



succeeded his own. Mír J'afar had been dethroned, Mír Kásim had succeeded. Then followed, in quick succession, the arbitrary measures of the Bengal Government, the protest against them by Mír Kásim, the unjust attack upon Patná replied to by the defeat of the attacking party—the first defeat sustained by the English in the field. The proprietors of East India stock became seriously alarmed. The English interests in Bengal seemed to stand at the mercy of a prince flushed with victory, justly enraged, and actuated by a secret longing to rid Bengal for ever of the hated islanders. Under the influence of alarm the public mind of England always forms rapidly and acts vigorously. Instances are frequent in our own time of the promptness alike of the thought and the action. When the news reached England, in 1849, that Lord Gough had fought an indecisive battle with the Sikhs at Chilianwálá, Sir Charles Napier was within twenty-four hours on his way to supersede him. When General Anson died on his way to Dihlí in 1857, Sir Colin Campbell was despatched with equal promptitude to take his place. When Lord Elgin died in 1863, at the moment when our troops were waging a bloody war with the tribes bordering the Panjáb, public instinct pointed to Sir John Lawrence as the one man alone whose presence on the spot would dominate every difficulty. So it has almost always been. With the exception of the period of the war of American independence, England has always possessed the man fitted to cope with a particular





emergency, and the sound instinct of the people has insisted on the employment of that particular man. That instinct was alive at the period of which I am writing. No sooner had ship after ship brought to England the account of the successive declensions of prosperity in Bengal of which I have made mention, culminating in the prospect of an immediate destruction of English interests in that quarter, than the instincts of the holders of stock, the instincts of members of Parliament, the instincts of the people pointed to the man who had laid the foundation stone of the threatened edifice as the one man who could save it. The action was as prompt as it has been in more modern times. The proprietors of stock met in full court, and insisted that Clive should be invited to return to the scene of his triumphs. They insisted, moreover, that he should return thither with full powers, not merely as president of a Council which might thwart and impede him, but as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief of all the Company's possessions in India. They insisted, moreover, that the petty persecution instituted against their hero at the instigation of Mr. Sullivan should cease, and that the jaghír should be restored without cavil, without after-thought, but fully, completely, absolutely.

It was a proud moment for Clive when the men who had rejected him for Sullivan, the real actor who had gained for them all the consideration they possessed for the very common clay which had nearly lost it for them, came to his feet to urge him, to





implore him to save them—to impose his own terms, only to save them. He was not very eager to comply. He had had some experience during the past four years of the value placed by politicians upon soldiers. He had seen how they were used as efficient tools and then cast aside as old iron. He had seen it in the instance of Forde, the conqueror of the Northern Sirkárs, and of Caillaud, who had succeeded himself in command of the army; he had seen it in his own person. He had had many disenchantments. He had felt how great services go for little the moment the performer of them becomes no longer necessary. Much, then, as the patriotic feeling within him urged him to accept the proffered position, as much did the deep distrust he felt of the India Office prompt him to refuse it.

After deep consideration the nobler feeling prevailed, and Clive consented to proceed to Bengal as Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief, but upon two conditions. The first of these was that the Court of Directors should accede to his proposal regarding the jaghír; the second that Mr. Sullivan should be removed from the office of Chairman of the Court of Directors. After some discussion and great opposition on the part of the Court of Directors these terms were acceded to. Mr. Rous succeeded Mr. Sullivan as Chairman, and the proposal made by Clive regarding the jaghír, to the effect that whilst it should still remain in the hands of the Company his right of possession should be confirmed for ten years, was accepted with enthusiasm. On the other



hand, though Clive was invested with the powers of Governor, President in Council, and Commander-in-Chief in Bengal, the absolute powers which had been claimed for him were, to a certain extent, restricted by the nomination of four gentlemen to form with him a select committee authorised to act in Bengal on their own authority, whenever they might deem it expedient, without consulting the Council, which, in effect, was superseded. These arrangements and others of a lesser importance having been concluded, Clive sailed for Bengal on the 4th June 1764.

Whilst he is making the tedious voyage to Bengal I propose to glance at the events which had combined to force upon the people of England a sense of the necessity of his return.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE RULE OF CORRUPTION.

I CANNOT too often repeat that, before Clive had left Calcutta in 1759, he had written to his successor, Mr. Vansittart, a letter which contained these words: "The expected reinforcements will, in my opinion, put Bengal out of all danger but that of venality and corruption." The reinforcements did arrive, but the spirit of venality and corruption followed them. It was the indulgence in those two vices which shook the English power in Bengal to its foundation.

Mr. Vansittart was himself in many respects a not unworthy representative of the British power in the East. His ideas were true, his instincts were sound, his wish to do the right thing was incontestable. Where he failed was in force of character. He could not impress his will upon others. With but a casting vote in Council, and at a critical period disagreeing with the majority of that Council, he was, when the





real crisis came, powerless. The communication with England was so long and so uncertain that the differences between himself and his colleagues could not be settled by an appeal to that country. Resignation would only strengthen the hands of his enemies. Under similar circumstances a Clive would probably have suspended his colleagues and seized the reins of power. But Vansittart possessed neither the strength of will nor the commanding influence which only would have justified such a course of action. Well-meaning, but overborne by men guided by "corruption and venality," he remained a passive spectator of evils which he could not prevent.

At the outset of his career in Bengal this was not so. He had for his colleagues, then, men who had served under Clive and who, though mortified by the nomination of a stranger from Madras to a post for which each one of them considered himself peculiarly fitted, were still unprepared to offer him a factious opposition. Thus he had at his side Mr. Holwell, one of the survivors of the Black Hole tragedy, and who had acted as Governor in the short interval which had elapsed between the departure of Clive and his own arrival, Mr. Amyatt, Mr. Playdell, Mr. Sumner, Mr. McGuire and Major Caillaud.

Before, however, Mr. Vansittart had taken up his office events of the gravest character had happened. With Mr. Holwell as acting President, and under the able leading of Major Caillaud and Captain Knox, the war against the Sháhzádah—become by his father's death Emperor—was being successfully prosecuted,





when, in the course of it, a circumstance befell which was the immediate cause of all the complications that followed.

This event was the death of Míran, son and declared successor of Mír J'afar. On the 2nd July 1760 Míran, campaigning with Major Caillaud, was struck dead by lightning. In itself his death was a relief; Míran possessed almost all the vices which disgrace human nature. He has been described as being rash without courage, cruel and suspicious without cause, false and treacherous without an object, avaricious without economy, and extravagant without liberality, sensual in the lowest sense of sensuality, and extravagant without taste. The disappearance from the scene of such a character, heir to a quasi-throne, could not be other than an unmixed advantage. But his death raised the question of his successor. Who was that successor to be? Mír J'afar was old, older even than his years, his health and strength were visibly declining; the eldest of his remaining sons had but just attained the age of thirteen. It is a proof of the enormous influence which the battle of Plassey and its consequences had acquired for the English that the arrangements which the death of the heir to the Súbahdárí of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá had rendered necessary rested, by general consent, in the Calcutta Council.

That Council had come to no decision when Mr. Vansittart, three weeks after the death of Míran, arrived to take up his office. The gravity of the crisis so impressed him that he at once summoned





Major—just become Colonel—Caillaud from the army, to assist at the deliberations which were to follow his arrival.

Major Caillaud possessed great experience in war, strong common sense, and great decision of character. His experience, founded on the negotiations which he had only recently been carrying on with the Mughul, had satisfied him that the course hitherto pursued by the English in treating the Núwáb of the three provinces as a quasi-independent prince, was an eminently false course; that opportunity should be taken of the death of Míran to reduce the Núwáb to his proper position—that of governor subordinate to the Court of Dillí; that he should be forced to discharge his rabble army, and that the English Government should enter into direct communication with the Mughul as Díwán of the provinces. This opinion, which was also the opinion of Mr. Holwell, had considerable weight in the Council. Had it prevailed, the complications which followed might have been avoided. But just as the discussion upon it was tending to a favourable conclusion, there appeared upon the scene an envoy from the Court of Murshidábád, who, appealing to two passions, cupidity and ambition, managed to divert the favourable course of thought to another channel, and to procure a decision highly favourable to himself—and to the members of Council.

This agent was no other than Mír Muhammad Kásim Khán, commonly called Mir Kásim Khán, son-in-law of the Núwáb. The death of Míran had made





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Mír Kásim the most prominent person in the three provinces. He was forty years of age, clever, ambitious, unscrupulous, far-sighted, a lover of his country, and possessing a keen sense of its requirements. He hated the English—and he hated them with reason. The battle of Plassey and its consequences had made them masters of the provinces his ancestors had gained for the Mughul. Every step taken by Mír J'afar had tended to increase their hold upon the country. From the yoke they had imposed Mír J'afar was unable to shake himself free. But Mír Kásim felt within him the power to create a spirit which should counterbalance that pernicious influence. He only wanted the opportunity. The death of Míran gave him that opportunity. It was not yet too late. He proceeded then to Calcutta with the secret resolve to buy from the Calcutta Council, at their own price, the Súbahdarí of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá!

