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This virtuous example, till such a time as the majority of the people in every civilized country have become sufficiently enlightened to see the depravity of the case in its own essence, will help to stamp with infamy the most flagitious perhaps of all the crimes which can be committed against human nature, the imposing upon a nation, by force of foreign armies, and for the pleasure or interest of foreign rulers, a government, composed of men, and involving principles, which the people for whom it is destined have either rejected from experience of their badness, or repel from their experience or expectation of better. Even where the disparity of civilization and knowledge were very great; and where it was beyond dispute, that a civilized country was about to bestow upon a barbarous one the greatest of all possible benefits, a good and beneficent government; even here, it would require the strongest circumstances to justify the employment of violence or force. But, where nations, upon a level only with another in point of civilization, or perhaps below it, proceed with bayonets to force upon it a government confessedly bad, and prodigiously below the knowledge and civilization of the age, under the pretence of fears that such a nation will choose a worse government for itself, these nations, or their rulers, if the people have no voice in the matter, are guided by views of benefit to themselves, and despise the shame of trampling upon the first principles of humanity and justice.

In paying the homage which he counted due to the will of a nation of Mahrattas, the Marquis Wellesley was not making a sacrifice of interests which he held in low esteem. In his address to the home authorities, dated the 24th of December, 1802, he declared his conviction, that "those defensive engagements which he was desirous of concluding with the Mahratta states, were essential to the complete consolidation of the British empire in India, and to the future tranquillity of Hindustan."¹ Yet the complete consolidation of the British empire in India, and the future tranquillity of Hindustan, which could never exist till a sufficient bridle was put in the mouth of the Mahratta power, he thought it his duty to sacrifice, or to leave to the care of unforeseen events, rather than violate

¹ Papers, ut supra, p. 33.



THREATENED OPPOSITION TO THE TREATY.

the freedom of will, in this important concern, of the people of one of the Mahratta states.

When the Governor-General resolved on restoring the Peshwa, upon the supposition that he and his subjects were consenting to the plan, a very low estimate of the opposition to be expected from other quarters was presented by the Governor-General to his superiors, in his language of the 10th of February, 1803. "No reason," said he, "exists, to justify an apprehension, that in the event supposed, Sindiah would proceed to such an extremity, as to make opposition, either singly, or united with Holkar. