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THE FOUNDERS OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE.

Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley.

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LORD CLIVE.

BY

COLONEL G. B. MALLESON, C.S.I.

AUTHOR OF "THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH IN INDIA."

WITH A PORTRAIT AND FOUR PLANS.

"A man of instincts and insights. A man, nevertheless, who will glare fiercely on any object, and see through it, and conquer it; for he has intellect, he has will, force beyond other men."—CARLYLE.

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THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED
TO
THE REVEREND EDWARD MALLESON,

RECTOR OF GREAT BOOKHAM, SURREY,

AS A SLIGHT MARK OF THE RESPECT AND AFFECTION,
BASED UPON AN UNBROKEN INTERCOURSE
EXTENDING OVER HALF A CENTURY,
BORNE HIM BY HIS BROTHER.



PREFACE.

It has often occurred to me that the title of the people of these islands to the control of the interests of the vast populations inhabiting Hindústán, so often called in question during recent years, might be fairly investigated by a crucial examination of the proceedings of the warriors and statesmen whose title to be regarded as the founders of the Indian Empire has never been questioned. These warriors and statesmen are—Clive, Warren Hastings, and Wellesley. The present volume deals with the first of the illustrious trio.

The claim of Clive to be the founder—the digger of the foundation, the organiser of the stratum, upon which our Indian empire rests—is undeniable. When he first went to India, in 1744, the few Englishmen and Frenchmen on the coast were the rent-paying tenants of the native lords of the soil. They did not possess in fee simple a single acre of land. They had no care to possess one. They went out to trade for the Company of which they were the servants. Their salaries were ridiculously small, but they were allowed,



on reaching a certain grade, to trade on their own account. It was to this trade that they looked to recoup themselves for the weariness of exile, and to atone for the privations of their earlier years of service.

Suddenly the whole condition of affairs changed. The war between France and England in Europe spread to India. The settlers of France expelled the settlers of England from their principal factory. Called upon by the native chief of the country, the common landlord of both, to restore it, they refused. When he raised an army to compel them they beat his army.

That was the first revolution. It inverted on the south-eastern coast of India the position of the settlers and the lords of the soil. The latter recognised the former as physically a superior race.

The second act in the drama was the contest between those two races, each physically stronger than the children of the soil, for superiority. The contest was long and obstinate. When the countries they represented were at peace in Europe, the settlers fought as adherents of rival puppet princes. These puppet princes thought they were fighting for their own hands. It was only when the genius of Clive had caused the contest to terminate in favour of the English, that the victorious native puppet recognised that he had been fighting for a gilded throne under the protection and under the control of the foreign settler.

But who were these puppet princes? Not the



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genuine natives of Hindústán, not the princes of the people of the soil. Those princes had disappeared. They had died out or had been forcibly removed by the descendants of the rude warriors of Central Asia, who, by the power of the sword, had exchanged the steppes of the deserts beyond the Oxus for the green pastures of Hindústán. So far, then, as the people were concerned, the change was simply a change in overlordship. The foreign descendants of the Mughul had had to yield to the foreign adventurers from beyond the sea.

It was in effecting this change in India south of the river Krishna that Clive first rose into prominence. But for him, the English would not have been the victors. In Southern India, then, he laid the foundation—rough and ready at the outset, but still the foundation—of a dominion that was to endure. The people, properly so-called, had been accustomed to be ruled; they called eagerly for a master to repress lawlessness within their borders; and they welcomed the firm but mild government of the European as an improvement on the rude tyranny of the equally foreign Mughul.

In Bengal the conditions were in many respects similar. There, too, the Hindú princes of a preceding era had been thrust out by the conquerors from Afghánistán and Central Asia. For more than five hundred years Bengal had not known a ruler professing the Hindú faith. The Hindú landed aristocracy still, indeed, remained titular lords of petty states, or the proprietors of large acres, under the



foreigner. The industrial middle classes of the same race conducted the extensive commercial and monetary transactions of the rich provinces in which they were born. The Afghán and the Central Asian foreigners protected a system which, without exertion on their part, tended alike to enrich the country and to supply them with loans in case of need. Their followers, settled for four or five hundred years in the province, gradually adopted the tastes and habits of the aboriginal race. But they did not oust them from any of the professions in which they had excelled. The Hindú still remained pre-eminent in finance, pre-eminent in trade. In Eastern Bengal alone did the Muhammadans show any disposition to rivalry. They built there a city, now the capital of that district, known as Dháká, which became the head-quarters of their co-religionists.

For centuries the two races lived side by side under the rule of the Muhammadan overlord. Sometimes this overlord was an independent prince, sometimes a prince who strove for independence; oftener, especially in the prosperous times of the Mughuls, a viceroy representing the sovereign of that race; in their season of decay, a viceroy aiming at independence. The last-named condition of affairs had ruled during the fifty years immediately preceding the catastrophe of the Black Hole. Just four years prior to the death of the ruler whom the Muhammadans venerate as the greatest of the Mughuls—the capable but bigoted Aurangzib—the Government of al had been seized by a man who, the son of a



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poor Bráhmaṇ, had been sold to a Persian merchant, had been brought up as a Muhammadan, and who, under the name of Murshid Kuli Khán, had developed extraordinary abilities. In the troubles which followed the death of Aurangzíb, Murshid Kuli Khán made Bengal and Orísá a virtually independent satrapy. He gave his own name to the capital, previously called Makhsus-ábád, and that name it retains to the present day. Fourteen years later he added Bihár to his dominions, and he obtained for his government patents of legality from the Court of Dihlí.