He bought it. After many discussions the Council, on the 27th September 1760, signed a treaty transferring all the real power in Murshidábád to Mír Kásim for the following principal considerations: 1st, that the districts of Bardhwán, Midnapúr, and Chátgáon (Chittagong) should be granted, by sanads, to the English; that certain advantages in Silhat should be conceded to them; that the jewels of Mír J'afar should be redeemed by cash payment; that the following sums should be paid, as presents, viz. to Mr. Vansittart five hundred thousand rupees; to Mr. Holwell, two hundred and seventy thousand; to





Messrs. Sumner and McGuire,\* each, two hundred and fifty-five thousand; to Colonel Caillaud, two hundred thousand; to Mr. Culling Smith and to Captain Yorke, one hundred and thirty-four thousand each. Three days after the signature of the treaty Mír Kásim set out for Murshidábád. Two days later Mr. Vansittart followed him. A week or two later Mír J'afar was on his way to Calcutta as a pensioner, and Mír Kásim reigned in his stead. This was a revolution, and revolutions rarely calm the passions. This one, in particular, had had the effect of confirming the view, introduced by the corrupt transactions with Mír J'afar previous to Plassey, that the special use of a Súbahdár of the three provinces was to supply the members of the Calcutta Council with private funds as they might require them.† A circumstance came, shortly after the transaction with Mír Kásim, to prove the truth of this theory. In a previous chapter‡ I have mentioned how Clive and his Council had commented most strongly, in a letter, dated 29th December 1759, on the conduct of the Court of Directors. The reply to this remonstrance had been a letter, dated 21st January 1761, dismissing from the service Messrs. Holwell, Playdell,

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\* The members of Council mentioned in a previous page, Messrs. Amyatt and Playdell, had been nominated to other appointments. Mr. Amyatt subsequently, however, returned to Calcutta.

† This was the view stated a little later by Mr. Scrafton, a very able man, who took a considerable part in the negotiations immediately preceding and following Plassey.

‡ Page 331.





Sumner, and McGuire. Before this despatch, however, reached Calcutta, Mr. Holwell had resigned. The three other gentlemen were now removed. Others, Mr. Ellis, a man of very violent temper, Mr. Smyth, Mr. Verelst, and Mr. Warren Hastings, filled the vacancies. By this change the party in opposition to Mr. Vansittart obtained the majority in the Council. Indeed, from this time, it was they who ruled, Mr. Vansittart being supported only by Mr. Warren Hastings.

Meanwhile Mír Kásim had begun to put in practice the policy by which he hoped to secure practical independence for the country he had been called upon to administer. The war in which he, as an ally of the English, found himself engaged with the Emperor was brought to a conclusion in June 1761. No sooner had his territories been evacuated alike by the supporters of the imperial authority and by the English, than Mír Kásim took the first step in his long-meditated project. This was to remove from power all the subordinate governors who had shown either partiality to the English or hostility to himself. The reasons he put forward for the removal were of a less political character. The men removed were said to have embezzled State moneys, to have taken bribes, to have misgoverned. Their places were filled by men of character and ability devoted to the new Núwáb. To be further away from the surveillance which the English had exercised over Mír J'afar at Murshidábád, Mír Kásim then removed his capital to Mungér (Monghyr), three hundred and seventy miles by the river





route from Calcutta, and containing a strong fortress. He proceeded at once to add to the strength of this place. Next, by the exercise of strict economy, and by compelling the plunderers of the State to disgorge, he paid off his monetary obligations to the English—thus avoiding the rock on which the fortunes of Mír J'afar had been wrecked. He then turned his attention to his army. Disbanding the irregular infantry corps of his predecessors, he re-formed them on a European model. To train them he enlisted adventurers—Frenchmen, Germans, Armenians, even English, wherever he could find them—men who had been soldiers. Conspicuous amongst these were the Alsatian, Reinhard, better known later as Samrú or Sombre, and the Armenians, Markar and Aratoon. By the exertion of these men, animated by his own constant supervision, Mír Kásim, by the end of 1762, had on foot, ready for action, armed and trained on the European principle, a force of twenty-five thousand infantry and a regiment of excellent artillery. Provident in all things, he had, in the meanwhile, built a foundry for casting cannon, and from this his workmen were able to turn out guns equal to any which could be brought against him. These measures, and another which he brought to a high degree of perfection—the reform of his revenue system—were inspired by but one motive, distrust of the English. Good reason had he for that distrust. The two vices, regarding which Clive had declared to Mr. Vansittart that they constituted the only danger to English rule in Bengal, reigned supreme in the re-





modelled Calcutta Council. In vain did Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Hastings plead for statesmanlike action. Their colleagues had but one thought—to enrich themselves. To hasten this consummation they encouraged the abuse of the rule by which an English pass secured for country goods immunity from taxation. This abuse led to confusion of the worst character, and to the ruin of the Núwáb's subjects. European passes were openly sold; in course of time, they were forged. The evil rose at last to such a head that it had become impossible to test the genuineness of any pass. The result was that the honest native traders were ruined and the revenues of the Núwáb suffered. In vain did Mír Kásim represent the evils to the Calcutta Council. For a long time the majority refused to listen; and it was only when they were wearied by the repeated appeals supported by two of their colleagues whose dissentient reasons would certainly find a hearing in England, that they delegated full powers to Mr. Vansittart, then about to proceed to Mungér, to settle the question once and for ever.

The interview between Vansittart and Mír Kásim took place in January 1763. When two men armed with full powers, each anxious to arrive at a conclusion, meet to discuss its terms, a satisfactory compromise is almost always the result. Vansittart, it is true, found the Núwáb smarting under the sense of the real injuries which he and his people were suffering from the greed of the English, and in no mood to give way. He persuaded him—with great difficulty,





however—to agree to a compromise on terms still very advantageous to the English. These were that whilst the servants of the Company should be allowed to carry on the inland private trade, on payment of a fixed duty of nine per cent. on all goods, the native traders should pay twenty-five per cent.; further that no passes should be valid unless they were signed by the Company's agent. In agreeing, very unwillingly, to these terms, Mír Kásim expressed his opinion that the English would not observe them; but that, even if they did, they would not remedy the evils complained of. He declared himself ready, however, to give the scheme a fair trial, but he warned Vansittart that if it should not succeed he would abolish all duties and throw the trade open.

Mr. Vansittart had made the compromise, a most favourable compromise for English interests; the Calcutta Council rejected it. Careless of the public interest, of consequences, greedy only of gain, regarding the Núwáb and the natives as a race born to be swindled for their advantage, they insisted that the English private trade should be subjected to no duty whatever, the trade in salt alone excepted, and on this they were ready to agree to a duty of two and a half per cent. They would not listen to any alteration of these terms, and they expressed their opinions in a manner natural to men whose instincts were solely money-making.

The Núwáb, meanwhile, trusting to the formal engagements he had entered into with Mr. Vansittart—engagements signed, sealed, and delivered—had issued





orders for their being carried out at once. He then started on an expedition to Nipál. He returned, a month later, unsuccessful from that raid, only to find that Vansittart's agreement had been disallowed, and that the members of the Calcutta Council were bent upon making the last state of things worse than the first. His mind was made up on the spot. He at once issued a mandate abolishing all duties whatever, and establishing free trade throughout his dominions.

This bold and prudent measure—for, even if judged by the result, personal ruin was preferable to the lingering torture to which the policy of the Calcutta Council subjected him—roused all the worst passions of the corrupt clique in the British capital. They declared that the Núwáb had not the power to issue laws affecting their trade, and that the edict establishing free trade was a distinct declaration of war. Yielding, however, for the moment, to the strong representations of Messrs. Vansittart and Hastings, they despatched two of their members, Messrs. Hay and Amyatt, to Mungér, to reason with the Núwáb. These gentlemen arrived safely at his capital. They found him determined not to yield on the subject of free trade, convinced that the English intended to drive him to extremities. How far they might have succeeded in persuading him to abate his pretensions, had the Council been content to leave the negotiations in their hands, may never be known. But whilst they were reasoning at Mungér, Mr. Ellis, the most violent of the senior servants of the Company, and who had been appointed to the agency at





Bánkípur, was making open preparations to attack the Núwáb's city of Patná. The Núwáb still tried to avert hostilities. He detained at Mungér a fleet of boats containing ammunitions of war intended for the force at Bánkípur, and he begged the Calcutta Council to remove the English force from that place to Mungér, where it would be powerless for mischief. The Calcutta Council refused, and, bent on war, directed Messrs. Amyatt and Hay to leave Mungér, notifying at the same time to Ellis the order they had given to that effect. This action precipitated the crisis. Ellis, believing that Amyatt and Hay had left Mungér, and aware that the Núwáb's troops were on their way to reinforce the garrison of Patná, directed the troops at his disposal, commanded by Colonel Carstairs, to surprise that city. Carstairs made the attempt on the 23rd June, was momentarily successful, and allowed his troops to disperse for drink and plunder. Whilst they were thus dispersed the reinforcements sent by the Núwáb arrived, retook the city, and then besieged the English in their turn at Bánkípur. Pressed hard, the English attempted (29th June) to escape by night into Awadh (Oudh). But meanwhile other detachments of the Núwáb's troops had occupied their line of retreat. Pursued by the men who had besieged them they were thus placed between two fires. By both these parties they were, on the 1st July, attacked and completely defeated. It was only, however, after Colonel Carstairs, several officers, and many of their men had been killed, that the survivors laid down their arms and surrendered at discretion.





