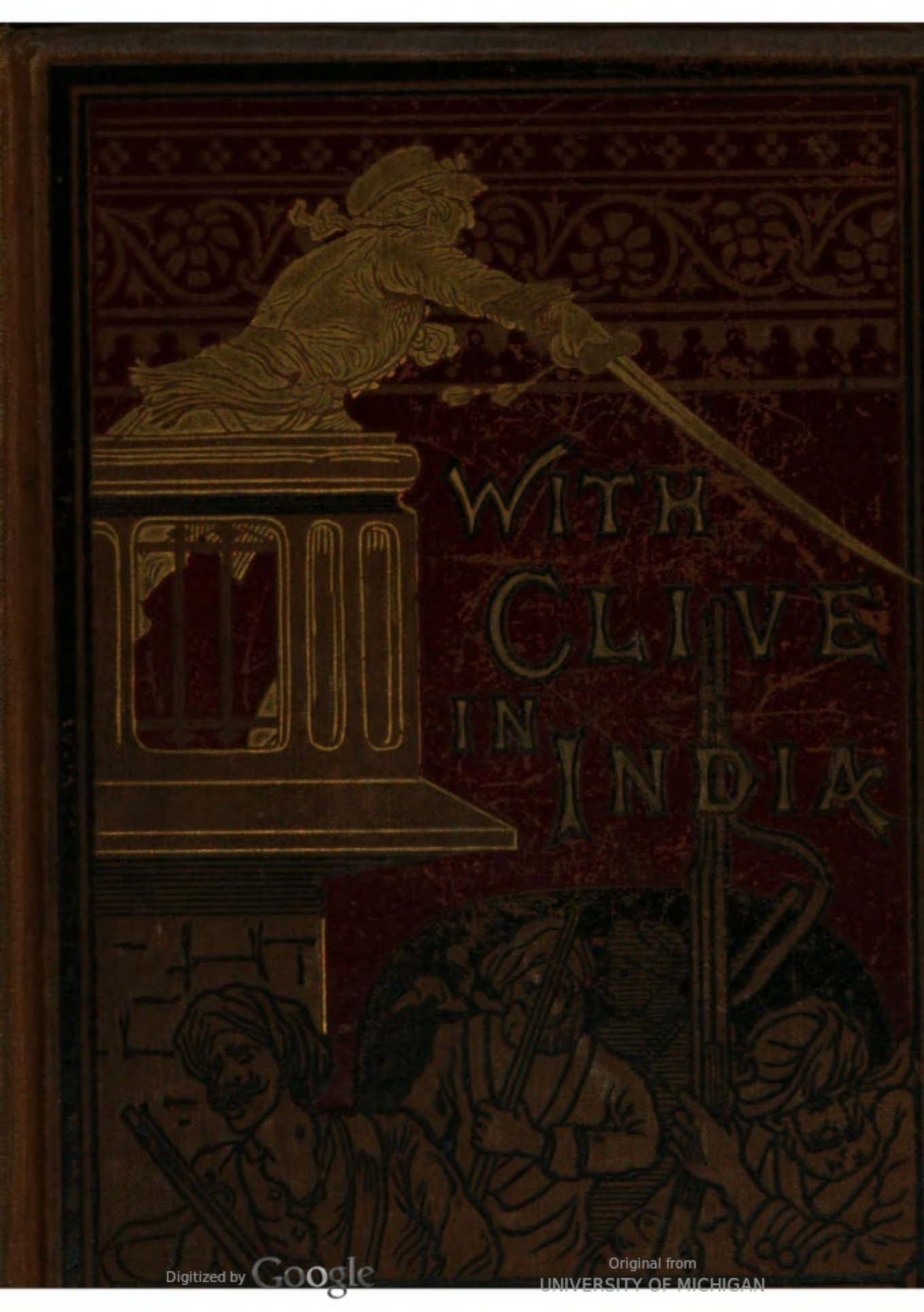

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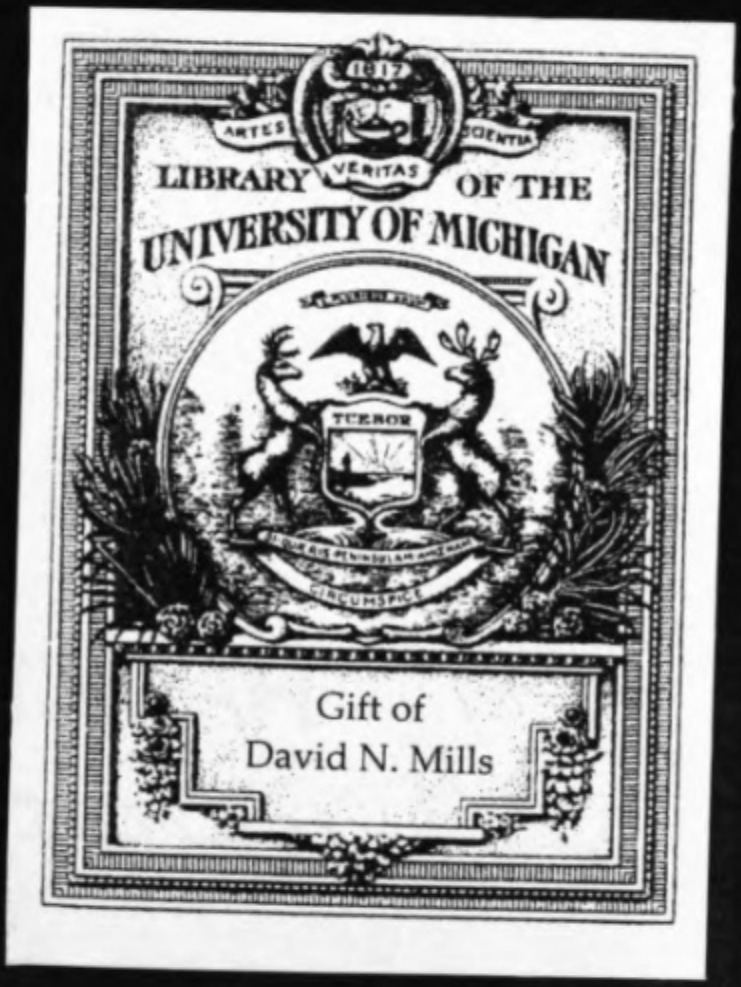

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Frontispiece. **A BRUSH WITH PRIVATEERS.**

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WITH CLIVE IN INDIA:

OR THE

BEGINNINGS OF AN EMPIRE

BY

G. A. HENTY,

Author of "Under Drake's Flag;" "Facing Death;" "Winning his Spurs;" "The Cornet of Horse;" &c. &c.]

WITH TWELVE FULL-PAGE ILLUSTRATIONS BY GORDON BROWNE.

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PREFACE.

MY DEAR LADS,—In the following pages I have endeavoured to give you 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 sequence 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 deeds of fiction could surpass them. I hope and believe then that you will follow the career of my hero, Charlie Marryat, with as much interest as you have manifested in the adventures of the many characters to whom I have hitherto introduced you.

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 words. 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.

Yours very sincerely,

G. A. HENTY.

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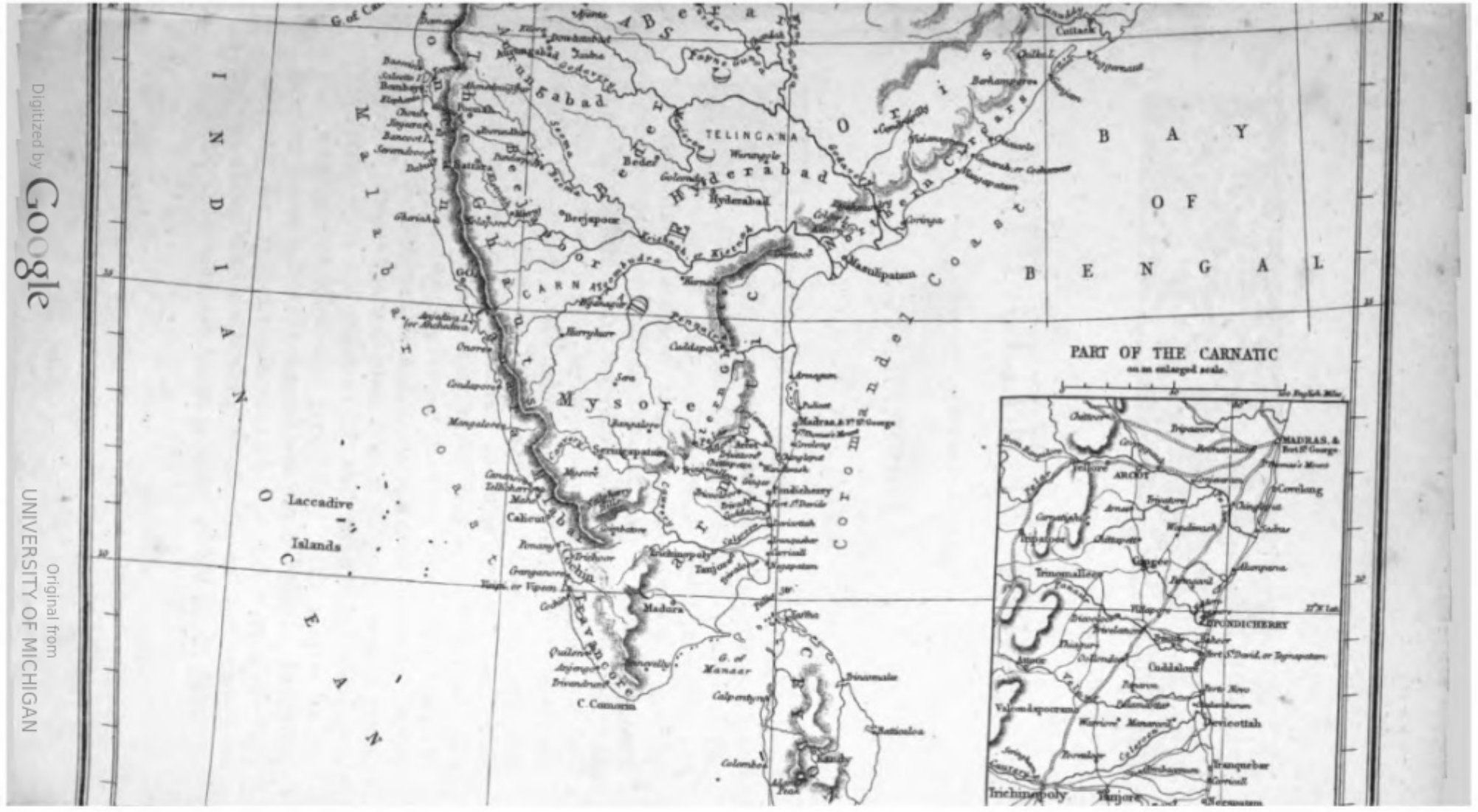

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WITH CLIVE IN INDIA.

CHAPTER I.

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 honourable 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.

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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 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

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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 Hon. 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."

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"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 every one 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 business-like, 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

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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

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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 grand-nephew," he said, holding out

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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 makes one lissom. 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 grand-nieces 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.

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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, grand-nephew?" 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 grand-nieces going tramping about the

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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 honourable 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

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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

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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 anyrate 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

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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."

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CHAPTER II.

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 turn-outs. 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 some one 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?"

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"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 grand-nieces 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 musn'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 grand-nieces, 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."

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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, grand-niece?"

"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, grand-niece, that you intend to be sarcastic. This is a hateful habit in a man, worse in a

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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 hair-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.

"To-morrow 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

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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

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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 good-bye to their friends, and all sat down to lunch, served in the

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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

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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

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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 to-morrow. 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"

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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 look-out 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."

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"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?"

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"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 to-night?"

"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

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would come down and might 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.

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CHAPTER III.

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

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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."

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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 rugged 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

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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

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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 Dr. 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 Dr. Rae, when the latter said:

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"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

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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

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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 St. 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 St. 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 longheaded and ambitious young fellow. I remember his saying to me one night

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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 St. 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 six 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 Davikota. However we shall hear about that when we get there."

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

"I think that undoubtedly sooner or later either the French or ourselves will be driven out; which it will be

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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

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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

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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 under water 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.

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CHAPTER IV.

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 water-side 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

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being some thirty yards in depth from the sea face to its foot. The male passengers were requested to divide themselves in 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

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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 them-

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selves 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 overmatched 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 ratlins.

"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

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the shore, and although the distance was too great for anything like accurate fire, several of the men dropped as they ran up the shrouds. 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

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years before. She was now painted entirely black and a snake had been added for her figure-head. 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

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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 quarter-deck, 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 officers 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

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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 guardship, 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 honour, glory, nor promotion to be won. The climate

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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 good-bye 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

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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 steerman 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 employés, 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

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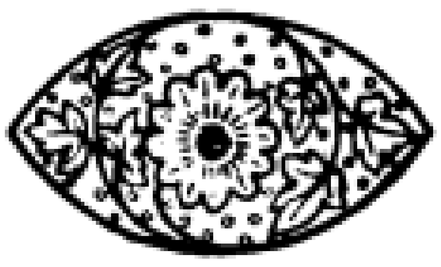
mind's eye. Instead of this they saw squalid huts, men dressed merely with a rag of cotton around them, everywhere signs of squalor and poverty. Madras, however, they were told that evening, was not to be taken as a sample of India. It was a mere collection of huts which had sprung up round the English factories. But when they went to a real Indian city they would see a very different state of things.



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CHAPTER V.

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 new-comers met for the first time those with whom they were to be associated.

All were dressed in white suits, and Charlie was struck

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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 verandah 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 big-wigs. 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."

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"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 verandah 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 verandah 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, forbad the natives to throw all their rubbish and offal on the beach, and made, in fact, a decent place of

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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 St. 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 St. 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

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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 St. 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 flag-ship, 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 St. David, and there was a great discussion among the big-wigs. 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 St. 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

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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

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CLIVE LEADING THE STORMING PARTY AT DEVIKOTA. PAGE 63.

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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; "Dr. Rae spoke to us about him during the voyage. He knew him at the siege of Fort St. 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

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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 St. 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

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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 Marattas, 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 Maratta 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

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work. The nawab was killed, and one of his sons, Maphuz Khan, taken prisoner. The other, Mahummud 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 St. David, sent at once to Chunda Sahib to acknowledge him as nawab, which, in the opinion of every one here, was a very foolish step. Mahummud 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 St. 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, how-

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ever, 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

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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 St. 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 St. 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

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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 honours. 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."

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CHAPTER VI.

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

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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 St. 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.

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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,

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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 good-night 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 St. David. In July some of the Company's ships came in with some reinforcements. There were no military officers left at Fort St. 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,

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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 St. 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 St. 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 St. 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 shirt-sleeves 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.

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Tormented by mosquitos 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 St. David!"

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

"I hope they're from St. 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 St. 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 Dr. Rae, who chatted with them as to the ships, which were now just anchoring. These had already signalled that they were from St. 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 new-comers, and conjecture was busy on shore among the civilians as to the object of bringing troops from St. David's to Madras, that is, directly away from the scene of action.

"It is one of two things," Dr. Rae said: "either Trichinopoli has surrendered and they are evacuating Fort. St. David, or they have news that the nawab is marching to attack us here. I should think it to be the latter, for Fort St. 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

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for the defence of the other, I should have thought they would have held on to St. 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. Dr. 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 Dr. 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," Dr. Rae said laughing.

"Yes, we had some tough fighting behind the ramparts of St. 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?" Dr. 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;

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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 Dr. 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?" Dr. 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

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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 to-morrow. 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 St. 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 St. 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

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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 St. 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 to-morrow, 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

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who, like yourselves, volunteered at St. David's. They are of four or five years' 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. Marryatt," 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

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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."

"Shure, 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.

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CHAPTER VII.

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

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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 eighteeen-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

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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 Dr. 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," Dr. 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 look-out here to-night."

"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

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them shy of meeting us again. Therefore it is just possible that they may be marching in this direction to-day, while Clive is going in the other, and that they may intend carrying it with a rush. I should say, to-day 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 to-day. 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."

Dr. 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 honour, 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 St. 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 honour, 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

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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 honour, 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 honour, but he's not the boy to shrink from his duty; so he comes and he takes post on the form be 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 honour, 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 honour! 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 honour,

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TIM KELLY DISCOURSING ON HORRIBLE REPTILES. PAGE 86.

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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 honour, 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 honour, 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 honours. 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 honours."

"Now, Tim, you'd better go and lie down and get a

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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. Dr. 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. Dr. 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

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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 Maratta 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 that 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

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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

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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 north-west 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

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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 anyrate 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 south-west, 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 St. 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

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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 Maratta 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 Marattas 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 Marattas began to show

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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 honours," 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.

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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."

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE GRAND ASSAULT.

THE 14th of November was a Mahommedan 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

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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.

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Among those who had fallen at the great breach was the commander of the storming party, a man of great valour. Four hundred of his followers had also been killed, and Riza Sahib, utterly disheartened at his repulse at all points, decided not to renew the attack. He had still more than twenty men to each of the defenders; but the obstinacy of their resistance and the moral effect produced by it upon his troops, the knowledge that the Maratta horse were hovering in his rear, and that Kilpatrick's little column was close at hand, determined him to raise the siege. After the repulse of the assault the heavy musketry fire from the houses around the fort was continued. At two in the afternoon he asked for two hours' truce to bury the dead. This was granted, and on its conclusion the musketry fire was resumed and continued until two in the morning. Then suddenly it ceased. Under cover of the fire Riza Sahib had raised the siege and retired with his army to Vellore.