The large Hindú populations of the three provinces had been for so many centuries accustomed to the sway of the foreigner that they had ceased even to inquire as to his family or his race. They only required a strong man, a man who would protect their trade and commerce, would repress turmoil within, would defend them against an enemy from without. Murshid Kuli Khán did all this; and notwithstanding that in the eyes of the Hindú priests he was an outcast, a pervert from their faith, the Hindús gave him their most complete adhesion. After his death, his son-in-law Shuja'u'dín Khán, a Khorasání of the tribe of Nádir Sháh, succeeded to the vacated seat, and pursuing the same system, obtained the same confidence. But with him the line ended. One of his confidants had been Alí Vardí Khán, a man of great ability, whom he had nominated Governor of Patná. On the death of Shuja'u'dín in 1739, Alí Vardí, like a true Mughul, appeared as a claimant for the viceregal chair, defeated and slew the son of his late



master, and gained it. The moribund Court of Dihilí confirmed him in his office.

Alí Vardí Khán was a strong man, and he assumed power when a strong man was most needed. Almost immediately after his accession, the Maráthás, the latest warrior representatives of the Hindú race, began an invasion which for the nine years that followed was intermittent. The Hindús of Bengal had no sympathy with the Hindú invaders. They clung, all the more for the invasion, to the strong Muhammadan arm which alone could protect them. Alí Vardí struggled manfully, but not always effectually; and when finally, in 1751, he made peace with the invaders, he was forced, as the only means to ensure it, to yield Katak, and to agree to pay twelve lakhs of rupees annually as the *chauth*, or tribute, of Bengal!

Still, from Bengal proper he did expel the invaders. Little recked the Hindú inhabitants regarding the disposal of the twelve lakhs, provided the expenditure obtained for them peace and security. And it did, for the remainder of the life of Alí Vardí, obtain those results.

Alí Vardí died in 1756. His title to the government of the three provinces had been a sharp sword wielded by a strong hand. He had slain the son of his early master because he could not produce such a title. His own spoiled grandson and successor was of the same material as the dispossessed son of his early master. What was still more against him was the fact that he was too young and too inexperienced



to understand that the first requirement of a ruler of Bengal was to respect and protect the property, the trade, the private wealth, of his subjects. Siráju'd daulah had scarcely seated himself upon the masnad before he made war upon all three. In so doing, whilst he alienated the influential classes alike of his Hindú and Muhammadan subjects, he roused against himself the righteous indignation of a foreign race which, in virtue of privileges granted to them by his predecessors, had settled, and were carrying on a trade, lucrative to themselves and to his subjects, in Bengal.

How the foreigners, led by a man of consummate daring and genius, rose to avenge that outrage—how, with the sympathy and the support of the more influential of the children of the soil they did avenge it—is told in this book. The result may be described almost in a phrase. The Hindú peoples of the three provinces exchanged one foreign ruler for another, a ruler who would protect them for a ruler who had begun his short reign by oppressing them. That was simply all. If the new race of foreigners were usurpers, the foreign race they expelled were equally usurpers, equally alien in language and in religion. As the royal Mughuls had fallen before Murshid Kuli Khán, as the grandson of Murshid Kuli had fallen before Alí Vardí, so now the grandson of Alí Vardí fell before the right arm of the foreign race which, in his presumption, he had endeavoured to expel.

In laying, then, in Bengal the foundations of a British empire, Clive violated no principle not admitted



alike by those whom he expelled and those over whom he assumed rule. The principle had been not only admitted but acted upon from generation to generation. It was the principle of the right of the strongest to protect and to govern a busy, industrious, money-acquiring race, incapable of defending or of governing themselves. The catastrophe of 1756 proved that the non-assertion of that right by a foreigner able to assert it meant annihilation. For him there was no middle course.

There is a marked difference between a principle and the mode of applying that principle. In the instance just referred to, there can, I think, be no two opinions regarding the necessity of applying the principle; regarding the mode in which it was applied there may be many. I shall not here anticipate the conclusions at which I have arrived on this point. It will suffice to insist that the misgovernment of the Central Asian foreigner had placed before the European foreigner the alternative of intervention or of destruction.

The European foreigner intervened. How—with what immediate result—is told in the pages which follow. The story, after reaching a certain point, confines itself almost to the narration of the life of the stern and resolute man who was the first of Englishmen to recognise the necessity of taking a decided course; who, in Southern India, founded British rule on the basis from which he expelled a European foreigner; and who, in Bengal, brought about a similar result by a direct collision with the



satrap of the Mughul, and, later, with the Mughul himself.

In carrying out this task I have endeavoured to preface the introduction on the scene of the chief actor by setting clearly before the reader the position of affairs in Southern India which forced his great qualities into striking prominence. I have thus described the state of affairs in Southern India immediately prior to the appearance of Clive in a position of real responsibility; I have indicated the impression the scene thus opened to him made upon, the resolution it helped to form in, his mind; I have gone back then to trace his earlier career, his early hopes, his early disappointments, following him step by step to the critical moment of his first introduction to the reader, and describing at the same time the events in Southern India which, from small beginnings, had so accumulated as to make that special moment most critical. When the story is brought up to that point, no further management is necessary. There is a clap of thunder, a flash—the heaven-born General produces light out of darkness: he strikes down the power of France, and he stands before the world the founder of the Indian Empire.

Such is, at least, the scene as it appeared to his contemporaries. Before he had become a hero, Clive had not been thought of. Up to that time no one knew aught of his antecedents; no one cared to know of them. He was one of the herd; as fit, apparently, to help to fill a ditch as any other man. It was when he suddenly showed himself a man of action, a



man likely to guide the course of events, that the questions were asked which, under similar circumstances, always rise to the lips of the multitude: "Who is he?" "What was he?"

In endeavouring in these pages to answer those questions I have especially devoted my researches to three periods of his life. The first, the period of little more than eighteen months—between his sudden appearance at Trichinápalli in May 1751 and the close of 1752; the second, from his sailing up the Hugli in December 1756 to his return to England in 1760; the third from his re-landing in Calcutta in May 1765 to his departure in January 1767. It is on his conduct during those three epochs—epochs of Indian life—that posterity will judge Clive. Small interest, in comparison, will it take in the intrigues, the disappointments, the annoyances of his first and second visits to England. Those intrigues, those annoyances, those disappointments, were the consequences of the acts of his Indian life. Passing over those periods, then, as briefly as I might, I have endeavoured to concentrate the interest of the reader on the actions—for Clive was essentially a man of action—of his very remarkable career in India. The third and last visit to England I have necessarily described in greater detail, because his reception by the world of London was the crucial test applied to certain acts of the active life, the propriety of which was not apparent to some of his contemporaries. Had the inculpatèd acts been able to stand that crucial test, to pass through the trying ordeal without leaving a stain on their author, there



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had been, possibly, for Clive, in Europe or America, a career scarcely less brilliant than that which has given him a name for ever in the history of the connection between Great Britain and India.

In performing my self-allotted task I have striven to be impartial. I am sure I have not written as a partisan. With the admiration I naturally feel for a man who did as much as any man who ever trod this earth to make of this small island in the Atlantic the Queen of nations, her roots spreading all over the world, it is with pain, greater than I can describe, that I have been forced to the conclusions I have recorded in the last chapter. I have done justice, I am certain, to the brilliant genius which changed the future of India; to the daring, the coolness, the energy, the clear-sightedness, the superiority to circumstances, displayed on every trying occasion. The greater, then, is my mortification that I cannot deny the existence of the alloy which, at times of peculiar temptation, disfigured a character which would have been otherwise without reproach.

I append a list of the sources on which I have based my work. The memoirs of the Frenchmen who flourished in India in the middle of the eighteenth century have been the more valuable inasmuch as the *pièces justificatives* which form the bulk of their volumes give almost the entire official correspondence of the period. *Orme's History*, *Caraccioli's Life of Clive*, the *Sayar il Muta'akhhkirin*, *Transactions in India*, *Ives's Voyage and Historical Narrative*, *Grose's Voyage to the East Indies*, *Vansittart's Narrative*,



Holwell's *Indian Tracts*, Francklin's *Life of Shah Aulum*, Mr. Henry Strachey's *Narrative*, are contemporary records which form, with the French memoirs, the basis for a history of the period. With respect to more modern works, I may state that I have found invaluable the correspondence of Lord Clive accumulated by Sir John Malcolm, and that I have consulted with great advantage Stewart's *History of Bengal*, the *Asiatic Annual Register*, Williams's *Bengal Native Infantry*, Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*, and Broome's *History of the Bengal Army*. On the last-named work I have based mainly my account of the combination of the Bengal officers in 1766.

G. B. MALLESON.

27, West Cromwell Road,
20th October 1882.



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LIST OF WORKS which form the Authorities for this Volume,
or which have been consulted :—

1. Orme's "Military Transactions in Indostan."
2. "Mémoire pour le sieur de la Bourdonnais, avec les pièces justificatives."
3. "Mémoire pour le sieur Dupleix, avec les pièces justificatives."
4. "Mémoire pour le sieur Moracin, avec les pièces justificatives."
5. Cambridge's "War in India" (containing Colonel Stringer Lawrence's narrative).
6. "Transactions in India, from the commencement of the French war in 1756 to the conclusion of the late peace in 1783," containing a history of British interests in Indostan for a period of near thirty years.
7. Caraccioli's "Life of Clive."
8. Ive's "Voyage and Historical Narrative."
9. Grose's "Voyage to the East Indies."
10. The "Siyar-ul-Muta'akherin," a history of the Mahomedan power in India during the last century, by Mír Gholam Hussein Khán, revised from the translation of Haji Mustafa and collated with the original Persian by Lieutenant-Colonel John Briggs, M.R.A.S.
11. Holwell's "Indian Tracts."
12. Vansittart's "Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal."
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15. Williams's "Bengal Native Infantry."
16. Verelst's "English Government in Bengal."
17. Francklin's "Life of Shah Aulum."
18. Malcolm's "Life of Clive."
19. "Inde," par M. Xavier Raymond.
20. "Histoire de la conquête de l'Inde par Angleterre," by Baron Barchon de Penhoen.
21. Broome's "History of the Bengal Army."
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23. Gleig's "Life of Lord Clive."
24. "Lord Clive," by T. B. Macaulay.
25. Talboys Wheeler's "Early Records of British India."



ERRATUM.