Amongst the prisoners was the most prominent author of the war, Mr. Ellis.

The attack upon Patná and its results had the effect of clearing the position. Thenceforth it was a war to the death between the Núwáb and the English. The former, in a letter of remarkable ability addressed to the Calcutta Council, reminded them of the provocation they had given him, of the promises they had broken, and called upon them to return to him the three districts whose resources they had misused, and to make compensation for the violence and oppression they had carried on in his territories. The English replied in a manner which had at least the merit of being thorough. The Government, which had been bribed by Mír Kásim to depose Mír J'afar, now accepted other bribes from Mír J'afar to reinstate him at the expense of Mír Kásim. Having concluded an arrangement with the former, they declared war against the latter, and, in a proclamation, invited all the people of the three provinces to return to their allegiance to their reinstated master. At the same time they put their army in motion against Mír Kásim.

Fortunately for the English, their army, though small in numbers, was led by a consummate soldier. It is not too much to say that never has the British army produced a soldier more capable in all respects than Major John Adams. He could plan a campaign and lead an army in a manner not to be surpassed. The officers who surrounded him were all men who had won their spurs. Knox, distinguished in the





campaign of the Northern Sirkárs and at Biderra; Yorke, shot through both thighs at Machhlípatanam; Irving, Moran, and Glenn, were all men worthy of their leader. It was well that they were so, for the campaign upon which they were about to enter would try all their energies. With a force at the outset smaller, and never very much larger, than that which fought at Plassey, they would have to confront an army of trained soldiers led by men devoted to their chiefs, and united by the bond of hatred to the foreigner.

It is not necessary to give in this place a detailed account of the campaign that followed. It will suffice to say that never had Indian troops fought so well before, never have they fought better since. But their efforts, supreme as they were, were shattered against British determination and British leading. On the 17th July a very large body of Mír Kásim's irregular troops hurled themselves in vain against a small detachment of native infantry and European artillery, led by Lieutenant Glenn, on the banks of the A'jí. Almost victorious, they were in the end repulsed. Two days later the Núwáb's main army was defeated, after a most obstinate battle, by Major John Adams, near Katwá. Here victory long hovered between the two armies; at one time it seemed within the grasp of the troops of the Núwáb, and had the horsemen who had been repulsed on the A'jí, on the 17th, not refused to act, they might have gained it. As it was, the battle was long doubtful, and was only decided in the end by the opportune





death of the enemy's leader. On the 24th, Murshid-ábád was occupied by Mír J'afar, and on the 2nd August another obstinate, and for long a very doubtful, battle was fought between the rival parties on the field of Ghéria. Here, too, victory for a long time seemed to smile on Mír Kásim. His troops broke the right wing of the English, and threw their centre into disorder. Had the blow been vigorously followed up the English force must have been destroyed. But the success of the English on the right, and the failure of the enemy to employ to the greatest profit a decisive moment, changed the fortunes of the day. Mír Kásim's army fell back beaten, but not destroyed. The game was not yet lost. To reach Mungér the English had to traverse the defiles and hill ranges of Rájmahal. These had been strongly fortified. At one of these passes, U'ndwá Nálá, a pass of enormous strength, Mír Kásim had posted the flower of his army. Here, he thought, was a barrier strong enough to keep even the English at bay.

For about a month it did so keep them at bay. So unassailable was the position that Major Adams dared not attack it till he had placed his two heavy guns in battery against it. Even then success seemed impossible. On the early morn of the 5th September, however, in consequence of information received from a deserter, he attempted to storm the position. He succeeded: the enemy were surprised and destroyed. The annals of war do not record a more decisive victory than that of U'ndwá Nálá.





Thenceforth opposition in the field ceased. Pressing forward, the English leader traversed the Ráj-mahal hills, occupied Mungér without resistance, captured Patná on the 6th November, and forced Mír Kásim to throw himself upon the protection of the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh).

This brilliant campaign accomplished all, and more than all, the objects of the Calcutta Council. It expelled Mír Kásim, it reinstated Mír J'afar—as their slave.

Mír Kásim, however, had not wholly renounced all hope of recovering his position. Presenting himself to the Emperor, Sháh A'lam, and to the Núwáb-Vazír, Shujá'u'd daulab, at Alláhábád, he entered into an agreement with those two high authorities, in virtue of which they, in consideration of his reducing with his troops the revolted Rájá of Bundelkhand, bound themselves to aid him with all their forces against the English. Mír Kásim easily overran Bundelkhand. The Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír then kept their word. The united forces of the three contracting parties crossed the Ganges and advanced towards Patná. They arrived within sight of that city on the 23rd April. But an English army, commanded by Major Carnac, was occupying a strongly entrenched position in front of it. For more than a week the allies reconnoitred this position. On the 3rd May they attacked it. They were successful at one point, but the misconduct of the troops on another part of the field neutralised that success, and they fell back on Baksar. Here, on the 23rd of October following,





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they were attacked and completely defeated by an English force under Major, afterwards Sir Hector, Munro. The war was prolonged till August 1765, and was then terminated by a treaty which virtually advanced the English frontier as far as Alláhábád. Just three months before this treaty had been concluded Lord Clive had returned to Calcutta. To him, then, I propose now to return.

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## CHAPTER XV.

## SECOND ADMINISTRATION.—INTERNAL.

CLIVE reached Calcutta on the 3rd May 1765. At Madras, where he touched on the 10th April, he received despatches giving him the latest intelligence of the events passing in Bengal. From these he learned that Mír Kásim had been expelled from Bengal, and his supporters had been subdued; that Mír J'afar was dead, and that the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír had implored the forbearance of the English. Clive availed himself of the days of leisure assured to him by the voyage between the roadstead of Madras and the Huglí to consider the terms upon which to insist when concluding the treaty then clearly looming in the future.

Accompanying the new Governor and Commander-in-Chief were two gentlemen, Mr. Sykes and Mr. Sumner—two of the members\* of a select committee of which he was the ruling spirit, and which was

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\* The other members were General Carnac and Mr. Verelst.





to supersede in India the authority of the President and Council—and several officers required to fill up vacancies in the military establishment, a plan for the remodelling of which had, prior to his departure from England, received the general approval of the Court of Directors. To carry out this scheme he directed his immediate attention. Three days after his arrival he appointed Brigadier-General Carnac to be colonel of infantry and commander-in-chief of the local forces. He directed that, as soon as circumstances would permit, the European infantry should be divided into three battalions; that Lieutenant-Colonels Smith and Barker, who had accompanied him from England, should be colonels of the two remaining regiments of infantry; that the three lieutenant-colonelcies should be given to Sir R. Fletcher, Major Peach, and Major Chapman; that two out of the three vacant majorities should be conferred upon Major Champion and Major Stibbert—the third to be left open for the present; that Major Jennings should be confirmed in command of the artillery.

But it was the remodelling of the civil, rather than of the military, service, which claimed the earnest attention of Lord Clive almost from the very hour of his return. The very day of his landing he wrote to General Carnac to tell him how he had been impressed by the extent to which the English name had sunk in Calcutta; how the Members of Council had taken immense sums as gratifications, and were so shameless as to own it publicly. In the same letter





he declared in the most solemn manner that he had come out with a mind superior to all corruption, and that he was determined to destroy the great and growing evil or perish in the attempt.

An occasion was at hand which demanded the putting in practice of this resolve.

Four months before Lord Clive's return, Mír J'afar, harassed by unceasing demands for money on the part of the Calcutta Council, and beset by difficulties which, even if he had had the spirit and energy, he had not the means, to overcome, had sunk into an unhonoured grave. The compact made with the English by this unhappy man before Plassey had brought him only shame and trouble; the compact made with the same nation on the eve of the campaign against Mír Kásim had covered himself and his office with ruin and disgrace. The Súbahdár of Bengal, Bihár and Orísá had, before the alliance with the foreigner, been one of the most powerful supports of the Mughul Empire. Alliance with the English had, in seven years, made the same high official, politically, an abject thing at which to point the finger, commercially "a banker for the Company's servants, who could draw upon him as often and to as great an amount as they pleased."\*

But Mír J'afar was dead; it was necessary, politically, for the sake of appearances, personally and commercially for the sake of those who wished to dip their hands still deeper into the large bank of state

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\* Mr. Scrafton's letters.





revenues, that he should have a successor. There were two candidates for the office, one a son of Míran, and therefore grandson of the late Núwáb; the other Nujmu'd daulah, eldest surviving, but illegitimate, son of the deceased Mír J'afar.

The selection rested actually with the members of the Calcutta Council. These consisted of Mr. Spencer, who had, the preceding year, succeeded Mr. Vansittart in the presidential chair, Messrs. Johnstone, Senior, Middleton, Leycester, Playdell, Burdett, and Gray. But one thought pervaded the minds of these gentlemen, and that thought was how to make the best bargain—for themselves—from the transaction. Their predecessors in the offices they held had profited largely by the substitution of Mír J'afar for Siráju'd daulah, of Mír Kásim for Mír J'afar, again of Mír J'afar for Mír Kásim. It was unreasonable, then, to expect that they should forego the opportunity of making an equal profit by the selection of a successor to Mír J'afar.

Of the two candidates, one, the grandson of the deceased, was only six years old; the other, the son, was eighteen. As Mr. Mill finely points out, the one was of an age to give presents; the other was a minor, whose revenues would have to be accounted for.

