in substance, all the claims preferred by Dupleix, that regarding the governorship of the Karnátak alone excepted. Even with respect to that he had proposed that the office should be declared vacant, and that Muhammad Ali should be nominated under the joint protection of the French and English. Dupleix had refused.

From this strain, when their affairs were at their lowest ebb, the English were delivered by one of those freaks with which Fortune sometimes delights to perplex the counsels of nations. In an evil moment for France the French East India Company recalled their great Indian proconsul, and replaced him by Godeheu, a man of a cringing and servile nature, without patriotism and without generosity. On his arrival Saunders raised his demands, and Godeheu yielded all that Saunders asked.

In 1755, then, the two European trading communities in Southern India were at peace. They had signed a treaty that neither should ever interfere in the differences which might arise between native princes. It was a treaty made to be broken, for neither nation had attained the predominance necessary for the political effacement of the other. English influence was supreme in the Karnátak, but the French virtually ruled the Dakhan* and the country thence to the coast, north of Madras.

Such was the state of India when Clive, weary of

* The word "Dakhan" is used to signify the territory ruled by the Súbahdár of the Dakhan, somewhat larger than the existing dominions of the Nizám.

inactivity in England, applied to the Court of Directors for employment in India. His application was well received. The Court could not but feel that English influence in the Karnátak must be precarious so long as the French should be virtual masters of the Dakhan. To make a direct attack upon Haidarábád, aided only by Muhammad Ali, from Madras, was not to be thought of. But could they induce the Péshwá to wage against his hereditary enemy, the representative of the Mughul, a war in which the English could act as auxiliaries of the Péshwá, the end they desired might be obtained. Before, then, they had been made aware of the neutrality treaty of which I have spoken, they had entered into an agreement with the Péshwá and had prepared to send troops to support him. They had even gone so far as to nominate an officer to command the Europeans who should be engaged in such an expedition. This was Colonel Scot, who had proceeded the previous year to Madras as Engineer-General of all the Company's settlements in India. Of Scot's fitness for the post as compared with Clive's fitness the Court must have entertained considerable doubt; for the latter had no sooner expressed his wish to be employed in India than the Court nominated him Governor of Fort St. George, and obtained for him the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the royal army. Then, without actually superseding Scot, they desired Clive to proceed direct to Bombay, to be on the spot in case his services should be there required.

Scot relieved the Company of the dilemma by

dying. Before the news of his death had reached England, however, Clive had set out for Bombay, accompanied by three companies of Royal Artillery, each a hundred strong, and three hundred infantry recruits. He reached Bombay at the end of October (1755), to learn that Colonel Scot was dead.

Other tidings likewise awaited Clive at Bombay. He learned that in consequence of the convention entered into between Governor Saunders and Godeheu, the projected expedition against the Súbahdár of the Dakhan had fallen through. When, however, it seemed as though he had come upon a fool's errand, work of a legitimate nature suddenly presented itself.

During his wars with the Mughul dynasty Sívají, the founder of the Maráthá empire, had (1662) seized and fortified Vijiyádrúg, better known to the English as Gheriah, a town and fort at the mouth of the river Kanvi, on the western coast of India, about a hundred and seventy miles south of Bombay. During the same year the island of Súwarndrúg, about eighty miles north of Gheriah and ninety from Bombay, had been seized by the same prince and a strong fort erected upon it. From these two places Sívají had been in the habit of making quasi-piratical raids upon the vessels of the Great Mughul. Fifty years later both places passed from the hands of the successor of Sívají into those of Kánhaji Angria, the commander of the Maráthá fleet, and from them that chieftain had continued on his own account the piratical raids which he had conducted previously on behalf of his master. These raids had gradually

taken a more ambitious flight. From preying on the puny vessels of Indian merchants Kánhaji Angria had begun to attack, plunder, and destroy the trading vessels of the Europeans. The ships of the East India Company and of the French Company were not long exempt from his attacks. During the first half of the eighteenth century Kánhaji, and, after him, his son Túlaji Angria, had captured, besides vessels of lesser note, the "Darby," richly laden, having on board a hundred and fifty men; and, soon afterwards, the war-brig "Restoration," of twenty guns and two hundred men, which had been fitted out expressly to attack them. These successes made the Angria family still bolder. They attacked and captured the French war-ship "Jupitre," carrying forty guns; and a little later they had had the presumption to assail an English convoy, covered by two ships of war, the "Vigilant," of sixty-four guns, and the "Ruby," of fifty guns.

The Dutch, who had suffered not less than the French and English from the depredations of the Angria family, had, about the year 1735, despatched a fleet of seven ships of war, two bomb vessels, and a number of land forces against Gheriah. The attack had, however, been repulsed with loss. The depredations from that time increased in daring, until in February 1754 Angria's fleet attacked three Dutch ships of war, one of fifty, one of thirty-six, the third of eighteen guns, burned the two first and took the last. Upon this success Angria grew very insolent, and boasted that he would soon be superior to any naval force that could be brought against him. As

he followed up this boast by a rapid increase in his number of vessels, and by laying more on the stocks, the senior English naval officer on the coast, Commodore James, deemed it advisable to strike a blow at him before it should be too late. Having arranged with the Maráthá ruler of Satárah that his troops should co-operate by land, James, on the 2nd April 1755, sailed from Bombay with one ship of forty-four guns, one of sixteen, and two bomb-vessels to beat up the pirate in his island-home of Súwarndrug. He had with him, also, a few Maráthá vessels—but they were of little use for actual combat.

Then was seen the enormous advantage which attack confers upon a power combating against the natives of India. Túlaji Angria, who just twelve months before had captured a Dutch squadron, considerably exceeding in weight of metal that commanded by Commodore James, was anxious on this occasion only to save his ships from destruction. Whilst these, by skilful manœuvring, escaped, James attacked the strong fortress on the island. This, though of extraordinary strength, surrendered after a very faint resistance on the 13th April. Six days later James captured Bánkót, ten miles nearer to Bombay; he was proceeding further with his conquests when he was recalled to Bombay, the season being considered too far advanced for further operations.

Túlaji Angria had meanwhile taken refuge with his fleet in Gheriah, and he proceeded to render this strong place still stronger. When, then, in November 1755, Admiral Watson arrived at Bombay with his

squadron, it was resolved to complete the work begun by Commodore James, and to destroy the piratical fleet in its own waters. With this object in view, Watson despatched James with three ships to reconnoitre Gheriah. On his return, Watson sailed, early in February following, with four ships of the line, five frigates, one smaller vessel, and five bomb-ketches. On board this squadrön, to co-operate with it from the land-side, was a force of eight hundred Europeans and a thousand sipáhís, commanded by Colonel Clive.

Admiral Watson, with whom Clive was now for the first time brought in contact, was an officer highly esteemed in the navy. A thorough master of his profession, eager and zealous in the service of his country, he was likewise a high-minded English gentleman. His mind was very differently constituted from that of his military colleague. The divergences between them were constantly manifested, and threatened sometimes to interfere with the carrying out of the public service.

Watson's squadron arrived before Gheriah on the 22nd February 1756. Whilst it was sailing, a Maráthá army, which was also to co-operate with it, had marched from Cháwal, twenty-three miles south of Bombay, and, almost simultaneously with the arrival of the fleet, had taken up a position to the east of the fortress, which thus became blockaded by sea and land. Túlaji Angria, terrified at his position, had at once resolved to take refuge in the camp of his own countrymen, with the view of inducing them to

join against the common enemy of the Asiatic race. He did not quite succeed in that calculation, but the Maráthá leader, determined to gain the fortress for his own people, extorted from Angria an order for its delivery to himself, and not to the English.

The afternoon before this arrangement was to be carried out (23rd February), information of it had reached Watson. No time was to be lost. To foil it, Clive at once landed with his men, and took up a position between the Maráthá army and the fortress. The fire from the ships, which had begun on the 23rd, was renewed on the 24th. So much did it terrify the garrison, that before evening they surrendered Gheriah, its arsenals, its ships, its stores, its booty, to Clive. It was found, then, that the fort had been capable of making a successful defence against the fleet, and could only have been taken by regular approaches on the land-side! Pure panic had caused its surrender. Such is the effect of *morale* in war! There are few armies amongst whom it is so strong as to enable its soldiers, once cowed, to resist enemies apparently, and only apparently, overwhelming. The surrender of the strongest fortresses in Prussia after Jena, is an illustration of this axiom.

As there remained nothing more to accomplish on the western coast, Clive and Watson proceeded to Fort St. David, the former landing there to take up his government, the latter continuing his course to Madras. Clive arrived at Fort St. David the 16th May. The times were critical. The ships which had

more recently arrived from Europe had brought information that a renewal of hostilities between France and England was certain, and that the former country, resolved that this time there should be no mistake regarding supremacy in Southern India, was preparing a large fleet and army for Pondichery.

As the forces of the two rival powers were then on about a footing of equality, a large accession of strength to the French could not be viewed with equanimity by the English authorities on the coast. Those authorities were engaged in debating how to meet the impending evil, when information reached them of a disaster, befallen nearer to their own doors, a disaster more terrible, more appalling, more reeking with barbarity, than any which the preponderance of the French in Southern India was likely to produce. The news was to the effect that the English settlement at Calcutta, on the river Huglí, had been attacked and captured by an army led in person by the Núwáb of Bengal, that several of their countrymen had perished, that many of the remainder had been carried away captive to Murshidábád by the victorious Núwáb, who, having sacked Calcutta, and changed its name to Alínagar, had, leaving there a garrison under his general Mánakchand, returned to his capital with the conviction that he had for ever extirpated the English from Bengal. He had, in reality, only sealed his own doom. Fugitives from Calcutta, alike during and after the siege, had escaped to Fultá, a small place on the Huglí, opposite the mouth of the Damúdah river, twenty-two miles south-

west of Calcutta. It was from these fugitives that the news of the disaster reached Madras.

It is unnecessary to give, in this place, more than a slight sketch of the proceedings which had led to the catastrophe of the Black Hole.

Siráju'd daulah had succeeded his famous uncle, Alí Vardi Khán, as Núwáb or Viceroy of the provinces of Bengal, Bahár, and Orísá in April 1756. Prior to his great uncle's decease, Siráju'd daulah had taken umbrage with the English settlers, first, because, he affirmed, they were harbouring state-offenders, and secondly, because, against his express orders, they were fortifying their factory.

The reply to the latter of the Governor of Calcutta, Mr. Drake, though in itself perfectly explicit, and proving that the fortifications had been repaired solely in view of anticipated hostilities with France, was probably not sufficiently submissive in its tone. It reached the Núwáb two or three weeks after his accession to the viceroyalty, and when he was marching at the head of an army against a relative who had presumed to be his rival. Instantly, in his rage, he changed the route of his army and directed it against the English factory of Kásimbázár, a suburb of the city of Murshidábád. The European garrison of that place consisted of only one officer and forty-four soldiers, of whom twenty were Dutchmen and Portuguese. With these were associated about two hundred and fifty matchlockmen. On arriving before this place, the Núwáb sent for the chief of the factory, Mr. Watts, bitterly upbraided him for the conduct of

his countrymen in Calcutta, and compelled him and the next two seniors in the factory to sign a paper pledging themselves to the destruction within fifteen days of the new fortifications. This happened on the 1st June; on the 4th the Núwáb took possession of Kásimbázár; on the 9th he marched for Calcutta.

The garrison of Calcutta consisted of two hundred and sixty-four men of all arms, but of these a portion were Portuguese or Eurasians; there were, also, two companies of militia, composed of the Company's servants and the other Christian inhabitants, amounting in number to two hundred and fifty. Of the grand total of five hundred and fourteen only a hundred and seventy-four were Englishmen. The fortifications were in wretched order, the supply of powder was small and its quality was inferior, the fuses for the shells had been driven many years before and were spoiled, the gun-carriages were mostly in a state of decay, and fifty new pieces which had arrived from England three years previously were lying dismounted and useless under the walls of the fort.

The Núwáb crossed the Huglí on the 15th of June and appeared before Calcutta the following day. An examination of the events of the five days' siege which ensued would satisfy the reader that great daring, energy, and devotion were displayed by the majority of Englishmen; selfishness, worse than cowardice, by others. The catastrophe which followed could never have taken place had every man been true to the dictates of honour. Every man was

not true to those dictates. There were vessels in the Huglí, lying off the fort, capable of carrying away the garrison when defence should become no longer possible. It will scarcely be credited that, when it had been decided to place the European women and children on board these vessels, the two Members of Council deputed to carry out this arrangement not only refused to return, but caused all the vessels to drop down the following morning to Govindpúr, three miles below the fort. Desertion on a greater scale took place when an attempt was made to despatch the Portuguese and Eurasian women and children by native boats to the same vessels. This bad example was followed, the next night, by the Governor, Mr. Drake, by the commandant of the troops, Captain Minchin, and other officers and men both of the regular troops and the militia. These desertions left Mr. Peakes the senior agent on the spot, but by general consent Mr. Holwell, from whose narrative, confirmed in all essentials by that of Mr. Grose, I have taken these details, was elected to the post of honour. But not even could his bright example inspire in others a feeling of common humanity sufficient to soar above the basest self-love. Even in the last agony of the siege it had been possible to save those who had not abandoned the defences. If the ships, still within sight of the fort, could have been induced to return, the garrison could yet have escaped the tender mercies of the enemy. The operation was perfectly feasible. The senior captain, however, Captain Young of the "Dodaly," pronounced

it dangerous. To his eternal infamy he allowed his ships and the other ships to lie at anchor for two days, till Calcutta was taken, without making the smallest effort to assist the Englishmen within its walls.

On the 20th June the Núwáb became master of Calcutta. It would be too long to dwell here on the measure he meted out to its unfortunate defenders. Let it suffice to say that whilst permitting the Portuguese and Eurasians to return to their homes, he made over his captives of pure English blood to his subordinates to be locked up for the night. These, irritated by a resistance which had caused the death of many of their comrades, caused the Englishmen, a hundred and forty-six in number, including one lady, to be confined for a night in a room eighteen feet square, with only two small barred windows. The consequences, during the sultry heat of June, the outside air loaded with dense smoke, were such as might be imagined. When the door was opened in the morning, only twenty-three ghastly figures were found to have survived the terrible night.

The news of the capture of Kásimbázár reached Madras on the 15th July. Fearing that this hostile act might be the prelude to an attack upon Calcutta, Mr. Pigot, now Governor of Madras, the same whom we have seen accompanying with Clive a party of European troops from Fort St. David in 1751, had hastened to despatch thither a force of two hundred and thirty men, principally Europeans, under the orders of Major Kilpatrick. Kilpatrick reached Faltá on the Huglí, on the 2nd August, to learn there, for

the first time, of the attack upon Calcutta and its fatal issue. By accessions from the Company's posts at Báleswar (Balasore), at Jagdiah, and at Dháká, this force was gradually increased to nearly four hundred and fifty men. It is worthy to be noted that among these accessions was a young writer named Warren Hastings.

Sickness, however, caused partly by compelled inaction, partly by exposure, partly by the necessity of sleeping on the open decks of the vessels at the most unhealthy season of the year, soon produced a rapid diminution in the numbers of this little band. The mortality, the necessity of action, the divided counsels, impressed the survivors with the advisability of making their case known at Madras. Two of the number, Mr. Manningham and Lieutenant Le Beaune—a strange selection, for both these gentlemen had fled from Calcutta in the early days of its agony—were deputed for this purpose. They reached Madras on the 5th August.

CHAPTER VIII.

Calcutta, Chandranagar, Mír J'afar, Siráju'd daulah.

When, on the 5th August, the news of the capture of Calcutta reached Madras, there were serving in that presidency four men, each of whom might have preferred, and three of whom did prefer, claims to command an expedition to avenge the outrage. Foremost amongst these was the veteran commander, Colonel Stringer Lawrence, a soldier of established renown; the second was Colonel Adlercron, commanding the 39th Foot, whose motto, *Primus in Indis*, dates from this year; the third was Mr. Pigot, the governor; the fourth was Robert Clive. To the first three, however, the objections which were raised seemed to counterbalance the advantages each was able to offer. Thus, the state of health of Lawrence was such as to render it very doubtful whether he could stand the damp climate of Bengal; of Adlercron it was urged that though undoubtedly a capable man, he had no experience of the country, and besides, he was, as commanding a King's regiment, independent of

the authority of the Company. Pigot, again, though known to be a man of action, had neither military experience nor military training; and although he could adduce the example of Clive to show that these were not always absolutely essential, it had yet to be proved that in his case they could be dispensed with. To Clive none of these objections applied. He, therefore, was selected, and to enable him to act with vigour so as to return soon to Madras, where apprehensions regarding the war with France still reigned rampant, he was invested with independent powers in all matters connected with military arrangements, was liberally supplied with money, and empowered to draw bills on the Madras Government.

On the 16th October Clive sailed for the Huglí. The fleet, commanded by Admiral Watson, consisted of four ships of war, five transports, and a fire-ship. The land force was composed of two hundred and fifty men of the 39th Foot, five hundred and seventy men of the Madras European Battalion, eighty artillerymen—in all, nine hundred Europeans—and twelve hundred sipáhís. He had also a few field-pieces and a large quantity of military stores. Of the nine hundred Europeans, little more than six hundred were able to land then on the banks of the Huglí; for the Admiral's largest ship of war, the "Cumberland," having nearly three hundred men on board, grounded off Point Palmyras on the 1st December, and was compelled to bear away to Vishákpatanan (Vizagapatam). The remainder of the fleet reached Faltá at intervals between the 11th and 20th December.

Clive found the force of Kilpatrick so reduced by death, that of the two hundred and thirty men whom that officer had brought with him from Madras the preceding July only about thirty remained alive, and of these not more than ten were fit for duty. By all the fugitives assembled at that last resting-place of British power on the Huglí the arrival of Clive was hailed with joy. That joy was soon to be justified. Acting in conformity with his instructions, Clive's first care, indeed, was to transmit to Mánakchand, Governor of Calcutta, letters from the Government of Madras, from Admiral Watson, and from himself, to be forwarded to the Núwáb. But when he received from that governor a refusal to forward those letters on the ground of their menacing style, he at once, in concert with the Admiral, prepared to carry out his aim by force.

The fleet, leaving Faltá the 27th December, anchored off Moiapúr the following day. The fort of Bajbaj, in close vicinity to this place and only twelve miles from Calcutta, presented the first object of attack. It was arranged that whilst Watson should bombard it with his fleet, Clive should attack it by land.