Page 12, line 2 from foot, for "twenty," read "twelve."

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original 7.

THE FOUNDERS OF THE INDIAN EMPIRE.

LORD CLIVE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

IN the spring of 1751 the struggle between the French and English for supremacy in the Karnátak, and, generally, in the countries south of the Vindhayan range, had been all but decided in favour of the former. French troops occupied the capital, and a French general dictated the policy, of the country now ruled by the Nizám. South of the river Krishna the Governor of Pondichery, M. Dupleix, had been nominated, by the Muhammadan Viceroy of Southern India, Núwáb of the territory known as the Karnátak, and comprehending North and South Arkát, Tanjúr, Trichinápalli, Madura, and Tinnevéli. It is true that in none of those territories had Dupleix openly assumed the reins of power. That great man had,



at an early period of his career, recognised the possibility of securing a great future for France in Southern India. From the moment when, on November 4th, 1746, the French troops, led by Paradis, had completely defeated the vastly superior army of the Núwáb of the Karnátak, the establishment of French domination over India south of the Vindhayan range had become the dream of his life. Of all the Europeans who had devoted their career to India he was the first to grasp the idea. He had grasped not only the idea, but, what was of greater consequence, the one method by which it could be worked out to a successful result. It was not by a bold assertion of power, by a too patent exercise of authority, that he would strive to attain his end. It was rather by keeping his own personality in the background, whilst he allowed French influence, supported when necessary by French troops, to permeate everywhere, to be predominant everywhere, that he hoped to reap the ultimate harvest. Acting on these lines he had, by a series of skilful manœuvres, caused French influence, supported by an able general, M. de Bussy, and a small body of French troops, to become paramount at the court of the Nizám, then known as the Súbahdár of the Dakhan. Influenced by the same policy, Dupleix, although nominated, as I have said, Núwáb of the provinces south of the Krishna, had carefully refrained from exercising personal authority in any one of them. Preferring to rule by deputy, he had caused that they should be entrusted to Chanda Sáhib, a nobleman whom he had made ruler in the



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teeth of the English, and who was, therefore, devoted to him.

Of the important cities in these territories Trichinápalli and Tanjúr alone resisted the rule of the French nominee. To obtain possession of Trichinápalli was an integral portion of the French scheme. Tanjúr, famous then for the vast wealth of its ruler, and the possibility of coercing which had been demonstrated by the English in 1749, would follow Trichinápalli. But Trichinápalli demanded instant action. Not only was it strong in itself, not only did it, in the hands of an enemy, constitute an open sore in the dominions of the ruler of the Karnátak, but, it was at that moment held by Muhammad Ali, the rival claimant to that important territory, the claimant supported by the English.

In the autumn of 1750 the idea that Trichinápalli would constitute an obstacle to the plans of the great Frenchman had occurred to no one. The English, dazzled by the success of the policy of their rivals, were apparently too dispirited to attempt to oppose their schemes. It is true that they held Madras and Fort St. David, and that they had acquired Devikóta; but since the departure of Boscawen and his fleet (November 1749) they had ceased to devise large projects. Mr. Saunders, who, in 1750, had succeeded Mr. Floyer as governor, had been especially charged to pursue a policy of peace. The veteran commander who had on previous occasions baffled the plans of the French—Major Stringer Lawrence—was in England. The next in command, Captain Gingen, was

an officer of tried mediocrity. It was not wonderful, then, that the English, cooped up in Madras and Fort St. David, should not only take a gloomy view of the future, but should deem themselves powerless to defeat, or even to hinder, the plans of the ruler of Pondichery.

It was at this season that Muhammad Ali, deeming further resistance futile, and conscious of the fate which would certainly await him were he captured in his stronghold, opened negotiations with Dupleix. He offered to recognise Chanda Sáhib as Núwáb of the Karnátak, and to surrender to him Trichinápalli and its dependencies, on the conditions that the moneys left by his father should be restored to him, that no inquiry should be made into any of his administrative acts, and that a governing post in some other part of the Dakhan should be bestowed upon him. Dupleix agreed to these conditions. So confident, then, was the Frenchman that no further difficulties would occur, that, without waiting for the ratification of the agreement, he carried out a measure which had been awaiting the pacification of the Karnátak, and despatched M. de Bussy and the flower of the French force to Haidarábád.

For once Dupleix allowed himself to be overreached. Muhammad Ali had no sooner heard of the despatch of the French troops to Haidarábád, than he made further demands upon Dupleix, demands of no great moment in themselves, but which required the ratification of the Súbahdár.

Whilst thus gaining a considerable respite, Mu-



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hammad Ali plied Saunders with entreaties to send some English troops to aid him in the defence of Trichinápalli. He pointed out the enormous importance of that place as the one considerable barrier to French domination still remaining. That barrier swept away, what was there to prevent the entire supremacy of the French in Southern India? Was that an outlook which the English would care to face?

This reasoning, urged with considerable force, worked upon the mind of Mr. Saunders. It was, in fact, irresistible. He felt that two courses were open to him—to be swallowed up without resistance, or, with inferior means and no capable commander, to attempt to check the progress of the dragon. He acted as every real Englishman would under the circumstances always act. Early in January 1751 he transmitted to Muhammad Ali the assurance that he would be supported by an English force. On receiving this assurance, Muhammad Ali, who had just then received the ratification of the Súbahdár to the further conditions forwarded through Dupleix, boldly threw off the mask, and defied alike the French and the ruler of the Dakhan.

Thus it was that the possession of Trichinápalli came to be the crucial point upon which the supremacy of the French in Southern India was to depend. At the dawn of 1751 that nation had every place except Tanjúr and Trichinápalli, and the latter was apparently within their grasp. It had been promised them on conditions, and they had agreed to those con-



ditions. But during the same month of January the promise had been withdrawn. Trichinápalli defied them. The English were despatching troops to defend it. The French would have, then, to accomplish by force of arms the end which they had failed to attain by negotiations. Failure in the field alone would baffle the vast plans of Dupleix.

But failure did not seem possible. Although his most capable commander and his best *corps d'armée* were with the Súbahdár, Dupleix had still at his disposal troops more numerous than the English, and commanders who, indifferent though they might be, were not inferior to Gingen. He had all the resources of the Karnátak, and the moral force of Haidarábád, to aid him. What though Muhammad Ali and the English did defy him, his power to crush both seemed assured. He could not doubt it. No man in Pondichery could doubt it. No Englishman in Madras and Fort St. David, least of all the leader of the English troops, Captain Gingen, doubted it. It was a foregone conclusion. Trichinápalli, now to be conquered by force of arms, would become the grave alike of Muhammad Ali and the English.

No one more clearly than the French leader recognised the fact that on the possession of that place depended whether Southern India was to become permanently French. He recognised it, however, without any misgiving. He felt confident that, with the resources at his command, there could be but one result to the contest which Muhammad Ali had provoked. With the directness, then, which always



marked his policy when he had clearly before his eye the aim to be attained, Dupleix urged Chanda Sáhib to move rapidly on Trichinápalli, with a force numbering from seven to eight thousand men, aided by four hundred French soldiers, a few Africans, and some guns, under the command of Monsieur d'Auteuil. Chanda Sáhib promised to comply.

Of the plans for the campaign all but one betokened the prescience of a great administrator. The exception lay in the choice of the commander. D'Auteuil was a man naturally indolent and unenterprising. He was subject, moreover, to periodical attacks of gout. On the other hand, he was accustomed to command; he was the senior officer in Pondichery; he was equal to the Gingens and the Copes with whom it was believed he would come in contact. It was impossible for Dupleix to divine that under the Gingens and the Copes there served a man possessing a genius not inferior to his own, a genius even more comprehensive, inasmuch as it invested him with the power, wanting to himself, of personally directing the plan of a campaign, and of deciding rapidly and rightly amid the storm of bullets and the roar of cannon!

Mr. Saunders having once resolved to aid Muhammad Ali, had detached, early in the year, a force consisting of two hundred and eighty Europeans and three hundred sepoy, commanded by Captain Cope, to Trichinápalli. Their arrival at that place before d'Auteuil had even quitted Pondichery inspired Muhammad Ali with the hope that with their aid he



might gain for himself the cities to the south, held at the time for his rival.

In this hope, however, he was disappointed. An attempt made by Cope upon the important city of Madura was defeated. This defeat appeared the climax of the misfortunes of Muhammad Ali. Cope was compelled to destroy his guns from inability to carry them away; three thousand five hundred of Muhammad Ali's native troops deserted to the enemy; and at the same time news arrived of the march of d'Auteuil and Chanda Sahib from Pondichery. Muhammad Ali thereupon sent urgent requests to Fort St. David, imploring immediate assistance, and telling the English in the plainest language that his cause was indeed their cause, that his extinction would be the prelude to their own destruction.

The cause of Muhammad Ali was in very deed the cause of the English. Already, from the ramparts of Fort St. David the English garrison could distinguish small white flags which Dupleix had caused to be planted in every field to which he could lay claim, some of them on fields within the territory of the English Company. It was the insolence of these marks of sovereignty, writes the contemporary historian, Mr. Orme, which gave force and expression to the solicitations of Muhammad Ali, which roused the English from their lethargy, and which finally determined them to run every risk rather than allow their native ally to perish. Mr. Saunders accordingly equipped and sent into the field a body of five hundred Europeans, of whom fifty were cavalry,



a thousand sepoy, a hundred Africans, and eight guns; and placing them under the command of Captain Gingen, directed that officer to follow and watch the movements of d'Auteuil and Chanda Sáhib, but on no account to engage them until he should be joined by the troops of Muhammad Ali from Trichinápalli. Peace reigned between France and England in Europe, and it was a main object of the English to avoid the committing of any act which would make them appear as principals in the war which Chanda Sáhib was waging against Muhammad Ali. Hence the order to Gingen not to act offensively until he should be joined by the partisans of that pretender.

Meanwhile Chanda Sáhib, instead of marching directly upon Trichinápalli—a march which, under the circumstances, could scarcely have failed to finish the war—had persuaded d'Auteuil to proceed in the first instance northwards, with the double object of confirming his authority in the principal towns and fortresses of North and South Arkát, and of levying additional troops. Though he was successful in both objects, the success did not compensate for the delay which the *détour* caused. Though Vélúr (Vellore) and Arkát and every stronghold north of the Kolrún acknowledged the sovereignty of Chanda Sáhib, though the number of that prince's soldiers was raised from eight thousand to seventeen thousand, these advantages were dearly purchased. On arriving before the important fortress of Valkonda d'Auteuil found it threatened by an army led by the



brother of Muhammad Ali, allied with whom were the English troops under Captain Gingen.