There can be little doubt but that this consideration decided the choice of the Calcutta Council. They, resolved, after due consideration, to negotiate with the son, Nujmu'd daulah. They came to this decision in the face of an offer made them by the Emperor to confer the Súbahdárí of the three provinces upon the





Company, in other words, to supersede the whole family of Mír J'afar in its favour. Notwithstanding the fact that this arrangement would have been very beneficial alike to the Company—as it proved when carried out subsequently—and to the natives, for they would have been plundered by one master instead of by two, it would not have profited the private interests of the members of Council. It was therefore rejected, and negotiations were entered into with Nujmu'd daulah.

The negotiations with Mír J'afar in 1757 had been carried on by means of a Bengáli, Amíchand, who had been cheated out of his reward. The art of negotiating corrupt bargains had in the interval made considerable progress, and in 1765 Englishmen were proved adepts at it. On the occasion of which I am writing Mr. Gideon Johnstone, brother of one of the members of Council, conducted the more or less delicate bargain. The agent on the other side was Muhammad Ríza Khán, a Muhammadan gentlemen, very clever and very unscrupulous. These two negotiators, each worthy of the other, arranged that the sum to be paid by Nujmu'd daulah for the empty right to be called Súbahdár should be twenty lakhs of rupees; that of this sum Mr. Spencer should receive 200,000 rupees; Mr. Johnstone 237,000; Messrs. Playdell, Burdett, and Gray, 100,000 each; Mr. Senior, 172,500; Mr. Middleton, 122,500; Mr. Leicester, 112,500; and Mr. Gidéon Johnstone, 50,000. The balance, consisting of over ten lakhs, was to be distributed in a more secret manner. For this





consideration\* Mr. Gideon Johnstone arranged not only that Nujmu'd daulah should be nominated Súbahdár of the three provinces, but that Muhammad Ríza should be Náib Súbah, or deputy Núwáb, and, as such, should exercise all authority. On the 25th February the bargain was completed, and Nujmu'd daulah took his seat on his viceregal throne.

This transaction, no less than the vaunting manner in which the principal actors in it spoke of it, roused all the ire of Clive. In condemning their conduct, as he did, in unmeasured terms, he had right and power on his side. Just thirteen days before the death of Mír J'afar the Calcutta Council had received from the India Office a despatch, directing the immediate execution of a new covenant between the Company and its servants forbidding the latter to accept for themselves thenceforth any presents from the natives.† For the moment the Bengal Govern-

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\* It deserves to be recorded that at the time that this shameless bargain was made the Company's treasury was empty, and there were no means of replenishing it. The sums necessary for carrying on the public business were lent to the Treasury by the Company's servants at eight per cent. Well might the India Office complain that their servants had interests distinct from those of their masters!

† The order ran to the effect that new covenants, dated May 1764, should be executed by all the servants of the Company, civil and military, binding them to pay to the Company the amount of all presents and gratuities in whatever shape, received from the natives, in case the amount should exceed four thousand rupees, and not to accept any present or gratuity, if amounting even to one thousand rupees, without the consent of the President in Council. This order reached Calcutta early in January 1765;





ment treated the order with silent contempt. In direct violation of its provisions the members of Council received the large sums I have mentioned from Nujmu'd daulah, and far from attempting to conceal the transaction, they openly boasted of it in the presence of the new Governor. They hoped to bear him down, as they and their predecessors had borne down Vansittart, by the weight of their majority.

But Clive was a different man from Vansittart. When, on the very day of his arrival, at a meeting summoned by him, the members of Council began the tactics which had prevailed with his predecessor, one questioning the extent and meaning of the powers conferred upon his committee, another proposing measures which would neutralise their force, Clive plainly let them know that he was resolved to be master. On the 7th May, without waiting for General Carnac and Mr. Verelst, he declared the Select Committee formed; assumed the whole powers of the government, civil and military; and taking an oath of secrecy himself, caused the same to be administered to his colleagues and the secretaries.

The first task to which the Committee bent themselves, was to investigate the transactions relative to the accession of Nujmu'd daulah. Driven into a corner, the inculpatcd members of Council boldly

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and though the members of the Services did not at once sign the covenants, the orders respecting them were morally not the less binding upon them.





retorted that they had only followed the example of Clive himself with respect to Mír J'afar. To this allegation Clive had a ready, and, as he had persuaded himself, a complete answer. In those days the accepting of presents from native princes was lawful, in these it was forbidden. Further, he went on to argue, at the time of the conquest of Bengal the wealth of the province was boundless, whereas experience had shown, and none knew better than the members of Council, that it had been greatly overrated, and that the burdens imposed by the English upon the Núwáb had contributed greatly to his ruin. So far the reasoning was plausible. But when Clive went on to assert that the overthrow of Siráju'd<sup>o</sup> daulah and the elevation of Mír J'afar had been the work of the people of Bengal, the English acting merely a subordinate part as auxiliaries, he chose to forget the negotiations with Amichand, the conspiracy with the chiefs of the army, the sums which were paid him, not by the people, but by ambitious chiefs working for their own interest; that the immediate result had been enormously to increase the burdens pressing on the people. Arguing from the point of view that his own policy, right in itself, had been exaggerated and disfigured by his successors, he proceeded to condemn the subsequent removal of Mír J'afar, and the substitution of Mír Kásim—acts which he attributed only to the love of personal gain on the part of the Council. As strongly, too, did he express his disapproval of the policy which had forced Mír Kásim into rebellion. But the





act which of all others he most condemned was that immediately under his review. In 1765, he urged, there was no crisis; there was no excuse for the intervention of the English, and his own early arrival was certain. He charged the members of Council, the representatives of the Company, with having set up the Súbahdárí for sale and put the price of it into their pockets. He charged them further with having hurried forward the transaction with precipitation lest the arrival of his Committee should interrupt the transaction.

The receivers of the bribes could not deny these charges. They made no attempt even to refute them. During the brief remainder of their stay in Bengal they combated Clive with a vigour, an audacity, and a resolution worthy of a better cause; and when, finally, he drove them from their seats in the manner presently to be related, they returned to England, to excite there against him a clamour which was to embitter the last days of his life.

One of the earliest acts upon which Clive insisted was that the new covenants should be signed. His order was obeyed, not, however, without a murmur. It was the murmur which preluded the storm. Resolved to push his reforms to the utmost—"to cleanse the Augean stable"—as he put it when defending himself at a later period, Clive at the same time directed an investigation into the right claimed by the servants of the Company to trade on their own account. The war with Mír Kásim had been brought about solely by the selfish desire of the





Company's servants to retain in their own hands, for their own private interests, the monopoly of a trade, in the enormous profits arising from which they did not allow the Company, of which they were the sworn servants, to share. This trade was confined to articles the products of the country, principally to salt, betel-nuts, and tobacco, the consumption of which was universal. That the demand for these articles was enormous may be concluded from the fact that salt in India is largely consumed in every household; that the very moderate duty imposed upon betel-nuts and tobacco had, up to 1758, constituted one of the main sources of revenue to the Núwábs of the three provinces. The results of the monopoly for the sale of these products acquired by the Company's servants had resulted in the ruin of the native merchants, the acquisition for themselves of princely fortunes, the neglect of the interests of their masters. These licensed plunderers had not hesitated to imperil the possession of Bengal by embarking in a war with Mír Kásim to uphold this private monopoly. They were not the men likely to relinquish their hold upon it when their own nominee reigned in the place of the expelled Mír Kásim.

It was with such men, the servants of the Company from the highest to the lowest, plunderers alike of the native merchants and of the public revenues, that Clive and his Committee had to deal. He was very much hampered by the fact that private trade had been authorised by the Court of Directors, and that it was from the profits of the private trade that





they had always proposed to compensate their servants for the insignificance of their salaries. A member of Council received in those days only three hundred pounds a year. The Court, then, was the real cause of the evil which had arisen. It constitutes but a poor defence of the Directors to say that they never imagined that the evil would assume the gigantic proportions it had attained in 1762-65. They had granted a permission of which their servants had taken undue advantage. Nor were they prepared, in 1765, to have recourse to the one remedial measure which was afterwards adopted—a large increase of salaries accompanied by an absolute prohibition of private trade. Clive himself had strongly urged such a measure. It did not fit in, however, with the ideas of the day. The Court of Directors had not realised the fact that the achievements of Clive had made them the inevitable successors of the Mughuls. Their imaginations were still confined by the traditions of the counting-house. They would not increase the salaries, at the same time they would not interfere with the private trade, of their servants.

It was this action which hampered Clive; which prevented him from reforming radically a procedure which was fast ruining the country. He could not prohibit private trade to civil servants of the higher grades, for, under the parsimonious rules of the India Office, without private trade they could not live. But he did all that was possible under the circumstances.\* In concert with his colleagues of the Select Committee





he issued an order abrogating the power—the abuse of which it will be recollected had roused the anger of Mír Kásim—exercised up to that time by the Company's servants generally, to grant passes for the transport of merchandise; and restricted it to certain authorities, named and defined. Another abuse of which Mír Kásim had largely complained was the facility which the unrestricted employment of passes by the Company's servants had given to the employment of combined force and fraud. Under the operation of the rule, natives of Calcutta and the vicinity had dressed their servants as sipáhís and sent them with forged passes, often without passes, to force their way beyond the custom line of the Núwáb's territories. Whilst putting an end to this abuse Clive imposed upon the system of private trade restrictions which minimised as much as possible its evils. He did, in fact, more in that direction than Mír Kásim had asked of Vansittart's government. In a general way it may be said that he brought the management of public and private trade in Bengal under the control of the Government.

