upon the bales, evidently belonged to several ships; which she had, no doubt, taken and sunk after removing the pick of their cargoes. The prize was a most valuable one, and the captain felt that the board of directors would be highly delighted at the recovery of their ship, and still more by the destruction of the two bands of pirates.

The deck of the ship was thickly strewn with dead. Among them was the body of a man who, by his dress, was evidently the captain. From some of the pirates who still lived, Captain Thompson learned that the brig was the original pirate, that she had captured the Dover Castle, that from her and subsequent

prizes they had obtained sufficient hands to man both ships, all who refused to join being compelled to walk the plank. These were the only two pirate ships in those seas, so far as the men knew. Their rendezvous was at a large native town on the mainland, at the mouth of a river three days' sail distant.

The news of the Indiaman being laid up, refitting at the island, was brought by the native craft they had seen on the day after their arrival; and upon its being known, the natives had insisted in joining in the attack. The pirate captain, whose interest it was to keep well with them, could not refuse to allow them to join, although he would gladly have dispensed with their aid, believing his own force to be far more than sufficient to capture the vessel, which he supposed to be lying an easy prize at his hands.

Another ten days were spent in getting the cargo and guns on board the Lizzie Anderson, and in fitting out both ships for sea. Then, Mr. James and a portion of the crew being placed on board the prize, they sailed together for India. The Dover Castle proved to be much the faster sailer, but Captain Thompson ordered her to reduce sail, and to keep about a mile in his wake, as she could at any time close up when necessary; and the two, together, would be able to oppose a determined front, even to a French frigate, should they meet with one on their way.

The voyage passed without incident save that, when rounding the southern point of Ceylon, a sudden squall from the land struck them. The vessel heeled over suddenly, and a young soldier, who was sitting on the bulwarks to leeward, was jerked

backwards and fell into the water.

Charlie Marryat was on the quarterdeck, leaning against the rail, watching a shoal of flying fish passing at a short distance. In the noise and confusion, caused by the sudden squall, the creaking of cordage, the flapping of sails, and the shouts of the officer to let go the sheets, the fall of the soldier was unnoticed; and Charlie was startled by perceiving, in the water below him, the figure of a struggling man.

He saw, at once, that he was unable to swim. Without an instant's hesitation Charlie threw off his coat, and kicked off his shoes, and with a loud shout of "Man overboard!" sprang from the taffrail and, with a few vigorous strokes, was alongside the drowning man. He seized him by the collar, and held him at a distance.

"Now," he said, "don't struggle, else I'll let you go. Keep quiet, and I can hold you up till we're picked up."

In spite of the injunction, the man strove to grasp him; but Charlie at once let go his hold, and swam a pace back as the man sunk. When he came up he seized him again, and again shouted:

"Keep quite quiet, else I'll leave go."

This time the soldier obeyed him and, turning him on his back, and keeping his face above water, Charlie looked around at the vessel he had left.

The Indiaman was still in confusion. The squall had been sudden and strong. The sheets had been let go, the canvas was flapping in the wind, and the hands were aloft reducing sail. She

was already some distance away from him. The sky was bright and clear, and Charlie, who was surprised at seeing no attempt to lower a boat, saw a signal run up to the masthead.

Looking the other way, he saw at once why no boat had been lowered. The Dover Castle was but a quarter of a mile astern. Carrying less sail than her consort, she had been better prepared for the squall, and was running down upon him at a great rate.

A moment later a boat was swung out on davits, and several men climbed into it. The vessel kept on her course, until scarcely more than her own length away. Then she suddenly rounded up into the wind, and the boat was let fall, and rowed rapidly towards him.

All this time, Charlie had made no effort beyond what was necessary to keep his own head, and his companion's face, above the water. He now lifted the soldier's head up, and shouted to him that aid was at hand. In another minute they were dragged into the boat. This was soon alongside the ship, and three minutes later the Dover Castle was pursuing her course, in the track of the Lizzie Anderson, having signalled that the pair had been rescued.

Charlie found that the soldier was an Irish lad, of some nineteen years old. His name, he said, was Tim Kelly, and as soon as he had recovered himself sufficiently to speak, he was profuse in his professions of gratitude to his preserver. Tim, like the majority of the recruits in the Company's service, had been enlisted while in a state of drunkenness; had been hurried on board a guard ship, where, when he recovered, he found a

number of other unfortunates like himself. He had not been permitted to communicate with his friends on shore, but had been kept in close confinement, until he had been put in uniform and conveyed on board the Lizzie Anderson, half an hour before she sailed.

The Company's service was not a popular one. There was no fighting in India, and neither honor, glory, nor promotion to be won. The climate was unsuited to Europeans, and few, indeed, of those who sailed from England as soldiers in the Company's service ever returned. The Company, then, were driven to all sorts of straits to keep up even the small force which they then maintained in India, and their recruiting agents were, by no means, particular as to the means they employed to make up the tale of recruits.

The vessels did not again communicate until they came to anchor in Madras roads, as the wind was fair and Captain Thompson anxious to arrive at his destination. During these few days, Tim Kelly had followed Charlie about like a shadow. Having no duties to perform on board, he asked leave to act as Charlie's servant; and Charlie was touched by the efforts which the grateful fellow made to be of service to him.

Upon their arrival they saw, to their satisfaction, that the British flag was waving over the low line of earthworks, which constitute the British fort. Not far from this, near the water's edge, stood the white houses and stores of the Company's factors; and behind these, again, were the low hovels of the black town.

The prospect was not an inviting one, and Charlie wondered how on earth a landing was to be effected, through the tremendous surf which broke upon the shore.

He soon found that, until the wind went down and the surf moderated somewhat, no communication could be effected. The next morning, however, the wind lulled, and a crowd of curious native boats were seen putting off from the shore.

Charlie had, after the vessel anchored, rejoined his ship with Tim Kelly, and he now bade goodbye to all on board; for only the doctor, two civilians, and the troops were destined for Madras; all the rest going on in the ship to Calcutta, after she had discharged that portion of her cargo intended for Madras. Charlie had, during the last twelve hours, been made a great deal of, on account of the gallantry he had displayed in risking his life for that of the soldier. Peters and one of the other young writers were also to land; and, taking his seat with these in a native boat, paddled by twelve canoe men, he started for the shore.

As they approached the line of surf, Charlie fairly held his breath; for it seemed impossible that the boat could live through it. The boatmen, however, ceased rowing outside the line of broken water, and lay on their paddles for three or four minutes.

At last a wave, larger than any of its predecessors, was seen approaching. As it passed under them, the steersman gave a shout. In an instant the rowers struck their paddles into the water, and the boat dashed along, with the speed of a racehorse, on the crest of the wave. There was a crash. For a moment the boat

seemed, to the lads, engulfed in white foam; and then she ran high up upon the beach. The rowers seized the boys and, leaping out, carried them beyond the reach of the water, before the next wave broke upon them; and then triumphantly demanded a present, for their skilful management. This the lads were glad to give, for they considered that their escape had been something miraculous.

For a while they stood on the shore, watching other boats, with the soldiers and baggage, coming ashore; and then, being accosted by a gentleman in the employment of the Company, followed him to the residence of the chief factor. Here they were told that rooms would be given them, in one of the houses erected by the Company for the use of its employees; that they would mess with the other clerks residing in the same house; and that, at nine o'clock in the morning, they would report themselves as ready for work.

Charlie and his friends amused themselves by sauntering about in the native town, greatly surprised by the sights and scenes which met their eyes; for in those days very little was known of India, in England. They were, however, greatly disappointed. Visions of oriental splendour, of palaces and temples, of superbly dressed chiefs with bands of gorgeous retainers, had floated before their mind's eye. Instead of this they saw squalid huts, men dressed merely with a rag of cotton around them, everywhere signs of squalor and poverty.

Madras, however, they were told that evening, was not to be taken as a sample of India. It was a mere collection of huts, which

had sprung up round the English factories. But when they went to a real Indian city, they would see a very different state of things.

Chapter 5: Madras

After the young writers had seen the native town, they returned to the beach, and spent the afternoon watching the progress of landing the cargo of the Lizzie Anderson. They were pleased to see their own luggage safely ashore; as it would have been greatly damaged, had the boat containing it been swamped; a misfortune which happened to several of the boats laden with cargo. It was very amusing, each time that one of these boats arrived, to see a crowd of natives rush down into the water, waist deep, seize it, and drag it up beyond the next wave. Many of them would be knocked down, and some swept out by the retreating wave, only to return on the next roller. All could swim like fish, and any of these events were greeted with shouts of laughter by the rest.