That officer had been delayed for six weeks by the necessity imposed upon him of waiting for his native allies. It was only when he had been joined by sixteen hundred troops from Trichinápalli that he was in a position to act under the shadow of the name of Muhammad Ali. Under the potent auspices of that name he then marched upon and captured Verdachelam, a fortified pagoda held for Chanda Sáhib. Thence he had proceeded to Valkonda, a very strong fortress about ninety miles from the coast, on the high road between Arkát and Trichinápalli, and forty-five miles from the latter. He summoned this fortress, but the governor, learning that Chanda Sáhib was approaching, and not being certain as to which of the two contending parties would prove the stronger, declined the most persuasive offers. Two days later Chanda Sáhib and d'Auteuil appeared. They, too, endeavoured to coax the governor into admitting them. But towards them likewise he was inexorable. For a whole fortnight matters continued in this uncertain condition, Gingen and his allies lying encamped in a grove about a mile and a half to the south-west of the fortress, Chanda Sáhib and the French about four miles to its north, both parties using their utmost persuasions with the governor, each waiting for the other to have recourse to force. The British were the first to lose their patience. At 9 o'clock on the evening of the 19th July, Gingen marched against the place, gained the outworks, but in the end was repulsed with con-



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siderable loss. The governor was so irritated at this attack that he at once admitted the French within the fortress.

The next morning, whilst the main body of the French attacked Gingen's troops, d'Auteuil opened upon them from the walls of the fortress an artillery fire so severe that, though the pieces were extremely ill-directed, the English fell into a panic and quitted the field, abandoning their native allies and leaving six pieces of cannon, several muskets, all their camp equipage and stores of ammunition, in the hands of the conqueror. Here was an opportunity to finish the war at which a great general, at which any but an ordinary general, would have clutched. Victors on the field of battle, the only army of their enemy—the few troops under Cope excepted—panic-stricken, deprived of its guns and munitions, the French had but to march straight on in the manner in which the French can march, not halting till the defeat had been turned into a complete and absolute overthrow, and Trichinápalli would have fallen—the whole of Southern India would have been secured. But, far from acting in this manner, the French contented themselves with a barren victory. D'Auteuil was suffering from gout, and there was not a single officer serving under him who possessed the spirit and capacity to supply his place. The English thus were allowed not merely to escape, but to retreat leisurely in the direction of that very Trichinápalli which it was the commission of d'Auteuil to secure.

When the next day d'Auteuil discovered the line of



retreat taken by Gingen, he followed on his track and caught him up at Utatúr, some twenty miles distant. Here an event occurred which added to the discouragement of the English troops. They were enticed into an ambushade and suffered severely. Two days later Chanda Sáhib, having arranged with d'Auteuil that under cover of a cavalry demonstration the French infantry should make a serious attack, moved against the English camp with all his horsemen. The demonstration failed owing to the non-arrival of the French at the time agreed upon. It had this effect, however. It proved very clearly to the English commander that it would be easy for Chanda Sáhib to cut him off from Trichinápalli whence he drew all his supplies. Alarmed at such a prospect, Gingen withdrew from the ground he occupied that same night, never halting till 2 o'clock the next day, and then only when he had reached the northern bank of the Kolrún, an arm of the river Kávéri.

The river Kávéri, rising in the mountains of the Malabár coast, passes through the kingdom of Maisúr, and runs four hundred miles before it reaches Trichinápalli. About five miles to the north-west of this city it divides itself into two principal arms. The northern, called the Kolrún, finds its outlet at Devikóta; the southern retains the name of Kávéri. For several miles after the separation the banks of the Kolrún and Kávéri are in no part two miles apart; in many, scarcely one. Indeed, about a mile west of Koiládi,—a mud fort twenty miles to the east of Trichinápalli,—the two streams approach so



near to each other that the people of the country had built a large and strong mound of earth to prevent them from reuniting. The long slip of land enclosed between the point, five miles to the west of the city, where the streams first separate, and the point indicated about a mile to the west of Koiládi, is called the island of Shrírangham (Seringham), famous throughout India for the great pagoda whence it derives its name. This temple, which is very strong and of vast extent, its outer wall being four miles in circumference, is situated about a mile from the western extremity of the island, at a short distance only from the banks of the Kolrún. About half a mile to the east of it is another large pagoda, rather more than half the circumference of the other, called Jambukeshwar. There is a small village in the extreme western angle of the island, but besides this and the two pagodas there are no habitations of any importance. To complete the description, I may add that on the northern bank of the Kolrún, opposite to the space between the two pagodas, and directly facing Trichinápalli, is the fortified pagoda of Paichandah; about two miles to the east of it is the fort of Lálgudi. Of the villages and positions on the south bank of the main branch, the Kávéri, I shall speak when they come into the story.