On the morning of the 15th Clive discovered that the enemy had disappeared. The joy of the garrison was immense. Every man felt proud and happy in the thought that he had taken his share in a siege which would not only be memorable in English history till the end of time, but which had literally saved India to us. The little band made the fort re-echo with their cheers when the news came in. Caps were thrown high in the air, and the men indulged in every demonstration of delight. Clive was not a man to lose time. The men were at once formed up and marched into the abandoned camp of the enemy, where they found four guns, four mortars, and a great quantity of ammunition. A cloud of dust was seen approaching, and soon a mounted officer riding forward announced the arrival of Captain Kilpatrick's detachment.

Not a moment was lost, for Clive felt the importance of at once following up the blow inflicted by the repulse of the enemy. Three days were spent in con-

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tinuous labour in putting the fort of Arcot again in a position of defence; and leaving Kilpatrick in charge there, he marched out with two hundred Europeans, seven hundred Sepoys, and three guns, and attacked and took Timari, the little fort which before baffled him. This done he returned towards Arcot to await the arrival of a thousand Maratta horse which Murari Reo had promised him. When these arrived, however, they proved unwilling to accompany him. Upon their way they had fallen in with a portion of Riza Sahib's retreating force and had been worsted in the attack; and as the chance of plunder seemed small while the prospect of hard blows was certain, the freebooting horsemen refused absolutely to join in the pursuit of the retreating enemy. Just at this moment the news came in that reinforcements from Pondicherry were marching to meet Riza Sahib at Arni, a place seventeen miles south of Arcot, twenty south of Vellore. It was stated that with these reinforcements a large sum of money was being brought for the use of Riza Sahib's army. When the Marattas heard the news, the chance of booty at once altered their intentions, and they declared themselves ready to follow Clive. The greater portion of them, however, had dispersed plundering over the country, and great delay was caused before they could be collected. When six hundred of them had been brought together Clive determined to wait no longer, but started at once for Arni.

The delay enabled Riza Sahib, marching down from Vellore, to meet his reinforcements, and when Clive, after a forced march of twenty miles, approached Arni, he found the enemy, composed of three hundred French troops, two thousand five hundred Sepoys, and two thousand horsemen, with four guns, drawn up before it. Seeing their immense superiority in numbers these advanced to the attack.

Clive determined to await them where he stood. The position was an advantageous one. He occupied a space

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of open ground some three hundred yards in width. On his right flank was a village. On the left a grove of palm-trees. In front of the ground he occupied were rice fields, which, it being the wet season, were very swampy and altogether impracticable for guns. These fields were crossed by a causeway which led to the village, but as it ran at an angle across them, those advancing upon it were exposed to the fire of the English front. Clive posted the Sepoys in the village, the Maratta horsemen in the grove, and the two hundred English with the guns on the ground between them. The enemy advanced at once. His native cavalry with some infantry marched against the grove, while the French troops with about fifteen hundred infantry moved along the causeway against the village.

The fight began on the English left. There the Maratta cavalry fought bravely. Issuing from the palm grove they made repeated charges against the greatly superior forces of the enemy. But numbers told, and the Marattas, fighting fiercely, were driven back into the palm grove, where they with difficulty maintained themselves. In the meantime the fight was going on at the centre. Clive opened fire with his guns on the long column marching almost across his front to attack the village. The enemy, finding themselves exposed to a fire which they were powerless to answer, quitted the causeway, and formed up in the rice fields fronting the English position. The guns, protected only by a few Frenchmen and natives, remained on the causeway. Clive now despatched two of his guns and fifty English to aid the hard-pressed Marattas in the grove, and fifty others to the village with orders to join the Sepoys there, to dash forward on to the causeway and charge the enemy's guns.

As the column issued from the village along the causeway at a rapid pace the French limbered up their guns and retired at a gallop. The infantry, dispirited at their disappearance, fell back across the rice fields, an example

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which their horsemen on their right, already dispirited by the loss which they were suffering from the newly arrived English musketry and the discharges of the field-pieces, followed without delay. Clive at once ordered a pursuit. The Marattas were despatched after the enemy's cavalry, while he himself with his infantry advanced across the causeway and pressed upon the main body. Three times the enemy made a stand, but each time failed to resist the impetuosity of the pursuers, and the night alone put a stop to the pursuit, by which time the enemy were completely routed.

The material loss had not been heavy, for but fifty French and a hundred and fifty natives were killed or wounded; but the army was broken up, the *morale* of the enemy completely destroyed, and it was proved to all Southern India, which was anxiously watching the struggle, that the English were in the field of battle superior to their European rivals. This assurance alone had an immense effect. It confirmed in their alliance with the English many of the chiefs whose friendship had hitherto been lukewarm, and brought over many waverers to our side. In the fight eight Sepoys and fifty of the Maratta cavalry were killed or disabled, the English did not lose a single man. Many of Riza Sahib's soldiers came in during the next few days and enlisted in the British force. The Marattas captured the treasure the prospect of which had induced them to join in the fight, and the governor of Arni agreed to hold the town for Muhammud Ali. Clive moved on at once to Conjeveram, where thirty French troops and three hundred Sepoys occupied the temple, a very strong building. Clive brought up two eighteen-pounders from Madras and pounded the walls, and the enemy seeing that the place must fall, evacuated it in the night and retired to Pondicherry. North Arcot being now completely in the power of the English, Clive returned to Madras, and then sailed to Fort St. David to concert measures with Mr. Saunders

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for the relief of Trichinopoli. This place still held out, thanks rather to the feebleness and indecision of Colonel Law, who commanded the besiegers, than to any effort on the part of the defenders.

Governor Dupleix, at Pondicherry, had seen with surprise the result of Clive's dash upon Arcot. He had, however, perceived that the operations there were wholly secondary, and that Trichinopoli was still the all-important point. The fall of that place would more than neutralize Clive's successes at Arcot, and he, therefore, did not suffer Clive's operations to distract his attention here. Strong reinforcements and a battering train were sent forward to the besiegers, and by repeated messages he endeavoured to impress upon Law and Chunda Sahib the necessity of pressing forward the capture of Trichinopoli. But Dupleix was unfortunate in his instruments. Law was always hesitating and doubting. Chunda Sahib, although clever to plan, was weak in action, indecisive at moments when it was most necessary that he should be firm. So then, in spite of the entreaties of Dupleix, he had detached a considerable force to besiege Clive. Dupleix seeing this, and hoping that Clive might be detained at Arcot long enough to allow of the siege of Trichinopoli being brought to a conclusion, had sent the three hundred French soldiers to strengthen the force of Riza Sahib. He had still an overpowering force at Trichinopoli, Law having nine hundred trained French soldiers, a park of fifty guns, two thousand Sepoys, and the army of Chunda Sahib twenty thousand strong. Inside Trichinopoli were a few English soldiers under Captain Cope and a small body of troops of Muhammud Ali; while outside the walls, between them and the besiegers, was the English force under Gingen, the men utterly dispirited, the officer without talent, resolution, or confidence.

Before leaving the troops with which he had won the battle of Arni, Clive had expressed to the two young

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writers his high appreciation of their conduct during the siege of Arcot, and promised them that he would make it a personal request to the authorities at Fort St. David that they might be permanently transferred from the civil to the military branch of the service; and such a request made by him was certain to be complied with. He strongly advised them to spend every available moment of their time in the study of the native language, as without that they would be useless if appointed to command a body of Sepoys. Delighted at the prospect now open to them of a permanent relief from the drudgery of a clerk's life in Madras, the young fellows were in the highest spirits; and Tim Kelly was scarcely less pleased when he heard that Charlie was now likely to be always employed with him. The boys lost not a moment in sending down to Madras to engage the services of a native "moonshee" or teacher. They wrote to their friend Johnson asking him to arrange terms with the man who understood most English, and to engage him to remain with them some time.

A few days later Tim Kelly came in. "Plase, yer honours, there's a little shrivelled atomy of a man outside as wants to spake wid ye. He looks for all the world like a monkey wrapped up in white clothes, but he spakes English after a fashion, and has brought this letter for you. The cratur scarce looks like a human being, and I misdoubt me whether you had better let him in."

"Nonsense, Tim," Charlie said, opening the letter; "it's the moonshee we are expecting from Madras. He has come to teach us the native language."

"Moonshine, is it! by jabers, and it's a mighty poor compliment to the moon to call him so. And is it the language you're going to larn now Shure, Mr. Charles, I wouldn't demane myself by larning the lingo of these black hathens. Isn't for them to larn the English, and mighty pleased they ought to be to get themselves to spake like Christians."

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"But who's going to teach them, Tim?"

"Oh, they larn fast enough," said Tim. "You've only got to point to a bottle of water, or to the fire, or whatever else you want, and swear at them, and they understand directly. I've tried it myself over and over again."

"There, Tim, it's no use standing talking any longer; bring in the moonshee." From that moment the little man had his permanent post in a corner of the boys' room, and when they were not on duty they were constantly engaged in studying the language, writing down the names of every object they came across and getting it by heart, and learning every sentence, question, and answer which occurred to them as likely to be useful. As for Tim, he quite lost patience at this devotion to study on the part of his master, who, he declared to his comrades, went on just as if he intended to become a nigger and a hathen himself. "It's just awful to hear him, Corporal M'Bean, jabbering away in that foreign talk with that little black monkey moonshine. The little cratur atwisting his shrivelled fingers about, that looks as if the bones were coming through the skin. I wonder what the good father at Blarney, where I come from, you know, corporal, would say to sich goings-on. Faith, then, and if he were here, I'd buy a bottle of holy water and sprinkle it over the little hathen. I suspict he'd fly straight up the chimney when it touched him."

"My opinion of you, Tim Kelly," the corporal, who was a grave Scotchman, said, "is that you're just a fule. Your master is a brave young gentleman, and is a deal more sensible than most of them, who spend all their time in drinking wine and playing cards. A knowledge of the language is most useful. What would you do yourself if you were to marry a native woman and couldn't speak to her afterwards."

"The saints defind us!" Tim exclaimed; "and what put such an idea in yer head, corporal? It's naythe

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more nor less than an insult to suppose that I, a dacent boy, and brought up under the teaching of Father O'Shea, should marry a hathen black woman; and if you weren't my suparior officer, corporal, I'd tach ye better manners." Fortunately at this moment Charlie's voice was heard shouting for his servant, and Tim was therefore saved from the breach of the peace which his indignation showed that he meditated.

December passed quietly, and then in January, 1752, an insurrection planned by Dupleix broke out. The governor of Pondicherry had been suffering keenly from disappointments, which, as time went on, and his entreaties and commands to Law to attack Trichinopoli were answered only by excuses and reasons for delay, grew to despair, and he resolved upon making another effort to occupy the attention of the man in whom he already recognized a great rival, and to prevent his taking steps for the relief of Trichinopoli. Law had over and over again assured him that in the course of a very few weeks that place would be driven by famine to surrender; and, as soon as Clive arrived at Fort St. David, Dupleix set about taking steps which would again necessitate his return to the north, and so give to Law the time which he asked for. Supplies of money were sent to Riza Sahib together with four hundred French soldiers. These marched suddenly upon Punemalli and captured it, seized again the fortified temple of Conjeveram, and from this point threatened both Madras and Arcot.

Had this force possessed an active and determined commander, it could undoubtedly have carried out Dupleix's instructions, captured Madras, and inflicted a terrible blow upon the English. Fortunately it had no such head. It marched indeed against Madras, plundered and burnt the factories, levied contributions, and obtained possession of everything but the fort, where the civilians and the few men who constituted the garrison daily expected to be attacked, in which case the place must have fallen. This,

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however, the enemy never even attempted, contenting themselves with ravaging the place outside the walls of the fort. The little garrison of Arcot, two hundred men in all, were astonished at the news that the province which they had thought completely conquered was again in flames, that the road to Madras was cut by the occupation of Conjeveram by the French, and that Madras itself was, save the fort, in the hands of the enemy. The fort itself, they knew, might easily be taken, as they were aware that it was defended by only eighty men.

The change in the position was at once manifest in the altered attitude of the fickle population. The main body of the inhabitants of Southern India were Hindoos, who had for centuries been ruled by foreign masters. The Mahommedans from the north had been their conquerors, and the countless wars which had taken place, to them signified merely whether one family or another were to reign over them. The sole desire was for peace and protection, and they, therefore, ever inclined towards the side which seemed strongest. Their sympathies were no stronger with their Mahommedan rulers than with the French or English, and they only hoped that whatever power was strongest might conquer; and that after the hostilities were over their daily work might be conducted in peace, and their property and possessions be enjoyed in security. The capture and defence of Arcot, and the battle of Arni, had brought them to regard the English as their final victors; and the signs of deep and even servile respect which greeted the conquerors wherever they went, and which absolutely disgusted Charlie Marryat and his friend, were really sincere marks of the welcome to masters who seemed able and willing to maintain their rule over them. With the news of the successes of Riza Sahib all this changed. The natives no longer bent to the ground as the English passed them in the streets. The country people who had flocked in with their products to the markets absented themselves altogether, and the whole

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population prepared to welcome the French as their new masters.

In the fort the utmost vigilance was observed. The garrison laboured to mend the breaches and complete the preparations for defence. Provisions were again stored up, and they awaited anxiously news from Clive. That enterprising officer was at Fort St. David, busy in making his preparations for a decisive campaign against the enemy round Trichinopoli, when the news of the rising reached him. He was expecting a considerable number of fresh troops from England, as it was in January that the majority of the reinforcements despatched by the Company arrived in India, and Mr. Saunders had written to Calcutta begging that a hundred men might be sent thence. These were now, with the eighty men at Madras, and the two hundred at Arcot, all the force that could be at his disposal, for at Fort St. David there was not a single available man. With all the efforts that Clive, aided by the authorities, could make, it was not until the middle of February that he had completed his arrangements. On the 9th the hundred men arrived from Bengal, and, without the loss of a day, Clive started from Madras to form a junction with the garrison from Arcot, who, leaving only a small force to hold the fort, had moved down to meet him.

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CHAPTER IX.

THE BATTLE OF KAVARIPAK.

THE troops from Arcot had already moved some distance on their way to Madras, and Clive, therefore, with the new levies, joined them on the day after his leaving Madras. The French and Riza Sahib let slip the opportunity of attacking these bodies before they united. They were well aware of their movements, and had resolved upon tactics, calculated in the first place to puzzle the English commander, to wear out his troops, and to enable them finally to surprise and take him entirely at a disadvantage. The junction with the Arcot garrison raised the force under Clive's orders to three hundred and eighty English, thirteen hundred Sepoys, and six field-guns, while the enemy at Vendalur, a place twenty-five miles south of Madras, where they had a fortified camp, had four hundred French troops, two thousand Sepoys, two thousand five hundred cavalry, and twelve guns. Hoping to surprise them there Clive marched all night. When the force approached the town they heard that the enemy had disappeared, and that they had started apparently in several directions.

The force was halted for a few hours, and then the news was obtained that the enemy had united their forces at Conjeveram, and that they had marched away from that place in a westerly direction. Doubting not that they

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were about to attack Arcot, which, weakened by the departure of the greater portion of its garrison, would be in no position to defend itself against a sudden *coup de main* by a strong force, Clive set his troops again in motion. The French, indeed, had already bribed some of the native soldiers within the fort, who were to reply to a signal made without if they were in a position to open the gates. However, by good fortune their treachery had been discovered, and when the French arrived they received no reply to their signal; and as Arcot would be sure to fall if they defeated Clive, they marched away without attacking it, to take up the position which they had agreed upon beforehand. It was at nine in the evening that Clive at Vendalur obtained intelligence that the enemy had assembled at Conjeveram. The troops had already marched twenty-five miles, but they had had a rest of five hours, and Clive started with them at once, and reached Conjeveram, twenty miles distant, at four in the morning. Finding that the enemy had again disappeared he ordered the troops to halt for a few hours. They had already marched forty-five miles in twenty-four hours, a great feat when it is remembered that only the Arcot garrison were in any way accustomed to fatigue, the others being newly raised levies. The greater portion of the Sepoys had been enlisted within the fortnight preceding.

"I don't know, Mr. Marryat, whether the French call this fighting; I call it playing hide and seek," Tim Kelly said. "Shure we've bin marching with only a halt of two or three hours since yisterday morning, and my poor feet are that sore that I daren't take my boots off me, for I'm shure I'd never git 'em on agin. If the French want to fight us why don't they do it square and honest, not be racing and chasing about like a lot of wild sheep."

"Have you seen the moonshee, Tim? He is with the baggage."

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"Shure and I saw him," Tim said. "The cart come in just now, and there was he perched up on the top of it like a dried monkey. You don't want him to-night, shure, yer honour."

"Oh no, I don't want him, Tim. You'd better go now, and get to sleep at once if you can, we may be off again at any minute."

Arcot is twenty-seven miles from Conjeveram. Clive felt certain that the enemy had gone on to that place, but, anxious as he was for its safety, it was absolutely necessary that the troops should have a rest before starting on such a march. They were, therefore, allowed to rest until twelve o'clock, when, refreshed by their eight hours' halt and breakfast, they started upon their long march towards Arcot, making sure that they should not find the enemy until they reached that place. Had Clive possessed a body of cavalry, however small, he would have been able to scour the country, and to make himself acquainted with the real position of the French. Cavalry are to a general what eyes are to a man, and without these he is liable to tumble into a pit-fall. Such was the case on the present occasion. Having no doubt that the enemy were engaged in attacking Arcot the troops were plodding along carelessly and in loose order, when, to their astonishment, after a sixteen-mile march, as they approached the town of Kavaripak just as the sun was setting, a fire of artillery opened upon them from a grove upon the right of the road but two hundred and fifty yards distant. Nothing is more confusing than a surprise of this kind, especially to young troops, and when no enemy is thought to be near.