When the packages were landed a rope was put round them, and through this a long bamboo pole was inserted, which would be lifted on to the shoulders of two, four, or six porters, according to its weight; and these would go off, at a hobbling sort of trot, with their burden to the factory.

Their own baggage was taken up to the quarters allotted to them, and at the hour named for dinner the newcomers met, for the first time, those with whom they were to be associated. All were dressed in white suits, and Charlie was struck with the pallor of their faces, and the listless air of most of them. The

gentleman to whom they had first been introduced made them acquainted with the others.

"How refreshingly healthy and well you look!" a young man of some six and twenty years old, named Johnson, said. "I was something like that, when I first came out here, though you'd hardly think it now. Eight years of stewing, in this horrible hole, takes the life and spirits out of anyone.

"However, there's one consolation. After eight or ten years of quill driving in a stuffy room, one becomes a little more one's own master, and one's duties begin to be a little more varied and pleasant. One gets a chance of being sent up, occasionally, with goods; or on some message or other to one of the native princes, and then one gets treated like a prince, and sees that India is not necessarily so detestable as we have contrived to make it here. The only bearable time of one's life is the few hours after dinner, when one can sit in a chair in the veranda, and smoke and look at the sea. Some of the fellows play billiards and cards; but if you will take my advice, you won't go in for that sort of thing. It takes a lot out of one, and fellows that do it are, between you and me, in the bad books of the bigwigs. Besides, they lose money, get into debt, and all sorts of mischief comes of it."

The speaker was sitting between Charlie and Peters, and was talking in a tone of voice which would not be overheard by the others.

"Thank you," Charlie said. "I, for one, will certainly take your advice. I suppose one can buy ponies here. I should think a good

ride every morning early, before work, would do one good."

"Yes, it is not a bad thing," Johnson said. "A good many fellows do it, when they first come out here. But after a time they lose their energy, you see, though some do keep it up.

"What appetites you fellows have! It does one good to see you eat."

"I have not the least idea what we are eating," Charlie said, laughing; "but it's really very nice, whatever it is. But there seems an immense quantity of pepper, or hot stuff of some kind or other; which one would have thought, in this tremendous heat, would have made one hotter instead of cooler."

"Yes," their new friend answered. "No doubt all this pepper and curry do heat the blood; but you see, it is done to tempt the appetite. Meat here is fearfully coarse and tasteless. Our appetites are poor, and were it not for these hot sauces, we should eat next to nothing.

"Will you have some bananas?"

"They are nice and cool," Peters said as, having peeled the long fruit as he saw his companion doing, he took a bite of one; "but they have very little taste."

"Most of our fruit is tasteless," Johnson said, "except, indeed, the mango and mangostine. They are equal to any English fruit in flavour, but I would give them all for a good English apple. Its sharpness would be delicious here.

"And now, as you have done, if you will come and sit in the veranda of my room, we will smoke a cigar and have something

cool to drink; and I will answer, as well as I can, the questions you've asked me about the state of things here."

When they had seated themselves in the extremely comfortable cane chairs, in a veranda facing the sea, and had lit their cigars, their friend began:

"Madras isn't much of a place, now; but you should have seen it before the French had it. Our chiefs think of nothing but trade, and care nothing how squalid and miserable is the place in which they make money. The French have larger ideas. They transformed this place; cleared away that portion of the native town which surrounded the factory and fort, made wide roads, formed an esplanade, improved and strengthened the fortifications, forbade the natives to throw all their rubbish and offal on the beach; and made, in fact, a decent place of it. We hardly knew it when we came back, and whatever the Company may have thought, we were thoroughly grateful for the French occupation.

"One good result, too, is that our quarters have been greatly improved; for not only did the French build several new houses, but at present all the big men, the council and so on, are still living at Fort Saint David, which is still the seat of administration. So you see, we have got better quarters; we are rid of the stenches and nuisances of the native town; the plague of flies which made our life a burden is abated; and we can sit here and enjoy the cool sea breeze, without its being poisoned before it reaches us by the heaped up filth on the beach.

"It must have wrung Dupleix's heart to give up the place over which they expended so much pains, and after all it didn't do away with the fighting. In April we sent a force from Fort Saint David–before we came back here–four hundred and thirty white soldiers and a thousand Sepoys, under the command of Captain Cope, to aid a fellow who had been turned out of the Rajahship of Tanjore. I believe he was a great blackguard, and the man who had taken his place was an able ruler liked by the people."

"Then why should we interfere on behalf of the other?" Charlie asked.

"My dear Marryat," their host said compassionately, "you are very young yet, and quite new to India. You will see, after a time, that right has nothing at all to do with the dealings of the Company, in their relations to the native princes. We are, at present, little people living here on sufferance, among a lot of princes and powers who are enemies and rivals of each other. We have, moreover, as neighbours, another European colony considerably stronger than we are. The consequence is, the question of right cannot enter into the considerations of the Company. It may be said that, for every petty kingdom in Southern India, there are at least two pretenders, very often half a dozen. So far we have not meddled much in their quarrels, but the French have been much more active that way. They always side with one or other of these pretenders, and when they get the man they support into power, of course he repays them for their assistance. In this manner, as I shall explain to you presently, they

have virtually made themselves masters of the Carnatic, outside the walls of Fort Saint David and this place.

"Well, our people thought to take a leaf out of the French book, and as the ex-rajah offered us, in payment for our aid, the possession of Devikota, a town at the mouth of the river Kolrun, a place likely to be of great use to us, we agreed to assist him. Cope, with the land forces, had marched to the border of the Tanjore territory, and the guns and heavy baggage were to go by sea.

"But, unfortunately, we had a tremendous gale just after they sailed. The admiral's flagship, the Namur, of seventy-four guns; the Pembroke, of sixty; and the hospital ship, Apollo, were totally lost; and the rest of the fleet scattered in all directions. Cope entered the Tanjore territory, but found the whole population attached to the new rajah. It was useless for him, therefore, to march upon Tanjore, which is a really strong town, so he marched down to Devikota, where he hoped to find some of the fleet. Not a ship, however, was to be seen, and as without guns Cope could do nothing, he returned here, as we had just taken possession again.

"Then he went to Fort Saint David, and there was a great discussion among the bigwigs. It was clear, from what Cope said, that our man had not a friend in his own country. Still, as he pointed out, Devikota was a most important place for us. Neither Madras nor Fort Saint David has a harbour; and Devikota, therefore, where the largest ships could run up the river

and anchor, would be of immense utility to us.

"As this was really the reason for which we had gone into the affair, it was decided to repeat the attempt. By this time Major Lawrence, who commands the whole of the Company's forces in India, and who had been taken a prisoner in one of the French sorties at the siege of Pondicherry, had been released. So he was put at the head of the expedition; and the whole of the Company's English troops, eight hundred in all, including the artillery; and fifteen hundred Sepoys, started on board ship for Devikota. I must tell you that Lawrence is a first-rate fellow, the only really good officer we have out here, and the affair couldn't have been in the hands of a better man.

"The ships arrived safely at the mouth of the Kolrun, and the troops were landed on the bank of the river opposite the town, where Lawrence intended to erect his batteries; as, in the first place, the shore behind the town was swampy, and in the second the Rajah of Tanjore, who had got news of our coming, had his army encamped there to support the place. Lawrence got his guns in position and fired away, across the river, at the earthen wall of the town. In three days he had a breach. The enemy didn't return our fire, but occupied themselves in throwing up an entrenchment across the side of the fort.

"We made a raft and crossed the river, but the enemy's matchlock men peppered us so severely that we lost thirty English and fifty Sepoys in getting over. The enemy's entrenchment was not finished, but in front of it was a deep

rivulet, which had to be crossed.

"Lawrence gave the command of the storming party to Clive. He is one of our fellows; a queer, restless sort of chap, who was really no good here, for he hated his work and always seemed to think himself a martyr. He was not a favourite among us, for he was often gloomy and discontented, though he had his good points. He was straightforward and manly, and he put down two or three fellows here, who had been given to bully the young ones, in a way that astonished them.

"He would never have made a good servant of the Company, for he so hated his work that, when he had been out here about a year, he tried to blow out his brains. He snapped the pistol twice at his head, but it didn't go off, though it was loaded all right. Strange, wasn't it? So he came to the conclusion that he wasn't meant to kill himself, and went on living till something should turn up."

"Yes," Charlie said; "Doctor Rae spoke to us about him during the voyage. He knew him at the siege of Fort Saint David, and Pondicherry."