It was to the fortified pagoda of Paichandah that Gingen had retreated. He was not, however, allowed to remain there in peace. Rapid as had been his march, Chanda Sáhib and the French had followed him as rapidly, and before 8 o'clock that night had



taken up their position within three miles of his camp. The army of Chanda Sáhib was increasing at every step. The position of Gingen on the banks of a river which at the moment was not fordable was dangerous in the extreme. His anxiety was augmented by the knowledge of the fact that it was always open to the French, whilst threatening him in front, to despatch a detachment across the river at another point, and by occupying Shrírangham, to cut him off from Trichinápalli. Under these circumstances Gingen resolved to fall back further. Fortunately boats were available, and he succeeded in crossing into the island almost before the French had discovered that he had moved. He did not consider himself safe even here. After a halt of two days he crossed the Kávéri and encamped under the walls of Trichinápalli. Chanda Sáhib and the French followed, took possession of Shrírangham, and attempted thence to bombard the city. But finding the range too great, they first captured Koiládi, then, crossing the Kávéri, they took up, on the plain to the east of the town, a position known as the French rock. Thence they opened fire on Trichinápalli.

Trichinápalli was, for the arms of those days, a place of very considerable strength. It had the form of an oblong square, the longest sides of which were the eastern and western. On the north side ran the Kávéri, less than half a mile from the northern face. The town was at that time an enclosure four miles in circumference round the foot of a rock. This rock, three hundred feet high, commanded from its summit



the country as far as Tanjūr. The town possessed a double enceinte of walls with round towers at equal distances. The ditch was thirty feet wide though not quite half as deep. The outer wall, built of stone, was about eighteen feet high and four or five feet thick. The inner wall, distant from the outer some twenty-five feet, might properly be termed a rampart. It was thirty feet high and had the same thickness at its base, the thickness decreasing in proportion as it ascended. The terreplein of the parapet had a breadth of about ten feet; and the parapet, pierced with loop-holes, was seven or eight feet high, giving a complete cover to the defenders. Some bastions were erected during the siege. The town was extremely well supplied with water by the Kávéri.

To besiege this place, to conquer its English defenders, Chanda Sáhib and the French took up the position already mentioned in the first days of August 1751. Notwithstanding the little energy which their leader had displayed, the French contingent was animated by the inspiring confidence which the following a retreating foe always creates. Had it known the change in its leadership then looming in the immediate future, that confidence would have been still greater. The position at the French rock had been occupied but a few days when d'Auteuil, incapacitated for active work, was at his own request relieved of his command. His place was filled by Law, of Lauriston, nephew of the famous Scotch financier, and the destined father of the renowned cavalry officer under the French empire.



Law had before served with distinction in India. He was young, active, ambitious, seemingly full of energy. He displayed, then, the qualities which inspire hope in soldiers. On the other hand the English, partly shut up in Trichinápalli, partly occupying a post about one-third of the distance between that fortress and the French camp, were utterly dispirited. The men had lost confidence in their officers, and the officers had lost confidence in themselves. Law, deeming Trichinápalli too strong to be stormed, had resolved to subject the place to a strict blockade. In his view every consideration seemed to favour the policy of such a course. Superior in numbers, commanding the surrounding country with his cavalry, occupying all the strong places in the neighbourhood, he believed that by instituting a strict blockade he could in a short time force a surrender. With ordinary care, then, the fall of Trichinápalli seemed assured.

It was when the situation was so desperate that an English gentleman, but recently attached to the army, and commanding a small detachment of men, reached the beleaguered place. The more that officer saw of its affairs the less he liked them. Discouragement reigned supreme, confidence had entirely disappeared. The position of that officer did not allow him to take prominent command at Trichinápalli, nor did he, looking about him, consider that Trichinápalli was the preferable base from which, at the moment, to commence a new departure. Something must be done, and that speedily, to prevent Southern India from becoming French. But that something must,



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in the first instance, be attempted elsewhere than at Trichinápalli. So long as the besiegers were left in undisturbed possession of the cities and fortresses of North and South Arkát the French would not lose their grip on the last refuge of Muhammad Ali. The peace, then, of those districts of his must be disturbed. Chanda Sáhib must be alarmed for the safety of his household gods. Such was the thought that by degrees mastered the mind of that officer. Full of it he left Trichinápalli and proceeded to Fort St. David to lay it before the governor. His name was Robert Clive.



CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY PROMISE.

ROBERT CLIVE was born on the 29th September 1725, in the manor house of Styche, near Market Drayton, in Shropshire. He was the eldest of thirteen children, seven of whom were girls. His father, who would appear to have been in no way distinguishable from the common run, had been trained to the law, and added to the small income he derived from the moderate property he had inherited from his elder brother by practising as a solicitor. Robert Clive's mother was a Miss Gaskill of Manchester. The estate of Styche had been held by the family for centuries. Mention is made of their name in connection with it so far back as the reign of Henry II.

From his early youth Robert Clive would appear to have displayed the same character for daring and enterprise which distinguished him throughout his splendid career. Sent, at the tender age of three, for family reasons, to Hope Hall, near Manchester, there to be brought up by a gentleman named Bayley



who had married a sister of Mrs. Clive, young Robert gave early proof of a strength of will and a resolve to display that strength—a determination on all occasions to assert himself—which rather alarmed his guardian. The method adopted by that gentleman to curb these propensities was the least likely of all to be successful. Writing to his parents when the boy had scarcely attained the age of seven, Mr. Bayley thus indicated the nature of his charge, and the mode he adopted to correct that nature: “He has just had a new suit of clothes and promises by his reformation to deserve them. I am satisfied that his fighting (to which he is beyond measure addicted) gives his temper a fierceness and imperiousness that he flies out upon every trifling occasion: for this reason I do what I can to suppress the hero, that I may forward the more valuable qualities of meekness, benevolence, and patience.” Neither the bribe of the new clothes nor the “suppression of heroic qualities” had, however, the effect aimed at by Mr. Bayley. In the schools in which he was successively placed,—at Lostock, at Market Drayton, at Merchant Taylors’, and finally at Hemel Hempsted,—Clive displayed the same daring nature, the same love of fighting, the same strength of will which had in his earlier years alarmed the fears of Mr. Bayley. In all these schools he made himself notorious for his dislike of serious application, and for his love of adventure, whatever its difficulty or its danger. The tradition still lives at Market Drayton how, to the terror of the inhabitants, he climbed a lofty steeple, and seated himself on a stone spout