In carrying out this arrangement there occurred one of those mishaps which bring ruin to an ordinary mortal, but which afford to a man cast in the heroic mould an opportunity for the display of qualities which can change defeat into victory. It happened that whilst events in Southern India had imbued Clive with contempt for the military capacity of native generals, the

issue of the sieges of Kásimbázár and of Calcutta had implanted in the minds of the natives of Bengal a similar disdain for the fighting power of the English. The reader will recollect that previous to the siege of Arkát the same feeling prevailed in Southern India. It was that siege which had drawn from Murári Ráo the confession that the English could fight. If Bajbaj forced the same avowal from the Bengal leader, it brought also to the mind of Clive the conviction that he could not, against his present enemies, afford to relax the rules of ordinary warfare.

It happened in this wise. After a long and fatiguing march of fifteen hours' duration through an uninhabited part of the country, full of swamps and intersected by watercourses, Clive and his troops, two hundred and fifty Europeans and twelve hundred sipáhís, dragging with them, for want of draught cattle, two light field-pieces and a tumbril, arrived, at 8 o'clock on the morning of the 29th December, at a large hollow capable of containing them all. This hollow, the bed of a lake in the rainy season, but now perfectly dry, was about ten feet below the level of the country, and was surrounded by jungle. Immediately on its eastern and southern banks lay an abandoned village and its enclosures. It was situated only a mile from the nearest point to the river, about a mile and a half from Bajbaj, and half a mile from the main road between that place and Calcutta. Clive himself was ill, his men were utterly exhausted—so worn out, indeed, that after they had detached one small body to occupy a village

on the banks of the river, to impose upon the defenders of the fort, and another into the thickets adjoining the main road, they resigned themselves to a profound sleep. Some of the men lay in the village, some under the banks of the hollow: the two field-pieces stood, undefended, on the north side of the village. But all slept, their arms in a heap, sixty yards from the eastern bank, and not a single sentry posted.

They were so sleeping when the army of Mának-chand, composed of fifteen hundred horse and two thousand foot, came upon them. That wily leader, well informed by his spies, had followed the move-ments of the English force, had surrounded three sides of the hollow, and was waiting patiently till sleep should deliver the invaders into his hands. Had he known the full extent of their fatuity, had he been aware that their arms were lying at a distance of sixty yards from their nearest man, he might have succeeded. Ignorant of this, he waited an hour, then, believing that the proper time had arrived, he caused to be opened on the hollow and the village a continuous matchlock fire. Roused by this, the English at once ran to their arms and formed line on the spot where they had thrown them as they came up. The gunners, in their confusion, instead of repairing to their guns, joined this line, thus leaving their pieces a prey to the enemy. Whilst the men, still hardly awake, were thus scrambling into their places, the enemy, creeping up, had obtained possession of the entire eastern bank of the hollow, and, protected by

this, they now poured a sustained and often murderous fire upon their victims.

Clive, I have said, was ill; he was ill before he had set out on the expedition, and the long night-march had greatly increased his sufferings. But, ill as he was, he proved again here, as he had proved on every trying occasion before, his title to be ranked as a real leader of men. Let the reader take in the situation: the little band surprised, just seizing their arms, their guns lost, they standing huddled together on a bank exposed to a sustained fire from an unseen enemy! It was a time for real leadership—a time for a real man to inspire with his own spirit those doubting groups, standing there to be shot at, and not knowing how to act. But, how many men, roused from their sleep, would have been equal to that sudden inspiration? How many, we are certain, would have been unequal to it, would have been on the same level as the most dazed of their men!

But never did Clive's genius shine more brightly, never was his calmness, his coolness, his perception of things, more apparent than on this trying occasion. He comprehended the situation in an instant. In an instant he acted in the manner which alone would inspire his men with confidence. Feeling that to draw back his men out of fire would in their depressed physical condition certainly cause a panic, he ordered them to stand fast, and, forming them up, detached small parties from the right and centre to drive the enemy from the bank. Advancing under a heavy fire, which caused considerable loss, the centre platoon

reached the bank, then, firing a volley, charged the enemy and drove them towards the village. As they approached this, the right platoon, which had been equally successful in driving back their enemy and with smaller loss, joined them. The charges had proved sufficiently to the enemy that "the English could fight." They fell back rapidly into the jungles, and though they continued thence an intermittent fire, no persuasion could induce them to try conclusions once again in the open. Their chances of success were diminishing every second. For, whilst the events I have described were taking place, the detachment sent to the jungles bordering the main road, having heard the firing, was hastening up. It came on the spot just as the native officers of Mánakchand's army were imploring their men to advance. Its arrival decided everything. It enabled Clive to recover the guns which the enemy had not been able to use. A discharge from these caused the enemy to retire under shelter of his cavalry. Clive then formed up in line, and, supported by his field-pieces, moved against the cavalry led in person by Mánakchand. These stood for a time, but when a shot from one of the guns passed close to the head of their commander, other thoughts came over them. They turned and fled towards Calcutta. Clive then moved towards the village on the banks of the river. There he met Major Kilpatrick and a party despatched to his assistance.

But the surprises of that eventful night were not yet over. Whilst Clive and his troops had been engaged in the manner I have described, the guns of the fleet

had poured upon the ramparts of the fort so heavy a fire that a breach had been effected there. In consequence, however, of the fatigue of the troops, Clive, on reaching the village, determined to delay the assault till the following morning. To aid in that operation, a party of two hundred and fifty sailors, with two 24-pounder guns, were landed in the course of the evening. Some of these sailors who had drunk pretty freely, ventured, as the shades of night fell, to stroll towards the fort. One of them, a man named Strahan, felt his way towards the wall unobserved, discovered the breach, entered it alone, and came suddenly upon a party of the defenders sitting in a circle, smoking and talking. Strahan at once fired his pistol among them, then, drawing his cutlass, exclaimed, "The fort is mine!" following the expression with three hearty cheers. The enemy, however, soon recovered from their surprise, and, perceiving that the intruder was alone, fell upon him. Strahan, however, defended himself with great vigour, whilst he called to his comrades. His cutlass, after doing considerable service, broke off near the hilt when these arrived. The discharge of matchlocks which followed roused some of the 39th and some sipáhís. These came up so continuously that the enemy, after struggling for a time, abandoned the fort, which was then taken possession of by Captain Eyre Coote. At daybreak the following morning its guns gave a salute of welcome to the British fleet.* The only casualty

* The sailor Strahan was brought before the Admiral the following morning to be reprimanded for his breach of discipline.

on the British side was that of Captain Dugald Campbell, who, when marching up at the head of his sipáhís, was mistaken for an enemy, and shot by the sailors.

In war a commander must always be prepared for the unexpected. This freak of a drunken sailor was fraught with momentous consequences. Following as it did so closely upon the events of the morning, it persuaded Mánakchand, not only that the English could fight, but that they were irresistible. He no longer thought himself safe in Calcutta. Accordingly, leaving a garrison of five hundred men in that place, he marched with all convenient speed to join the Núwáb at Murshidábád.

Calcutta, thus virtually abandoned, made only a show of resistance. The fort was taken possession of by a company of the 39th Foot under Captain Eyre Coote (2nd January).

The occasion fanned almost into a flame the differences which had been long smouldering between Clive and Watson. The differences had been based,

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On his being called upon to explain his conduct, Strahan, scratching his head with one hand and holding his hat in the other, replied: "Why, to be sure, sir, it was I that took the fort, and I hope there was no harm in it." When the Admiral then dwelt in a severe tone on the possible consequences of his breach of discipline, and dismissed him with a threat of punishment, Strahan, on rejoining his comrades, exclaimed with an oath, "Well, if I am flogged for this 'ere action, I will never take another fort by myself as long as I live." Dr. Ives, Surgeon of the Admiral's flagship during this expedition, relates that Strahan subsequently called on him in London. He was then a pensioner, and his great ambition was to be appointed cook on board a first-class ship.

partly upon want of sympathy of feeling, partly upon professional jealousy. The Admiral regarded Clive, notwithstanding the Royal Commission he bore, as representing the East India Company alone. Choosing to ignore his rank and his position as commander of the land forces, he treated the senior officer of the detachment of the 39th, Captain Eyre Coote, as the representative of the King's land forces. A feeling, not altogether dissimilar, had manifested itself during the expedition against Gheriah. It was displayed now by an act which might have led to very grave consequences. In sending Eyre Coote to take possession of the fort of Calcutta the Admiral had directed him to hold it as its governor in the name of the King. Clive, arriving immediately afterwards, disputed the validity of this order, refused to acknowledge the Admiral's commission to Eyre Coote, and directed that officer to obey him as his senior. On a reference being made to the Admiral, the latter angrily insisted that Clive should abandon the fort and threatened to fire upon him if he should refuse. The dispute might have had unpleasant consequences, but through the intervention of Captain Latham, a compromise was entered into which virtually conceded all that Clive had demanded. It was arranged that the Admiral, as senior officer, should land and take possession of the fort, and, having done so, should in turn transfer it to Mr. Drake, the civil representative of the East India Company. This arrangement was carried out.

The recapture of Calcutta had been the first object

of the expedition, but it was by no means its main object. Its leaders had in view, by punishing the offender, to secure the Company's possessions against the risk of future attack. They had been directed, moreover, to bear in mind that, in the event of the information reaching them that hostilities had broken out between France and England, it might be advisable to seize the French settlement of Chandranagar. They had received, likewise, general instructions to recoup the Company for the great losses which had been sustained by the unprovoked attack of the Núwáb.