These reforms had the effect of greatly retrenching the profits which the civil servants of the Company had enjoyed. The best method of compensating them would have been to increase their salaries. But as the Court of Directors would not allow Clive to alter the regulations upon this subject, he was compelled to devise other schemes to accomplish the same result. The plan which he finally adopted had the merit of being comparatively fair to all parties. Hitherto the





trade in salt had been conducted in a manner which, whilst it produced enormous gains to a few traders, pressed very hardly on the natives. Clive, whilst still retaining the monopoly, placed the trade on a fixed basis—a basis which, whilst it would ensure to the native population a certain supply at a rate not too extravagant, should secure for the servants of the Company fixed incomes on a graduated scale. He provided that thenceforth the trade in salt should be conducted on the principle of a joint-stock company composed of all the higher officials of the Government, civil and military. “The capital,” to use his own words, “is thirty-two lakhs of rupees, upon which the most moderate may expect to make fifty per cent. clear of all charges; others seventy-five per cent.; and the most sanguine one hundred per cent.” To the members of the Company the fifty-six shares, into which the capital was divided, were allotted in rateable proportion. Thus, to the first class thirty-five shares were reserved, divided as follows: to the Governor, five shares; to the second in Council and to the Commander-in-Chief, each three shares; the other ten members of Council and colonels of brigade, two shares each. To the second class twelve shares were reserved, to be divided amongst one chaplain, fourteen senior merchants, and three lieutenant-colonels, each receiving two-thirds of a share; to the third class nine shares were given to be divided amongst thirteen factors, four majors, six first surgeons, one secretary to Council, one sub-accountant, one Persian translator, and one export-warehouse





keeper, allowing each one-third of a share. Clive calculated that at the lowest rate a Councillor would receive seven thousand pounds per annum.

It was by no means a perfect scheme. It amounted to the imposition of a tax of thirty-five per cent. on the raw material. But it was a vast improvement on the regulations regarding the sale of salt which had preceded it. Whilst it had the effect of reducing the price of that article ten to fifteen per cent. below the average of the twenty years immediately preceding, it secured to the Company's servants of the higher grade handsome incomes, at the same time that it diverted their attention from a demoralising traffic. Thenceforth "they were sleeping partners of a sure and profitable concern, the whole details of which, without any care on their part, were managed by a committee devoted to business."\*

A third point which Clive brought before the consideration of the Select Committee was the constitution of the Calcutta Council. According to the orders then in existence, it was composed of a president and sixteen members. The fact of being a member of

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\* *Malcolm's Memoirs of Lord Clive*, vol. iii. p. 102. The Court of Directors, having always before them the war with Mír Kásim, caused mainly by the imposition of duties on raw products, disapproved of this arrangement. They directed that the trade in salt should be made free. The despatch containing these instructions reached Clive as his second administration was drawing to a close. Unable to act directly counter to them, he, in Select Committee, abolished the salt company or society from a prospective date—the 1st September 1767. The Committee further requested the Court of Directors to review their decision.





Council did not preclude a man from accepting an agency elsewhere. There resulted from this, that whilst members of Council were scattered over the provinces, the real work of the Government was carried on by seven or eight, sometimes by fewer, gentlemen. The evil produced was greater than would appear at the first glance. The charge of an agency was extremely lucrative in the opportunities it gave for private trade. An agent, who was also a member of Council, and who could always not only support his own measures by a vote, but could count upon the votes of his colleagues in that body, enjoyed practical immunity from inquiry. The remedy suggested by Clive went to put a stop to this accumulation of offices; to rule that a member of Council should be a member of Council, and nothing more; an agent an agent, and nothing more; and that the number of Councillors should be reduced to twelve, the only exception to be in the case of the Commander-in-Chief, who would often be compelled to proceed with the army in the field. It was natural that this reform, bearing on its face though it did the stamp of common-sense, should meet with opposition from without. That which Clive had not anticipated was that it should encounter resistance in the body of the Select Committee. In spite, however, of this opposition, he carried it through.

The composition of the Select Committee has been already noted. Of its members, General Carnac was with the army; Mr. Sykes was with the Núwáb at Murshidábád; Mr. Verelst had been nominated super-





visor of Bardhwán and Mednípúr (Midnapore); Mr. Sumner alone remained with Lord Clive.

Mr. Sumner held in his hands the reversion of the Government of Bengal. He had been selected as successor to Clive whenever Clive should choose to leave India. For such a post he was in every way unfitted. Not only was he wanting in energy and decision, but he showed on many important occasions a sympathy with the corrupt party, which could only be attributed to the consideration that his conduct in previous years, when he had been agent in Bardhwán, could not bear scrutiny.

Neither in the efforts which he made to reform the constitution of the Bengal Council, nor in the crusade which he undertook against abuses, did Clive receive any support from Mr. Sumner. These abuses had, however, "rendered the English name odious." The Company's servants had proceeded "even to extortion in those cases where simple corruption could not keep pace with their rapacity. Examples of this sort, set by emperors, could not fail of being followed, in a proportionable degree, by inferiors. The evil was contagious, and spread among the civil and military, down to the writer, the ensign, and the free merchant."\*

As an example of the extortion, the corruption and the rapacity to which Clive alluded, I will cite the case of Bardhwán, as stated, not by Clive, but by the

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\* Lord Clive to the Court of Directors, dated 30th September 1765.





Court of Directors, in a despatch dated 17th May, 1766, a despatch in which the wise and just and reforming conduct of the Select Committee is contrasted with that of the Calcutta Council. In the district of Bardhwán, then, it was proved that the Resident and his council had accepted from the Rájá an annual stipend of eighty thousand rupees in addition to the salaries they received from the Company. But this was not all. It was shown that they had shared with the Rájá all the land revenues he had collected in excess of the amount he had stipulated to pay to the Company. The enormity of this breach of trust will be recognised if the reader bear in mind that, with the exception of a certain fixed amount for the support of the Rájá, the whole revenues of the district belonged by treaty to the Company. But as it had been agreed that under no circumstances were those revenues to fall below a certain minimum amount, the Resident and the Rájá combined to arrange that that minimum amount should be paid, and that they should share the balance. Can we wonder that the Court of Directors should denounce this action as one "directly undermining the whole fabric; for whilst the Company were sinking under the burden of war, our servants were enriching themselves from those very funds that ought to have supported the war!"

These remarks were applicable not to Bardhwán alone, but to every district in the three provinces held by the English. The case was clearly and tersely put by the Court when they described those





provinces, at the time of Lord Clive's arrival, as "a súbah disarmed, with a revenue of almost two millions sterling, at the mercy of our servants, who had adopted an unheard of ruinous principle, of an interest distinct from the Company. This principle showed itself in laying their hands upon everything they did not deem the Company's property."

The evil being deep-rooted and wide-spread, Clive deemed it advisable, with the view to come to a complete understanding with the native authorities, and to invoke their assistance in carrying out the reforming measures which he contemplated, to invite to Calcutta the Núwáb Nujmu'd daulah ; his minister, Muhammad Ríza Khán ; his old ally in the negotiations before Plassey, Rájá Dúlab Rám ; and the most influential bankers at Murshidábád. The disclosures which these made to him in the conferences which followed their arrival, more than confirmed the worst fears he had entertained regarding the all but universal corruption of the public service. He ascertained that, in addition to the sums which Muhammad Ríza had paid to the members of Council on behalf of the Núwáb for his accession to the viceregal seat, he had distributed to influential servants of the Company upwards of ten lakhs\* for the avowed purpose of maintaining him on that seat, and that in this plunder many of the members of Council had

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\* The total sum mentioned by the Núwáb was twenty lakhs : of this nearly ten were paid on his accession, and the balance subsequently.





participated. This was the charge which brought matters to a climax, and which resulted in the suspension of Mr. Spencer, Mr. Johnstone, and Mr. Leycester, and in the forced retirement of Messrs. Burdett, Gray, and Playdell, and other senior members. Clive filled up the vacancies thus caused, sufficient to form the Council of twelve members, by indenting on Madras for servants of the Company not committed to the corrupt practices of Bengal.

This measure, whilst it strengthened his hands, greatly increased his unpopularity amongst the civil servants of Bengal. Neither their clamour nor their hatred interfered, however, with the steady progress of the measures which Clive gradually, but steadily, introduced. On some of the less hardened evil-doers the effect of the inquiry, which preceded the introduction of reform, was fatal. The chief agent at Patná, Mr. Billars, accused of malversation, committed suicide. Others, less compromised, did not hesitate to express their feelings in a very unbecoming manner.

They formed amongst themselves an association of which the following were some of the main articles:—That all visits to the Governor were forbidden; that no invitations from him and the members of the Select Committee should be accepted; that the gentlemen coming from Madras should be treated with neglect and contempt; that every member of the Bengal service who should in any way deviate from this programme should be denounced and avoided.