The French general's plans had been well laid. He had reached Kavaripak that morning, and allowed his troops to rest all day, and he expected to obtain an easy victory over the tired men who would, unsuspicious of danger, be pressing on to the relief of Arcot. So far his

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calculations had been correct, and the English marched unsuspiciously into the trap laid for them. The twelve French guns were placed in a grove, round whose sides, facing the point from which Clive was approaching, ran a deep ditch with a high bank forming a regular battery. A body of French infantry were placed in support of the guns, with some Sepoys in reserve behind the grove. Parallel with the road on the left ran a deep water-course, now empty, and in this the rest of the infantry were stationed, at a point near the town of Kavaripak, and about a quarter of a mile further back than the grove. On either side of this water-course the enemy had placed his powerful cavalry force.

For a moment when the guns opened there was confusion and panic among the British troops. Clive, however, ever cool and confident in danger, and well seconded by his officers, rallied them at once. The position was one of extreme danger. It was possible, indeed, to retreat, but in the face of an enemy superior in infantry and guns, and possessing so powerful a body of cavalry, the operation would have been a very dangerous one. Even if accomplished it would entail an immense loss of *morale* and prestige to his troops. Hitherto under his leading they had been always successful, and a belief in his own superiority adds immensely to the fighting power of a soldier. Even should the remnant of the force fight its way back to Madras the campaign would have been a lost one, and all hope of saving Trichinopoli would have been at an end.

"Steady, lads, steady," he shouted. "Form up quietly and steadily. We have beaten the enemy before, you know, and we will do so again."

While the troops, in spite of the artillery fire, fell into line, Clive rapidly surveyed the ground. He saw the enemy's infantry advancing up the water-course, and so sheltered by it as to be out of the fire of his troops. He saw their cavalry sweeping down on the other side of the

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water-course, menacing his left and threatening his baggage. The guns were at once brought up from the rear, but before these arrived the men were falling fast. Three of the guns he placed to answer the French battery, two of them he hurried to his left with a small body of English and two hundred Sepoys, to check the advance of the enemy's cavalry. The main body of his infantry he ordered into the water-course, which afforded them a shelter from the enemy's artillery. The baggage carts and baggage he sent half a mile to the rear, under the protection of forty Sepoys and a gun. While this was being done the enemy's fire was continuing, but his infantry advanced but slowly, and had not reached a point abreast of the grove when the British force in the water-course met them. It would not seem to be a very important matter at what point in the water-course the infantry of the two opposing parties came into collision, but matters apparently trifling in themselves often decide the fate of battles; and, in fact, had the French artillery retained their fire until their infantry were abreast of the grove, the battle of Kavaripak would have been won by them, and the British power in Southern India would have been destroyed. Clive moved confidently and resolutely among his men, keeping up their courage by cheerful words, and he was well seconded by his officers.

"Now, lads," Charlie Marryat cried to the company of which he was in command, "stick to it. You ought to be very thankful to the French for saving you the trouble of having to march another twelve miles before giving you an opportunity of thrashing them."

The men laughed and redoubled their fire on the French infantry, who were facing them in the water-course at a distance of eighty yards. Neither party liked to charge. The French commander knew that he had only to hold his position to win the day. His guns were mowing down the English artillery-men. The English party on the left of the water-course with diffi-

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culty held their own against the charges of his horsemen, and were rapidly dwindling away under the artillery fire, while other bodies of his cavalry had surrounded the baggage, and were attacking the little force told off to guard it. He knew, too, that any attempt the English might make to attack the battery, with its strong defences, must inevitably fail.

The situation was becoming desperate. It was now ten o'clock; the fight had gone on for four hours. No advantage had been gained, the men were losing confidence, and the position grew more and more desperate. Clive saw that there was but one chance of victory. The grove could not be carried in the front, but it was just possible that it might be open in the rear. Choosing a sergeant who spoke the native language well, he bade him leave the party in the water-course and make his way round to the rear of the grove, and discover whether it was strongly guarded there or not. In twenty minutes the sergeant returned with the news that there was no strong force there.

Clive at once took two hundred of his English infantry, the men who had fought at Arcot, and quietly left the water-course and made his way round towards the rear of the grove. Before he had gone far the main body in the water-course, surprised at the sudden withdrawal of the greater portion of the English force and missing the presence of Clive himself, began to lose heart. They no longer replied energetically to the fire of the French infantry. A movement of retreat began, the fire ceased, and in a minute or two they would have broken in flight. At this moment Clive returned. As he moved forward he had marked the dying away of the English fire, and guessing what had happened, had given over the command of the column to Lieutenant Keene, the senior officer, and hurried back to the water-course. He arrived there just as the troops had commenced to run away. Throwing himself among them, with shouts and exhor-

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tations, he succeeded in arresting their flight, and by assurances that the battle was as good as won elsewhere, and that they had only to hold their ground for a few minutes longer to ensure victory, he got them to advance to their former position and to reopen fire on the French, who had, fortunately, remained inactive instead of advancing and taking advantage of the cessation of the English fire.

In the meantime Lieutenant Keene led his detachment, making a long circuit, to a point three hundred yards immediately behind the grove. He then sent forward one of his officers, Ensign Symmonds, who spoke French perfectly, to reconnoitre the grove. Symmonds had proceeded but a little way when he came upon a large number of French Sepoys, who were covering the rear of the grove, but who, as their services were not required, were sheltering themselves there from the random bullets which were flying about. They at once challenged, but Symmonds answering them in French, they being unable to see his uniform in the darkness, and supposing him to be a French officer, allowed him to advance. He passed boldly forward into the grove. He proceeded nearly through it, until he came within sight of the guns, which were still keeping up their fire upon those of the English, while a hundred French infantry, who were in support, were all occupied in watching what was going on in front of them.

Symmonds returned to the detachment by a path to the right of that by which he had entered, and passed out without seeing a soul. Lieutenant Keene gave the word to advance, and, following the guidance of Mr. Symmonds, entered the grove. He advanced unobserved until within thirty yards of the enemy. Here he halted and poured a volley into them. The effect was instantaneous. Many of the French fell, and the rest, astounded at this sudden and unexpected attack, left their guns and fled. Sixty of them rushed for shelter into a building

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at the end of the grove, where the English surrounded them and forced them to surrender.

By this sudden stroke the battle of Kavaripak was won. The sound of the musketry fire and the immediate cessation of that of the enemy's guns, told Clive that the grove was captured. A few minutes later fugitives arriving from the grove informed the commander of the enemy's main body of infantry of the misfortune which had befallen them. The French fire at once ceased and the troops withdrew. In the darkness it was impossible for Clive to attempt a pursuit. He was in ignorance of the direction the enemy had taken; his troops had already marched sixty miles in two days, and he would, moreover, have been exposed to sudden dashes of the enemy's cavalry. Clive, therefore, united his troops, joined his baggage, which the little guard had gallantly defended against the attacks of the enemy's cavalry, and waited for morning. At daybreak not an enemy was to be seen. Fifty Frenchmen lay dead on the field and sixty were captives. Three hundred French Sepoys had fallen. There were, besides, many wounded. The enemy's artillery had been all captured. The British loss was forty English and thirty Sepoys killed, and a great number of both wounded.

The moral effect of the victory was immense. It was the first time that French and English soldiers had fought in the field against each other in India. The French had proved to the natives that they were enormously their superiors in fighting power. Hitherto the English had not done so. The defence of Arcot had proved that they could fight behind walls, but the natives had themselves many examples of gallant defences of this kind. The English troops under Gingen and Cope had suffered themselves to be cooped up in Trichinopoli and had not struck a blow in its defence. At Kavaripak the natives discovered that the English could fight as well, or better than the French. The latter were somewhat stronger

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numerically than their rivals; they had double the force of artillery, were half as strong again in Sepoys, and had two thousand five hundred cavalry, while the English had not a single horseman. They had all the advantages of surprise and position, and yet they had been entirely defeated.

Thenceforth the natives of India regarded the English as a people to be feared and respected, and for the first time considered their ultimate triumph over the French to be a possibility. As the policy of the native princes had ever been to side with the strongest, the advantage thus gained to the English cause by the victory of Kavaripak was enormous.

On the following day the English took possession of the fort of Kavaripak and marched to Arcot. Scarcely had they arrived there when Clive received a despatch from Fort St. David, ordering him to return there at once with all his troops, to march to the relief of Trichinopoli, where the garrison was reported to be in the sorest straits from want of provisions. The force reached Fort St. David on the 11th of March. Here preparations were hurried forward for the advance to Trichinopoli, and in three days Clive was ready to start. Just as he was about to set out a ship arrived from England, having on board some more troops, together with Major Lawrence and several officers, some of whom were captains senior to Clive. Major Lawrence, who had already proved his capacity and energy, of course took command of the expedition, and treated Clive, who had served under him at the siege of Pondicherry, and whose successes in the field had attracted his high admiration, as second in command, somewhat to the discontent of the officers senior to him in rank.

The force consisted of four hundred Europeans, eleven hundred Sepoys, and eight guns, and escorted a large train of provisions and stores. During these months which the diversion, caused by the attack of Riza Sahib

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and the French upon Madras, had given to the besiegers of Trichinopoli, they should have long since captured the town. In spite of all the orders of Dupleix, Law could not bring himself to attack the town, and the French governor of Pondicherry saw with dismay that the two months and a half which his efforts and energy had gained for the besiegers had been entirely wasted, and that it was probable the whole fruits of his labours would be thrown away. He now directed Law to leave only a small force in front of Trichinopoli, and to march with the whole of his army, and that of Chunda Sahib, and crush the force advancing under Lawrence to the relief of Trichinopoli. Law, however, disobeyed orders, and, indeed, acted in direct contradiction to them. He maintained six hundred French troops and many thousands of native before Trichinopoli, and sent but two hundred and fifty French, and about three hundred and fifty natives—a force altogether inferior in numbers to that which it was sent to oppose—to arrest the progress of Lawrence's advancing column

The position which this French force was directed to occupy was the fort of Koiladi, an admirable position. As the two branches of the Kavari were here but half a mile apart, had Law concentrated all his force here he could, no doubt, have successfully opposed the English. Lawrence, however, when the guns of the fort opened upon him, replied to them by the fire of his artillery, and as the French force was insufficient to enable its commander to fight him in the open, he was enabled to take his troops and convoy in safety past the fort. When Law heard this he marched out and took his position round a lofty and almost inaccessible rock called Elmiseram, and prepared to give battle. Lawrence, however, after passing Koiladi, had been joined by a hundred English and fifty dragoons from Trichinopoli. These acted as guides, and led him by a route by which he avoided the French position, and effected a junction with

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two hundred Europeans and four hundred Sepoys from Trichinopoli, and with a body of Maratta cavalry under Murari Reo. Law having failed to attack the English force upon its march, now, when its strength was nearly doubled, suddenly decided to give battle, and advanced against the force which, wearied with its long march, had just begun to prepare their breakfast. The French artillery at once put the Maratta cavalry to flight.

Lawrence called the men again under arms, and sent Clive forward to reconnoitre. He found the French infantry drawn up with twenty-two guns, with large bodies of cavalry on either flank. Opposite to the centre of their position was a large caravansary, or native inn, with stone buildings attached. It was nearer to their position than to that occupied by the English, and Clive saw at once that if seized and held by the enemy's artillery, it would sweep the whole ground over which the English would have to advance. He galloped back at full speed to Major Lawrence, and asked leave at once to occupy the building. Obtaining permission he advanced with all speed to the caravansary with some guns and infantry.

The negligence of the French in allowing this movement to be carried out was fatal to them. The English artillery opened upon them from the cover of the inn and buildings, and to this fire the French in the open could reply only at a great disadvantage. After a cannonade lasting half an hour, the French, having lost forty European and three hundred native soldiers, fell back, the English having lost only twenty-one. Disheartened at this result, utterly disappointed at the failure which had attended his long operations against Trichinopoli, without energy or decision, Law at once raised the siege of the town, abandoning a great portion of his baggage, and destroying great stores of ammunition and supplies, crossed an arm of the Kavari and took post in the great fortified temple of Seringam.

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THE BAZAARS OF TRICHINOPOLI. PAGE 119.

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The delight of the troops so long besieged in Trichinopoli, inactive, dispirited, and hopeless, was extreme, and the exultation of Muhammud Ali and his native allies was no less.

Captain Cope, towards the end of the siege, had been killed in one of the little skirmishes which occasionally took place with the French.

Charlie Marryat and Peters had, owing to some of the officers senior to them being killed or invalided, and to large numbers of fresh recruits being raised, received a step in rank. They were now lieutenants, and each commanded a body of Sepoys two hundred strong. At Charlie's request Tim Kelly was detached from his company and allowed to remain with him as soldier servant. After the retreat of the French and the settling down of the English force in the lines they had occupied, Charlie and his friend entered Trichinopoli, and were surprised at the temples and palaces there. Although very inferior to Tanjore, and in no way even comparable to the cities of the north-west of India, Trichinopoli was a far more important city than any they had hitherto seen. They ascended the lofty rock and visited the fort on its summit, which looked as if, in the hands of a resolute garrison, it should be impregnable to attack. The manner in which this rock, as well as that of Elmiseram and others lying in sight, rose sheer up from the plain, filled them with surprise; for although these natural rock fortresses are common enough in India, they are almost without an example in Europe. After visiting the fort they rambled through the town, and were amused at the scene of bustle in its streets and at the gay shops, full of articles new and curious to them, in the bazaars.

"They are wonderfully clever and ingenious," Charlie said. "Look what rough tools that man is working with, and what delicate and intricate work he is turning out. If these fellows could but fight as well as they work, and were but united among themselves, not only

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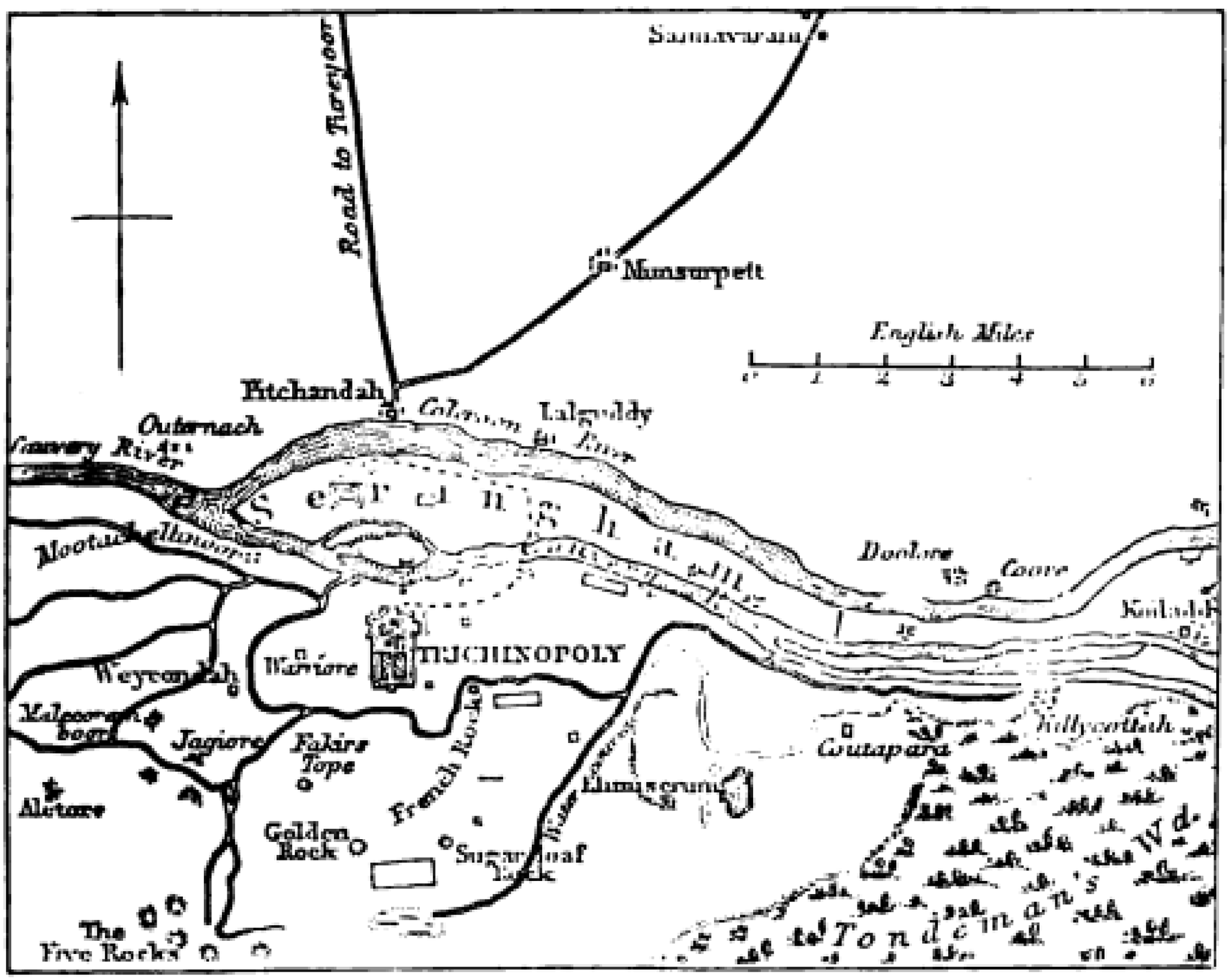
should we be unable to set a foot in India, but the emperor, with the enormous armies which he would be able to raise, would be able to threaten Europe. I suppose they never have been really good fighting men. Alexander, a couple of thousand years ago, defeated them, and since then the Afghans and other northern peoples have been always overrunning and conquering them. I can't make it out. These Sepoys, after only a few weeks' training, fight almost as well as our own men. I wonder how it is that, when commanded by their own countrymen, they are able to make so poor a fight of it. We had better be going back to camp again, Peters, at any moment there may be orders for us to do something. With Major Lawrence and Clive together we are not likely to stop here long inactive."