On the very morrow of the recapture of Calcutta, the advisability of taking prompt advantage of the consternation which that event was sure to inspire presented itself to the mind of the leaders of the expedition. The natives of Calcutta, and the adjacent villages, had hailed with joy the return of their English masters. They hastened, then, to inform Mr. Drake that the flight of Mánakchand had produced everywhere the impression that the English were irresistible; that the Núwáb, who had treated as a ridiculous fable the rumour that they would endeavour by force of arms to recover their lost factory, had, in the superabundance of his contempt for them, given furloughs to his soldiers and was in no condition immediately to oppose them; further, that the town of Huglí, twenty-two miles distant, offered, as the commercial emporium and principal granary of the province, the surest means alike of crippling the resources of the Núwáb and of improving the finances of the Company.

Clive, impressed with the value of time as a factor in war, resolved to despatch a force against Huglí before its garrison could be reinforced. In those days the land ways were little known; the river was believed to be deep enough to float vessels of considerable burden for several miles. Accordingly, the troops of the expedition were despatched in five vessels, one of which was a twenty-gun sloop. They were composed of a hundred and fifty men of the 39th and two hundred sipáhís. The command was entrusted to Major Kilpatrick of the Company's service. That officer set out on the 4th January, hoping to gain the place in one tide. But the sloop, unfortunately, stuck on a sand-bank, and remained on it for five days. It was not till the evening of the 9th that the expedition anchored abreast of Huglí.

The delay had given the enemy time which, had they chosen, they might have used to great advantage. The defences of the place were strong, the garrison consisted of two thousand men, and the delay had given opportunity to three thousand horse to approach the place. But these advantages were all thrown away. The ships, commencing to cannonade the place immediately on their arrival, effected a breach before midnight. At daybreak of the 10th the town was taken by storm. But the booty fell far short of the anticipations. It was ascertained that all the more valuable stores had been removed to the Dutch factory of Chinsurah.

It was during the progress of the expedition against Huglí that the authorities in Calcutta received infor-

mation that France had declared war against England. The time of the arrival of the news was opportune. It reached them after all their greatest difficulties had been overcome; after the intricacies of the river navigation had been surmounted; after Calcutta had been taken; when the junction of the French with the Núwáb, though a union still much to be deprecated, would not have the extremely formidable character it would have possessed ten days earlier.

Clive, however, and his colleagues, still saw in this last possibility the greatest danger which, even at that moment, threatened the British interests in Bengal. Holding a strong position on the Huglí, only seventeen miles north of Calcutta, it might be possible for the French, disposing of a force of a hundred and forty Europeans and three hundred sipáhís, to decide, by a sudden appearance on the battle-field, any contest which might ensue between the English and the Núwáb.

This possibility impressed Clive the more, as he believed the French troops to exceed, by more than one-half, the numbers I have mentioned, and which represent those they actually possessed. With such a possible enemy on his flank or rear, how could Clive move forward to meet the Núwáb in the field? It was a contingency not to be thought of. Deeming, then, that of the two enemies, the French were, at the moment, the most formidable, Clive resolved to attempt to conciliate the Núwáb, whilst he should crush the European rivals of his country.

The attempt was made. The Núwáb, however,

would not be conciliated. The storming and sack of his town of Huglí had irritated him beyond measure. He could talk of nothing but revenge. Far, then, from responding favourably to the conciliatory advances of the English, he spurned them with scorn, and levying a very considerable army, despatched a pressing message to the chief of the French colony of Chandranagar to join him in crushing the nation which was as much the enemy of the French as of himself.

The storming of Huglí, then, brought within the range of possibility that very scheme which Clive and his colleagues deemed of all others the scheme most injurious to their interests—an active alliance between the Núwáb and the French.

From the anxiety thus caused by the action of the Núwáb, the French themselves saved Clive. The Governor of Chandranagar, M. Renault de St. Germain, had received orders from his chief at Pondichery that, in the event of a war breaking out between France and England, he was to endeavour to arrange a treaty of neutrality with the representatives of the English in Bengal. Fully sensible of the advantages which an alliance with the Núwáb offered him, he yet did not feel authorised, with the small military force at his disposal, to go beyond his instructions. Instead, then, of responding to the Núwáb's advances, he despatched to Calcutta a proposal that, in spite of the war in Europe, the two nations should abstain from hostilities against each other.

To Clive and Watson, who, as I have already stated,

believed the French force at Chandranagar to be much greater than it really was, this proposition was like a message from heaven. They instantly acceded to its principle, and wrote to request M. Renault to send deputies to Calcutta to arrange the conditions of a treaty of neutrality.

The deputies were sent. They had scarcely arrived, however, when circumstances occurred which entirely changed the dispositions of the English Council towards the French settlement. The Núwáb hastening from Múrshidábád with an army of ten thousand foot and fifteen thousand horse, had, on the 2nd February, arrived before Calcutta. On hearing of his approach Clive, whose army now, by means of European reinforcements, and by levies of natives, consisted of seven hundred European infantry, a hundred artillerymen, and fifteen hundred sipáhís, with fourteen field-pieces, nearly all 6-pounders, had, leaving a garrison in Calcutta, formed an intrenched camp about a mile or more to the northward of the town, near Kásipúr, beyond the Maráthá ditch, and half-a-mile from the river, and had thrown up several strong outposts around it. As the salt-water lake, then much more extensive than at present, came within a mile of the Maráthá ditch, an enemy, marching from the north against Calcutta, would be forced to march within sight of the intrenched camp, and could scarcely avoid exposing his flank to its occupants. It was thus a position whence Clive could, choosing his opportunity, strike a decisive blow.

A skirmish took place the very first day. The

advance-guard of the Núwáb's army were taking up a position on the plain to the right of the Damdam road, and were even beginning to intrench themselves there, when Clive marched with the greater portion of his force, and six guns, to feel them. Taking up a position on their flank he opened out a fire from his guns. The prompt reply from a battery of ten heavy pieces showed him that the enemy were on the alert, and that any further measures would be hazardous. He therefore drew back in good order to his camp.

The next day (3rd February) the Núwáb arrived with his main body, though several of his guns were still behind. He had, in the meanwhile, re-opened negotiations with the Council of Calcutta, and the very morning of his arrival had sent into the fort to request that deputies might be sent to him to arrange terms. The deputies, two Members of Council, were sent. But whether it was that the Núwáb was elevated by that which he must have regarded as the repulse of Clive on the previous day, or whether the late arrival of the deputies—for they had been unable to find his tent till late in the evening—had annoyed him, this is certain, that prior to the conference his attendants treated the two Englishmen with extreme insolence; at the conference he did no more than refer them to his dewán; and, on leaving the conference they were warned by Amíchand*—a Calcutta merchant, who,

* This name is written by Mr. Orme and all earlier historians "Omichund." During the current year, an anonymous writer, reviewing a work on India, has expressed an opinion that it is too late now to ascertain the derivation and proper spelling of this

though from motives of policy in the Núwáb's camp, had suffered greatly from his warfare against the English, and whose sympathies were entirely with the latter—that their personal safety might be in danger. On this they hastened to inform Clive of the state of affairs. Clive at once resolved to attack the Núwáb's camp the following morning.

His first and immediate care was to send an express to Admiral Watson, apprising him of his design and requesting his co-operation. Watson promptly responded by despatching a body of sailors, five hundred and sixty in number, inclusive of officers, all of whom had volunteered for the service, under the command of Captain Warwick, of the "Thunder." These joined the camp at Kásipúr at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 4th February.

The reader who is familiar with the Calcutta of the present day will understand the position of the two armies if I indicate the points upon which their several component parts rested. Of the Núwáb's army the more select troops, commanded by Mír

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name. My friend, Mr. Pincott, my obligations to whom in all matters connected with the origin and spelling of Oriental words I am glad to take this opportunity of acknowledging, has, however, solved the question. "The word Omichund," he writes me, "is derived from the words *ami* (a corruption of *amrita*), 'nectar,' and *chanda*, 'the moon.' The two words combined imply 'the lunar nectar,' there being a superstition that the Moon is the receptacle of the nectar of the gods. For this reason the Moon is also called *sudhánidhi*, 'the ocean of nectar,' and *sudhádhára*, 'the receptacle of nectar.'" The name should, therefore, be spelled "Amíchand."

J'afar, were on the ground within the Maráthá ditch, near Amíchand's garden, in which was the tent of the Núwáb himself. The rest of the army extended without much order from the Maráthá ditch to the salt-water lake; or, speaking roughly, from what is now the Damdam road to Báliganj and Alípúr. Clive, whose head-quarters were near Kásipúr, kept up a double communication with Calcutta; the first by water, the second by a road running along the bank of the river, this latter being supported by a body of troops occupying a post known as Perring's Redoubt, commanding the bridge over the Maráthá ditch at a point close to what is now the Chitpúr suspension bridge. He proposed to march directly on the battery of heavy guns which had baffled him on the 2nd, and which still lay in position to the right of the Damdam road, and, having rendered them powerless, to march straight for the garden in which lay the Núwáb.