An opportunity came later, before the departure of





the great reformer, for them to display still more violently the pent-up anger which burned within them. I allude to the occasion given by the conspiracy of the officers, dealt with in their turn. Of this the civilians eagerly availed themselves.

Of the young Núwáb who had purchased his inheritance for twenty lakhs of rupees, Clive formed but a poor opinion. "The more I see of the Núwáb," he wrote to General Carnac, "the more I am convinced of his incapacity for business; whether it proceeds from want of natural abilities, or want of education, time will discover; certain it is, the most difficult task we have is to act in such a manner as not to put too great a restraint upon the Núwáb's inclinations, and yet, at the same time, influence him to do what is for his own honour and the good of the Company."

With the deputy Núwáb, Muhammad Ríza Khán, and the other surroundings of the Núwáb, Clive was even less favourably impressed. In another letter, addressed to the same officer, he wrote:—"I am as fully averse to Ríza Khán's remaining in the great post of Náib Súbah. His being a Musulmán, acute and clever, are reasons of themselves, if there were no others, against trusting that man with too much power; and yet the young man must have men about him capable of directing and governing him; for, besides his youth, he is really very simple, and always receives his impressions from those last about him. It is really shocking to see what a set of miserable and mean wretches Nandkumár has





placed about him, men that the other day were horsekeepers."

The Nandkumár here referred to is the same Nandkumár who commanded for Siráju'd daulah at Huglí when Clive attacked Chandranagar, and who had been bribed by Amíchand into neutrality. Subsequently imprisoned for corruption, then released on the intercession of Mír J'afar, he came, during the second administration of that Núwáb, to be the keeper of his conscience and his purse. On Mír J'afar's death he had been set aside in favour of Ríza Sáhib, and been directly charged with the worst crimes that could characterise an administrator. Nevertheless, a certain clique, at the head of which was General Carnac, was anxious that he should replace Ríza Sáhib. Clive refused to employ him, and endeavoured to solve the difficulty by associating with Ríza Sáhib, in the office of Náib Súbah, Rájá Dúlab Rám and the eminent and wealthy banker, Jagget Sét. Ríza Sáhib still, however, continued all-powerful.

The reforms to which Clive devoted his attention were not carried out all at once. The basis of them was laid, however, during the first twelve months which followed his return. The strain, the mental labour, had been enormous. Whilst his only colleague on the spot was always showing an inclination to give way, whilst the moment affairs had required Clive to absent himself temporarily from Calcutta, he had yielded absolutely to the pressure of the corrupt clique, Clive had remained firm and determined. The task had been almost beyond his





strength. He had found, to use his own language, “extortion and corruption practised openly and at noonday; the three kingdoms of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, whose revenues amounted to four millions sterling per annum, put to sale; and the profits divided among the civil and military; the Company’s interests most scandalously sacrificed; \* ” and he had laid the foundation of a reformation as thorough as the powers with which he had been entrusted would allow. Completely thorough he could not make it, because the Court of Directors refused to sanction the one measure, the grant of liberal salaries to their servants, which would have enabled him to forbid private trading. He had to steer towards the same end by a circuitous route. His reforms, therefore, were necessarily and avowedly imperfect. But that he checked a great evil, that he infused a healthier tone into the public service, that he did something towards rehabilitating the British name, sunk at the time in the mire, will, I think, be admitted. Indeed, looking at the obstacles he encountered both above him, on either side of him, and below him, there are few, I believe, who will not be ready to concur in the verdict of Sir John Malcolm, set forth in the eloquent language which follows: “It may be questioned,” he writes,† “whether any of Clive’s many and great achievements called forth more of that active energy and calm firmness for which he was distinguished than was

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\* Letter to Sir Matthew Featherstonhaugh, dated 30th September 1765.

† *Life of Robert, Lord Clive*, vol. ii. p. 380.





evinced in effecting the reform of the Civil Service of Bengal."

There is certainly no position more trying than that of the man who, *tenax propositi*, endeavours to root out abuses based upon class interests. Clive had, in the course of his career, been exposed to great dangers; the surprise at Samiaveram, the night at Kávéripák, the half-hour in the grove before Plassey, had exercised every faculty of his soul. On his action on those trying occasions had depended empire, fame, life, and all that makes life valuable. But what were those trying periods, acute in their short-lived excitement as they were, to the prolonged agony of the contest with the vested interests of Bengal, a contest in which he stood alone against men who had gained wealth, who possessed vast influence at the India Office, which he knew would be used against him on his return, a contest which conciliated no one, which promised no substantial rewards, which sowed the seeds of life-long enmities? The man must have possessed a will of iron who, with such a prospect before him, sustained, not by high principle, not by the feeling that he himself, under similar circumstances, had resisted temptation, but by the dogged resolution, often expressed, to extirpate an evil which, if allowed to continue, would undermine his own work, should have dared to persevere!

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## CHAPTER XVI.

## SECOND ADMINISTRATION.—POLITICAL.

CLIVE set out on the 25th June to join the army. The transactions which awaited him were of a most important nature. He had to settle with the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh) the new frontier of the territories which had recently been brought in subjection to the English.

When Clive in the preceding April had learned at Madras of the death of Mir J'afar and the success of the British arms on the frontier, he had devised in his own mind a scheme for the welding of the three provinces and of the new territory to be acquired into one compact whole, to be governed by the English under the direct authority of the Emperor of Dihlí. He would have placed in the viceregal seat of Murshidábád the son of Míran, then a child six years of age; have conferred upon him the nominal title; he would have allowed his ministers to administer the country, and to collect its revenues. But for his own countrymen he would have assumed the supreme





control. They would receive the revenues and undertake the defence of the three provinces against invasion and insurrection: they would make war and conclude peace. All this, however, they would do in the name of the Núwáb and under the authority of the Emperor.

The indecent haste with which, before he could arrive, the Calcutta Council had sold the vacated seat of Nujmu'd daulah, had to a certain extent frustrated this plan. Clive acknowledged the new Núwáb. He did not, however, abandon his idea; and it was with the view of carrying out, even of developing it, that he was anxious to hasten to the front to arrange with the prince who was titular Emperor of Hindústán and King of Dihlí, first regarding the new territories to be acquired, secondly regarding the future status of the three provinces.

The Emperor and the Núwáb were at Alláhábád, awaiting there the terms which it should please Clive to impose. They might almost be called houseless wanderers; Dihlí was in the hands of the Afgháns, Awadh (Oudh) was prostrate before the English. The King and the Núwáb were alike reckless with respect to their own territories; they had one idea and one hope—that was that they might be able to induce Clive to march northwards to recover the capital of the Mughal Empire. They believed they had some reason for this hope, for when, after their disaster at Baksar, and before the arrival of Clive, they had flashed it before the Calcutta Council, Mr. Spencer had not rejected it.





Clive left Calcutta, as I have stated, on the 25th June, and proceeded direct to Murshidábád. There, after several interviews with the Núwáb and his ministers, he arranged the scheme which he had predetermined to introduce when the death of Mír J'afar should afford him the opportunity. Baffled for the moment by the premature action of the Calcuttá Council, he felt that the time had arrived when he might recur to it with advantage. He had found the young Núwáb uneducated and sensual, his minister a clever and reckless adventurer; and, although he had attempted to check the misrule of the latter by combining with him two men on whom he believed he could rely, the experiment did not seem to promise well. In an association of three men the stronger character will always assert itself. He resolved, then, with the consent of the Núwáb, which virtually was assured beforehand, to reintroduce, with certain improvements, into the three provinces the system which had prevailed in them in the time of the Emperor Aurangzib, and which, therefore, had the merit of ancient usage to recommend it.\* The principle of this system provided that for the Government of the three provinces there should be, first, a Núwáb-Názim, responsible for their defence and for the maintenance of the public peace, for the administration of justice, and for the enforcing of obedience to the law; secondly, a Díwán, or chief financial minister,

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\* *Early Records of British India*, by J. Talboys Wheeler, p. 334, note.





appointed by the Emperor and empowered to receive the yearly revenues of the provinces, responsible for all disbursements, and for the payment of the surplus, after a due provision for the requirements of the local court, to the imperial treasury. This system Clive was resolved to apply to the existing state of affairs. He would reduce Nujmu'd daulah to the status of Núwáb-Názim; the Company should occupy the position of Díwán. Subsequently, should his negotiations with the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír afford him the opportunity, he resolved further to transfer from the Núwáb-Názim to the Company the responsibility for the maintenance of the public peace, for the administration of justice, and for the enforcing of obedience to the law. In fact he would render the Company all-powerful, the Núwáb-Názim a cypher.

The negotiations with the Núwáb in July 1765 presented no difficulty whatever. That unhappy youth consented—on the representations made to him by Clive,\* of the great expense the English would incur in maintaining an army large enough to support him in his government, of the large sums due for restitution, and the navy, together with that accruing from the annual tribute which he would be under the necessity of paying to the King (of Dihlí)—to alienate for those purposes all the revenues of the country, fifty lakhs of rupees only excepted. Out of this sum the whole expenses of the Núwáb's court, of every

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\* Letter from Clive to Select Committee, dated 11th July 1765.





nature and denomination, were to be defrayed.\* The amount was, at a subsequent interview, increased to fifty-three lakhs. As the revenues of the country were estimated at between three and four millions, and the yearly payments to the Núwáb amounted to fifty-three lakhs, and the annual tribute to the Emperor to twenty-six lakhs, representing a total considerably short of a million, the arrangement was certainly not disadvantageous to the Company.