"Yes," Johnson said. "He came out there quite in a new light. He got transferred into the military service, and was always in the middle of the fighting. Major Lawrence had a very high opinion of him, and so selected him to lead the storming party. It really seems almost as if he had a charmed life. Lawrence gave him thirty-three English soldiers, and seven hundred Sepoys. The rest of the force were to follow as soon as Clive's party gained the

entrenchments. Clive led the way with his Europeans, with the Sepoys supporting behind, and got across the rivulet with a loss of only four men. He waited on the other bank till he saw the Sepoys climbing up, and then again led the English on in advance towards the unfinished part of the entrenchment.

"The Sepoys, however, did not move, but remained waiting for the main body to come up. The enemy let Clive and his twenty-nine men get on some distance in advance, and then their cavalry, who had been hidden by a projection of the fort, charged suddenly down on him. They were upon our men before they had time to form, and in a minute twenty-six of them were cut to pieces. Clive and the other three managed to get through the Tanjore horsemen and rejoin the Sepoys. That was almost as narrow a shave for his life as with the pistol.

"Lawrence now crossed with his main body and advanced. Again the Tanjore horsemen charged; but this time we were prepared, and Lawrence let them come on till within a few yards, and then gave them a volley which killed fourteen and sent the rest scampering away. Lawrence pushed forward. The garrison, panic stricken at the defeat of their cavalry, abandoned the breach and escaped to the opposite side of the town, and Devikota was ours.

"A few days later we captured the fortified temple of Uchipuran. A hundred men were left there, and these were afterwards attacked by the Rajah of Tanjore, with five thousand men; but they held their own, and beat them off. A very gallant

business, that!

"These affairs showed the rajah that the English could fight; a point which, hitherto, the natives had been somewhat sceptical about. They were afraid of the French, but they looked upon us as mere traders. He had, too, other things to trouble him as to the state of the Carnatic, and so hastened to make peace. He agreed to pay the expenses of the war, and to cede us Devikota and some territory round it; and to allow the wretched ex-rajah, in whose cause we had pretended to fight, a pension of four hundred a year, on condition that we kept him shut up in one of our forts.

"Not a very nice business on our side, was it? Still, we had gained our point, and, with the exception of the ex-rajah, who was a bad lot after all, no one was discontented.

"When the peace was signed, our force returned to Fort Saint David. While they had been away, there had been a revolution in the Carnatic. Now this was rather a complicated business; but as the whole situation at present turns upon it; and it will, not improbably, cause our expulsion from Southern India; I will explain it to you as well as I can.

"Now you must know that all Southern India, with the exception of a strip along the west coast, is governed by a viceroy, appointed by the emperor at Delhi. He was called the Subadar of the Deccan. Up till the end of 'forty-eight, Nizam Ul-Mulk was viceroy. About that time he died, and the emperor appointed his grandson, Muzaffar Jung, who was the son of a daughter of his, to succeed him. But the subadar had left five sons. Four of

these lived at Delhi, and were content to enjoy their life there. The second son, however, Nazir Jung, was an ambitious man, who had rebelled even against his father. Naturally, he rebelled against his nephew.

"He was on the spot when his father died, while the new subadar was absent. Nazir, therefore, seized the reins of government, and all the resources of the state. The emperor has troubles enough of his own at Delhi, and Muzaffar had no hope of aid from him. He therefore went to Satarah, the court of the Mahrattas, to ask for their assistance.

"There he met Chunda Sahib. This man was the nephew of the last nawab of the Carnatic, Dost Ali. Dost Ali had been killed in a battle with them, in 1739; and they afterwards captured Trichinopoli, and took Chunda Sahib, who commanded there, prisoner; and had since kept him at Satarah. Had he been at liberty he would, no doubt, have succeeded his uncle, whose only son had been murdered; but as he was at Satarah, the Subadar of the Deccan bestowed the government of the Carnatic upon Anwarud-din.

"Chunda Sahib and Muzaffar Jung put their heads together, and agreed to act in concert. Muzaffar, of course, desired the subadarship of the Deccan, to which he had been appointed by the court of Delhi. Chunda Sahib wanted the nawabship of the Carnatic, and advised his ally to abandon his intention of asking for Mahratta aid, and to ally himself with the French. A correspondence ensued with Dupleix, who, seeing the immense

advantage it would be to him to gain what would virtually be the position of patron and protector of the Subadar of the Deccan, and the Nawab of the Carnatic, at once agreed to join them.

"Muzaffar raised thirty thousand men, and Chunda Sahib six thousand–it is always easy, in India, to raise an army; with a certain amount of money, and lavish promises–marched down and joined a French force of four hundred strong, commanded by D'Auteuil.

"The nawab advanced against them, but was utterly defeated at Ambur, the French doing pretty well the whole of the work. The nawab was killed, and one of his sons, Maphuz Khan, taken prisoner. The other, Muhammud Ali, bolted at the beginning of the fight. Arcot, the capital of the Carnatic, surrendered next day.

"Muzaffar Jung proclaimed himself Subadar of the Deccan, and appointed Chunda Sahib Nawab of the Carnatic. Muzaffar Jung conferred upon Dupleix the sovereignty of eighty-one villages adjoining the French territory. Muzaffar, after paying a visit to Pondicherry, remained in the camp with his army, twenty miles distant from that place. Chunda Sahib remained, as the guest of Dupleix, at Pondicherry.

"On the receipt of the news of the battle of Ambur, Mr. Floyer, who is governor at Fort Saint David, sent at once to Chunda Sahib to acknowledge him as nawab; which, in the opinion of everyone here, was a very foolish step. Muhammud Ali had fled to Trichinopoli, and sent word to Mr. Floyer that he could hold the place, and even reconquer the Carnatic, if the

English would assist him. I know that Admiral Boscawen, who was with the fleet at Fort Saint David, urged Mr. Floyer to do so, as it was clear that Chunda Sahib would be a mere tool in the hands of the French.

"When Chunda Sahib delayed week after week at Pondicherry, Mr. Floyer began to hesitate, but he could not make up his mind, and Admiral Boscawen, who had received orders to return home, could no longer act in contravention to them, and was obliged to sail.

"The instant the fleet had left, and we remained virtually defenceless, Chunda Sahib, supplied with troops and money by Dupleix, marched out from Pondicherry and joined Muzaffar Jung, with the avowed intention of marching upon Trichinopoli. Had he done this at once, he must have taken the place, and it was a question of weeks and days only of our being turned altogether out of Southern India. Nothing, indeed, could have saved us.

"Muzaffar Jung and Chunda Sahib, however, disregarding the plan which Dupleix had marked out for them, resolved, before marching on Trichinopoli, to conquer Tanjore, which is the richest city in Southern India. The rajah had, only a few weeks before, made peace with us; and he now sent messengers to Nazir Jung, Muzaffar's rival in the Deccan, and to the English, imploring their assistance. Both parties resolved at once to grant it, for alone both must have been overwhelmed by the alliance between the two Indian princes and the French; and their only hope of a successful resistance to this combination was in saving

Trichinopoli.

"The march of these allies upon Tanjore opened the road to Trichinopoli; and Captain Cope, with a hundred and twenty men, were at once despatched to reinforce Muhammud Ali's garrison. Of this little force, he sent off twenty men to the aid of the Rajah of Tanjore, and these, under cover of the night, passed through the lines of the besiegers and into the city, which was strongly fortified and able to stand a long siege.

"The English at once entered into a treaty with Nazir Jung, promising him six hundred English troops; to assist him in maintaining his sovereignty of the Deccan, and in aiding to place Muhammud Ali in the nawabship of the Carnatic.

"Tanjore held out bravely. For some weeks the rajah had thrown dust in the eyes of Chunda Sahib, by pretending to negotiate. Then, when the allies attacked, he defended the city for fifty-two days, at the end of which one of the gates of the town had been captured, and the city was virtually at the mercy of the besiegers. He again delayed them by entering into negotiations for surrender. In vain Dupleix continued to urge Chunda Sahib to act energetically, and to enter Tanjore.

"Chunda Sahib, however, although he has a good head for planning, is irresolute in action. His troops were discontented at the want of pay. The French contingent also was demoralized, from the same cause. The troops feared to engage in a desperate struggle, in the streets of a town abounding with palaces, each of which was virtually a fortress; especially as it was known that

Nazir Jung was marching, with all speed, to fall upon their rear. So at last the siege was broken up, and the army fell back upon Pondicherry.

"Meanwhile Cope's detachment of a hundred men, with six thousand native horsemen, escorted Muhammud Ali to join Nazir Jung at Valdaur, fifteen miles from Pondicherry. Lawrence was busy at work at Fort Saint David, organizing a force to go to his aid. Dupleix saw that it was necessary to aid his allies energetically. The army, on its return from the siege of Tanjore, was reorganized; the French contingent increased to two thousand men; and a supply of money furnished, from his private means.