THE ENVIRONS OF TRICHINOPOLI, to illustrate the Military Operations of 1751–1753.

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CHAPTER X.

THE FALL OF SERINGAM.

ALTHOUGH called an island, Seringam is in fact a long narrow tongue of land running between the two branches of the river Kavari. In some places these arms are but a few hundred yards apart, and the island can therefore be defended against an attack along the land. But the retreat of the French by this line was equally difficult, as we held the narrowest part of the neck, two miles from Koiladi. Upon the south our forces at Trichinopoli faced the French across the river. Upon the other side of the Kolrun, as the northern arm of the Kavari is called, the French could cross the river and make their retreat, if necessary, in any direction. The two principal roads, however, led from Paichandah, a strong fortified position on the bank of the river, facing the temple of Seringam. Clive saw that a force crossing the river, and taking up its position on the north, would entirely cut off Law's army in the island, would intercept any reinforcements sent by Dupleix to its rescue, and might compel the surrender of the whole French army. The attempt would, of course, be a dangerous one. The French force was considerably stronger than the English, and were the latter divided into two portions, entirely cut off from each other, the central point between them being occupied by the French, the latter would have an opportunity of throwing his whole force

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upon one after the other. This danger would have been so great that, had the French been commanded by an able and active officer, the attempt would never have been made. Law, however, had shown amply that he had neither energy nor intelligence, and Major Lawrence therefore accepted Clive's proposal.

But to be successful it was necessary that both portions of the English force should be well commanded. Major Lawrence felt confident in his own capacity to withstand Law upon the southern bank, and in case of necessity he could fall back under the guns of Trichinopoli. He felt sure that he could, with equal certainty, confide the command of the other party to Captain Clive. There was, however, the difficulty that he was the junior captain present, and that already great jealousy had been excited among his seniors by the rank which he occupied in the councils of Lawrence. Fortunately the difficulty was settled by the native allies. Major Lawrence laid his plans before Muhammud Ali and his allies, whose co-operation and assistance were absolutely necessary. These, after hearing the proposal, agreed to give their assistance, but only upon the condition that Clive should be placed in command of the expeditionary party. They had already seen the paralysing effects of the incapacity of some English officers. Clive's defence of Arcot and the victories of Arni and Kavaripak had excited their intense admiration, and caused them to place unbounded confidence in him. Therefore they said, "If Captain Clive commands we will go. Unless he commands we do not." Major Lawrence was glad that the pressure thus placed upon him enabled him, without incurring a charge of favouritism, to place the command in the hands of the officer upon whom he most relied.

On the night of the 6th of April Clive set out with a force composed of four hundred English, seven hundred Sepoys, three thousand Maratta cavalry, a thousand Tanjore cavalry, six light guns and two heavy ones. Descending the

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river he crossed the island at a point three miles to the east of Law's camping ground, and marched to Samieaveram, a town nine miles north of the island, and commanding the roads from the north and east. The movement was just made in time. Dupleix, utterly disgusted with Law, had resolved to displace him. D'Auteuil, the only officer he had of sufficient high rank to take his place, had not when previously employed betrayed any great energy or capacity. It appeared, nevertheless, that he was at anyrate superior to Law. On the 10th of April, therefore, he despatched D'Auteuil with a hundred and twenty French, and five hundred Sepoys, with four guns and a large convoy to Seringam, where he was to take the command. When he arrived within fifteen miles of Samieaveram, he learned that Clive had possession of that village, and he determined upon a circuitous route by which he might avoid him. He therefore sent a messenger to Law to acquaint him with his plans in order that he might aid him by making a diversion.

Clive in the meantime had been at work. On the day after his arrival at Samieaveram, he attacked and captured the temple of Mansurpet, half-way between the village and the island. The temple was lofty and stood on rising ground, and commanded a range of the country for many miles round. On its top Clive established a signal station. Upon the following day he carried the mud fort of Lalgudi, which was situated on the north bank of the river two miles to the east of Paichandah, which now remained Law's only place of exit from the island.

D'Auteuil, after sending word to Law of his intentions, marched from Utatua, where he was lying, by a road to the west which would enable him to move round Samieaveram to Paichandah. Clive captured one of the messengers and set off with his force to intercept him. D'Auteuil, however, received information by his spies of Clive's movement, and not wishing to fight a

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battle in the open with a superior force, fell back to Utatua, while Clive returned to Samieaveram. Law, too, had received news of Clive's movement. Here was a chance of retrieving the misfortunes of the campaign. Paichandah being still in his hands, he could sally out with his whole force and that of Chunda Sahib, seize Samieaveram in Clive's absence, and extend his hand to D'Auteuil, or fall upon Clive's rear. Instead of this he repeated the mistake he had made before Trichinopoli; and instead of marching out with his whole force, he sent only eighty Europeans, of whom forty were deserters from the English army, and seven hundred Sepoys.

The English returned from their march against D'Auteuil. The greater portion of the troops were housed in two temples, a quarter of a mile apart, known as the Large and Small Pagoda. Clive with several of his officers was in a caravansary close to the Small Pagoda. Charlie's company were on guard, and, after paying a visit to the sentries and seeing that all were on the alert, he returned to the caravansary. The day had been a long one, and the march under the heat of the sun very fatiguing. There was therefore but little conversation, and Charlie, finding on his return from visiting the sentries that his leader and the other officers had already wrapped themselves in their cloaks and lain down to rest, imitated their example. Half an hour later the French column arrived at Samieaveram. The officer in command was a daring and determined man. Before reaching the place he had heard that the English had returned, and finding that he had been forestalled, he might well have returned to Law. He determined, however, to attempt to surprise the camp. He placed his deserters in front, and when the column, arriving near the Sepoy sentinel, was challenged, the officer in command of the deserters, an Irishman, stepped forward, and said that he had been sent by Major Lawrence to the support of Captain Clive. As the other English-speaking soldiers now came up the sentry and native officer with

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him were completely deceived, and the latter sent a soldier to guide the column to the English quarter of the camp. Without interruption the column marched on through lines of sleeping Sepoys and Marattas until they reached the heart of the village. Here they were again challenged. They replied with a volley of musketry into the caravansary and another into the pagoda. Then they rushed into the pagoda, bayoneting all they found there.

Charlie, who had just dropped off to sleep, sprang to his feet, as did the other officers. While, confused by the noise and suddenness of the attack, others scarcely understood what was happening, Clive's clear head and ready judgment grasped the situation at once. "Gentlemen," he said calmly, "there is no firing going on in the direction of the Great Pagoda. Follow me there at once."

Snatching up their arms the officers followed him at a run. The whole village was a scene of wild confusion. The firing round the pagoda and caravansary were continuous. The Maratta horsemen were climbing into their saddles and riding away out into the plain, the Sepoys were running hither and thither. At the pagoda he found the soldiers turning out under arms, and Clive, ordering his officers to do their best to rally the native troops in good order against the enemy, at once moved forward towards the caravansary with two hundred English troops. On arriving there he found a large body of Sepoys firing away at random. Believing them to be his own men, for the French and English Sepoys were alike dressed in white, he halted the English a few yards from them, and rushed among them, upbraiding them for their panic, striking them, and ordering them instantly to cease firing and to form in order. One of the Sepoy officers recognized Clive to be an Englishman, struck at him and wounded him with his sword.

Clive, still believing him to be one of his own men, was furious at what he considered an act of insolent insubordination, and seizing him, dragged him across to the

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Small Pagoda to hand him over, as he supposed, to the guard there. To his astonishment he found six Frenchmen at the gate, and these at once summoned him to surrender. Great as was his surprise, he did not for a moment lose coolness, and at once told them that he had come to beg them to lay down their arms, that they were surrounded by his whole army, and that unless they surrendered his troops would give no quarter. So impressed were the Frenchmen with the firmness of the speaker that three of them at once surrendered, while the other three ran into the temple to inform their commander.

Clive took the three men who had surrendered, and returned to the English troops he had left near the caravansary. The French Sepoys had discovered that the English were enemies, and had moved quietly off. Confusion still reigned. Clive did not imagine for a moment that so daring an assault could have been made on his camp by a small body of enemies, and expected every moment an attack by Law's whole force. The commander of the French in the pagoda was disturbed by the news brought in by the three men from the gate, and despatched eight of his most intelligent men to ascertain exactly what was going on. These, however, fell into the hands of the English, and the officer of the party, not knowing that the Small Pagoda was in the hands of the French, handed them over to a sergeant, and told him to take a party and escort his eight prisoners and the three Captain Clive had captured to that pagoda for confinement there. Upon arrival at the gate the Frenchmen at once joined their comrades, and these latter were also so bewildered at the affair that they allowed the English sergeant and his guard to march off again unmolested.

By this time, owing to the absence of all resistance elsewhere, Clive had learnt that the whole of the party who had entered the camp were in the Lesser Pagoda, and, as he was still expecting momentarily to be attacked by Law's

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main army, he determined to rid himself of this enemy in his midst. The pagoda was very strong and only two men could enter abreast. Clive led his men to the attack, but so well did the French defend themselves that after losing an officer and fifteen men, Clive determined to wait till morning.

The French officer, knowing that he was surrounded, and beyond the reach of all assistance, resolved upon cutting a way through, and at daylight his men sallied out from the temple. So fierce, however, was the fire with which the English received him that twelve of his men were instantly killed, and the rest ran back into the temple.

Clive, hoping that their commander would now surrender without further effusion of blood, advanced to the gateway and entered the porch to offer terms. He was himself so faint from the loss of blood from his wounds that he could not stand alone, but leaned against a wall, supported by two sergeants. The officer commanding the deserters came out to parley, but, after heaping abuse upon Clive, levelled his musket and discharged it at him.

He missed Clive, but killed the two sergeants who were supporting him.

The French officer in command, indignant at this conduct, rushed forward at once to disavow it, and stated that he had determined to defend the post to the last, solely for the sake of the deserters, but that the conduct of their officer had released him from that obligation, and he now therefore surrendered at once. The instant day broke and Clive saw that Law was not, as he expected, at hand, he despatched the Maratta horse in pursuit of the French Sepoys. These were overtaken and cut to pieces, and not one man of the force which Law had despatched against Clive returned to the island. The English loss was heavy. The greater portion of the occupants of the Small Pagoda were bayoneted by the French when they entered, and as fifteen others were

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killed in the attack, it is probable that at least one-fourth of the English force under Clive were killed. Clive's own escapes were extraordinary. In addition to those of being killed by the French Sepoys, among whom he ran by mistake, and of death at the hands of the treacherous deserter, he had one almost as close when the French fired their volley into the caravansary. A box at his feet was shattered, and a servant who slept close to him was killed.

Some days passed after this attack without any fresh movement on either side. Major Lawrence then determined to drive back D'Auteuil. He did not despatch Clive against him, as this would involve the risk that Law might again march out to surprise Samieaveram. He therefore directed Clive to remain at that place and watch the island while he sent a force of a hundred and fifty English, four hundred Sepoys, five hundred Marattas, with four guns to attack D'Auteuil from his own force, under Captain Dalton. This officer in the advance marched his troops near Samieaveram, and, making as much show with them as he could, impressed D'Auteuil with the idea that the force was that of Clive. Accordingly he broke up his camp at Utatua in the night, abandoned his stores, and retreated hastily upon Valconda. Dalton then marched to Samieaveram, and placed his force at Clive's disposal, and, to prevent any disputes arising as to precedence and rank, offered himself to serve under him as a volunteer.

Not only D'Auteuil but Law was deceived by Dalton's march. From the lofty towers of Seringam he saw the force marching towards Utatua, believed that Clive with his whole force had left Samieaveram, and did now what he should have before done, crossed the river with all his troops. Clive's look-out on the temple of Mansurpet perceived what was going on and signalled the news to Clive, who at once set out with his whole force, and, before Law was prepared to issue out from Paichandah,

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Clive was within a mile of that place. Law might still have fought with a fair chance of success, as he was far stronger than his enemy, but he was again the victim of indecision and want of energy, and, covered by Paichandah, he fell back across the river again.

On the 15th of May Clive captured Paichandah, and then determined to give a final blow to D'Auteuil's force, which had, he learned, again set out to endeavour to relieve Law. He marched to Utatua to intercept him. D'Auteuil, hearing of his coming, instantly fell back again to Valconda. The native chief of this town, however, seeing that the affairs of the French were desperate, and willing, like all his countrymen, to make his peace with the strongest, had already accepted bribes from the English, and upon D'Auteuil's return closed the gates and refused to admit him. Clive soon arrived and D'Auteuil, caught between two fires, surrendered with his whole force.

Had Law been a man of energy he had yet a chance of escape. He had still seven or eight hundred French troops with him, two thousand Sepoys, and four thousand of Chunda Sahib's troops. He might then have easily crossed the Kavari at night and fallen upon Lawrence, whose force there now was greatly inferior to his own. Chunda Sahib in vain begged him to do so. His hesitation continued until, three days after the surrender of D'Auteuil, a battering train reached Lawrence, whereupon Law at once surrendered, his chief stipulation being that the life of Chunda Sahib should be spared. This promise was not kept. The unfortunate prince had preferred to surrender to the Rajah of Tanjore, who had several times intrigued secretly with him, rather than to Muhammud Ali or the English, whom he regarded as his implacable enemies. Had he placed himself in our hands his life would have been safe. He was murdered by the treacherous rajah within twenty-four hours of his surrender.

With the fall of Seringam terminated the contest for

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the supremacy of the Carnatic between the English and French, fighting respectively on behalf of their puppets, Muhammud Ali and Chunda Sahib. This stage of the struggle was not a final one, but both by its circumstances and by the prestige which we acquired in the eyes of the natives it gave us a moral ascendency which even when our fortunes were afterwards at their worst was never lost again. Muhammud Ali had himself gained but little in the struggle. He was indeed nominally ruler of the Carnatic, but he had to rely for his position solely on the support of the English bayonets. Indeed the promises of which he had been obliged to be lavish to his native allies to keep them faithful to his cause, when that cause seemed all but lost, now came upon him to trouble him, and so precarious was his position that he was obliged to ask the English to leave two hundred English troops and fifteen hundred of their Sepoys to protect the place against Murari Reo and the Rajahs of Mysore and Tanjore.

The fatigues of the expedition had been great, and when the force reached the sea-coast Major Lawrence was forced to retire to Fort St. David to recover his health, while Clive, whose health had now greatly broken down, betook himself to Madras, which had, when the danger of invasion by the French was at an end, become the headquarters of the government of the presidency. There were, however, two French strongholds dangerously near to Madras, Covelong and Chengalpatt. Two hundred recruits had just arrived from England, and five hundred natives had been enlisted as Sepoys. Mr. Saunders begged Clive to take the command of these and reduce the two fortresses. He took with him two twenty-four pounders, and four officers, of whom two were Charlie Marryat and Peters, to both of whom Clive was much attached, owing to their courage, readiness, and good humour. Covelong was first attacked. It mounted thirty guns and was garrisoned by fifty French and three hundred Sepoys.

"I don't like the look o' things, Mr. Charles," Tim

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Kelly said; "there's nothing but boys altogether, white and black. Does it stand to reason that a lot of gossoons who haven't learnt the goose step, and haven't as much as a shred of faith ayther in themselves or their officers, are fit to fight the French?"

"Oh, I don't know, Tim," Charlie said. "Boys are just as plucky as men in their way, and are ready to do all sorts of foolhardy things which men would hesitate to attempt."

"And that is so, Mr. Charles, when they've only other boys to dale with; but as they're growing up they take some time before they're quite sure they're a match for men. That's what it is, yer honour, I tell ye, and you will see it soon."

Tim's predictions were speedily verified. The very morning after they arrived before the fort the garrison made a sally, fell upon the troops, and killed one of their officers. The whole of the new levies took to their heels and fled away from the fight. Clive with his three officers threw himself among them, and for some time in vain attempted to turn the tide. It was not, indeed, until several had been cut down that the rout was arrested, and they were brought back to their duty. A day or two later a shot striking a rock killed or wounded fourteen men, and excited such a panic that it was some time before the rest would venture near the front.

The enemy with a considerable force marched from Chengalpatt to relieve the place. Clive left half his force to continue the siege, and with the rest marched out and offered battle to the relieving force. Daring and confidence as usual prevailed. Had the enemy attacked there is little doubt they would have put Clive's raw levies to flight. They were, however, cowed by his attitude of defiance, and retreated hastily. The governor of Covelong at once lost heart and surrendered the place, which he might have maintained for months against the force before it, and on the fourth day of the siege capitulated. A few hours

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afterwards the enemy from Chengalpatt, ignorant of the fall of the fort, again advanced, and Clive met them with his whole force. Taken by surprise they suffered heavily. Clive pursued them to the gates of their fort, to which he at once laid siege. Fortunately for the English, the commander of this place, like him of Covelong, was cowardly and incapable. Had it not been so, the fort, which was very strong, well provisioned, and well garrisoned, might have held out for an indefinite time. As it was it surrendered on the fourth day, and Clive took possession on the 31st of August. He returned to Madras, and there, a short time afterwards, married Miss Maskelyne. Finding his health, however, continuing to deteriorate, he sailed for Europe in February, 1753. It was but five years since he had first taken up arms to defend Fort St. David, an unknown clerk without prospects and without fortune, utterly discontented and disheartened. Madras was in the hands of the French. Everywhere their policy was triumphant, and the soil surrounded by the walls of St. David's alone remained to the English in Southern India. In the five years which had elapsed all had changed. The English were masters of the Carnatic. The French were broken and discredited. The English were regarded by the natives throughout the country as the coming power, and of this great change no slight portion was due to the energy and genius of Clive himself.