As soon as he had settled this preliminary Clive proceeded *viâ* Patná to Banáras, and arrived there on the 1st August. Thither General Carnac, commanding the forces, and Shujáu'd daulah, Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), had preceded him. I shall proceed at once to record the negotiations which ensued between the two contracting parties.

The idea which ruled in the mind of Clive was, first, the acquisition of a safe boundary for the Company's possessions, and the virtual transfer to the Company of all the territory within that boundary. This would imply confirmation of the arrangements made at Murshidábád. The conferences were opened with this view at Banáras, but, after some discussions, it was decided, for the sake of convenience, and of the presence at Alláhábád of the Emperor, to bring them

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\* The Núwáb, wrote Clive, "received the proposal of having a sum of money for himself and household at his will with infinite pleasure, and the only remark he made upon leaving me was, 'Thank God, I shall now have as many dancing girls as I please.'"





to a conclusion at that place. Thither, therefore, Clive, the Núwáb-Vazír, and Carnac proceeded.

The conditions which Clive formulated were such as, with one exception, the Emperor and the Núwáb-Vazír were prepared to accept. The exception proves how thoroughly the latter had realised the danger of allowing the pushing islanders one inch of ground within his own territories. Whilst Shujáu'd daulah declared his readiness to cede to the English the fortress of Chunar, and to the Emperor the provinces of Karrah and Alláhábád, to be held for him, if he should require it, by the English; whilst he agreed to pay fifty lakhs of rupees for the expenses of the war just concluded; engaged never to employ or afford protection to Mír Kásim and Samrú; promised to allow the Company to trade free throughout his dominions,—he steadily refused to grant its servants permission to establish a single factory within his borders. He drew the line at trade, but at a trade to be conducted from a base outside of his dominions. He did not conceal his reasons. He pointed to Bengal and drew the inevitable conclusion. "To that province," he said in so many words, "you came to trade, and only to trade; within it you were allowed to establish factories; for a time all went well; but gradually disputes arose which embroiled you with the native ruler. Where is the native ruler now, and where are you? I decline to submit my dominions to the same chances. Collisions will certainly arise, possibly from the fault of myself or my successors, but arrive they will, and then——" This





was a reasoning which Clive, of all men, could not answer. He waived the question of factories.

In addition to the stipulations above noted, there were others, mutually agreed upon, to the effect that the Zamíndár, subsequently known as the Rájá, of Banáras, who during the war had submitted to the English and been taken under their protection, should retain his districts, subordinate to the Núwáb-Vazír, on the terms on which he had held them before the war; that a treaty of mutual support, in case of attack, should be made between the English, the Núwáb-Vazír, and the Súbahdár of Bengal, Bihár and Orísá; and that, in the event of the troops of the Company being required by the Núwáb-Vazír for the defence of his country, he should bear all the expenses attendant on their employment.

It may be proper to anticipate the arrangements which were the consequence of this treaty, by stating here that, in the month of October following, Lord Clive, accompanied by General Carnac, proceeded to Chaprá, to meet there in congress the Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), the Emperor's ambassador, and the agents from the Ját chiefs of Ágra, and the Rohíláh chiefs of Rohílkhánd. The object of the congress, at which agents from the Maráthá chief of Birár were also present, was to form a league against the aggressions of the Maráthá people. In the course of the discussions which followed Lord Clive discovered that the Maráthá movement, which, as will presently be related, caused him considerable uneasiness at a formidable crisis of domestic adminis-





tration, had been caused by the urgent solicitation of his own ally, the Emperor Sháh Álam! Lord Clive, then, in complete understanding with the Núwáb-Vazír, arranged that the British troops should be recalled from Karrah and Alláhábád and stationed at Dáúdnagar and Sabasráam (Sasseram), where, supported by a brigade at Bánkípúr, they would cover the province of Bihár. In consequence of renewed movements on the part of the Maráthás this arrangement was modified in the following November. The third brigade was moved forward to occupy Alláhábád and protect the province of Karrah; and whilst a strong detachment of the second brigade, which had its head-quarters at Bánkípúr, was sent to garrison Chunar, two battalions of it were detailed for Banáras, and one for Lakhnao. This was the final arrangement made by Lord Clive for the protection of his new frontier.

To return. The treaty with the Emperor completely fulfilled the long-nursed views of Clive. In return for the doubtful cession of two provinces to be guarded by the English, the Emperor Sháh Álam granted firmáns, confirming the Company in all the possessions held by it in his territories, and bestowing upon it the Díwání, or total revenue proceeds, of the provinces of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, "as a free gift, without the association of any other person." From those revenue proceeds was to be deducted only the customary annual contribution to the Emperor, of twenty-six lakhs, always paid by the ruler of the three provinces. The Company further bound itself





to provide for the expenses incurred by the Nizámat keeping up an army for the defence of the three provinces.\* Practically, the Company simply engaged to keep up an army for that purpose.

\* Writing to the Court of Directors in the name of the Select Committee, Clive thus defended his policy (30th September 1765): "The perpetual struggles for superiority between the Núwábs and your agents, together with the recent proofs before us of notorious and avowed corruption, have rendered us unanimously of opinion, after the most mature deliberation, that no other method can be suggested of laying the axe to the root of all those evils, than that of obtaining the Díwání of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá, for the Company. By establishing the power of the Great Mughal, we have likewise established his rights; and His Majesty, from principles of gratitude, of equity, and of policy, has thought proper to bestow this important employment on the Company, the nature of which is, the collecting all the revenues, and after defraying the expenses of the army, and allowing a sufficient fund for the support of the Nizámat, to remit the remainder to Dihlí, or wherever the King shall reside or direct. But as the King has been graciously pleased to bestow on the Company, for ever, such surplus as shall arise from the revenues, upon certain stipulations and agreements expressed in the Sanad, we have settled with the Núwáb, with his own free will and consent, that the sum of fifty-three lakhs shall be annually paid to him, for the support of his dignity and all contingent expenses, exclusive of the charge of maintaining an army, which is to be defrayed out of the revenues ceded to the Company, by this royal grant of the Díwání; and, indeed, the Núwáb has abundant reason to be well satisfied with the conditions of this agreement, whereby a fund is secured to him, without trouble or danger, adequate to all the purposes of such grandeur and happiness as a man of his sentiments has any conception of enjoying; more would serve only to disturb his quiet, endanger his government, and sap the foundation of that solid structure of power and wealth which, at length, is happily reared and completed by the Company, after a vast expense of blood and treasure.

"By this acquisition of the Díwání, your possessions and influ-





This, then, was the result of Plassey. This the retribution which had fallen upon the family of Mír

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ence are rendered permanent and secure, since no future Núwáb will either have power or riches sufficient to attempt your overthrow, by means either of force or corruption. All revolutions must henceforward be at an end, as there will be no fund for secret services, for donations, or for restitutions. The Núwáb cannot answer the expectations of the venal and mercenary, nor will the Company comply with demands injurious to themselves, out of their own revenues. The experience of years has convinced us that a division of power is impossible without generating discontent and hazarding the whole: all must belong either to the Company or to the Núwáb. We leave you to judge which alternative is the most desirable, and the most expedient in the present circumstances of affairs. As to ourselves, we know of no other system we could adopt, that would less affect the Núwáb's dignity, and at the same time secure the Company against the fatal effects of future revolutions than this of the Díwání. The power is now lodged where it can only be lodged with safety to us, so that we may pronounce with some degree of confidence that the worst which will happen in future to the Company will proceed from temporary ravages only, which can never become so general as to prevent your revenues from yielding a sufficient fund to defray your civil and military charges, and furnish your investments.

"The more we reflect on the situation of your affairs, the stronger appear the reasons for accepting the Díwání of these provinces, by which alone we could establish a power sufficient to perpetuate the possessions we hold, and the influence we enjoy. While the Núwáb acted in quality of collector for the Mughal, the means of supporting our military establishment depended upon his pleasure. In the most critical situations, while we stood balancing on the extreme border of destruction, his stipulated payments were slow and deficient, his revenues withheld by disaffected Rájás and turbulent Zamíndárs, who despised the weakness of his Government; or they were squandered in profusion, and dissipated in corruption, the never-failing symptoms of a declining constitution and feeble administration. Hence we were frequently disappointed of those supplies, upon the punctual receipt of which depended the very existence of the Company in Bengal."





1766.]

SECOND ADMINISTRATION.—POLITICAL.

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J'afar! But eight years after that battle, the provinces, to gain which for himself Mír J'afar had betrayed his master, were made over to his ally: the representative of his family had become a pensioner, without power, and, except within the four walls of his palace, without authority! Whatever impression of another character this event may produce, it cannot, at least, be denied that the family reaped an appropriate reward for treason. For Clive it was a triumph—a triumph he hastened to improve. From Alláhábád he hastened to Banáras to settle the affairs of the army—to be presently recorded; thence to Calcutta to add vigour to the carrying out of his civil reforms; and thence again, in April 1766, to Murshidábád, to be present at the annual revenue settlement known as the Puna, the first made since the new arrangements had been entered into. To this great meeting it was the custom for every landholder to come to make his agreement regarding the payment of the revenue for the coming year. It was conducted with great solemnity. The Núwáb-Názim, now so denominated, sat on the throne as titular ruler of the three provinces; on his right stood the English Governor, as representative of the Company, in the quality of Díván of the Emperor.