At 3 o'clock in the morning Clive set out. Besides the detachment of sailors I have mentioned, five hundred and sixty-nine strong, he had six hundred and fifty European infantry, a hundred European artillerymen, eight hundred sipáhís, and six guns drawn by the sailors. The ammunition was carried by lascars. One half of the sipáhís led the advance, then followed the European infantry, then the guns and the lascars; the remaining half of the sipáhís brought up the rear. Shortly before daybreak the little army came upon the enemy's advanced guards stationed in the ditches of that part of the high-road which leads from the ditch at the head of


TERRITORY OF
CALCUTTA
MDCCLVII.
A. Perring's Point
B. Govinda Mitr's Garden
C Amichand's Garden
D. Governapur
Tents and Huts of the Nawab's Army
RIVER HUGLI
1 Mile
Road to Dumdum

the lake to the Maráthá ditch. The guards, after discharging their matchlocks and some rockets, took to flight. One of the rockets almost caused a misfortune to the assailants. Striking the pouch of a sipáhí it exploded its contents; and, the fire communicating itself to the contents of other pouches, very great confusion was caused. Fortunately the enemy were not ready to take advantage of it, and Captain Eyre Coote, who led the grenadiers behind the first line of sipáhís, succeeded in restoring order. The line now advanced, but though the day had by this time broken, a very thick fog, not uncommon even now in the cold-weather months in Bengal, overspread the ground, and completely obscured the objects before the men. Still, however, they pushed on in the direction taken by the fugitives, and reached unopposed a position facing the garden of Amíchand, covered at this point by the Maráthá ditch.

This garden was an inclosure of ground to the right of the Damdam road, beyond the natural line of the Maráthá ditch. That ditch, however, made at this point a sweep which enclosed it on three sides. As the attacking force approached this position they heard—they could still only hear—the approaching sound of charging cavalry. Facing towards the direction of the sound, they waited until it had come quite near, then discharged a volley so deadly that the advance suddenly ceased, to be followed, in a few moments, by the fainter trampling of retreat. It was found that the fire had been delivered at a distance of about thirty yards, and that it had emptied many of

the saddles of the Núwáb's body-guard, a select corps of Mughul horsemen who had been stationed near the garden but outside the ditch.

The fog appeared to increase in intensity ; no one could see an inch in front of him. It was impossible for Clive to direct the march of his troops on any given point. He did not even quite know where he was. Fortune, more than good guidance, directed his steps. About a mile to the south of the garden was a narrow cañseway raised several feet above the level of the country, having a ditch on both sides, and forming a road across the Maráthá ditch into Company's territory. Divining, as well as he could, the direction of this causeway, Clive now felt his way along the ditch, marching very slowly, his infantry firing by platoons in all directions, his guns also firing obliquely to the front. Proceeding in this manner, and meeting no opposition, Clive at last reached the causeway. He knew at once where he was; that it was the very point which he had designed to reach; that, crossing it, and making a sharp turn to the right he must reach the unprotected face of Amíchand's garden. That it was barricaded was probable, but a determined rush would break down the barricade. He now clearly saw his way.

It will be understood that marching, feeling his way along the ditch, as he had been, Clive, on reaching the head of the causeway, would have to make a sharp turn to the right to cross it. He gave his directions accordingly. But whether he had omitted to transmit those orders to his artillerymen, who, from the right

and left of the line towards its rear, had been firing to the front—rather obliquely, to avoid their own men, but still to the front—or whether the officer to whom he entrusted them had not delivered them, this is certain, that the artillery-fire did not cease. The consequence was that no sooner had the leading division of his force, consisting of sipáhís, taken ground on the causeway than they were mowed down by the fire of their own field-pieces from the right rear. The leading files, surprised and panic-stricken, then rushed for refuge into the ditch, followed thither, helter skelter, by the main body. Clive was at once on the spot, endeavouring to rally his men, but the thick fog added to the difficulty, for he found that the darkness had added much to the panic caused by the surprise. He succeeded, however, in forming the men into a column on the side of the ditch along which they had been marching, and then faced them so that they might storm the barricade at the other end of the causeway* as soon as he should receive reports from the officers sent to examine it. Unhappily, another surprise was yet in store for him. The enemy had mounted two heavy guns on a bastion along the line

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* Orme—and he is followed by others—states that the men rushed across the causeway, and forming on the other side, prepared to attack the barricade. But this would have been impossible, for the barricade guarded the further end of the causeway. Orme's subsequent narrative proves that the causeway never was crossed. It is curious, too, that the plan which accompanies Orme's description gives a direct contradiction on this point to the words in his text.

of the ditch, and which enfiladed the passage of the causeway. Well aware, by the fire of their muskets and guns, of the propinquity of Clive, they divined the course he proposed to follow, and, directing their guns on the spot where they had reason to believe his force was massing itself in column, they suddenly discharged their pieces loaded with grape. The effect was very great. Twenty-two Europeans were killed or wounded, and, a second discharge, less deadly but still death-bearing, soon following, the column was thrown into inextricable confusion. Clive abandoned then the idea of storming the causeway, and extending his troops, resumed his march in the direction he had quitted, in the hope of gaining a road known to be about half a mile in advance, and which, crossing the Maráthá ditch into the Company's territory, formed the main road and avenue leading to Calcutta.* The country between the outer end of the raised causeway and the road towards which the force now tried to make its way, was laid out in rice-fields, each enclosed by a separate bank. It was found impossible to lift the guns over these banks; they were, therefore, dragged along the ditches which had been made to form the banks. This not only caused great labour and considerable delay, but it necessitated a constant change of direction. The troops, dispirited and fatigued, were engaged at this work when, at 9 o'clock, the fog began to lift. Noticing, then, that the enemy's

* This main road and avenue now runs from Lall Bazar to the Circular road by Bow Bazaar and Boitakannah.

horsemen were hovering all about them, and gradually closing in, Clive detached platoons to both flanks to keep them at a distance. But the lifting of the fog had disclosed to the enemy, likewise, his apparently forlorn condition; and the two guns which had caused so much mischief at the causeway, and which had never been wholly silent, were able to take a new and surer aim. Another battery of two heavy guns to which he had necessarily exposed his flank, likewise took up the refrain. It was under these difficulties that, after more than an hour's hard labour, and after abandoning two of his field-pieces, which had broken down, he reached the road at which he was aiming. This road, the reader will recollect, crosses the Maráthá ditch. Once across the Maráthá ditch, two courses would be open to Clive: he could either penetrate into Amíchand's garden from its open side, or could march into the Calcutta fort. But to cross the Maráthá ditch, to accomplish at this road that which he had failed to accomplish at the causeway, was the first necessity. Up to this moment he had been marching through the Núwáb's camp, parallel with the line of the ditch; but on reaching the point where he now was he had to wheel his whole column to the right, and cross the ditch by the road forming a right angle with his previous line of advance. On reaching this road, then, he formed his troops in column to the right, and advanced. For men who had been seven hours afoot, finding their way in darkness through an enemy's camp, seeing no opponents, but made by many casualties bitterly conscious of an opponent's

close vicinity, the task was no easy one. There were cannon on both flanks, cavalry and infantry in their front, cavalry and infantry in their rear. Their one chance of success lay in their going forward. Happily no one was more impressed with this necessity than their leader; happily, too, the officers and men who fought on that day were men upon whom he could rely in any emergency.

Clive, having formed his column to the right, pushed along the road, across the ditch, to attack the strong body of cavalry and infantry drawn up on the further side of it. But whilst he attacked these, a larger body of the enemy's horsemen attacked his rear with great fury, and, for a moment, succeeded in capturing one of his field-pieces. Had the enemy in front resisted, the situation would have been more than critical; but the fire of the leading platoons dispersed these, and Ensign Yorke of the 39th Foot having, by a gallant charge of his platoon, recovered the captured gun, the whole party crossed the ditch. Clive was now master of his movements. Considering however, the fatigued condition of his troops, he resolved to renounce the movement against Amí-chand's garden and to retire into the fort. This resolution he carried out, and though harassed for a considerable distance by the enemy's cavalry and artillery, he reached Calcutta about noon. Towards evening he returned, unmolested, to Kásipúr. His losses had been considerable. They amounted to fifty-seven killed, of whom thirty-nine were Europeans, and a hundred and seventeen wounded, of whom

eighty-two were Europeans. The greater part of these casualties were caused by the guns which played upon the force at the causeway and during its march across the rice-fields from the causeway to the road.

Clive's attack on the Núwáb's camp must be regarded from two points of view. As a military operation it was a failure. Clive did not carry out either of the two objects he had proposed to himself when he set out. He did not capture the enemy's battery of heavy guns, and he did not attack Amí-chand's garden. Far from that, he made the tour, apparently the useless and disastrous tour, of the enemy's camp, to find, after ten hours of terrible fatigue, that he had lost in killed and wounded more than one-tenth of his army. His plan then, however good it may have been in theory, had failed. The failure may partly be attributed, and with a great deal of plausibility, to the fog. It is certainly impossible to carry out a precise and difficult manœuvre in total darkness. But it is an argument which cuts both ways. The same fog which hindered his movements affected to the same extent the movements of his enemy.

In a military sense it must be admitted, then, Clive's plan failed completely. Did it deserve to succeed? This is a question which was asked keenly at the time, and which was answered generally, I might almost say universally, in the negative. Clive's plan involved, under any circumstances, the long exposure of his right flank to the batteries raised

on the ditch. It involved, in fact, a march through the enemy's camp, exposed to an enfilading fire, to be followed by the storming of the passage across the ditch. It is curious he should have preferred a plan so fraught with danger when one so much more simple was at his very hand. The reader will recollect that his camp at Kásipúr was connected with Calcutta by a road which led along the river bank, and which crossed the Maráthá ditch by a bridge almost at the same point as the Chitpúr suspension bridge of the present day, guarded by a fort known as Perring's Redoubt. By this bridge he had free entrance within the ditch, at a point not more than half a mile from the unfortified entrance into Amíchand's garden. Mr. Orme expresses the general opinion of the time when he says, that if Clive had crossed by that bridge he might have marched to Amíchand's garden "on a spacious road capable of admitting twelve or fifteen men abreast, on the left exposed, indeed, to the annoyance of matchlocks from some enclosures, where, however, cavalry could not act, but their left would have been defended by the rampart of the Maráthá ditch, contiguous to which the road lies; their only danger would have been in front, from the onsets of cavalry, and the discharge of what pieces of cannon the enemy had got near the garden." It seems to me impossible to gainsay the conclusions thus summarised by Mr. Orme.