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CHAPTER XI.

AN IMPORTANT MISSION.

A FEW days after the return of the expedition against Covelong and Chengalpatt, Charlie received a note from Governor Saunders requesting him to call upon him at eleven o'clock. Charlie, of course, attended at Government House at the time named, and found Captain Clive with Mr. Saunders.

"I have sent for you, Mr. Marryat, to ask you if you are ready to undertake a delicate and somewhat dangerous mission. Captain Clive tells me that he is convinced that you will be able to discharge the duties satisfactorily. He has been giving me the highest report of your conduct and courage, and he tells me that you speak the language with some facility."

"I have been working hard, sir," Charlie said, "and have had a moonshee for the last year; and as, except when on duty, I have spoken nothing but the native language with him, I can now speak it almost as fluently as I can English."

"So Captain Clive has been telling me," Mr. Saunders said; "and it is indeed on that ground that I select you for the service. Your friend Mr. Peters has equally distinguished himself in the field, Captain Clive tells me, but he is greatly your inferior in his knowledge of the vernacular."

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This was indeed the case. Peters had but little natural aptitude for foreign languages, and after working hard for a time with the moonshee he found that he was making so little progress in comparison with Charlie that he lost heart; and although he had continued his lessons with the moonshee, he had done so only to the extent of an hour or so a day, whereas Charlie had devoted his whole leisure time to the work.

"The facts of the case are these, Mr. Marryat. Owing to the failure of Muhammud Ali to fulfil the ridiculously onerous terms extorted from him by some of his native allies during the siege of Trichinopoli, several of them are in a state of discontent, which is likely soon to break out into open hostilities. The Rajahs of Mysore and Tanjore are, I have learned, already in communication with Pondicherry, and will, I believe, shortly acknowledge the son of Chunda Sahib, whom Dupleix has declared ruler of the Carnatic. Murari Reo has already openly joined the French. Their influence in the Deccan is now so great that Bussy may be said to rule there. Now, there is a chief named Boorhau Reo, whose territory lies among the hills, and extends from the plain nearly up to the plateau land of the Deccan. His position, like that of many of the other small rajahs, is precarious. In days like the present, when might makes right, and every petty state tries to make profit out of the constant wars at the expense of its neighbour, the position of a chief surrounded by half a dozen others more powerful than himself is by no means pleasant. Boorhau Reo feels that he is in danger of being swallowed by the nizam or by the Marattas, and he earnestly desires to ally himself with us, believing, as he says, that we are destined to be masters here. I have assured him that, although gratified at his expressions of friendship, we can enter into no alliance with him. The position of his territory would enable him to be of great assistance to us in any war in which the whole force of the Deccan, controlled as it is at

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present by Bussy, might be utilized against us in the Carnatic. He would be able to harass convoys, cut communications, and otherwise trouble the enemy's movements. But although we see that his aid would be very useful to us in case of such a war, we do not see how on our part we could give him any protection. We have now, with the greatest difficulty, brought affairs to a successful conclusion in the Carnatic, but Dupleix is active and energetic and well supported at home. Many of the chiefs lately our allies have, as I have just said, declared against us or are about to do so, and it is out of the question for us to think of supporting a chief so far removed from us as Boorhau. I have, therefore, told him that we greatly desire his friendship, but are at present powerless to protect him should he be attacked by his northern neighbours. He is particularly anxious to train his men after the European fashion, as he sees that our Sepoys are a match for five times their number of the untrained troops of the Indian princes.

"This brings me to the subject before us. I have written to him to say that I will send to him an English officer capable of training and leading his troops, and whose advice may be useful to him upon all occasions; but that, as were it known that he had received a British officer and was employing him to train his troops, it would excite the instant animosity of Bussy and of the Peishwar, I should send one familiar with the language and who may pass as a native. Captain Clive has strongly recommended you for this difficult mission."

"I fear, sir, that I could hardly pass as a native. The moonshee is constantly correcting mistakes which I make in speaking."

"That may be so," Mr. Saunders said; "but there are a score of dialects in Southern India, and you could be passed upon nineteen of the twenty peoples who speak them as belonging to one of the other."

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"If you think, sir, that I shall do," Charlie said, "I shall be glad to undertake the mission."

"Very well, Mr. Marryat, that is understood then. You will receive full instructions in writing, and will understand that your duty is not only to drill the troops of this chief, but to give him such advice as may suit his and our interests, to strengthen his good feeling towards us, and to form as far as possible a compact little force which might at a critical moment be of immense utility. You will, of course, master the geography of the country, of which we are all but absolutely ignorant, find out about the passes, the mountain paths, the defensible positions. All these things may some day be of the highest importance. You will have a few days to make your arrangements and settle as to the character you will adopt. This you had better do in consultation with some one who thoroughly understands the country. It is intended that you shall go down to Trichinopoli with the next convoy, and from there make your way to the stronghold of Boorhau."

"Shall I take any followers with me?"

"Yes," Mr. Saunders said. "As you will go in the character of a military adventurer who has served among our Sepoys long enough to learn European drill, you had better take two, three, or four men, as you like, with you as retainers. You might pick out two or three trusty men from the Sepoys you command."

Charlie left Government House in high spirits. It was certainly an honour to have been selected for such a post. It was quite possible that it would be a dangerous one. It was sure to be altogether different from the ordinary life of a subaltern in the Company's army. Peters was very sorry when he heard from Charlie that they were at last to be separated. It was now nearly two years since they had first met on board the *Lizzie Anderson*, and since that time they had been constantly together, and were greatly attached to each other. Charlie, perhaps,

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had taken the lead. The fact of his having a stock of firearms, and being able to lend them to Peters, had given him perhaps the first slight and almost imperceptible advantage. His feat of jumping overboard to rescue Tim Kelly had been another step in advance, and although Charlie would have denied it himself there was no doubt that he generally took the lead, and that his friend was accustomed to lean upon him and to look to him always for the initiative. It was therefore a severe blow to Peters to find that Charlie was about to be sent on detached service. As for Tim Kelly, he was uproarious in his grief when he heard that he was to be separated from his master.

"Shure, Mr. Charlie, ye'll never have the heart to lave a poor boy that sarved ye be night and day for eighteen months. Tim Kelly would gladly give his life for ye, and ye wouldn't go and lave him behind ye and go all alone among these black thaves of the world."

"But it is impossible that I can take you, Tim," Charlie said. "You know yourself that you cannot speak ten words of the language. How then could you possibly pass undetected, whatever disguise you put on?"

"But I'd never open my mouth at all at all, yer honour, barring for mate and drink."

"It's all very well for you to say so, Tim," Charlie answered; "but I do not think that anything short of a miracle would silence your tongue. But leave us now, Tim, and I will talk the matter over with Mr. Peters. I should be glad enough to have you with me if we could arrange it."

The moonshee was taken into their counsels, and was asked his opinion as to the disguise which Charlie could adopt with least risk of detection. The moonshee replied that he might pass as a Bheel. These hill tribes speak a dialect quite distinct from that of the people around them, and the moonshee said that if properly attired Charlie would be able to pass anywhere for one of these

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people, provided always that he did not meet with another of the same race. "You might assert," he said, "that your father had taken service with some rajah on the plain, and that you had there learned to speak the language. In this way you would avoid having to answer any difficult questions regarding your native place; but as to that, you can get up something of the geography before you leave."

"There are several Bheels among our Sepoys," Charlie said. "I can pick out three or four of them who would be just the men for me to take. I believe they are generally very faithful and attached to their officers."

When Tim again entered the room he inquired anxiously if his master hit upon any disguise which would suit him. "What do you say, Mr. Moonshine?" Tim said.

The moonshee shook his head. Between these two a perpetual feud had existed ever since the native had arrived at Arcot to take his place as a member of Charlie's establishment. In obedience to Charlie's stringent orders Tim never was openly rude to him; but he never lost an opportunity of making remarks of a disparaging nature as to the value of Charlie's studies. The moonshee, on his part, generally ignored Tim's existence altogether, addressing him, when obliged to do so, with a ceremonious civility which annoyed Tim more than open abuse would have done. "I think," he said gravely in reply to Tim's demand, "that the very worshipful one would have most chance of escaping detection if he went in rags, throwing dust on his hair and passing for one afflicted."

"And what does he mean by afflicted, Mr. Charles?" the Irishman said wrathfully, as the two young officers laughed.

"He means one who is a born fool, Tim."

Tim looked furiously at the moonshee.

"It would," the latter said sententiously, "be the character which the worshipful one would support with the greatest ease."

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"The black thief is making fun of me," Tim muttered; "but I'll be aven with him one of these days or my name isn't Tim Kelly. I was thinking, yer honour, that I might represent one deaf and dumb."

"But you're always talking, Tim, and when you're not talking to others you talk to yourself. It's quite impossible you could go as a dumb man; but you might go, as the moonshee suggests, as a half-witted sort of chap with just sense enough to groom a horse and look after him, but with not enough to understand what's said to you or to answer any questions."

"I could do that asy enough, Mr. Charles."

"And you have to keep from quarrelling, Tim. I hear you quarrelling on an average ten times a day; and as in such a character as we're talking about you would, of course, be exposed to all sorts of slights and unpleasantnesses, you would be in continual hot water."

"Now, yer honour," Tim said reproachfully, "you're too hard on one entirely. I like a bit of a row as well as any man, but it's all for divarsion; and I could go on for a year without quarrelling with a soul. Just try me, Mr. Charles, just try me for a month, and if at the end of that time you find me in your way, or that I don't keep my character, then send me back agin to the regiment."

It was arranged that the moonshee should remain with Peters, who, seeing that Charlie owed his appointment to a post which promised excitement and adventure, to his skill in the native languages, was determined that he would again set to in earnest and try and master its intricacies. The moonshee went down to the bazaar and purchased the clothes which would be necessary for the disguises, and Charlie found in his company four Sepoys who willingly agreed to accompany him in the character of his retainers upon his expedition. As to their costume there was no difficulty. When off duty the Sepoys in the Company's service were accustomed to dress in their native attire. Consequently it needed only

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the addition of a tulwar or short curved sword, a shield thrown over one shoulder, a long matchlock, and two or three pistols and daggers stuck into a girdle to complete their equipment. Charlie himself was dressed gaily in the garb of a military officer in the service of an Indian rajah. He was to ride, and a horse, saddle, and gay housings were procured. He had at last given in to Tim's entreaties, and that worthy was dressed as a syce or horse-keeper.

Both Charlie and Tim had had those portions of their skin exposed to the air darkened, and both would pass muster at a casual inspection. Charlie in thus concealing his nationality desired only to hide the fact that he was an officer in the Company's service. He believed that it would be impossible for him to continue to pass as a Bheel. This, however, would be of no consequence after a time. Many of the native princes had Europeans in their service. Runaway sailors, deserters from the English, French, and Dutch armed forces in their possessions on the sea-coast, adventurers influenced either by a love of a life of excitement, or whom a desire to escape the consequences of folly or crime committed at home had driven to a roving life—such men might be found in many of the native courts. Once settled, then, in the service of the rajah, Charlie intended to make but little farther pretence or secrecy as to his nationality. Outwardly he would still conform to the language and appearance of the character he had chosen, but he would allow it to be supposed that he was an Englishman, a deserter from the Company's service, and that his comrades were Sepoys in a similar position. His employment, then, at the court of the rajah would have an effect the exact reverse of that which it would have done had he appeared in his proper character. Deserters were of all men the most opposed to their countrymen, to whom they had proved traitors. In battle they could be relied upon to fight desperately, for they fought with ropes round their necks.

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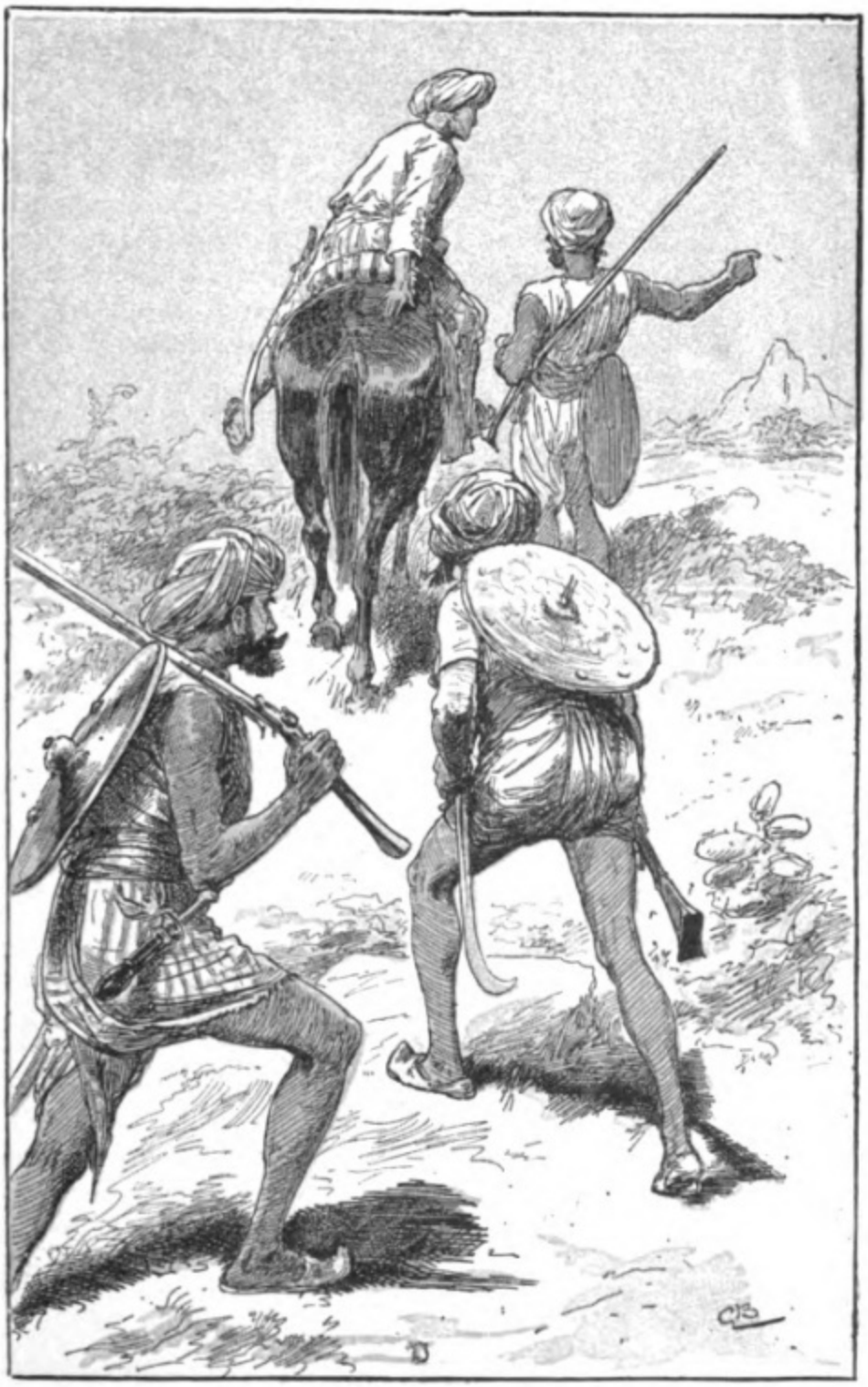

CHARLIE'S MISSION TO RAJAH BOORHAU. PAGE 141.

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Therefore, while the appearance of an English officer as instructer of the forces of the rajah would have drawn upon himself the instant hostility of all opposed to the British, the circulation of a report that his troops were being disciplined by some English and native deserters from the Company's forces would excite no suspicion whatever.

To avoid attracting attention Charlie Marryat and his party set out before daylight from Madras. Their appearance, indeed, would have attracted no attention when they once had passed beyond the boundaries of the portion of the town occupied by the whites. In the native quarter the appearance of a small zemindar or landowner attended by four or five armed followers on foot, was of such common occurrence as to attract no attention whatever; and, indeed, numbers of these come in to take service in the Sepoy regiments, the profession of arms being always considered honourable in India.

For a fortnight they travelled by easy stages without question or suspicion being excited that they were not what they seemed. They were now among the hills, and soon arrived at Ambur, the seat of the rajah. The town was a small one, and above it rose the fortress, which stood on a rock rising sheer from the bottom of the valley, and standing boldly out from the hill-side. The communication was effected by a shoulder which, starting from a point half-way up the rock, joined the hill behind it. Along this shoulder were walls and gateways. An enemy attacking these would be exposed to the fire from the summit of the rock. From the point where the shoulder joined the rock a zigzag road had been cut with enormous labour, in the face of the rock, to the summit.

"It is a strong place," Charlie said to Tim Kelly, who was walking by his horse's head, "and should be able to hold out against anything but starvation, that is to say, if properly defended."

"It's a powerful place, surely," Tim said; "and would

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puzzle the ould boy himself to take. Even Captain Clive, who is afeard of nothing, would be bothered by it."

As they rode up the valley two horsemen were seen spurring towards them from the town. They drew rein before Charlie, and one bowing said:

"My master, the rajah, sends his greeting to you, and begs to know if you are the illustrious soldier, Nadir Ali, for whom his heart has been longing."

"Will you tell your lord that Nadir Ali is here," Charlie said, "and that he longs to see the face of the rajah."