On the occasion of this visit an unexpected announcement was made to the English governor. This was to the effect that, in his will, the late Núwáb had bequeathed him a legacy of five lakhs of rupees. Although the new covenants, by which the Company's servants had bound themselves to accept no presents





from the natives of India, had been executed subsequently to the date of this will, Lord Clive felt that, in the position he occupied, he could not, with regard to his own honour and to his position, accept the legacy for himself. He resolved, therefore, to constitute with it a fund for the relief of officers and men of the Company's army who might be disabled by wounds or by the climate. In a letter addressed to the Council (8th April 1766) he communicated this decision. The reply of the Council, dated the 14th of the same month, expressed an opinion that the acceptance of the legacy was in no way prohibited by the covenants, and a lively sense of the generous manner in which it was to be applied. The consequence was the institution of a fund, known as Lord Clive's Fund, which, for nearly a century, acted most beneficially for thousands of the Company's servants. It is a curious fact, however, that, on the transfer of the British possessions in India from the Company to the Crown at the close of 1858, the fund was claimed by the heirs of Lord Clive as having lapsed to them by the demise of the Company. The claim was held to be valid in law, and Mír J'afar's legacy was transferred to private hands.

The month following Clive's visit to Murshidábád, an event occurred which put to a certain test the new arrangements. On the 19th May the Núwáb-Názim, Nujmu'd daulah, after a short illness caused by intemperance in eating, died. An event of this nature would, under the old arrangements, have given rise to intrigues, to heart-burnings, to corrupt negotiations.





It must be fresh in the reader's recollection, how, in succession, Mír J'afar, Mír Kásim, then again Mír J'afar, and lastly how Nujmu'd daulah, had bought their sovereignty; how the Calcutta Council had put up the Súbahdári of the three provinces to the highest bidder, and had sold it. But action of this sort had now become past history. Under the new arrangements it was absolutely indifferent to the Calcutta Council who might be the successor to the deceased Núwáb-Názim. Clive had reduced the holder of that office to the position of a cypher, possessing neither money with which to bribe nor territory to bestow. When Nujmu'd daulah died, his brother and next heir, Saifu'd daulah, succeeded him as a matter of course. The communications between Calcutta and Murshidábád on this occasion related merely to the annual allowance from the revenues of the three provinces to be granted to the new Núwáb-Názim. This was, after consideration, reduced from fifty-three to forty-one lakhs.\*

With the uneventful succession of Saifu'd daulah the interest in Murshidábád ceased. The success of Clive's measures in this respect did not make him less attentive to the policy to be pursued on his frontier. Like all great men who have introduced a new political system, Lord Clive believed his work to be perfect, to be proof, so long as his system were enforced, against the ravages of time. He clung to the

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\* The example was infectious. In 1770 the forty-one lakhs fell to thirty-one; and in 1793, from thirty-one to sixteen, at which figure it remains.





maintenance of the Núwáb Názim in the titular position of the Súbahdár of the three provinces, because, he wrote, "under the sanction of a súbah\* every encroachment that may be attempted by foreign powers can be effectually crushed, without any apparent interposition of our own authority, and all real grievances complained of by them can, through the same channel, be examined into and redressed." He would have the revenue still collected by the servants of the Núwáb-Názim, because "to appoint the Company's servants to the offices of collectors, or, indeed, to do any act by an exertion of the English power which can equally be done by the Núwáb at our instance, would be throwing off the mask, would be declaring the Company súbah of the provinces." He went so far only as to institute a grade of English officers, called supervisors, to watch the collections of revenue made by the native officers. That was the fullest extent to which he was prepared to go. He would have all the Company's servants, those supervisors excepted, confined entirely to commercial matters only.

Strong as he was in his convictions on these points, he was even more determined as to the foreign policy which alone could maintain the possessions he had acquired for the Company. Never did the late Lord Lawrence insist more strongly on the maintenance, as a measure of finality, of the Pesháwar frontier, than

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\* "Súbah" is here used to signify "authority of a Súbahdár or governor."





did Lord Clive for the frontier of Alláhábád. In both instances to pass beyond the boundary line fixed in the minds of these great men was to incur the certainty of ultimate ruin.

Fortunately, we have Lord Clive's own words on the point. In the State paper\* from which I have just quoted he writes: "Our possessions should be bounded by the provinces: studiously maintain peace,—it is the groundwork of our prosperity; never consent to act offensively against any powers, except in defence of our own, the King's" (of Dihlí) "or the Núwáb-Vazír's dominions, as stipulated by treaty; and, above all things, be assured that a march to Dihlí would be not only a vain and fruitless project, but attended with destruction to your own army, and perhaps put a period to the very being of the Company in Bengal." In a word the foreign policy of Lord Clive "was a policy of isolation. The English were to lie snugly ensconced in the three provinces of Bengal, Bihár, and Orísá. The frontier of Oudh was to form a permanent barrier against all further progress." The writer, from whom I have quoted,†

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\* This paper is given *in extenso* in Mr. Talboys Wheeler's *Early Records of British India*.

† Mr. Talboys Wheeler, in *Early Records of British India*. May I be excused if I pursue the comparison made in the text, and adapt its words to the principle on which India is governed at the present moment? We should then read: "The foreign policy of the present Government with respect to India is a policy of isolation. The English are to lie snug in Bengal, in the North-West, and in the Panjáb. The frontier, Afghanistán,





proceeds to add: "Within a single decade this policy was thrown to the winds!"

It was with the conviction that he had settled the internal and external policy of the Company's possessions that Clive, worn out and suffering, returned to England (January 1767). But before I accompany him thither it will devolve upon me to record his dealings with the army, dealings called for by a conspiracy the dangerous nature of which contributed its full share to the anxieties which pressed upon him during his second administration.

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is to form a permanent barrier against all further progress." It is possible that the "finality" of the present day may share the fate of the "finality" of Lord Clive.

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## CHAPTER XVII.

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### SECOND ADMINISTRATION.—MILITARY.

AMONGST the instructions given by the Court of Directors to the Select Committee, of which Lord Clive was the animating and guiding spirit, was one of a very urgent character, to reduce the batta allowed to the officers of the army. As the allowance of batta constituted a considerable portion of the pay of the officers, and the withdrawal would be of serious consequences, it is necessary to enter into such detail as will place the position of the officers clearly before the reader.

In the earlier days of its formation the officers of the Bengal army drew a fixed rate of pay, which formed their net receipts when in garrison or at the Presidency town; but when they took the field they were allowed an extra sum to cover the expenses incurred thereby. When they were detached to an out-station, not being actually in the field, they were allowed half that sum. This allowance was called batta. After the battle of Plassey, Mír J'afar, in the





profusion of his gratitude for the efforts which had made him Súbahdár, had bestowed upon the officers an additional sum equal to the full batta. This was called "double batta," and so long as the army was in the field rendering services to Mír J'áfar, that Núwáb, with the sanction of the Calcutta Council, continued to disburse it to the officers. Mír Kásim, on his accession, was anxious to confirm and continue the arrangement; but, in lieu of the actual payments to the Company which had so greatly contributed to the ruin of his predecessor, he assigned to them the three districts of Mednipur, Bardhwán, and Chátgáon, the revenues of which would more than cover these and other similar incidental disbursements. By this arrangement the duty of providing double batta for the officers devolved upon the Company, and although, upon the whole, it was an arrangement by which the Company greatly benefited, the Court of Directors, ignoring the increase to their revenues, began at once to issue orders whereby the cession of the three districts would be made more lucrative still. Amongst the items which particularly attracted their attention was that referring to the grant of double batta, and they gave peremptory instructions for its discontinuance. The subject had, in the meanwhile, come under the examination of the Calcutta Council; and its members, after a full inquiry, had postponed execution of the orders of the Court of Directors until the Court should have had time to peruse and decide upon the documents they forwarded to England, and which set forth the case for the officers, that is, for the con-





tinuance to the officers of the double batta, in a very strong light. The Court replied, in a despatch dated 9th March 1763, that they could not admit the arguments of the officers to be of sufficient force; and they expressed a fear that whilst endeavouring to grant their military officers encouragement suitable to their merit, they might enable them to acquire such fortunes as might lead them to quit the service in a short space of time, "an inconvenience," added the despatch, "which of late had frequently happened."

Before this despatch could reach Calcutta—indeed, one month before it had been written—the Calcutta Council had appointed a special committee, of which Major Adams and Major Carnac were members, to examine and report upon the subject. But before the committee could finish its inquiries there broke out that war with Mír Kásim which tried to the utmost the resources of the Company. On the eve of a war it was not considered advisable to render discontented those upon whose energies the successful conduct of it depended, and the inquiry dropped.

The Court of Directors, throughout their administration of more than a century, never sufficiently considered the interests of the officers who devoted to them their best energies, and who were ever willing to give their lives for their country. Ready enough to reward isolated cases, forced upon them by public opinion, they systematically neglected the interests of the military service generally. Deaf to all reasoning, they displayed the salient quality of the narrow-