On the other hand, looking at the operation from a political point of view, it may seem to justify the judgment passed on it by later writers. Colonel

Arthur Broome, who had studied the subject deeply, and who was well capable of forming an opinion upon it, whilst admitting that the operations were condemned by the troops as rash, ill-concerted, and entailing an unnecessary waste of life, pronounces the plan to have been "bold and judicious—such a display of energy being well calculated to strike terror into the mind of the Núwáb." No doubt, regard being had to the results, the operation may be justified. The only question is whether the same or greater terror might not have been stricken into the mind of the Núwáb by the easier march suggested by Mr. Orme, leading directly to his very tent. Still, judging by the political results, the work of the 4th February morning was a success—a marked and striking success. If the end justifies the means, the military action of Clive on that day was even more than justified.

The results were, indeed, marvellous. The military tour which had decimated the army of Clive, had inflicted a far greater numerical loss on the army of the Núwáb. Against Clive's total of a hundred and seventy-four killed and wounded, there were to be set thirteen hundred of the Núwáb's troops. Amongst the latter were two noblemen of high rank and twenty-two of lesser note.

These losses, and the unaccustomed propinquity to danger—perhaps, too, the dash and daring of the march through the very heart of his camp—terrified the Núwáb. He sent to the English camp the next morning a letter in which, whilst complaining of the

conduct of the English, he offered definite proposals for a peace. The reply of Clive is worthy of study. It affords a marvellous proof of the clearness with which he had read the character of Asiatics. The reader must bear in mind that Calcutta was virtually beleaguered, that supplies were running short, that the demonstration of the previous day had really been a failure. But between the lines of the Núwáb's letter, in the very fact of his writing at all, Clive read that the besiegers did not look upon it as a failure. He at once took up the tone; assured the Núwáb in his reply that he had simply marched his troops through His Highness's camp to show him of what British soldiers were capable; but that he had been careful to avoid hurting anyone, except those who had actually opposed his progress. He concluded by expressing his willingness to accede to the Núwáb's proposal regarding negotiations. The "swagger"—for such it was—of this reply was exactly suited to the man and to the occasion. The Núwáb took in every word of it. If the destruction and demoralisation he had witnessed were the effect but of a march through his camp, what might not be the result of a serious attack? Reasoning thus, he at once drew off his army to a position about three miles to the north of the salt-water lake beyond Damdam. Continuing from that point the negotiations, he finally, on the 9th February, concluded with the English a treaty to the effect that all the privileges granted by former firmans, including the grant of some neighbouring villages, should be acknowledged; that all goods passing and

repassing through the country, by land or water in Bengal, Bahár, or Orísá, with English passes, should be free from tax of any kind; that all the Company's factories, and all moneys and property belong to the Company or its servants and tenants, seized or taken by the Núwáb or his officers, should be restored or made good; that permission should be granted to the English to fortify Calcutta in such manner as they might think proper; that the right of coining money should be assured to them. On their part the English covenanted to transact the business of their factories within the jurisdiction of the Núwáb in the same manner as formerly; never to do violence to any person without cause; never to give protection to any-one having accounts with the Núwáb, to murderers, or to robbers; to carry on their trade in its former channel, and never to deviate from the agreement they were then signing. Two days later, the 11th February, the Núwáb began his march towards his capital, not, however, before he had commissioned Amíchand to propose to the English a further treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, against all enemies.

Whatever criticism may be passed on the military dispositions of the 4th February, it is impossible to question the enormous value of the results which they obtained. Never has there been more vividly illustrated the power of moral force wielded by a strong nature. The student of the campaigns of 1796–97 will recollect more than one illustration of the same power. It was evidenced, for example, when, after the defeat of Alvinzi, a French officer at the head of a

party of a hundred and fifty men, suddenly encountered eighteen hundred Austrians. Assuming an air of superiority, the young officer so dominated the spirits of these Austrians, that they laid down their arms. The previous victories of the French had ruined the *morale* of their enemy. Similarly the daring displayed by Clive on the 4th February had crushed the spirit of the Núwáb. The action which his own soldiers condemned, which competent military critics, judging it artistically, must condemn, as a useless promenade involving a needless expenditure of blood, was in reality, regard being had to its effects on the enemy, equal to a victory.

Certainly, it produced all the results of a victory. It produced results greater than any which Clive, in his most sanguine moments, had dared to hope for. The treaty—the march homewards—these were the natural consequences of the fear inspired by British daring. But that message sent by Amíchand—that proposal for an alliance offensive and defensive!

Not even in his brightest visions had hope dangled the possibility of such an alliance before the soul of the youthful conqueror! Yet never did proposal more satisfy the secret yearnings of a heart than did this proposal the heart of Clive!

The fact is that the long contest waged between the French and English in Southern India—a contest in which he had borne a part so conspicuous—had impressed Clive with the conviction that the French were the most dangerous enemy to English interests in every part of India. In his recent contest with Siráju'd

daulah he had been throughout haunted by the fear of the danger to which his countrymen would be exposed if the French, throwing off their neutrality, were to combine with the Núwáb. There can, I think, be no question but that, had Clive been a Frenchman, and had he commanded at Chandranagar, he would have seized that opportunity to crush the rivals of his country. Renault, the actual governor, had, it is true, let the opportunity slip. But the Núwáb, Clive knew well, had only been frightened. Distance from the scene of danger, the lapse of a few days or weeks, would remove or greatly weaken the impression. He might return; and, then, under fresh instructions from Pondichery—whither it was known France was despatching a formidable force under one of her most promising young generals—Renault, or possibly, a more resolute successor to Renault, might tear up the treaty, and join in an attempt to crush once again the British settlement at Calcutta. Clive, in fact, looked upon Chandranagar as the Scipios of Rome looked upon Carthage. Before even he had attacked Huglí, he had, in his heart, resolved that the French settlement must be destroyed.

How, in the first instance, he had temporised, and gladly temporised, I have already related. But the danger which had rendered that temporising policy a political necessity having passed away, the desire to rid himself of the one rival who had it in his power to drive, on any sudden opportunity, a knife into the vitals of his countrymen, returned with double force to Clive.

For a moment, indeed, there came to perplex him the fear lest the Núwáb might forbid hostilities, or, if the English were to undertake them, would unite with the French. But just at this conjuncture, when he was deliberating, now doubting, now hoping, as to the course he should pursue, there came Amíchand with the Núwáb's proposal for an offensive and defensive alliance. Was it possible for any message to be more opportune? In a second Clive had taken his part. Signing at once the treaty of offensive and defensive alliance, he commissioned Amíchand to return forthwith and ascertain from the Núwáb if he would sanction an attack upon the French settlement of Chandranagar.

Had the Núwáb been a strong man he would at once have put down his foot and said, "This thing shall not be." He possessed sufficient military force then to say this. He was nearer to Chandranagar than Clive was, and the spoken word would have been sufficient. All his interests incited him to this course. He hated the English. He knew that policy demanded the maintenance of an equilibrium between the rival settlers. The French had always been docile and submissive. Why, then, did he not pursue the course dictated by policy? The answer is patent; he had not recovered from the effect of Clive's march through his camp on the 4th February!

Unwilling to yield the permission, fearing openly to refuse it, the Núwáb adopted the course which weak men always have adopted, and, to the end of time, always will adopt. He temporised. He did not

refuse permission; he did not grant it; he simply evaded a decisive answer In his reply he referred to a report, then current, that M. Bussy, supported by a French squadron, would soon reach Bengal; advised Clive to be on his guard; authorised him to adopt measures to prevent the French from obtaining a further footing in the province; requested the loan of English gunners to work his guns and train his troops; and concluded by asking that Mr. Watts, one of the senior officers of the factory, and whom he liked for his suave and pleasant manners, might be deputed to his court as representative of the Company. The English at once promised to comply with the request regarding the gunners and Mr. Watts. The Núwáb then resumed his march towards Murshidábád.

The evasive character of the Núwáb's reply to the main question submitted to him combined with his immediate march towards his capital to confirm the secret resolution of Clive. The reader will recollect that when the English Council of Calcutta gladly agreed to the proposition of neutrality made by the French, they requested M. Renault to despatch deputies to Calcutta for the purpose of discussing and signing a treaty carrying out that aim. The French deputies had now been some days in Calcutta; the conditions of the treaty had been agreed upon; the treaty required only signature. Clive, however, under several pretexts, had deferred its final consideration. When the answer of the Núwáb reached him he determined not to sign. Making as speedily as

possible his military arrangements, he crossed the Huglí with his whole available force on the 18th February, a few miles above Calcutta, and prepared to march on Chandranagar.

But, meanwhile, the suspicion of the French had been aroused. Not only the deputies in Calcutta, but M. Renault himself, had divined the reason for the delays in signing the treaty, accompanied, as they were, by preparations which could only be intended against themselves. Before even Clive had crossed the river Renault had, therefore, sent messengers to the Núwáb to make strong representations regarding the danger which would accrue to him if the English were to strengthen themselves by the annihilation of the only European rival at all formidable, and to show him that the English, freed from the restraint of his presence, were now about to attempt that annihilation. These messengers reached the Núwáb at Agardíp, forty miles south of Murshidábád.