One of the horsemen at once rode off, and the other took his place by the side of Charlie; and having introduced himself as captain of the rajah's body-guard, rode with him through the town. Had Charlie appeared in his character as English officer the rajah and all his troops would have turned out to do honour to his arrival. As it was, a portion of the garrison only appeared at the gate and lined the walls. Through these the little party passed, and up the sharp zigzags, which were so steep that had it not been that his dignity prevented him from dismounting, Charlie would gladly have got off and proceeded on foot; for it was as much as the animal could do to struggle up the steep incline. At each turn there was a gateway, with little flanking towers on which jingalls or small wall-pieces commanded the road.

"Faith, then, it's no fool that built this place. I shouldn't like to have to attack it wid all the soldiers of the king's army, let alone those of the Company."

"It is tremendously strong, Tim, but it is astonishing what brave men can do."

In the after wars which England waged in India the truth of what Charlie said was over and over again proved. Numerous fortresses, supposed by the natives to be absolutely impregnable, and far exceeding in strength that just described, have been carried by assault by the dash and daring of English troops

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They gained at last the top of the rock. It was uneven in surface, some portions being considerably more elevated than others. Roughly, its extent was about a hundred yards either way. The lower level was covered with buildings occupied by the garrison and storehouses. On the upper level, some forty feet higher, stood the palace of the rajah. It communicated with the courtyard below by a broad flight of steps. These led to an arched gateway, with a wall and battlements, forming an interior line of defence should an assailant gain a footing in the lower portion of the stronghold. Alighting from his horse at the foot of the steps Charlie, followed by his five retainers, mounted to the gateway. Here another guard of honour was drawn up. Passing through these they entered a shady courtyard, on one side of which was a stone pavilion. The flat ceiling was supported by massive columns closely covered with intricate sculpture. The roof was arabesqued with deeply cut patterns picked out in bright colours. A fountain played in the middle. On the farther side the floor, which was of marble, was raised, and two steps led to a wide recess, with windows of lattice stonework giving a view over the town and valley below. In this recess were piles of cushions and carpets, and here reclined the rajah, a spare and active-looking man of some forty years old. He rose as Charlie approached, the soldiers and Sepoys remaining beyond the limits of the pavilion.

"Welcome, brave Nadir Ali," he said courteously; "my heart is glad, indeed, at the presence of one whose wisdom is said to be far beyond his years, and who has learned the arts of war of the infidels from beyond the seas." Then inviting Charlie to take a seat on the divan with him, he questioned him as to his journey and the events which were taking place in the plains, until the attendants, having handed round refreshments, retired at his signal. "I am glad to see you, Sahib," he said when they were alone; "though, in truth, I looked for one older than

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yourself. The great English governor of Madras tells me, however, in a letter which I received four days since, that you are skilled in war, that you fought by the side of that great Captain Clive at Arcot, Arni, Kavaripak, and at Trichinopoli, and that the great warrior himself chose you to come to me. Therefore I doubt neither your valour nor your prudence, and put myself in your hands wholly. The governor has already told you, doubtless, of the position in which I am placed here."

"Governor Saunders explained the whole position to me," Charlie said. "You are at present menaced on all sides by powerful neighbours. You believe that the fortunes of the English are on the increase, and as you think the time may come ere long when they will turn the French out of the Deccan and become masters there, as they have already become masters in the Carnatic, you wish to fight by their side, and share their fortunes. In the meantime you desire to be able to defend yourself against your neighbours, for at present the English are too far away to assist you. To enable you to do this I have been sent to drill and discipline your troops like our Sepoys, and to give you such advice as may be best for the general defence of your country. I have brought with me five soldiers, four Bheels, and one of my countrymen. The latter will be of little use in drilling your troops, for he is ignorant of the language, and has come as my personal attendant. The other four will assist me in my work. Your followers here will, no doubt, discover in a very short time that I am an Englishman. Let it be understood that I am a deserter, that I have been attracted to your court by the promise of high pay, and that I have assumed the character of a Bheel lest my being here might put you on bad terms with the English." Charlie then asked the rajah as to the strength of his military force.

"In time of peace," the rajah said, "I keep three hundred men under arms; in case of taking the field, three

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thousand. To defend Ambur against an attack of an enemy I could muster ten thousand men."

"You could not call out three thousand men without attracting the attention of your neighbours?" Charlie asked.

"No," the rajah said; "that would bring my neighbours upon me at once."

"I suppose, however, you might assemble another five hundred men without attracting attention."

"Oh, yes," the rajah said; "eight hundred men are not a force which could attract any great attention."

"Then I should propose that we begin with eight hundred," Charlie said. "For a month, however, I will confine myself to the troops you at present have. We must in the first place train some officers. If you will pick out those to whom you intend to give commands and sub-commands, I will choose from the men, after drilling them for a few days, forty of the most intelligent as what we call non-commissioned officers. For the first month we will work hard in teaching these officers and sub-officers their duties. Then, when the whole eight hundred assemble, we can divide them into four parties. There will be one of my drill-instructors to each party, ten under officers, and four or five of the officers whom you will appoint. Six weeks' hard work should make these eight hundred men fairly acquainted with drill. The English Sepoys have often gone out to fight with less. At the end of the six weeks let the five hundred men you have called out, in addition to your body-guard of three hundred, return to their homes, and replace them by an equal number of fresh levies, and so proceed until you have your three thousand fighting men thoroughly trained. In nine months all will have had their six weeks of exercise, and could take their places in the ranks again at a day's notice. Two hundred of your men I will train in artillery; although I do not belong to that branch of the service, I learned the duties at Arcot."

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The rajah agreed heartily to Charlie's proposals, well pleased at the thought that he should, before the end of a year, be possessed of a trained force which would enable him to hold his own against his powerful neighbours until an opportunity might occur when, in alliance with the English, he should be able to turn the tables upon them, and to aggrandize himself at their expense.

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CHAPTER XII.

A MURDEROUS ATTEMPT.

HANDSOME rooms with a suite of attendants were assigned to Charlie in the rajah's palace, and he was formally appointed commander of his forces. The four Sepoys were appointed to junior ranks, as was also Tim Kelly, who, however, insisted on remaining in the position of chief attendant upon his master, being, in fact, a sort of major-domo and valet in one, looking after his comforts when in the palace, and accompanying him as personal guard whenever he rode out.

"You niver know, yer honour, what these natives may be up to. They'll smile with you one day and stab ye the next. They're treacherous varmint, yer honour, if you do but give 'em the chance."

At first Charlie perceived that his position excited some jealousy in the minds of those surrounding the rajah. He therefore did all in his power to show to them that he in no way aspired to interfere in the internal politics or affairs of the little state,—that he was a soldier and nothing more. He urged upon the rajah, who wished to have him always by him, that it was far better that he should appear to hold aloof, and to avoid all appearance of favouritism, or of a desire to obtain dominance in the counsels of the rajah. He wished that the appointments to the posts of officers in the new force should be

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made by the rajah, who should lend an ear to the advice of his usual councillors; but that once appointed they should be under his absolute command and control, and that he should have power to dismiss those who proved themselves indolent and incapable, to promote active and energetic men, wholly regardless of influence or position.

The next morning Charlie and his four assistants set to work to drill the three hundred men of the garrison, taking them in parties of twenty. They were thus able, in the course of a few days, to pick out the most active and intelligent for the sub-officers, and these with the existing officers of the body and the new ones appointed by the rajah, were at once taken in hand to be taught their duty.

For a month the work went on steadily and without interruption, and from morn till night the courtyard echoed with the words of command. At the end of that time the twenty officers and forty sub-officers had fairly learned their duty. The natives of India are very quick in learning drill, and a regiment of newly raised Sepoys will perform manœuvres and answer to words of command in the course of a fortnight as promptly and regularly as would one of English recruits in three months. A good many changes had taken place during the month's work. Many of the officers became disgusted with hard and continuous work, to which they were unaccustomed, while some of the sub-officers showed a deficiency of the quickness and intelligence needed for the work. Their places, however, were easily filled, and as the days went on all took an increasing degree of interest, as they acquired facility of movement, and saw how quickly, according to the European methods, manœuvres were gone through. At the end of a month, then, the sixty men were able in turn to instruct others, and a body of five hundred men being called out, the work of drilling on a large scale began.

The drill-ground now was a level space in the valley below the town, and the whole population assembled day

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after day to look on with astonishment at the exercises. The four great companies, or battalions as Charlie called them, were kept entirely separate, each under the command of one of the Sepoys, under whom were a proportion of the officers and sub-officers. Every evening Charlie came down for an hour and put each body through its drill, distributing blame or praise as it was deserved, thus keeping up a spirit of emulation between the battalions. At the end of a fortnight, when the simpler manœuvres had been learned, Charlie, for two hours each day, worked the whole together as one regiment, and was surprised himself to find how rapid was the progress which each day effected. The rajah himself often came down to the drill-ground and took the highest interest in the work. He himself would fain have had regular uniforms, similar to those worn by the Sepoys in the service of the European powers, provided for the men; but Charlie strongly urged him not to do so. He admitted that the troops would look immensely better if clad in regular uniform than as a motley band, each dressed according to his own fancy. He pointed out, however, that while the news that the rajah was having some of his men drilled by European deserters would attract but little attention among his neighbours, the report that he was raising Sepoy battalions would certainly be received by them in a hostile spirit.

"By all means," Charlie said, "get the uniforms made for the whole force and keep them by you in store. They can be at once served out in case of war, and the sight of a number of Sepoy battalions where they expected only to meet an irregular force, will have an immense effect upon any force opposed to you."

The rajah saw the force of this argument, and at once ordered five thousand suits of white uniforms, similar to those worn by the Sepoys in the English and French service, to be made and stored up in the magazines. While his lieutenants were drilling the main body Charlie

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himself took in hand a party of forty picked men, and instructed them in the use of field-guns. The superiority of Europeans in artillery was one of the reasons which gave to them such easy victory in their early battles with the native forces in India. The latter possessed a very powerful artillery in point of numbers, but there was no regular drill nor manner of loading. They were in the habit, too, of allowing each gun to cool after it was fired before being loaded again. It was thought, therefore, good practice if a gun were discharged once in a quarter of an hour. They were then utterly astounded and dismayed at the effects of the European guns, each of which could be loaded and fired twice, or even three times, a minute.

So month passed after month until Rajah Boorhau was in a position to put, if necessary, five battalions of Sepoys, each seven hundred strong, into the field, with thirty guns, served by trained artillerymen. So quietly had the work gone on that it attracted no attention among his neighbours. The mere rumour that the rajah had some European deserters in his service, and that these were drilling four or five hundred men, was considered of so little moment that it passed altogether unheeded.

The accounts of the state of affairs in the Carnatic, which reached Charlie, were not satisfactory. Dupleix, with his usual energy, was aiding the son of Chunda Sahib with men and money in his combat with the British protégé, and most of the native allies of the latter had fallen away from him. Trichinopoli was again besieged, and the fortunes of England, lately so flourishing, were waning again. In the Deccan French influence was supreme. Bussy, with a strong and well-disciplined French force, maintained Salabut Jung, whom the French had placed on the throne, against all opponents. At one time it was the Peishwar, at another the Marattas, against whom Bussy turned his arms, and always with success,

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and the French had acquired the four districts on the coast known as the Northern Sircas. It was in vain that Charlie endeavoured to gain an accurate knowledge of the political position, so quickly and continually did this change. At one time the Peishwar and the Nizam, as the Subadar of the Deccan was now called, would be fighting in alliance against one or other of the Maratta chiefs. At another time they would be in conflict with each other, while the Rajah of Mysore, Murari Reo, and other chiefs were sometimes fighting on one side, sometimes on another.

Proud of his rapidly increasing force, Boorhau Reo would, more than once in the course of the year, have joined in the warfare going on around. Charlie, however, succeeded in restraining him from doing so, pointing out that the victor of one day was the vanquished of the next, and that it was worse than useless to join in a struggle of which the conditions were so uncertain, and the changes of fortune so rapid, that none could count upon others for aid, however great the assistance they might have rendered only a short time before.

"Were you to gain territory, Rajah, which you might, perhaps, largely do, from the efficient aid which you might render to one party or the other, you would be the object of a hostile combination against which you could not hope to struggle."

The rajah yielded at once to Charlie's arguments; but the influence of the latter added to the hostility which the favour shown him by the rajah had provoked among many of the leading men of the state. Where the sides were often so closely balanced as was the case in these intestine struggles, the aid of every rajah, however small his following, was sought by one or other of the combatants, and the counsellors of those able to place a respectable force in the field were heavily bribed by one side or the other. Those around Rajah Boorhau found their efforts completely baffled by the influence of the

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English commander of his forces, and a faction of increasing strength and power was formed to overthrow him. The rajah himself had kept his secret well, and one or two only of his advisers knew that the Englishman was a trusted agent of the Company.

The soldiers were much attached to their English leader. They found him always just and firm. Complaints were always listened to, tyranny or ill-treatment by the officers suppressed and punished, merit rewarded. Among the officers the strictness of the discipline alienated many, who contrasted the easy life which they had led before the introduction of the European system, with that which they now endured. So long as they were engaged in mastering the rudiments of drill they felt their disadvantage; but when this was acquired each thought himself capable of taking the place of the English adventurer and of leading the troops he had organized to victory. Already Charlie had received several anonymous warnings that danger threatened him. The rajah was, he knew, his warm friend, and he, in his delight at seeing the formidable force which had been formed from his irregular levies, had presented him, as a token of his gratitude, with large sums of money.

In those days this was the method by which Indian princes rewarded European officers who rendered them service, and it was considered by no means derogatory to the latter to accept the money. This was, indeed, the universal custom, and Charlie, knowing that Captain Clive had received large presents of this kind, had no hesitation in following his example. The treasures stored up by many of these Indian princes were immense, and a lac of rupees, equivalent to ten thousand pounds, was considered by no means a large present. Charlie, foreseeing that sooner or later the little state would become involved in hostilities, took the precaution of forwarding the money he had received down to Madras, sending it piecemeal, in charge of native merchants and traders. It was by these

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paid into the Madras treasury, where a large rate of interest for all monies lent by its employés was given by the Company.

For those at home he felt no uneasiness. It was very seldom that their letters reached him; but he learned that they were still in high favour with his uncle, that his mother continued installed as the head of his house, and that the girls were both at excellent schools.

Charlie mentioned to the rajah the rumours which had reached him of a plot against him. The rajah assured him of his own support under all circumstances, and offered that a strong guard should be placed night and day over the apartments he occupied.

This Charlie declined. "A guard can always be corrupted," he said. "My Irish servant sleeps in my anteroom, my four lieutenants are close at hand, and knowing that the soldiers are, for the most part, attached to me, I do not think that open force will be used. I will, however, cause a large bell to be suspended above my quarters, its ringing will be a signal that I am attacked, in which case I rely upon your highness putting yourself at the head of the guard and coming to my assistance."

Tim Kelly was at once furious and alarmed at the news that danger threatened his master, and took every precaution that he could imagine to ensure his safety. He took to going down to the town himself to purchase provisions, and so far as possible prepared these himself. He procured two or three monkeys, animals which he held in horror, and offered them a portion of everything that came on the table, before he placed it before his master. Charlie at first protested against this, as his dinner became cold by waiting, but Tim had an oven prepared and ordered dinner half an hour before the time fixed by his master. Each dish as brought in was, after a portion had been given to a monkey, placed in the oven, and thus half an hour was given to allow the

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poison to work. This was done without Charlie's knowledge, the oven being placed in the ante-room, and the dishes thence brought in in regular order by the body servant, whom even Tim allowed to be devoted to his master.

One day Charlie was just sitting down to his soup when Tim ran in.

"For the love of Heaven, Mr. Charles, don't put that stuff to your mouth. It's pisoned, or, at anyrate, if it isn't, one of the other dishes is."

"Poisoned, Tim! Nonsense, man; you are always thinking of poisonings and plots."

"And it's lucky for your honour that I am," Tim said. "Jist come into the next room and look at the monkeys."

Charlie went in. One of the little creatures was lying upon the ground evidently in a state of great agony. The other was sitting up rocking itself backwards and forwards like a human being in pain.

"They look bad, poor little beasts," Charlie said; "but what has that got to do with my soup?"

"Shure, yer honour, isn't that jist what I keep the cratures for, just to give them a taste of everything yer honour has, and I claps it into the oven there to kape it warm till I've had time to see by the monkeys whether it's good."

"It looks very serious," Charlie said gravely. "Do you go quietly out, Tim, call two men from the guard-house and seize the cook, and place one or two men as sentries over the other servants. I will go across to the rajah."

The latter, on hearing what had happened, ordered the cook to be brought before him, together with the various dishes prepared for the dinner.

The man upon being interrogated vehemently denied all knowledge of the affair.

"We shall see," the rajah said. "Eat up that plate of soup."

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The man turned pale.

"Your highness will observe," he stammered, "that you have already told me that one of these dishes is poisoned. I cannot say which, and whichever I eat may be the fatal one."

The rajah made a signal to him to obey his orders, but Charlie interposed.

"There is something in what he says, your highness. Whether the man is innocent or guilty he would shrink equally from eating any of them. It is really possible that he may know nothing of it. The poison may have been introduced into the materials beforehand. If the man is taken to a dungeon, I think I could suggest a plan by which we could test him. I believe him to be guilty," he said when the prisoner had been removed.

"Then why not let him be beheaded at once?" the rajah asked.

"I would rather let ten guilty men escape," Charlie replied, "than run the risk of putting one innocent one to death. I propose, sir, that you order the eight dishes of food, which have been prepared for my dinner, to be carefully weighed. Let these be all placed in the cell of the prisoner, and there let him be left. In the course of two or three days he will, if guilty, endeavour to assuage his hunger by eating little bits of food from every dish except that which he knows to be poisoned, but will take such a small portion from each that he will think it will not be detected. If he is innocent, and is really ignorant which dish is poisoned, he will not touch any of them until driven to desperation by hunger. Then he will seize on one or more and devour them to the end, running the chance of death by poison rather than endure the pangs of hunger longer."