"The army set out to attack Nazir Jung and his ally at Valdaur. When the battle began, however, the French contingent mutinied and refused to fight; and the natives, panic stricken by the desertion of their allies, fell back on Pondicherry. Chunda Sahib accompanied his men. Muzaffar Jung surrendered to his uncle, the usurper.

"In three or four days the discipline of the French army was restored, and on the 13th of April it attacked and defeated a detachment of Nazir Jung's army; and a few days later captured the strong temple of Tiruvadi, sixteen miles from Fort Saint David.

"Some months passed before the French were completely prepared; but on September the first, D'Auteuil, who commanded the French, and Chunda Sahib attacked the army

of the native princes, twenty thousand strong, and defeated it utterly, the French not losing a single man. Muhammud Ali, with only two attendants, fled to Arcot, and the victory rendered Chunda Sahib virtual master of the Carnatic.

"Muzaffar Jung, after his surrender to his uncle, had been loaded with chains, and remained a prisoner in the camp; where, however, he managed to win over several of the leaders of his uncle's army. Gingee was stormed by a small French force, and the French officer there entered into a correspondence with the conspirators, and it was arranged that, when the French army attacked Nazir Jung, these should declare against him.

"On the 15th December the French commander, with eight hundred Europeans, three thousand Sepoys, and ten guns, marched against Nazir Jung, whose army of twenty-five thousand men opposed him. These, however, he defeated easily. While the battle was going on, the conspirators murdered Nazir Jung, released Muzaffar Jung, and saluted him as subadar. His escape was a fortunate one, for his uncle had ordered him to be executed that very day.

"Muzaffar Jung proceeded to Pondicherry, where he was received with great honors. He nominated Dupleix Nawab of the Carnatic and neighbouring countries, with Chunda Sahib as his deputy, conferred the highest dignities upon him, and granted the French possession of all the lands and forts they had conquered. He arranged with Dupleix a plan for common action, and agreed that a body of French troops should remain permanently at his

capital."

Chapter 6: The Arrival Of Clive

"I have nearly brought down the story to the present time," Mr. Johnson said. "One event has taken place, however, which was of importance. Muzaffar Jung set out for Hyderabad, accompanied by a French contingent under Bussy. On the way, the chiefs who had conspired against Nazir Jung mutinied against his successor. Muzaffar charged them with his cavalry. Two of the three chief conspirators were killed and, while pursuing the third, Muzaffar was himself killed.

"Bussy at once released from confinement a son of Nazir Jung, proclaimed him Subadar of the Deccan, escorted him to Hyderabad, and received from him the cession of considerable fresh grants of territory to the French. The latter were now everywhere triumphant, and Trichinopoli and Tanjore were, with the three towns held by the English, the sole places which resisted their authority. Muhammud Ali, deeming further resistance hopeless, had already opened negotiations with Dupleix for the surrender of Trichinopoli. Dupleix agreed to his conditions; but when Muhammud Ali found that Count Bussy, with the flower of the French force, had been despatched to Hyderabad, he gained time by raising fresh demands, which would require the ratification of the subadar.

"Luckily for us Mr. Floyer had been recalled, and his place taken by Mr. Saunders; who is, everyone says, a man of common

sense and determination. Muhammud Ali urged upon him the necessity for the English to make common cause with him against the enemy, for if Trichinopoli fell, it would be absolutely impossible for the English to resist the French and their allies. Early this year, then, Mr. Saunders assured him that he should be assisted with all our strength, and Muhammud Ali thereupon broke off the negotiations with the French.

"Most unfortunately for us, Major Lawrence had gone home to England on sick leave. Captain Gingen, who now commands our troops, is a wretched substitute for him. Captain Cope is no better.

"Early this year Mr. Saunders sent Cope, with two hundred and eighty English and three hundred Sepoys, to Trichinopoli. Benefiting by the delay which was caused before Dupleix, owing to the absence of his best troops at Hyderabad, could collect an army, Cope laid siege to Madura, but was defeated and had to abandon his guns. Three thousand of Muhammud Ali's native troops thereupon deserted to the enemy.

"The cause of the English now appeared lost. Dupleix planted the white flags, emblems of the authority of France, in the fields within sight of Fort Saint David. With immense efforts, Mr. Saunders put into the field five hundred English troops, a thousand Sepoys, a hundred Africans, and eight guns; under the command of Captain Gingen, whose orders were to follow the movements of the army with which D'Auteuil and Chunda Sahib were marching against Trichinopoli.

"Luckily Chunda Sahib, instead of doing so at once, moved northwards to confirm his authority in the towns of North and South Arcot, and to raise additional levies. Great delay was caused by this. On arriving before the important fortress of Valkonda, Chunda Sahib found before it the troops of Captain Gingen, who had been reinforced by sixteen hundred troops from Trichinopoli. The governor of the place, not knowing which party was the stronger, refused to yield to either; and for a fortnight the armies lay at a short distance from each other, near the fortress, with whose governor both continued their negotiations.

"Gingen then lost patience and attacked the place, but was repulsed, and the governor at once admitted the French within the fortress. The next day the main body of the French attacked us, the guns of the fortress opening fire upon us at the same time. Our men, a great portion of whom were recruits just joined from England, fell into a panic and bolted, abandoning their allies and leaving their guns, ammunition, and stores in the hands of the enemy.

"Luckily, D'Auteuil was laid up with gout. If he had pressed on, there remained only the two or three hundred men under Cope to offer the slightest resistance. Trichinopoli must have fallen at once; and we, without a hundred soldiers here, should have had nothing to do but pack up and go. As it was, Gingen's beaten men were allowed to retreat quietly towards Trichinopoli.

"The next day D'Auteuil was better, and followed in pursuit,

and Gingen had the greatest difficulty in reaching Trichinopoli. There, at the present moment, we lie shut up, a portion of our force only remaining outside the walls.

"The place itself is strong. The town lies round a lofty rock, on which stands the fortress, which commands the country for some distance round. Still, there is no question that the French could take it, if they attacked it. Our men are utterly dispirited with defeat. Cope and Gingen have neither enterprise nor talent.

"At present the enemy, who are now under the command of Colonel Law, who has succeeded D'Auteuil, are contenting themselves with beleaguering the place. But as we have no troops whatever to send to its rescue, and Muhammud Ali has no friends elsewhere to whom to look for aid, it is a matter of absolute certainty that the place must fall, and then Dupleix will only have to request us to leave, and we shall have nothing else to do but to go at once. So I should advise you not to trouble yourself to unpack your luggage, for in all probability another fortnight will see us on board ship.

"There, that's a tremendous long yarn I've been telling you, and not a pleasant one. It's a history of defeat, loss of prestige and position. We have been out fought and out diplomatized, and have made a mess of everything we put our hand to. I should think you must be tired of it. I am. I haven't done so much talking, for years."

Charlie and Peters thanked their new acquaintance, warmly, for the pains he had taken in explaining the various circumstances

and events which had led to the present unfortunate position; and Charlie asked, as they stood up to say goodnight to Mr. Johnson, "What has become of Clive, all this time?"

"After the conquest of Devikota," Mr. Johnson said, "the civilians in the service were called back to their posts; but to show that they recognized his services, the authorities allowed Clive to attain the rank of captain, which would have been bestowed upon him had he remained in the military service, and they appointed him commissary to the army, a post which would take him away from the office work he hated. Almost directly afterwards, he got a bad attack of fever, and was forced to take a cruise in the Bay of Bengal. He came back in time to go with Gingen's force; but after the defeat of Valkonda he resigned his office, I suppose in disgust, and returned to Fort Saint David. In July, some of the Company's ships came in with some reinforcements. There were no military officers left at Fort Saint David, so Mr. Pigot, a member of the council, started with a large convoy of stores, escorted by eighty English and three hundred Sepoys. Clive volunteered to accompany them. They had to march thirty or forty miles to Verdachelam, a town close to the frontier of Tanjore, through which the convoy to Trichinopoli would be able to pass unopposed, but the intervening country was hostile to the English.

"However, the convoy passed unmolested, and after seeing it safely to that point, Pigot and Clive set out to return, with an escort of twelve Sepoys. They were at once attacked, and for

miles a heavy fire was kept up on them. Seven of the escort were killed, the rest reached Fort Saint David in safety. Pigot's report of Clive's conduct, strengthened by that previously made by Major Lawrence, induced the authorities to transfer him permanently to the army. He received a commission as captain and was sent off, with a small detachment remaining at Saint David's, to Devikota.