It is probable that time, short as it had been, and distance, had caused to evaporate the dread caused by Clive's bold raid of the 4th February. Certainly the intelligence brought by the French messengers inspired Siráju'd daulah with feelings very different to those which had animated him on the morrow of the combat. It made him very angry. He saw clearly the danger to himself with which the contemplated proceedings of the English were fraught.

He at once wrote to Calcutta a letter in which he peremptorily forbade the English to wage war with their European rivals or to commit any act of hostility

against them. To mark his determination to prevent any such action by force of arms, he despatched fifteen hundred men to strengthen the garrison of Huglí, and instructed his general there, Nandkumár, to render the French every assistance in the event of his being attacked. Further, he despatched a lakh of rupees to M. Renault to aid him in his preparations for defence.

The language of the Núwáb was too decided to admit of any open hesitation on the part of those to whom it was addressed. Clive was not yet prepared to invite the simultaneous hostility of two enemies. Were he now to attack Chandranagar, that place, certain of support, might resist long enough to enable the Núwáb to act in a decisive manner against the English whilst he were yet before the besieged place. Whilst, then, urging his representative, Mr. Watts, and his native agent, Amíchand, who had likewise accompanied the Núwáb, to relax no efforts, to neglect no opportunity, of working upon the mind of Siráju'd daulah, Clive authorised them openly to announce to him that he accepted his decision and would undertake no hostile measures against the French.

And, in fact, Clive and the Calcutta Council did, for the moment, renounce the idea. As a proof of their sincerity, they resolved to sign the treaty of neutrality. That treaty had been passed by the select committee appointed to consider it, had been written out fairly, and was ready for signature. It was about to be signed when an unexpected difficulty arose.

Admiral Watson was the senior officer representing the Crown in Calcutta. In rank he was superior to Clive. Between the two men there had never existed very great cordiality. The Admiral had always regarded the self-made soldier as an interloper into His Majesty's service. Disputes regarding the right of Clive to a commander's share of prize-money had broken out even at Gheriah, and we have seen that at Calcutta Admiral Watson had insulted him by recognising before himself an officer of the 39th, serving under his orders, as the military representative of the Crown. On the occasion of the signature of the French treaty the difference was to break out again. The Núwáb had, since his halt at Agardíp, despatched every day to Clive letters in which he had renewed his positive prohibition to attack the French settlement. The increased decision in tone, and combined with that, too, the probability that his own presence would soon be required in Southern India to oppose the French troops expected under Lally, had for the moment changed his views regarding the policy of an immediate attack on Chandranagar. Certain of having the Núwáb on his hands if he were to attempt that attack, he was now more anxious than anyone that the treaty should be signed. It is impossible to say how far Clive's anxiety to sign may have stimulated Watson's disinclination, but it is certain that the more strongly the one course was urged by Clive the more vehemently the Admiral argued in favour of its opposite. The objection he took was at least plausible. "No treaty," he argued, in so many words, "can be binding with

Chandranagar until it be ratified by Pondichery. Calcutta is an independent, Chandranagar is a dependent, settlement. If we sign a treaty, then, with Chandranagar, we bind our own hands, we do not bind those of our rival." Considering that the rival was the suppliant to have his hands bound, the objection, though, doubtless, sound in law, was more plausible than solid. With respect to the real issues under consideration, it was nothing more than a legal quibble. The French, who had only a hundred and forty-six European soldiers at Chandranagar, would be formidable only if, when confident of the support of the Núwáb's army, they were to be attacked by the English. The Admiral, however, insisted on his objection. His colleagues used all their efforts to make him give way, but in vain. The scenes in the council-room became in consequence very stormy. In the heat of the altercation, Clive told Watson that only one of two courses was open to him, to sign the treaty or to go and capture Chandranagar. But the Admiral was not to be moved; the treaty remained unsigned. Days were passed in fruitless arguments, which ended only in confirming each disputant in his own opinion.

The delays thus caused worked in favour of the Admiral. It happened that just at this time the news of the invasion of India and the occupation of Dihlí by Ahmad Sháh Duráni reached the camp of the Núwáb. Terrified, fearing the further progress of the invader, believing that Bengal itself was threatened, the Núwáb wrote a pressing letter to Clive urging him to

march at once to his assistance, and offering him a hundred thousand rupees a month for the expenses of his troops. In this letter he made no mention of Chandranagar.

The very same day which saw Clive receive it, brought him also information that Commodore James with three ships, having on board two companies of European infantry, a detachment of European, and a company of native, artillery, had arrived from Bombay at the mouth of the Huglí; further, that the "Cumberland," with the remaining portion of the 39th on board, and which had parted from the Admiral's squadron after leaving Madras, had arrived at Báleswar.

Clive felt now that he was quite independent of the Núwáb, that he could act, if necessary, in defiance of his threats. Another circumstance came at the same moment to shake off the last link of the chain. Whilst Watson had been disputing with the Council, the wily Amíchand had been pursuing his own natural method to advance the interests of his English masters. Placed in communication with Nandkumár, governor of Huglí for the Núwáb and commander of his troops, he had persuaded that officer that his true interests lay in forbearing to offer any real opposition to an attack which might be made by Clive on his European rival.

Thus, practically unfettered, feeling himself strong enough now to meet the Núwáb should he dare to assist the French, Clive returned more strongly than before to his old plan of attacking Chandranagar.

The Calcutta Council consisted of Mr. Drake, the governor, Mr. Beecher, Major Kilpatrick, and Clive. Up to this moment the first three had voted persistently with Clive for concluding the treaty of neutrality. But now opinions veered round. Clive declared for the bolder measure, and carried with him his military colleague; Beecher, a weak man, declined to give an opinion either way; whilst Drake, weaker still, recorded a minute so full of casuistry, that it was not clear to which side his opinion inclined. His opinion was, therefore, voted to be no opinion at all, and the Council decided in favour of the expedition.

There remained, yet, Admiral Watson. Still in the mood which had ruled his controversy with Clive, the Admiral refused now to consent to the measure unless the consent of the Núwáb were previously obtained. To gain that consent, however, he agreed to write to that prince a letter in which he dwelt upon the shortcomings of the French, accused the Núwáb of assisting them with men and money—of not having carried out the treaty of the 9th February with regard to compensation and restitution, and threatening that if arrangements were not made within ten days for fully performing those promises, he would send to the coast for more ships and "would kindle such a flame in the country as all the waters of the Ganges would not be able to extinguish." This letter reached the Núwáb when he was still under the influence of the terror caused by the invasion of the Afghán prince. The insolence of its terms, instead of rousing his wrath, increased his apprehensions. He replied in a

style which might be termed even abject. He denied having assisted the French, pledged himself to carry out without delay the terms of the treaty, and, with reference to the projected attack on Chandranagar, used words which could be construed as giving full assent: "You," he wrote, "have understanding and generosity. If your enemy, with an upright heart, claim your protection, you will give him life; but you must be well satisfied with the innocence of his intention. If not, whatever you think, that do." The last sentence removed the last scruple of Admiral Watson. It was in vain, the day following, that the Núwáb, satisfied by news from the north-west that no danger was to be apprehended from the Afgháns, wrote in the most positive terms to forbid the attack. The Admiral, proceeding from the extreme of doubt to the extreme of resolution, was now as eager as Clive for the expedition, and treated the second letter as an insult.

On receiving from the Núwáb the application for aid against the Afgháns, Clive had replied that he would proceed to join him as soon as the news of invasion should be confirmed, and that meanwhile he would march as far as Chandranagar. His army had at once, then (7th March), broken up from the position it had occupied on the spot, now known as Haurah, and had advanced very slowly in the direction of the French territory. The detachments arrived in the ships were, at the same time, landed and pushed on with all speed to join the main body. Clive calculated that within a week he would be in a position to strike the contemplated blow.

The situation of the French governor, M. Renault de St. Germain, whilst the debates in the Calcutta Council and the negotiations with the Núwáb were proceeding, may be easily imagined. A peace-loving and honourable man, he had taken the earliest measures, after the re-occupation of Calcutta by the English, to secure with that people a cordial understanding on the terms of neutrality between both nations in Bengal. How that offer was welcomed when the English were in distress, how it had been looked upon with doubtful favour when the causes of that distress had been removed, I have already recorded. Still, up to the last Renault had hoped. Well aware, through his agents, of the opposition against the treaty raised in Calcutta, he had received from the Núwáb and from his general at Huglí, Nandkumár, the fullest assurances of protection. For a long time, then, he felt only that lesser kind of anxiety which harasses a man who, feeling confident that a certain event will happen, is longing every hour to hear that it has happened. But when his agents from Calcutta returned with the unsigned treaty, when he learned from them that the arrival of fresh troops and the terror of the Núwáb had removed from the English their last scruple, and that their troops were actually moving towards the French territory, that lesser anxiety gave place at once to indignation. Not, indeed, that he felt any confidence in his power successfully to resist, unaided, the English force. But hope had not entirely abandoned him. If even Nandkumár would threaten the besiegers, his resistance

might avail till the Núwáb himself should arrive. Despatching, then, the most pressing entreaties to Nandkumár and the Núwáb, Renault made vigorous preparations to receive the advancing enemy.