"Your plan is a wise one," the rajah said. "It shall be tried. Let the dishes be taken to him every morning and removed every evening. Each evening they shall be weighed."

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These orders were carried out, and on the following morning the dishes were placed in the cell of the prisoner. When removed at night they were found to be untouched. The next evening several of the dishes were found to have lost some ounces in weight. The third evening all but one had been tasted.

"Let the prisoner be brought in again," the rajah ordered when informed of this. "Dog," he said, "you have betrayed yourself. Had you been innocent you could not have known in which of the dishes the poison had been placed. You have eaten of all but one. If that one contains poison you are guilty."

Then turning to an attendant he ordered him to take a portion of the untouched food and to throw it to a dog. Pending the experiment the prisoner was removed. Half an hour later the attendant returned with the news that the dog was dead.

"The guilt of the man is confirmed," the rajah said. "Let him be executed."

"Will you give him to me, your highness?" Charlie asked. "His death would not benefit me now, and to save his life he may tell me who is my enemy. It is of no use punishing the instrument and letting the instigator go free."

"You are right," the rajah agreed. "If you can find out who bribed him, justice shall be done though it were the highest in the state."

Charlie returned to his own quarters, assembled his lieutenants and several other of his officers, and had the man brought before him.

"Hossein," he said, "you have taken money to take my life. I looked upon you as my faithful servant. I had done you no wrong. It has been proved that you attempted to poison me. You, when driven by hunger, ate small quantities, which you thought would pass unobserved, of all the dishes but one. That dish has been given to a dog and he has died. You knew then which

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was the poisoned dish. The rajah has ordered your execution. I offer you life if you will tell me who it was that tempted you."

The prisoner preserved a stolid silence.

"We had better proceed to torture him at once," one of the rajah's officers said.

The man turned a little paler. He knew well the horrible tortures which would in such an instance be inflicted to extort the names of those who had bribed him.

"I will say nothing," he said firmly, "though you tear me limb from limb."

"I have no intention of torturing you," Charlie said. "A confession extorted by pain is as likely to be false as true, and even did you tell me one name there might still be a dozen engaged in it who would remain unknown. No, Hossein, you have failed in your duty, you have tried to slay a master who was kind to you and trusted you."

"No, sahib," the man exclaimed passionately. "You did not trust me. The food I sent you was tested and tried. I knew it; but I thought that the poison would not have acted on the monkeys until you had eaten the dish. The fool who sold it me deceived me. Had you trusted me I would never have done it. It was only when I saw that I was suspected and doubted without cause that my heart turned against you, and I took the gold which was offered to me to kill you. I swear it by the Prophet."

Charlie looked at him steadily.

"I believe you," he said. "You were mistaken. I had no suspicions. My servant feared for me and took these precautions without telling me. However, Hossein, I pardon you, and if you will swear to me to be faithful in future I will trust you. You shall again be my cook, and I will eat the food as you prepare it for me."

"I am my lord's slave," the man said in a low tone. "My life is his."

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Charlie nodded, and the guard standing on either side of the prisoner stepped back, and without another word he left the room a free man.

Charlie's officers remonstrated with him upon having not only pardoned the man, but restored him to his position of cook.

"I think I have done wisely," Charlie said. "I must have a cook, for Tim Kelly here is not famous that way, and although he might manage for me when alone, he certainly could not turn out a dinner which would be suitable when I have some of the rajah's kinsmen and officers dining with me. Did I get another cook he might be just as open to the offers of my enemies as Hossein has been, and do you not think that, after what has passed, Hossein will be less likely to take bribes than any other man?"

Henceforth the oven was removed from the ante-chamber, and Charlie took his meals as Hossein prepared them for him. The man said little, but Charlie felt sure from the glances that he cast at him that he could rely upon Hossein now to the death.

Tim Kelly, who felt the strongest doubts as to the prudence of the proceeding, observed that Hossein no longer bought articles from men who brought them up to sell to the soldiers, but that every morning he went out early and purchased all the supplies he desired from the shopkeepers in the town. Tim mentioned the fact to his master, who said:

"You see, Tim, Hossein has determined that I shall not be poisoned without his knowing it. The little pedlars who come up here with herbs, and spices, and the ingredients for curry might be bribed to sell Hossein poisoned goods. By going down into the town and buying in the open market it is barely possible that the goods could be poisoned. You need have no more anxiety whatever, Tim, as to poison. If the attempt is made again it will probably be by sword or dagger."

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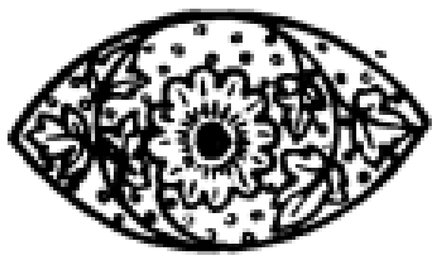
"Well, yer honour," said Tim, "anything's better than pison. I've got to sleep almost with one eye open. And you've got sentries outside your windows. What a pity it is that we ain't in a climate where one can fasten the windows and boult the shutters! But now the wet season is over again ye might have yer bed put, as ye did last year, on the roof of your room, with a canopy over it to keep off the dew. Ye would be safe thin, except from anyone coming through the room where I sleeps."

Charlie's bed-room was at the angle of a wall, and on two sides he could look down from his windows two hundred feet, sheer into the valley below. The view from the flat terraced roof was a charming one, and, as Tim said, Charlie had, in the fine weather, converted the terrace into a sleeping-room. A broad canopy, supported by poles at the corner, stretched over it, and even in the hottest weather the nights were not unpleasant here.



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CHAPTER XIII.

AN ATTEMPT AT MURDER.

THE house, of which the bed-room occupied by Charlie formed part, was elsewhere two stories higher, this room jutting out alone into the angle of the wall. The rest of the suite of rooms were in the house itself, but access could be obtained to this room through the window, which looked on to the terrace of the wall. Charlie's lieutenants always took pains to place men upon whom they could thoroughly rely as sentries on this terrace. One night, a fortnight after the events which have been described, Charlie was asleep on his bed on the flats above his room. On one side the house rose straight beside it. On two others was the fall to the valley, on the fourth side was the wall, along which two sentries were pacing to and fro. From time to time, from a door some distance along the side of the house, opening on to the wall, a white figure came out, stretched himself as if unable to sleep, looked for a while over the parapet down into the valley, appeared to listen intently, and then sauntered into the house again. It was the cook, Hossein. It was his custom. Successive sentries had for many nights past seen him do the same, but in a country where the nights are hot, a sleepless servant attracts but little attention. Upon the occasion of one of these visits to the parapet he stood in an attitude of deep attention longer than usual. Then he carelessly

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sauntered back. It was but a moment later that his face appeared at the window next to that of Charlie's bed-room. He stretched his head out and again listened intently. Then he went to Tim, who was sleeping heavily on a couch placed there, and touched him. He put his hand on his lips as Tim sprang up. "Take arm," he said in Hindostanee. "Bad man coming."

Tim understood the words, and seizing a sword and pistol which lay close to the bedside, followed Hossein, who had glided up the stairs with a drawn tulwar in his hand. At the moment he did so there was a noise of heavy bodies dropping, followed by a sudden shout from Charlie. There was a sound of clashing of arms and the report of a pistol. As Tim's eyes came on a level with the terrace he saw Hossein bound with uplifted blade into the midst of a group of men in the corner. Three times the blade rose and fell, and each time a loud shriek followed. Then he disappeared in the midst. Tim was but a few seconds behind him. Discharging his pistol into the body of one of the men, and running his sword into another, he, too, stood by the side of his master. Charlie, streaming with blood, was half sitting half lying in the angle of the parapet. Hossein, his turban off, his long hair streaming down his back, was standing over him, fighting furiously against some ten men who still pressed forward, while several others lay upon the ground.

In spite of the arrival of Charlie's two allies they still pressed forward, but the shots of the pistols had been echoed by the muskets of the sentries. Loud shouts were heard, showing that the alarm was sounding through the palace. One more desperate effort the assailants made to beat the two men who opposed them over the parapet, but Hossein and the Irishman stood firm. The weight and numbers of their opponents, however, told upon them, when the first of the sentries appeared upon the platform, followed closely by his comrade, and both with levelled bayonets charged into the fray. The assailants now

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thought only of escape, but their position was a desperate one. Some rushed to the end of the terrace and tried to climb the ropes by which they had slid down from the upper roof of the house. Others endeavoured to rush down the staircase, but Tim with one of the sentries guarded this point, until a rush of feet below told that the guard were coming to their assistance. It was well that help was at hand, for the conspirators, desperate at finding themselves in a trap, gathering themselves together rushed with the fury of wild beasts upon Tim and the sentry. One was impaled upon a bayonet, another cut down by Tim, and then, borne back by the weight of their opponents, they were hurled backwards down the stairs. As the assailants followed them with a rush, the guard sprang through the open window from the terrace below into the room. There was a short and desperate conflict. Then two of the conspirators bounded up the staircase on to the roof, ran to the parapet and leaped over into the valley, two hundred feet below. They were the last of the eighteen men who had lowered themselves from the roof above to attack Charlie.

As soon as Tim picked himself up he hastened to ascend the stairs again, and to run to the side of his master. Charlie was insensible. Leaning against the parapet, too weak to stand, but still holding his sword and ready to throw himself once more before him, stood Hossein, who now, seeing Tim approach, and that all danger was over, dropped his sword and sank upon the ground. A minute or two later the rajah himself, sword in hand, hurried up. He was greatly concerned and excited at the sight which met his eyes. Charlie was at once lifted and carried down to one of the rajah's own rooms, where he was instantly attended to. A hasty examination showed that only two of the attacking party still breathed. None of those who had fallen above survived, so fierce and deadly had been the blows struck by Hossein and Tim. Charlie himself had cut

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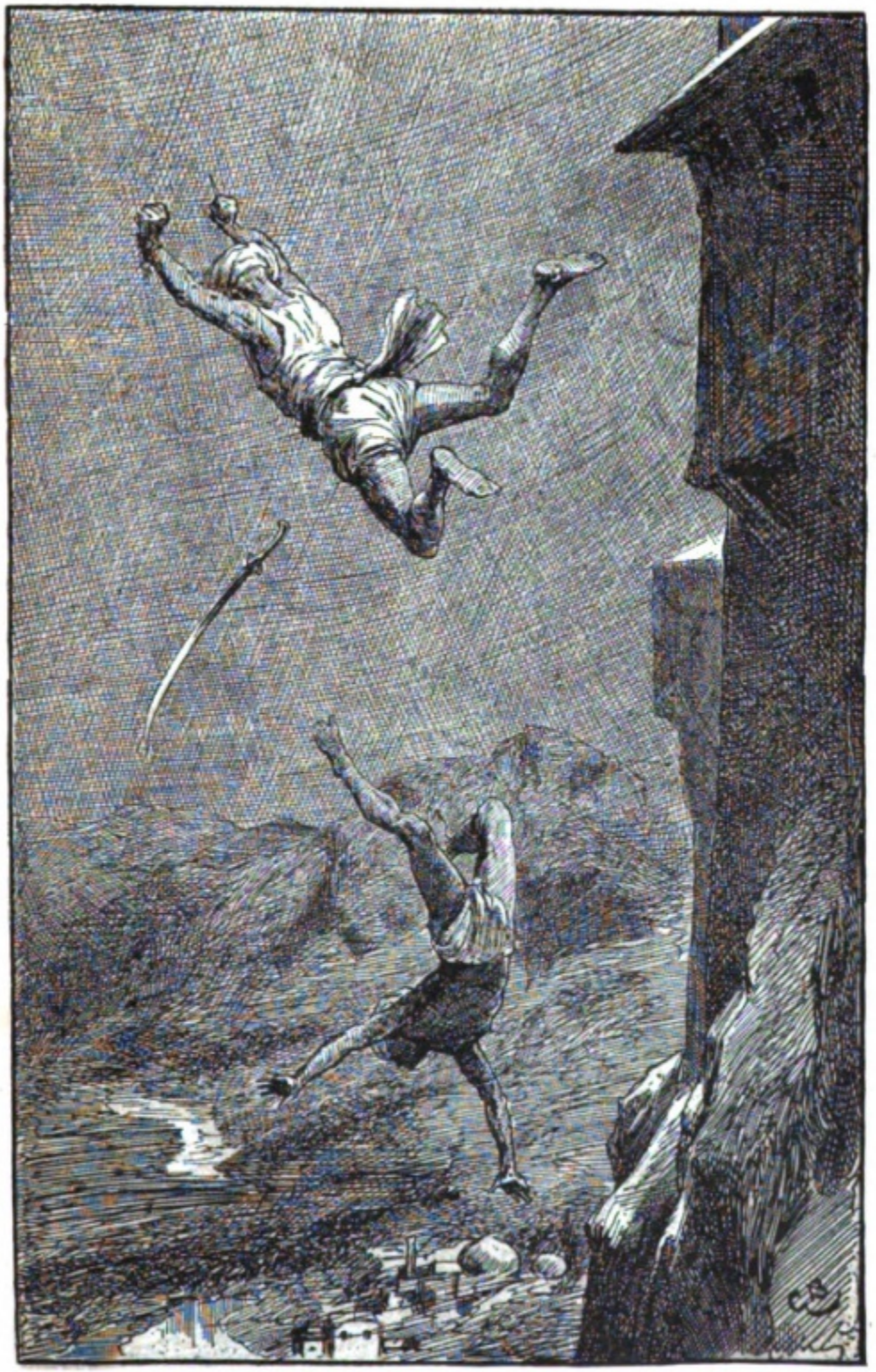

THE FATE OF THE ASSASSINS. PAGE 162.

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down one and shot another before he fell, slashed in many places, just as Hossein bounded through his assailants.

The bodies of the dead were by the rajah's orders laid together for identification in the morning. The two who still lived were carried to the guard-room, and their wounds dressed in order that the names of their employers might be obtained from them. In the meantime Charlie's lieutenants had hastily formed a body of their soldiers together, and these at once fell upon a number of men who were crowding up the steps to the palace with shouts of "Death to the Englishman." A few volleys poured among these effectually scattered them, and they broke and hurried down the steep road, through the gates to the town, the sentries on the way offering no opposition, but many falling under the fire from the parapet of the fort. In ten minutes all was over. The gates were again closed and a strong guard placed over them, and the attempted insurrection was at an end.

The native surgeon who attended Charlie pronounced that none of the five wounds he had received, although for the most part severe, were necessarily fatal, and that there was every chance of his recovery. Hossein's wounds, three in number, were pronounced to be more dangerous, one being a deep stab in the body given by a man who had rushed at him as he was guarding the blow of another. Tim's wounds were comparatively slight, and he suffered more from the bruises he had received when hurled backwards down the stone staircase. However, with one arm in a sling and his head bandaged, he was able to take his place by his master's bedside. Having heard from him that it was entirely due to Hossein that Charlie's life had been saved, the rajah directed that every attention should be paid to him, and several times during the night Tim stole away to his bedside to press his hand, and call down blessings upon him. The stanching of his wounds and the application of strong restoratives presently caused Charlie to open his eyes.

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"The Lord be praised, Mr. Charles," Tim said, "that you're coming to yourself again. Don't you trouble, sir. We've done for the murdhering rascals, and plase God you'll soon be about again. Jist drink this draught, yer honour, and go off to sleep if you can. In the morning I'll tell you all about it. You're in the rajah's own room," he continued, seeing Charlie's eyes wander wonderingly around him, "and all you've got to do is just to lie still and get well as soon as you can."

It was a fortnight before Charlie, still very weak and feeble, was able to totter from his room to that in which Hossein was lying. He himself knew nothing of what had passed after he fell. The conflict had to him been little more than a dream. Awakened from sleep by the sound of his assailants as they dropped from the ropes, he had leaped up as a rush of figures came towards him, catching up his sword and pistol as he did so. He had shot the first and cut down the next who rushed at him, but at the same moment he had felt a sharp pain and remembered no more. Tim heard from Hossein, when the latter, two days after the fight, was able to speak, that he had suspected that some renewed attempt might be made upon his master's life, and that for many nights he had not slept, contenting himself with such repose as he could snatch in the daytime, between the intervals of preparing meals. A few minutes before the attack he fancied he heard a movement on the roof of the house, and running to Charlie's room he had from the window seen some dark figures sliding down the wall. Then he roused Tim and rushed up to the rescue. Tim eloquently described to his master the manner in which Hossein sprung upon his foes, and cut his way through in time to drive back those who were hacking at him as he lay prostrate, and how he found him standing over him, keeping at bay the whole of his assailants.

Charlie with difficulty made his way to the bedside of

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the brave Mahommedan. The latter, however, did not know him. He was in the delirium of fever. He was talking rapidly to himself. "He trusted me," he said. "He gave me my life. Should I not give mine for him? Anyone else would have had me hung as a dog. I will watch; I will watch; he shall see that Hossein is not ungrateful."

Charlie's eyes filled with tears as he looked at the wasted form of his follower. "Is there any hope for him?" he asked the doctor.

"It is possible, just possible that he may live," the latter said. "Allah only knows."

"Do all you can to save him," Charlie said; "I shall be ever grateful to you if you do."

Tim, now that his master could dispense with his services, transferred his attentions to the bedside of Hossein, and was unremitting in the care and attention with which he kept the bandages on his head cool with fresh water, and wetted his hot lips with refreshing drinks. It was another week before his illness took a turn. Then the fever left him, and he lay weak and helpless as an infant. Strong soups now took the place of the cooling drinks, and in a few days the native doctor was able to say confidently that the danger was passed, and that Hossein would recover.