"There he placed himself under Captain Clarke, who commanded; and the whole body, numbering altogether a hundred English, fifty Sepoys, with a small field piece, marched up to Trichinopoli, and I hear managed to make its way in safety. He got in about a month ago."

"And what force have we altogether, here and at Saint David's, in case Trichinopoli falls?"

"What with the detachment that came with you, and two others which arrived about ten days back, we have altogether about three hundred and fifty men. What on earth could these do against all the force of the nawab, the subadar, and three or four thousand French troops?"

The prospect certainly seemed gloomy in the extreme, and the young writers retired to their beds, on this, the first night of their arrival in India, with the conviction that circumstances were in a desperate position.

The next day they set to work, and at its end agreed that they should bear the loss of their situations, and their expulsion from the country, with more than resignation. It was now August, the

heat was terrible, and as they sat in their shirtsleeves at their desks, bathed in perspiration, at their work of copying invoices, they felt that any possible change of circumstances would be for the better.

The next day, and the next, still further confirmed these ideas. The nights were nearly as hot as the days. Tormented by mosquitoes, they tossed restlessly in their beds for hours, dozing off towards morning and awaking unrefreshed and worn out. When released from work at the end of the third day, Charlie and Peters strolled down together to the beach, and bewailed their hard fate.

"There are two ships coming from the south," Charlie said presently. "I wonder whether they're from England, or Fort Saint David?"

"Which do you hope they will be?" Peters said.

"I hope they're from Saint David's," Charlie answered. "Even if they made a quick voyage, they couldn't have left England many weeks after us; and although I should be glad to get news from home, I am still more anxious, just at present, for news from Saint David's. Between ourselves, I long to hear of the fall of Trichinopoli. Everyone says it is certain to take place before long, and the sooner it does, the sooner we shall be out of this frightful place."

After dinner they again went down to the beach, and were joined by Doctor Rae, who chatted with them as to the ships, which were now just anchoring. These had already signalled that

they were from Saint David's, and that they had on board Mr. Saunders, the governor, and a detachment of troops. Already the soldiers from the Lizzie Anderson, aided by a number of natives, were at work pitching tents in the fort for the reception of the newcomers, and conjecture was busy on shore, among the civilians, as to the object of bringing troops from Saint David's to Madras, that is, directly away from the scene of action.

"It is one of two things," Doctor Rae said: "Either Trichinopoli has surrendered and they are evacuating Fort Saint David, or they have news that the nawab is marching to attack us here. I should think it to be the latter, for Fort Saint David is a great deal stronger than this place, though the French did strengthen it during their stay here. If, then, the authorities have determined to abandon one of the two towns, and to concentrate all their force for the defence of the other, I should have thought they would have held on to Saint David's.

"There is a boat being lowered from one of the ships, so we shall soon have news."

A signal from the ship announced that the governor was about to land, and the principal persons at the factory assembled on the beach to receive him. Doctor Rae and the two young writers stood, a short distance from the party. As the boat was beached, Mr. Saunders sprang out and, surrounded by those assembled to meet him, walked at once towards the factory. An officer got out from the boat and superintended the debarkation of the baggage, which a number of coolies at once placed on their heads and

carried away.

The officer was following them, when his eye fell upon Doctor Rae.

"Ah! Doctor," he said, "how are you? When did you get out again from England?"

"Only three or four days since, Captain Clive. I did not recognize you, at first. I am glad to see you again."

"Yes, I have cast my slough," Captain Clive said, laughing, "and have, thank God, exchanged my pen for a sword, for good."

"You were able to fight, though, as a civilian," Doctor Rae said, laughing.

"Yes, we had some tough fighting behind the ramparts of Saint David's, and in the trenches before Pondicherry; but we shall have sharper work, still before us, or I am mistaken."

"What! Are they going to attack us here?" Doctor Rae exclaimed.

"Oh no, just the other way," Captain Clive said. "We are going to carry the war into their quarters. It is a secret yet, and must not go farther."

And he included the two writers in his look.

"These are two fresh comers, Captain Clive. They came out in the same ship with me. This is Mr. Marryat, this Mr. Peters. They are both brave young gentlemen, and had an opportunity of proving it on the way out, for we were twice engaged; the first time with privateers; the second, a very sharp affair, with pirates. That ship lying off there is a pirate we captured."

"Aha!" Captain Clive said, looking keenly at the lads. "Well, young gentlemen, and how do you like what you have seen of your life here?"

"We hate it, sir," Charlie said. "We would, both of us, a thousand times rather enlist under you as private soldiers. Oh, sir, if there is any expedition going to take place, do you think there is a chance of our being allowed to go as volunteers?"

"I will see about it," Captain Clive said, smiling. "Trade must be dull enough here, at present, and we want every hand that can hold a sword or a musket in the field.

"You are sure you can recommend them?" he said, turning to Doctor Rae with a smile.

"Most warmly," the doctor said. "They both showed great coolness and courage, in the affairs I spoke of. Have you any surgeons with you, Captain Clive? If not, I hope that I shall go with any expedition that will take place. The doctor here is just recovering from an attack of fever and will not be fit, for weeks, for the fatigues of active service.

"May I ask who is to command the expedition?"

"I am," Clive said quietly. "You may well look surprised that an officer who has but just joined should have been selected; but in fact, there is no one else. Cope and Gingen are both at Trichinopoli, and even if they were not–" he paused, and a shrug of the shoulders expressed his meaning clearly. "Mr. Saunders is good enough to feel some confidence in my capacity, and I trust that I shall not disappoint him.

"We are going–but this, mind, is a profound secret till the day we march–to attack Arcot. It is the only possible way of relieving Trichinopoli."

"To attack Arcot?" Doctor Rae said, astonished. "That does indeed appear a desperate enterprise, with such a small body as you have at your command, and these, entirely new recruits. But I recognize the importance of the enterprise. If you should succeed, it will draw off Chunda Sahib from Trichinopoli. It's a grand idea, Captain Clive, a grand idea, though I own it seems to me a desperate one."

"In desperate times we must take desperate measures, Doctor," Captain Clive said. "Now I must be going on after the governor. I shall see you tomorrow.

"I will not forget you, young gentlemen."

So saying, he proceeded to the factory.

It was afterwards known that the proposal, to effect a diversion by an expedition against Arcot, was the proposal of Clive himself. Upon arriving at Trichinopoli, he had at once seen that all was lost, there. The soldiers were utterly dispirited and demoralized. They had lost all confidence in themselves and their officers, who had also lost confidence in themselves. At Trichinopoli nothing was to be done, and it must be either starved out, or fall an easy prey should the enemy advance to the assault. Clive had, then, after a few days' stay, made his way out from the town, and proceeded to Fort Saint David, where he had laid before the governor the proposal, which he believed to be the

only possible measure which could save the English in India.

The responsibility thus set before Mr. Saunders was a grave one. Upon the one hand, he was asked to detach half of the already inadequate garrisons of Fort Saint David and Madras upon an enterprise which, if unsuccessful, must be followed by the loss of the British possessions, of which he was governor. He would have to take this great risk, not upon the advice of a tried veteran like Lawrence, but on that of a young man, only a month or two back a civilian; and it was to this young man, untried in command, that the leadership of this desperate enterprise must be intrusted.

Upon the other hand, if he refused to take this responsibility the fall of Trichinopoli, followed by the loss of the three English ports, was certain. But for this no blame or responsibility could rest upon him. Many men would have chosen the second alternative; but Mr. Saunders had, since Clive's return, seen a good deal of him, and had been impressed with a strong sense of his capacity, energy, and good sense. Mr. Pigot, who had seen Clive under the most trying circumstances, was also his warm supporter; and Mr. Saunders at last determined to adopt Clive's plan, and to stake the fortunes of the English in India on this desperate venture.

Accordingly, leaving a hundred men only at Fort Saint David, he decided to carry the remainder to Madras; and that Clive, leaving only fifty behind as a garrison there, should, with the whole available force, march upon Arcot.

The next morning as Charlie and Peters were at breakfast, a native entered with a letter from the chief factor, to the effect that their services in the office would be dispensed with, and that they were, in accordance with their request, to report themselves to Captain Clive as volunteers. No words can express the joy of the two lads, at receiving the intelligence, and they created so much noise, in the exuberance of their delight, that Mr. Johnson came in from the next room to see what was the matter.

"Ah!" he said, when he heard the cause of the uproar; "when I first came out here, I should have done the same, and should have regarded the certainty of being knocked on the head as cheerfully as you do. Eight years out here takes the enthusiasm out of a man, and I shall wait quietly to see whether we are to be transferred to Calcutta, or shipped back to England."