The settlement of Chandranagar occupied a tract about a mile and a half in breadth, working inland from the river, having a length of about two miles along its bank. Almost in the very centre of this length, and some thirty yards from the river, had been built the fort. This fort, called Fort d'Orléans, was a square of about a hundred and twenty yards, mounting on each of its four bastions ten 32-pounder guns. On the curtains facing the river and the south, 24-pounders were mounted at regular intervals. Near the angle formed by these two faces was a ravelin, covering the water-gate and extending to the bank of the river. On this ravelin eight 32-pounders were mounted. But the fort possessed other means of defence besides these. As soon as Renault heard of the march of the English troops, he converted the flat terrace of the church into a battery and armed it with six guns. He began also to dig a ditch and throw up a glacis all round the fort; to demolish all the buildings within a hundred yards of it, and to erect batteries beyond the foot of the glacis on the northern, western, and southern sides commanding the approaches from which the greatest danger was to be apprehended. Besides this, to render impossible an attack from the English ships, Renault gave directions for the sinking of several ships in the only navigable channel, about a hundred and fifty yards

south of the fort, a point commanded by the guns of one of the batteries. Unfortunately, the officer who was trusted with the execution of this order purposely carried out his instructions in a very inefficient manner. Leaving a narrow channel by which ships could pass, he deserted to the English. The French garrison consisted of a hundred and forty-six* French troops and three hundred sipáhís; but the European population and the sailors of the merchant vessels, to the number of about three hundred, had been hastily formed into a kind of militia, and had been armed. These, however, had had but little training.

Meanwhile, Clive's little army, numbering seven hundred European and fifteen hundred native infantry, was marching steadily on, the artillery, now increased to a hundred and fifty, proceeding in boats, escorted by Admiral Watson with three ships of war and several smaller vessels. On the 14th, Clive approached Chandranagar. Ascertaining, however, that the French had thrown up batteries commanding the approaches from the south and from the river side, he took ground to the west; then making a *détour*, he entered the French territory by

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* Orme, and, following Orme, Broome, and other writers, have placed the number of European troops at three hundred. But, through the courtesy of Monsieur Derussat, then Chief of the French establishments in Bengal, I enjoyed, in 1867, the opportunity of examining all the old records of Chandranagar. The numbers in the text are taken from the official returns of the period. Their correctness, therefore, cannot be questioned.

the road leading from that direction to the northern face of the fort. Renault had already placed a four-gun battery, commanded by the north-west bastion, on this road. As soon, moreover, as he had detected the intentions of Clive, he sent out strong detachments to keep the enemy in check. The men forming these detachments availed themselves to the utmost of their local knowledge of the country, but as Clive still advanced, they fell back, and finally formed up in rear of the battery. Their retreat allowed the English to take possession of houses and other buildings which Renault had had no time to destroy, and from the shelter of these they poured, and continued for several hours to pour, so sustained a fire, that at nightfall the French spiked the guns of the battery and retired within the fort. The abandonment of this battery rendered necessary the evacuation of the four others to the south of the fort, for these were now liable to be turned. The French, therefore, withdrew the guns from these during the night.

Clive spent the next day in establishing his troops firmly in the town and in the buildings on the southern esplanade, suffering but little from the fire directed against him from the fort. On the 16th he landed his guns and stores, opened fire on the 17th, and, on the 18th, continuing the fire, occupied the deserted battery on the river face and armed it with three 24-pounders. These opened fire on the 19th against the south flank and face of the north-east bastion. The defenders, during the three first days, had plied their guns with great spirit and vigour, and, being

sheltered behind solid defences, whilst the English fought behind brick buildings, improvised as batteries for the occasion, the results, in killed and wounded, had been rather to their advantage.

Whilst thus gallantly defending himself, Renault still maintained his hope in two causes, which might yet turn the scale very decidedly in his favour—the grounding of the English ships of war in the blocked-up channel, and the approach of the Núwáb, or at all events of Nandkumár. Could he but avert the fire of the men-of-war, he could hold out sufficiently long against the land-forces till the Núwáb should take up a position which would force Clive to retire.

These were reasonable hopes, hopes embodying a result which was easily within the possibilities. If treason and corruption had not intervened, Renault would have forced Clive to retire. But, alas! treason in the first instance had done its work, corruption had completed it in the other. On the 19th the three men-of-war, the "Kent" of sixty-four guns, the "Tiger" of sixty, and the "Salisbury" of fifty guns, admirably navigated by Captain Speke of the "Kent," had anchored just below the channel which Renault believed he had blocked up. Meanwhile the French engineer who had deserted to Clive had reported that if the Admiral would carefully sound all around the sunken vessels, he would find that there was still left sufficient room for ships to pass the channel singly. Soundings, made, during the succeeding days, under a heavy fire, proved this information to be correct. It was not, however, till the 23rd that Watson was able to attempt the passage.

The four days which intervened were spent by Clive and the defenders in exchanging a very vigorous fire alike from small arms and heavy guns. The result went far to show that, putting the ships out of consideration, the French were equal to the task of repelling Clive; that, if the Núwáb were true to his engagements, Chandranagar might even become the grave of the English. During those four days, in fact, the fire from the ramparts silenced the three-gun battery of the English, and brought down a house close to a five-gun battery which they were erecting, injuring several men and retarding the completion of that work. The losses of the defenders were all this time slight indeed. The Admiral was still engaged in his soundings. If the Núwáb would but come all would still be well with the defenders.

The Núwáb was in a position most embarrassing for a weak man. He was called upon to decide promptly and to act energetically. All his interests pointed to quick decision and energetic action. He certainly hated the English, and he especially hated and feared Clive, "the daring in war upon whom may bad fortune attend." He knew that to allow the French to be crushed was opposed to his interests. He knew that such an opportunity of repaying the insults of the raid through his camp and of this attack on Chandranagar, made in spite of his orders, would never recur. He had every wish to support the French. What, then, held him back?

The cause which tended most decisively to hold the Núwáb's hands at this crisis, a crisis affecting him

and his race even more than it affected the French, was the same cause which had already inverted the position of the European and Native in Southern India. There a series of events had caused the moral power to pass from those who had been, and were still nominally, lords of the soil, to the traders who had come, for the purposes of trade only, from Europe. There, one battle had caused that inversion. The same effect had been produced in Bengal when, on the 4th February, Clive, on a foggy morning, made the tour of the Núwáb's camp. Ill-planned and ill-conducted as was that military raid, its effect had been decisive on the mind of the ruler of Bengal. The prince who had regarded Europeans as dogs, whose officers, without punishment or rebuke, had consigned many of them to a lingering death in the Black Hole, had been made, by that raid, to tremble at the very name of Clive.

It was moral, not physical, fear, then, which made the Núwáb hesitate on this supreme occasion. Clive had daunted him. It is certain that he was very angry; that he felt mocked, insulted, defied. This conviction was brought acutely home to him when the messengers whom he despatched day after day, sometimes twice and thrice a day, bearing letters to Clive, ordering him, first not to attack, then to cease the attack, returned with the information that the siege was still vigorously prosecuted. But moral fear acting on his weak nature prevented him from acting promptly and decisively. Like all weak men, driven to do something, he had recourse to a compromise—

a word which so often signifies a measure which irritates but does not decide. Under this impulse, whilst threatening Clive with his letters, and remaining halted himself, he detached one of his generals, Rájá Dúlab Rám, with a considerable force, to aid the French.

Rájá Dúlab Rám marched and arrived within twenty miles of Huglí in sufficient time, had he pushed on, to save Chandranagar. But there came then into action the successful intrigues which the English had carried on with Nandkumár. That high officer, bribed by Amíchand, sent messengers to the Rájá to urge him to halt where he was; to assure him that if he were to push on he would incur the hostility of the English to no purpose; that Chandranagar was on the point of surrendering. Had the Rájá disregarded this message and pushed on to Huglí, he would have discovered the truth—that he was yet in ample time—for Huglí is about four miles from Chandranagar; but he suffered himself to be persuaded, and withheld an assistance which, given promptly, would have greatly influenced the future.

Thus did one of the two supports upon which Renault rested fail him at the very moment of his sorest need. Nor did the other prove more stable. By the evening of the 22nd the Master of the "Kent," Mr. John Delamotte, reported to the Admiral that he had sounded all around the ships sunk by the French, and that the passage, reported by the engineer deserter to be in existence, was actually there. Early the next morning, accordingly, Watson weighed

anchor. The "Tiger," leading, made her way successfully through the passage, and, clearing with one broadside the ravelin of its defenders, took up a position abreast of the north-east bastion, and, anchoring there, poured in a heavy fire from her guns, and from small arms from the tops. The "Kent," less fortunate, was letting go her anchor opposite the ravelin, when the guns from the curtain treated her so severely, that, in the confusion which followed, the cable ran out its full length, and the ship dropped from her allotted post till she anchored with her poop exposed to a heavy cross-fire, the fire from the south-east bastion being supplemented by that from the south-west. This accident threw out the "Salisbury," which was forced to anchor a hundred and fifty yards below the fort. The French stood well to their guns. Monsieur de Vignes, commander of one of the French ships which had been sunk, and who, at the beginning of the siege, had been placed in charge of the bastions, directed the fire with great skill and judgment, and inspired all around him with his own courage and energy. The duel between the "Tiger" and the north-east bastion was fought on both sides with great desperation, and for a long time with equal fortune. That between the two bastions and the "Kent," maintained with equal vigour, seemed at first likely to prove advantageous to the French. The flank-fire from the south-west bastion galled that ship so severely, that the Admiral at last concentrated upon it a heavy fire from all the lower-deck guns which could be brought to bear in that direction. This fire, kept up for some