near the summit; how he formed all the idle boys of the town into a brigade, and laid a species of blackmail on the tradespeople, compelling them to purchase the immunity of their windows by contributions of apples and of pence; how, on the crumbling away of a mound of turf by means of which his brigade was endeavouring to turn a dirty watercourse into the shop of a recusant trader, Clive threw himself into the gutter and stopped the flow of water there till his companions had repaired the damage. Qualities such as these, if they earned for him the love and devotion of his companions, alienated not less surely the sympathies of his teachers. The system indicated by his uncle in the letter I have quoted was powerless to affect his spirit. Of all his masters but one alone seems to have detected the sterling qualities which underlay the reckless and boisterous exterior. Dr. Eaton of Lostock is said to have declared that if his scholar lived to be a man, and the opportunity for the exertion of his talents were afforded him, he would win for himself a name second to few in history. But Dr. Eaton was the solitary exception. All the other masters condemned him as an idler and a scapegrace. Even his parents lost all hope of his capacity to settle down to a decent profession in the mother country. The very idea of associating his eldest son with him in his own profession, which had been the early dream of his father's life, was abandoned, as the untoward boy progressed towards manhood, as utterly impracticable. It became every year more clear that he was fitted



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only for a life of adventure. Interest was therefore made for an appointment in the service of the East India Company. The application was successful, and to the relief of many minds Robert Clive was in 1743, then in his eighteenth year, shipped off to India as a writer. His destination was Madras.

The "writer" of that period had little in common with the covenanted civilian of the present day. The East India Company was then nothing more than a trading corporation. It possessed on various points of the coast of India factories and a few square miles round those factories, for both of which rent was paid to the native governments. War for offensive purposes was not thought of by the Company. They disciplined and maintained a few troops for the sole purpose of guarding the rough-and-ready forts which protected their warehouses against sudden attack. These forts were not suited for the purposes of protracted warfare. The writers were simply clerks—clerks in a large mercantile establishment. Their business was to take stock, to keep accounts, to make advances to the natives whom they employed, to ship cargoes, and, above all, to prevent any infringement of the monopoly of the Company by private traders. This was scarcely the work which would prove attractive to one who had given so many indications of a restless and indolent nature as had Clive; and when to this it is added that a writer received in the shape of remuneration a pittance so miserable that the avoidance of debt, except by the exercise of a self-denial dangerous in a country like India, was simply



impossible, we may ask with wonder what was the magic power which was likely to transform an idle schoolboy into a useful public servant; what, again, would be the attraction of a steady monotonous office-life, supported by insufficient means, to a young man possessing the daring and adventurous spirit of Robert Clive. There was not in his nature an iota of that plodding industry which enables a man to be a successful trader. And yet by private trade alone could a writer, after he had obtained a certain position, hope to amass a fortune. To a man constituted as he was, the outlook, after the inspiration caused to an adventurous nature by a contemplation of the unknown, and when he had actually realised it, must have seemed especially dark and dreary, offering but a poor compensation for exile from friends and country.

Still, *omne ignotum pro magnifico*. Robert Clive left England in 1743, and after an unusually long and tedious voyage, exceeding twelve months in duration, reached Madras in the autumn of 1744. The length of the voyage had wearied him; his stay at the Brazils and at the Cape, at both of which places his ship had remained for some months on the voyage, had exhausted his resources; the one gentleman to whom he had brought letters of introduction had left for England. Here was a situation! His enthusiasm had evaporated, he was penniless; a stranger in a strange land! To meet his earliest necessities he borrowed money, at a usurious rate of interest, from the captain of his ship! Such were the circumstances



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under which Robert Clive commenced his life in India!

His first experiences in Madras neither improved his outward circumstances nor afforded solace to his wounded spirit. His pay, as I have said, was small. Though hospitality was in those early days as freely accorded as it is in our own, Clive would not take the one step necessary for its extension to himself. Unprovided with letters of introduction for any one, he would intrude upon no one. Holding himself aloof from everyone, everyone neglected him. This period was the bitterest period of his life. Soured by his isolation, uninterested by his work, having no resources in the shape of books, but few outside his house, he became irritable and desponding. His heart pined for the home he had left, for the scenes and associations of his earlier days. There at least he had associates; there he could enjoy sports, however wild, with his comrades, and exchange sympathies with kindred spirits. What a contrast did life in Madras offer! The work there was distasteful, the climate allowed him little out-door recreation, within his house he was alone! How he felt the bitterness of those early days he has himself left on record. "I have not enjoyed," he wrote in one of his letters to his relatives, "one happy day since I left my native country."

It would have mattered but little had the bitter feelings which rankled in the mind of Clive been but first impressions, to be completely effaced by more lengthened experience. From his mind those impressions were never effaced; they became ingrained in