A quarter of an hour later, Charlie and Peters joined Captain Clive in the camp.

"Ah!" he said, "My young friends, I'm glad to see you. There is plenty for you to do, at once. We shall march tomorrow, and all preparations have to be made. You will both have the rank of ensign, while you serve with me. I have only six other officers, two of whom are civilians who, like yourselves, volunteered at Saint David's. They are of four or five year's standing and, as they speak the language, they will serve with the Sepoys under one of my military officers. Another officer, who is also an ensign, will take the command of the three guns. The Europeans are divided into two companies. One of you will be attached to each. The

remaining officer commands both."

During the day the lads had not a moment to themselves, and were occupied until late at night in superintending the packing of stores and tents; and the following morning, the 26th of August, 1751, the force marched from Madras. It consisted of two hundred of the Company's English troops, three hundred Sepoys, and three small guns. They were led, as has been said, by eight European officers, of whom only Clive and another had ever heard a shot fired in action, four of the eight being young men in the civil service, who had volunteered.

Charlie was glad to find that among the company to which he was appointed was the detachment which had come out with him on board ship; and the moment these heard that he was to accompany them, as their officer, Tim Kelly pressed forward and begged that he might be allowed to act as Charlie's servant, a request which the lad readily complied with.

The march the first day was eighteen miles, a distance which, in such a climate, was sufficient to try to the utmost the powers of the young recruits. The tents were soon erected, each officer having two or three native servants, that number being indispensable in India. Charlie and Peters had one tent between them, which was shared by two other officers, as the column had moved in the lightest order possible in India.

"Sure, Mr. Marryat," Tim Kelly said to him confidentially, "that black hathen of a cook is going to pison ye. I have been watching him, and there he is putting all sorts of outlandish things

into the mate. He's been pounding them up on stones, for all the world like an apothecary, and even if he manes no mischief, the food isn't fit to set before a dog, let alone a Christian and a gintleman like yourself. If you give the word, sir, I knock him over with the butt end of my musket, and do the cooking for you, meself."

"I'm afraid the other officers wouldn't agree to that, Tim," Charlie said, laughing. "The food isn't so bad as it looks, and I don't think an apprenticeship among the Irish bogs is likely to have turned you out a first rate cook, Tim; except, of course, for potatoes."

"Sure, now, yer honor, I can fry a rasher of bacon with any man."

"Perhaps you might do that, Tim, but as we've no bacon here, that won't help us. No, we must put up with the cook, and I don't think any of us will be the worse for the dinner."

On the morning of the 29th Clive reached Conjeveram, a town of some size, forty-two miles from Madras. Here Clive gained the first trustworthy intelligence as to Arcot. He found the garrison outnumbered his own force by two to one; and that, although the defences were not in a position to resist an attack by heavy guns, they were capable of being defended against any force not so provided. Clive at once despatched a messenger to Madras, begging that two eighteen-pounders might be sent after him; and then, without awaiting their coming he marched forward against Arcot.

Chapter 7: The Siege Of Arcot

From Conjeveram to Arcot is twenty-seven miles, and the troops, in spite of a delay caused by a tremendous storm of thunder and lightning, reached the town in two days. The garrison, struck with panic at the sudden coming of a foe, when they deemed themselves in absolute security, at once abandoned the fort, which they might easily have maintained until Chunda Sahib was able to send a force to relieve it. The city was incapable of defence after the fort had been abandoned, and Clive took possession of both, without firing a shot.

He at once set to work to store up provisions in the fort, in which he found eight guns and an abundance of ammunition, as he foresaw the likelihood of his having to stand a siege there; and then, leaving a garrison to defend it in his absence, marched on the 4th of September with the rest of his forces against the enemy, who had retired from the town to the mud fort of Timari, six miles south of Arcot. After a few discharges with their cannon they retired hastily, and Clive marched back to Arcot.

Two days later, however, he found that they had been reinforced, and as their position threatened his line of communications, he again advanced towards them. He found the enemy about two thousand strong, drawn up in a grove under cover of the guns of the fort. The grove was inclosed by a bank and ditch, and some fifty yards away was a dry tank, inclosed by

a bank higher than that which surrounded the grove. In this the enemy could retire, when dislodged from their first position.

Charlie's heart beat fast when he heard the order given to advance. The enemy outnumbered them by five to one, and were in a strong position. As the English advanced, the enemy's two field pieces opened upon them. Only three men were killed, and, led by their officers, the men went at the grove at the double. The enemy at once evacuated it, and took refuge in the tank, from behind whose high bank they opened fire upon the English.

Clive at once divided his men into two columns, and sent them round to attack the tank upon two sides. The movement was completely successful. At the same moment the men went with a rush at the banks, and upon reaching the top opened a heavy fire upon the crowded mass within. These at once fled in disorder.

Clive then summoned the fort to surrender; but the commander, seeing that Clive had no battering train, refused to do so; and Clive fell back upon Arcot again, until his eighteen-pounders should arrive.

For the next eight days, the troops were engaged in throwing up defences, and strengthening and victualling the fort. The enemy, gaining confidence, gathered to the number of three thousand, and encamped three miles from the town, proclaiming that they were about to besiege; and at midnight on the 14th Clive sallied out, took them by surprise, and dispersed them.

The two eighteen-pounders, for which Clive had sent to Madras, were now well upon the road, under the protection of

a small body of Sepoys, and were approaching Conjeveram. The enemy sent a considerable body of troops to cut off the guns, and Clive found that the small number which he had sent out, to meet the approaching party, would not be sufficient. He therefore resolved to take the whole force, leaving only sufficient to garrison the fort.

The post which the enemy occupied was a temple near Conjeveram, and as this was twenty-seven miles distant, the force would be obliged to be absent for at least two days. As it would probably be attacked, and might have to fight hard, he decided on leaving only thirty Europeans and fifty Sepoys within the fort. He appointed Doctor Rae to the command of the post during his absence, and placed Charlie and Peters under his orders.

"I wonder whether they will have any fighting," Charlie said, as the three officers looked from the walls of the fort after the departing force.

"I wish we had gone with them," Peters put in; "but it will be a long march, in the heat."

"I should think," Doctor Rae said, "that they are sure to have fighting. I only hope they may not be attacked at night. The men are very young and inexperienced, and there is nothing tries new soldiers so much as a night attack. However, from what I hear of their own wars, I believe that night attacks are rare among them. I don't know that they have any superstition on the subject, as some African people have, on the ground that evil spirits are about at night; but the natives are certainly not brisk, after nightfall.

They are extremely susceptible to any fall of temperature, and as you have, of course, noticed, sleep with their heads covered completely up. However, we must keep a sharp lookout here, tonight."

"You don't think that we are likely to be attacked, sir, do you?"

"It is possible we may be," the doctor said. "They will know that Captain Clive has set out from here, with the main body, and has left only a small garrison. Of course they have spies, and will know that there are only eighty men here, a number insufficient to defend one side of this fort, to say nothing of the whole circle of the walls. They have already found out that the English can fight in the open, and their experience at Timari will make them shy of meeting us again. Therefore, it is just possible that they may be marching in this direction today, while Clive is going in the other, and that they may intend carrying it with a rush.

"I should say, today let the men repose as much as possible; keep the sentries on the gates and walls, but otherwise let them all have absolute quiet. You can tell the whites, and I will let the Sepoys know, that they will have to be in readiness all night, and that they had better, therefore, sleep as much as possible today. We will take it by turns to be on duty, one going round the walls and seeing that the sentries are vigilant, while the others sit in the shade and doze off, if they can. We must all three keep on the alert, during the night."

Doctor Rae said that he, himself, would see that all went well for the first four hours, after which Charlie should go on

duty; and the two subalterns accordingly made themselves as comfortable as they could in their quarters, which were high up in the fort, and possessed a window looking over the surrounding country.

"Well, Tim, what is the matter with you?" they asked that soldier, as he came in with an earthenware jar of water, which he placed to cool in the window. "You look pale."

"And it's pale I feel, your honor, with the life frightened fairly out of me, a dozen times a day. It was bad enough on the march, but this place just swarms with horrible reptiles. Shure an' it's a pity that the holy Saint Patrick didn't find time to pay a visit to India. If he'd driven the varmint into the sea for them, as he did in Ireland, the whole population would have become Christians, out of pure gratitude. Why, yer honor, in the cracks and crevices of the stones of this ould place there are bushels and bushels of 'em. There are things they call centipades, with a million legs on each side of them, and horns big enough to frighten ye; of all sizes up to as long as my hand and as thick as my finger; and they say that a bite from one of them will put a man in a raging fever, and maybe kill him. Then there are scorpions, the savagest looking little bastes ye ever saw, for all the world like a little lobster with his tail turned over his back, and a sting at the end of it. Then there's spiders, some of 'em nigh as big as a cat."