In the meantime the investigations of the rajah had brought to light the details of the conspiracy. The wounded men had confessed that they were employed by three of the principal persons at the rajah's court, one of them being the rajah's brother. The information, however, was scarcely needed, as it was found in the morning that their apartments were empty, they having fled with the men who had attacked the gates of the palace. These consisted partly of soldiers whom they had bribed, and of desperadoes from the town, who had singly entered the fort during the day, and had been concealed in the apartments of the conspirators until the signal for attack was

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given. The intention of the conspirators was not only to kill the Englishman but to dethrone the rajah, and install his brother in his place. The attack had commenced with the attempt upon Charlie's life, because it was believed that his death would paralyse the troops who were faithful to the rajah.

At the end of six weeks Charlie was able to resume his duties, and his appearance at the parade ground was hailed with enthusiastic shouts by the soldiers. The rajah was more attached to him than ever, and had again made him large presents in token of the regret he felt at the sufferings he had endured in his cause. Drilling was now carried on with redoubled energy, and large numbers of new levies had been summoned to the standard. A storm was gathering over Ambur. The rajah's brother was raising a force to attack him, and had, by means of large promises in case of success, persuaded Murari Reo to take up his cause, and he had, it was said, also sent messages to the nizam, pointing out that, in case of war with the English, the Rajah of Ambur would be a thorn in his side. He told of the numbers of troops who had been drilled, and how formidable such a force would be if opposed to him at a critical moment, while if he, the claimant, gained power the army of Ambur would be at the disposal of the nizam.

The rajah on his side had also sent messengers to Hyderabad with assurances to the nizam of his fidelity and friendship. He urged that the preparations he had made were intended solely for the defence of his state against marauding bands of Marattas, and especially against those of Murari Reo, who was a scourge to all his neighbours. In the meantime every effort was made to strengthen the defences of Ambur. The walls surrounding the town were repaired, and although these in themselves could have offered but a slight defence to a determined assault, the approaches to the town were all covered by the guns of the fort above. The weak point

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of the defence was the hill behind the town. This sloped up gradually to a point higher than the level of the projecting rock upon which the castle stood. It then rose in rugged cliffs some two hundred feet higher, and then fell away again steeply to its summit. This was too far back for the fire of guns placed upon it to injure the castle or town. Guns placed, however, at the foot of the rocky wall would dominate the castle and render it at last untenable. Charlie had often looked with an anxious eye at this point, and one morning, accompanied by the rajah, he rode up to examine the position. The highest point of the slope at the foot of the crag was nearly opposite the castle, and it was here that an active enemy, making his way along the slope, would place his guns. Here Charlie determined to establish a battery. News had arrived that the rajah's brother had raised a force of three thousand men, and that with seven thousand Marattas he was about to march. This force Charlie felt certain that he could meet and defeat in the open. But more disquieting news was that Bussy, hearing that the rajah's troops had been trained by an Englishman, had advised the nizam to declare for his rival and to send a considerable force to his assistance, if necessary. Fresh messengers were sent off with new assurances of the rajah's loyalty to the nizam.

"It may not do much good," Charlie said, "but if we can induce him to remain quiet until we have defeated Murari Reo, it will be so much gained." Charlie himself despatched a messenger to Mr. Saunders begging that assistance might be sent to the rajah. Having decided upon the position for a battery, energetic steps were taken to form it. A space large enough for the construction of the battery, and for the tents and stores of the artillery-men and two hundred infantry, was marked out, and the rajah ordered the whole population of Ambur, men, women, and children, to assist at the work. The troops, too, were all employed, and under Charlie's superintend-

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ence a wondrous change was soon effected. The spot chosen was levelled, a strong earthwork was erected round it, and then the surrounding ground was removed. This was a work of immense labour, the ground consisting first of a layer of soil, then of *débris* which had fallen from the face of the rock above, stones and boulders, to the depth of some fifteen feet, under which was the solid earth.

The slope resembled an ant-hill. The soldiers and able-bodied men broke up the boulders and rock with sledge-hammers, or, when necessary, with powder, and blasted the rock when needed. The women and children carried away the fragments in baskets. The work lasted for a fortnight, at the end of which a position of an almost impregnable nature was formed. At the foot of the earthworks protecting the guns, both at the face and sides, the ground, composed of great boulders and stones, sloped steeply out, forming a bank fifteen feet deep. At its foot, again, the solid rock was blasted away so as to form a deep chasm thirty feet wide and ten feet high round the foot of the fort. For a hundred yards on each side the earth and stones had been entirely removed down to the solid rock. Ten guns were placed in the battery, and the fire of these swept the slopes behind the town and castle, rendering it impossible, until the fort was carried, for an enemy to attack the town on that side, or to operate in any way against the only point at which an attack could be made upon the castle.

The rajah was delighted at this most formidable accession to the defensive power of his fortress, which was now in a position to defy any attack which could be made against it. A store of provisions and ammunition was collected there, and the command given to one of Charlie's Sepoy lieutenants, with a hundred trained artillerymen, and two hundred infantry. Numbers of cattle had been driven into the town and castle, and stores of provisions collected.

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It was but two days after the battery was complete that the news arrived that the rajah's brother with Murari Reo had entered the rajah's dominions, and was marching up the valley to the assault. The rajah had in the first place wished to defend a strong gorge through which the enemy would have to pass, this having hitherto been considered the defensible point of his capital against an invasion. Charlie pointed out, however, that although no doubt a successful defence might be made here, it would only be a repulse which would leave the enemy but little weakened for further operations. He argued that it was better to allow them to advance to the point where the valley opened out into a plain, some two miles wide. He had no doubt whatever that the rajah's troops would be able to inflict a crushing defeat upon the invaders, who would be so disheartened thereby that they would be little likely to renew the attack.

Two bodies of troops, each three hundred strong, were sent down to the gorge, with orders to remain in hiding among the heights, to allow the invading army to pass unmolested, and then to inflict the greatest possible loss upon them as they returned. These were under the command of another of Charlie's lieutenants, who received orders from him to erect breastworks of rock on the slopes above the entrance to the gorge, after the enemy had passed on, and to line these with a portion of his men who should pour a heavy fire into the enemy as they came down the valley, while the rest were to line the heights above the gorge and to roll down rocks upon those who passed through the fire of their comrades.

The uniforms were served out to the soldiers, and Charlie surveyed with pride the five battalions of trained troops which with twelve guns marched down into the valley and took up their post beyond it, at a point which he had carefully chosen, where the guns of the castle would be able to play upon an advancing body of troops. A body of trained artillerymen were told off for this

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service, and the last-raised levies were posted in the castle and on the walls of the town. The position was so chosen that the flanks of the line rested on the slopes on either side. These were broken by inclosures and gardens, into which on either side half a battalion was thrown forward so as to deliver a flanking fire upon an enemy advancing against the centre. Across the valley, two hundred yards in front of the position, the stream which watered it made a sharp turn, running for some distance directly across it, and several small canals for the irrigation of the fields rendered the ground wet and swampy. Across the line occupied by his troops, a breast-work had been thrown up, and in front of this rows of sharp-pointed stakes had been stuck in the ground. Altogether the position was a formidable one.

An hour or two after the position so carefully prepared had been taken up, large bodies of Maratta horse were seen dashing up the valley, and smoke rising from several points showed that they had begun their usual work of plundering and destroying the villages on their way. A few discharges from the field-pieces,—those in the castle had been ordered to be silent until the raising of a white flag gave them the signal to open fire,—checked the advance of the horsemen, and these waited until their infantry should arrive.

The force of Murari Reo was at that time the most formidable of any purely native army of Southern India. Recruited from desperadoes from all the Maratta tribes, well disciplined by its leader, it had more than once fought without defeat against bodies of Europeans, while it had in all cases obtained easy victories over other native armies.

Presently the horsemen opened, and a compact body of three thousand Maratta infantry, accompanied by an equal number of the irregulars of the rajah's brother, advanced to the attack, while the cavalry at their sides swept down upon the flanks of the rajah's position, and

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thirty pieces of artillery opened fire. Not a shot was fired in return, Charlie ordering his men to lie down behind the breastworks until they received the word of command to show themselves. The Maratta horsemen, compelled by the bends of the stream to keep near the foot of the slopes, came forward in gallant style, until suddenly from every wall and every clump of bushes on the slopes above them a tremendous fire of musketry broke out, while the twelve field-guns, six of which were posted on either side of Charlie's centre, poured a destructive fire into them. So deadly was the rain of iron and lead that the Maratta horsemen instantly drew bridle, and leaving the ground strewn with their dead, galloped back.

By this time the infantry, covered by the fire of their artillery, had reached the stream. This was waist deep, and the banks were some two feet above its level. As they scrambled up after crossing it, from the line of embankment in front of them a tremendous fire was opened. Although mowed down in scores the seasoned warriors of the Maratta chief, cheered on by his voice as, recklessly exposing himself, he rode among them, pressed forward. Ever increasing numbers gained a footing across the stream, those in front keeping up a heavy fire at the breastwork, whose face was ploughed by their cannon-shot. As they advanced the guns of the castle opened fire, not upon those in front, for these were too near the line of entrenchment, but upon the struggling mass still crossing the stream, into which a ceaseless fire of musketry was poured from the slopes on their flanks.

Still the Maratta infantry struggled bravely on until within a few yards of the entrenchments. Then, suddenly with a mighty shout the rajah's troops leaped to their feet, poured a volley from the crest of the breastwork into the enemy, and then with fixed bayonets flung themselves upon them. The effect was decisive. The Marattas had at the commencement of the fight scarcely

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outnumbered the troops of the rajah in front of them, and had derived but little assistance from the levies of their ally, who indeed had contented themselves with keeping up a fire upon the defenders of the slopes. They had already suffered very severely, and the charge made upon them along the whole line was irresistible. Before the bayonets crossed they broke and fled, hotly pursued by the troops of the rajah. These, in accordance with Charlie's orders, did not scatter, but kept in a close line, four deep, which advanced pouring tremendous volleys into their foe. In vain did Murari Reo endeavour to rally his men. His infantry, all order lost, fled at the top of their speed, their flight covered by their cavalry, who sacrificed themselves in two or three brilliant charges right up to the line of pursuers, although suffering terribly from the withering volleys poured into their ranks.

The troops were now formed into heavy columns, and these rapidly marched down the valley after their flying enemy. An hour later the sound of heavy firing was heard in front, and at redoubled speed the troops pressed onward. When they arrived, however, at the gorge they found that the last of the fugitives had passed through. The ground in front was strewn with dead and dying, for as the mass of fugitives had arrived at the gorge, the infantry from above had opened fire upon them. Several times the frightened throng had recoiled, but at last, impelled by the greater fear of their pursuers behind, they had dashed forward through the fire, only to fall in hundreds in the gorge, crushed beneath the rain of rocks showered down upon them from above.

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CHAPTER XIV.

THE SIEGE OF AMBUR.

THE victory was a complete and decisive one. A thousand of the best troops of Murari Reo had fallen, besides some hundreds of their irregular allies, whose loss was incurred almost wholly at the gorge in the retreat. The rajah was in the highest state of delight at the splendid result obtained by the European training of his troops, and these, proud of their victory over such formidable opponents, were full of enthusiasm for their young English leader. The rejoicings in Ambur that night were great, and all felt confident that the danger was at an end.

"What think you," the rajah said to Charlie, as, the long feast at an end, they sat together in the divan smoking their narghileys, "will be the result when the news of the defeat of Murari Reo reaches Hyderabad?"

"It is difficult to say," Charlie replied. "It is possible, of course, that it may be considered that it is better to leave you in peace; but upon the other hand it may be that they will consider that you are so formidable a power that it is absolutely necessary to crush you at once, rather than to give you the chance of joining against them in the war which must sooner or later take place between them and the English. In that case it will be a very different affair from that which we have had to-day. Still, I should send off a messenger to-morrow to acquaint

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the nizam with the defeat you inflicted upon the Marattas who have invaded you, to assure him again of your loyalty, and to beg him to lay his authority upon Murari Reo not to renew the attack."

Ten days later a messenger arrived from the nizam ordering the rajah to repair at once to Hyderabad to explain his conduct. The latter sent back a message of humble excuses, saying that his health was so injured by the excitement of recent events that he was unable to travel, but that when he recovered he would journey to Hyderabad to lay his respects at the feet of the nizam. Two or three days later a messenger arrived from Mr. Saunders with a letter to Charlie. In this he expressed his great satisfaction at the defeat Murari Reo had received, a defeat which would for some time keep him quiet, and so relieve the strain upon the English. Affairs had, he said, since the departure of Clive for England, been going badly. Dupleix had received large reinforcements, and the English had suffered several reverses. Mr. Saunders begged him to assure the rajah of the respect and friendship of England, and to give him the promise that if he should be driven from his capital he would be received with all honour at Madras, and should be reinstated in his dominions, with much added territory, when the English were again in a position to take the field in force and to settle their long feud with the French.

Ten days later they heard that the army of the nizam, of fifteen thousand troops, with eight hundred French under Bussy, were marching against them, and that the horsemen of Murari Reo were devastating the villages near the frontier. A council of war was held. Charlie would fain have fought in the open again, believing that his trained troops, flushed with their recent victory, would be a match even for the army of the nizam. But the rajah and the rest of the council, alarmed at the presence of the French troops, who had hitherto proved invincible

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against vastly superior forces of natives, shrank from such a course, and it was decided that they should content themselves with the defence of the town and castle. Orders were accordingly issued that the old men, the women, and children should at once leave the town, and, under guard of one battalion of troops, take refuge in an almost impregnable hill fort some miles away. One battalion was placed in garrison in the castle. The other three, with the irregulars, took post in the town, whence they could, if necessary, retreat into the castle. The day following the removal of the non-combatants the enemy appeared coming down the valley, having marched over the hills, while the Maratta cavalry again poured up from below.

Charlie had taken the command of the town, as it was against this that the efforts of the enemy would be first directed. It was an imposing sight as the army of the nizam wound down the valley, the great masses of men with their gay flags, the elephants with the gold embroidery of their trappings glistening in the sun, the bands of horsemen careering here and there, the lines of artillery drawn by bullocks, and, less picturesque but far more menacing, the dark body of French infantry who formed the nucleus and heart of the whole. The camp was pitched just out of range of the guns of the fort, and soon line after line of tents, gay with the flags that floated above them, rose across the valley. Charlie had mounted to the castle the better to observe the movements of the enemy, and he presently saw a small body of horsemen ride out of the camp and mount the hillside across the valley. A glass showed that some of these were native officers, while others were in the dark uniform of the French.

"I have no doubt," Charlie said to the rajah, "that is the nizam himself with Bussy gone up to reconnoitre the position. I wonder how he likes the look of it. I wish we could have turfed the battery above and the

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newly stripped land. We might in that case have given them a pleasant surprise. As it is they are hardly likely to begin by an attack along the slopes in the rear of the town, and you will see that they will commence the attack at the farther face of the town. The battery above cannot aid us in our defence there, and although the castle may help it will only be by a direct fire. If they try to carry the place by a *coup de main* I think we can beat them off, but they must succeed by regular approaches. We must inflict as much loss as we can and then fall back. However, it will be sometime before that comes."

The next morning Charlie found that the enemy had during the night erected three batteries on the slopes facing the north wall of the town, that farthest removed from the castle. They at once opened fire, and the guns on the walls facing them replied, while those on the castle hurled their shot over the town into the enemy's battery. For three days the artillery fire was kept up without intermission. The guns on the wall were too weak to silence the batteries of the besiegers, although these were much annoyed by the fire from the fort, which dismounted four of their guns and blew up one of their magazines. Several times the town was set on fire by the shell from the French mortars; but Charlie had organized the irregulars into bands with buckets, and these succeeded in extinguishing the flames before they spread. Seeing that the mud wall of the town was crumbling rapidly before the besiegers' fire, Charlie set his troops to work and levelled every house within fifty yards of it, and with the stones and beams formed barricades across the end of the streets beyond. Many of the guns from other portions of the walls were removed and placed on these barricades. The ends of the houses were loopholed, and all was prepared for a desperate defence.

Charlie's experiences at Arcot stood him in good stead,

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and he imitated the measures taken by Clive at that place. When these defences were completed he raised a second line of barricades some distance further back, and here, when the assault was expected, he placed one of his battalions, with orders that if the inner line of entrenchments was carried they should allow all the defenders of that post to pass through, and then resist until the town was completely evacuated, when they were to fall back upon the fort. He had, however, little fear that his position would be taken at the first assault.

Upon the evening of the third day the besiegers' fire had done its work, and a gap in the wall some eighty yards wide was formed. The garrison were ordered to hold themselves in readiness, and a strict watch was set. Towards morning a distant hum in the nizam's camp proclaimed that the troops were mustering for the assault. The besiegers' guns had continued their fire all night, to prevent working parties from placing obstacles in the breach. As the first shades of daylight appeared the fire ceased, and a great column of men poured forward to the assault.

The few remaining guns upon the end wall opened upon them, as did the infantry who lined the parapet, while the guns in the castle at once joined in. The mighty column, however, composed of the troops of the nizam, pressed forward, poured over the fragments of the wall, and entered the clear space behind it. Then from house-top and loophole, and from the walls on either side, a concentrated fire of musketry was poured upon them, while twelve guns, four on each barricade, swept them with grape. The head of the column withered away under the fire, long lines were swept through the crowded mass, and after a minute or two's wild firing at their concealed foes, the troops of the nizam, appalled and shattered by the tremendous fire, broke and fled. The instant they had cleared the breach, the guns of the besiegers again

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