"Oh, nonsense, Tim!" Charlie said; "I don't think, from what I've heard, that there's a spider in India whose body is as big as a mouse."

"It isn't their body, yer honor. It's their legs. They're just cruel to look at. It was one of 'em that gave me a turn, a while ago. I was just lying on my bed smoking my pipe, when I saw one of the creatures (as big as a saucer, I'll take my oath) walking towards me with his wicked eye fixed full on me. I jumped off the bed and on to a bench that stood handy.

"'What are ye yelling about, Tim Kelly?' said Corporal Jones to me.

"'Here's a riotous baste here, corporal,' says I, 'that's meditating an attack on me.'

"'Put your foot on it, man,' says he.

"'It's mighty fine,' says I, 'and I in my bare feet.'

"So the corporal tells Pat Murphy, my right-hand man, to tackle the baste. I could see Pat didn't like the job ayther, yer honor, but he's not the boy to shrink from his duty; so he comes and he takes post on the form by my side, and just when the cratur is making up his mind to charge us both, Pat jumps down upon him and squelched it.

"Shure, yer honor, the sight of such bastes is enough to turn a Christian man's blood."

"The spider had no idea of attacking you, Kelly," Peters said, laughing. "It might possibly bite you in the night, though I do not think it would do so; or if you took it up in your fingers."

"The saints defind us, yer honor! I'd as soon think of taking a tiger by the tail. The corporal, he's an Englishman, and lives in a country where they've got snakes and reptiles; but it's hard on

an Irish boy, dacently brought up within ten miles of Cork's own town, to be exposed to the like.

"And do ye know, yer honor, when I went out into the town yesterday, what should I see but a man sitting down against a wall, with a little bit of a flute in his hand, and a basket by his side. Well, yer honor, I thought maybe he was going to play a tune, when he lifts up the top of the basket and then began to play. Ye may call it music, yer honor, but there was nayther tune nor music in it.

"Then all of a suddint two sarpents in the basket lifts up their heads, with a great ear hanging down on each side, and began to wave themselves about."

"Well, Tim, what happened then?" Charlie asked, struggling with his laughter.

"Shure it's little I know what happened after, for I just took to my heels, and I never drew breath till I was inside the gates."

"There was nothing to be frightened at, Tim," Charlie said. "It was a snake charmer. I have never seen one yet, but there are numbers of them all over India. Those were not ears you saw, but the hood. The snakes like the music, and wave their heads about in time to it. I believe that, although they are a very poisonous snake and their bite is certain death, there is no need to be afraid of them, as the charmers draw out their poison fangs when they catch them."

"Do they, now?" Tim said, in admiration. "I wonder what the regimental barber would say to a job like that, now. He well nigh

broke Dan Sullivan's jaw, yesterday, in getting out a big tooth; and then swore at the poor boy, for having such a powerful strong jaw. I should like to see his face, if he was asked to pull out a tooth from one of them dancing sarpents.

"I brought ye in some fruits, yer honors. I don't know what they are, but you may trust me, they're not poison. I stopped for half an hour beside the stall, till I saw some of the people of the country buying and ating them. So then I judged that they were safe for yer honors."

"Now, Tim, you'd better go and lie down and get a sleep, if the spiders will let you, for you will have to be under arms all night, as it is possible that we may be attacked."

The first part of the night passed quietly. Double sentries were placed at each of the angles of the walls. The cannons were loaded, and all ready for instant action. Doctor Rae and his two subalterns were upon the alert, visiting the posts every quarter of an hour to see that the men were vigilant.

Towards two o'clock a dull sound was heard and, although nothing could be seen, the men were at once called to arms, and took up the posts to which they had already been told off on the walls. The noise continued. It was slight and confused, but the natives are so quiet in their movements, that the doctor did not doubt that a considerable body of men were surrounding the place, and that he was about to be attacked.

Presently one of the sentries over the gateway perceived something approaching. He challenged, and immediately

afterwards fired. The sound of his gun seemed to serve as the signal for an assault, and a large body of men rushed forward at the gate, while at two other points a force ran up to the foot of the walls, and endeavoured to plant ladders.

The garrison at once collected at the points of attack, a few sentries only being left at intervals on the wall, to give notice should any attempt be made elsewhere. From the walls, a heavy fire of musketry was poured upon the masses below; while from the windows of all the houses around, answering flashes of fire shot out, a rain of bullets being directed at the battlements. Doctor Rae himself commanded at the gate; one of the subalterns at each of the other points assailed.

The enemy fought with great determination. Several times the ladders were planted and the men swarmed up them, but as often these were hurled back upon the crowd below. At the gate the assailants endeavoured to hew their way, with axes, through it; but so steady was the fire directed, from the loopholes which commanded it, upon those so engaged, that they were, each time, forced to recoil with great slaughter. It was not until nearly daybreak that the attack ceased, and the assailants, finding that they could not carry the place by a coup de main, fell back.

The next day, the main body of the British force returned with the convoy. News arrived, the following day, that the enemy were approaching to lay siege to the place.

The news of the capture of Arcot had produced the effect which Clive had anticipated from it. It alarmed and irritated the

besiegers of Trichinopoli, and inspired the besieged with hope and exultation. The Mahratta chief of Gutti and the Rajah of Mysore, with whom Muhammud Ali had for some time been negotiating, at once declared in his favour. The Rajah of Tanjore and the chief of Pudicota, adjoining that state, who had hitherto remained strictly neutral, now threw in their fortunes with the English, and thereby secured the communications between Trichinopoli and the coast.

Chunda Sahib determined to lose not a moment in recovering Arcot, knowing that its recapture would at once cool the ardour of the new native allies of the English; and that, with its capture, the last hope of the besieged in Trichinopoli would be at an end. Continuing the siege, he despatched three thousand of his best troops, with a hundred and fifty Frenchmen, to reinforce the two thousand men already near Arcot, under the command of his son Riza Sahib. Thus the force about to attack Arcot amounted to five thousand men; while the garrison under Clive's orders had, by the losses in the defence of the fort, by fever and disease, been reduced to one hundred and twenty Europeans, and two hundred Sepoys; while four out of the eight officers were hors de combat.

The fort which this handful of men had to defend was in no way capable of offering a prolonged resistance. Its walls were more than a mile in circumference, and were in a very bad state of repair. The rampart was narrow and the parapet low, and the ditch, in many places, dry. The fort had two gates. These were in towers standing beyond the ditch, and connected with the interior

by a causeway across it. The houses in the town in many places came close up to the walls, and from their roofs the ramparts of the forts were commanded.

On the 23rd September Riza Sahib, with his army, took up his position before Arcot. Their guns had not, however, arrived, with the exception of four mortars; but they at once occupied all the houses near the fort, and from the walls and upper windows kept up a heavy fire on the besieged.

Clive determined to make an effort, at once, to drive them from this position, and he accordingly, on the same afternoon, made a sortie. So deadly a fire, however, was poured into the troops as they advanced, that they were unable to make any way, and were forced to retreat into the fort again, after suffering heavy loss.

On the night of the 24th, Charlie Marryat, with twenty men carrying powder, was lowered from the walls; and an attempt was made to blow up the houses nearest to them; but little damage was done, for the enemy were on the alert, and they were unable to place the powder in effective positions, and with a loss of ten of their number the survivors with difficulty regained the fort.

For the next three weeks the position remained unchanged. So heavy was the fire which the enemy, from their commanding position, maintained, that no one could show his head for a moment, without running the risk of being shot. Only a few sentinels were kept upon the walls, to prevent the risk of surprise, and these had to remain stooping below the parapet. Every day

added to the losses.

Captain Clive had a series of wonderful escapes, and indeed the men began to regard him with a sort of superstitious reverence, believing that he had a charmed life. One of his three remaining officers, seeing an enemy taking deliberate aim at him through a window, endeavoured to pull him aside. The native changed his aim, and the officer fell dead. On three other occasions sergeants, who accompanied him on his rounds, were shot dead by his side. Yet no ball touched him.

Provisions had been stored in the fort, before the commencement of the siege, sufficient for sixty days; and of this a third was already exhausted when, on the 14th of October, the French troops serving with Riza Sahib received two eighteen-pounders, and seven smaller pieces of artillery. Hitherto the besiegers had contented themselves with harassing the garrison night and day, abstaining from any attack which would cost them lives, until the arrival of their guns. Upon receiving these, they at once placed them in a battery which they had prepared on the northwest of the fort, and opened fire.

So well was this battery placed, and so accurate the aim of its gunner, that the very first shot dismounted one of the eighteen-pounders in the fort. The second again struck the gun and completely disabled it. The besieged mounted their second heavy gun in its place, and were preparing to open fire on the French battery, when a shot struck it also and dismounted it. It was useless to attempt to replace it, and it was, during the night,

removed to a portion of the walls not exposed to the fire of the enemy's battery. The besiegers continued their fire, and in six days had demolished the wall facing their battery, making a breach of fifty feet wide.

Clive, who had now only the two young subalterns serving under him, worked indefatigably. His coolness and confidence of bearing kept up the courage of his little garrison, and every night, when darkness hid them from the view of the enemy's sharpshooters, the men laboured to prepare for the impending attack. Works were thrown up inside the fort, to command the breach. Two deep trenches were dug, one behind the other; the one close to the wall, the other some distance farther back. These trenches were filled with sharp iron three-pointed spikes, and palisades erected extending from the ends of the ditches to the ramparts, and a house pulled down in the rear to the height of a breastwork, behind which the garrison could fire at the assailants, as they endeavoured to cross the ditches.

One of the three field pieces Clive had brought with him he mounted on a tower, flanking the breach outside. Two he held in reserve, and placed two small guns, which he had found in the fort when he took it, on the flat roof of a house in the fort commanding the inside of the breach.

From the roofs of some of the houses around the fort the besiegers beheld the progress of these defences; and Riza Sahib feared, in spite of his enormously superior numbers, to run the risk of a repulse. He knew that the amount of provisions which

Clive had stored was not large, and thinking that famine would inevitably compel his surrender, shrank from incurring the risk of disheartening his army, by the slaughter which an unsuccessful attempt to carry the place must entail. He determined, at any rate, to increase the probability of success, and utilize his superior forces, by making an assault at two points, simultaneously. He therefore erected a battery on the southwest, and began to effect a breach on that side, also.

Clive, on his part, had been busy endeavouring to obtain assistance. His native emissaries, penetrating the enemy's lines, carried the news of the situation of affairs in the fort to Madras, Fort Saint David, and Trichinopoli. At Madras a few fresh troops had arrived from England, and Mr. Saunders, feeling that Clive must be relieved at all cost, however defenceless the state of Madras might be, despatched, on the 20th of October, a hundred Europeans and a hundred Sepoys, under Lieutenant Innis. These, after three days' marching, arrived at Trivatoor, twenty-two miles from Arcot.

Riza Sahib had heard of his approach; and sent a large body of troops, with two guns, to attack him. The contest was too unequal. Had the British force been provided with field pieces, they might have gained the day; but, after fighting with great bravery, they were forced to fall back; with a loss of twenty English and two officers killed and many more wounded, while the Sepoys suffered equally severely.

One of Clive's messengers reached Murari Reo, the Mahratta

chief of Gutti. This man was a ferocious free-booting chief, daring and brave himself, and admiring those qualities in others. Hitherto, his alliance with Muhammud Ali was little more than nominal, for he had dreaded bringing upon himself the vengeance of Chunda Sahib and the French, whose ultimate success in the strife appeared certain. Clive's march upon Arcot, and the heroic defence which the handful of men there were opposing to overwhelming numbers, excited his highest admiration. As he afterwards said, he had never before believed that the English could fight, and when Clive's messenger reached him, he at once sent back a promise of assistance.

Riza Sahib learned, almost as soon as Clive himself, that the Mahrattas were on the move. The prospects of his communications being harassed, by these daring horsemen, filled him with anxiety. Murari Reo was encamped, with six thousand men, at a spot thirty miles to the west of Arcot; and he might, at any moment, swoop down upon the besiegers. Although, therefore, Riza Sahib had for six days been at work effecting a new breach, which was now nearly open to assault, he sent on the 30th of October a flag of truce, with an offer to Clive of terms, if he would surrender Arcot.

The garrison were to be allowed to march out with their arms and baggage, while to Clive himself he offered a large sum of money. In case of refusal, he threatened to storm the fort, and put all its defenders to the sword. Clive returned a defiant refusal, and the guns again opened on the second breach.

On the 9th of November, the Mahrattas began to show themselves in the neighbourhood of the besieging army. The force under Lieutenant Innis had been reinforced, and was now under the command of Captain Kilpatrick, who had a hundred and fifty English troops, with four field guns. This was now advancing.

Four days later the new breach had attained a width of thirty yards, but Clive had prepared defences in the rear, similar to those at the other breach; and the difficulties of the besiegers would here be much greater, as the ditch was not fordable.

The fifty days which the siege had lasted had been terrible ones for the garrison. Never daring to expose themselves unnecessarily during the day, yet ever on the alert to repel an attack; labouring at night at the defences, with their numbers daily dwindling, and the prospect of an assault becoming more and more imminent, the work of the little garrison was terrible; and it is to the defences of Lucknow and Cawnpore, a hundred years later, that we must look to find a parallel, in English warfare, for their endurance and bravery.

Both Charlie Marryat and Peters had been wounded, but in neither case were the injuries severe enough to prevent their continuing on duty. Tim Kelly had his arm broken by a ball, while another bullet cut a deep seam along his cheek, and carried away a portion of his ear. With his arm in splints and a sling, and the side of his face covered with strappings and plaster, he still went about his business.

"Ah! Yer honors," he said one day to his masters; "I've often been out catching rabbits, with ferrits to drive 'em out of their holes, and sticks to knock 'em on the head, as soon as they showed themselves; and it's a divarshun I was always mightily fond of, but I never quite intered into the feelings of the rabbits. Now I understand them complately, for ain't we rabbits ourselves? The officers, saving your presence, are the ferrits who turn us out of our holes on duty; and the niggers yonder, with their muskets and their matchlocks, are the men with sticks, ready to knock us on head, directly we show ourselves. If it plase Heaven that I ever return to the ould country again, I'll niver lend a hand at rabbiting, to my dying day."

Chapter 8: The Grand Assault

The 14th of November was a Mohammedan festival, and Riza Sahib determined to utilize the enthusiasm and fanatic zeal, which such an occasion always excites among the followers of the Prophet, to make his grand assault upon Arcot, and to attack at three o'clock in the morning. Every preparation was made on the preceding day, and four strong columns told off for the assault. Two of these were to attack by the breaches, the other two at the gates. Rafts were prepared to enable the party attacking by the new breach to cross the moat, while the columns advancing against the gates were to be preceded by elephants, who, with iron plates on their foreheads, were to charge and batter down the gates.

Clive's spies brought him news of the intended assault, and at midnight he learned full particulars as to the disposition of the enemy. His force was now reduced to eighty Europeans, and a hundred and twenty Sepoys. Every man was told off to his post, and then, sentries being posted to arouse them at the approach of the enemy, the little garrison lay down in their places, to get two or three hours' sleep before the expected attack.

At three o'clock, the firing of three shells from the mortars into the fort gave the signal for assault. The men leaped up and stood to their arms, full of confidence in their ability to resist the attack. Soon the shouts of the advancing columns testified to the

equal confidence and ardour of the assailants.

Not a sound was heard within the walls of the fort, until the elephants advanced towards the gates. Then suddenly a stream of fire leaped out from loophole and battlement. So well directed and continuous was the fire, that the elephants, dismayed at the outburst of fire and noise, and smarting from innumerable wounds, turned and dashed away, trampling in their flight multitudes of men in the dense columns packed behind them. These, deprived of the means upon which they had relied to break in the gates, turned and retreated rapidly.

Scarcely less prolonged was the struggle at the breaches. At the first breach, a very strong force of the enemy marched resolutely forward. They were permitted, without a shot being fired at them, to cross the dry ditch, mount the shattered debris of the wall, and pour into the interior of the fort. Forward they advanced until, without a check, they reached the first trench bristling with spikes.

Then, as they paused for a moment, from the breastwork in front of them, from the ramparts, and every spot which commanded the trench, a storm of musketry was poured on them; while the gunners swept the crowded mass with grape, and bags of bullets. The effect was tremendous. Mowed down in heaps, the assailants recoiled; and then, without a moment's hesitation, turned and fled. Three times, strongly reinforced, they advanced to the attack; but were each time repulsed, with severe slaughter.

Still less successful were those at the other breach. A great raft, capable of carrying seventy, conveyed the head of the storming party across the ditch; and they had just reached the foot of the breach, when Clive, who was himself at this point, turned two field pieces upon them, with deadly effect. The raft was upset and smashed, and the column, deprived of its intended means of crossing the ditch, desisted from the attack.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.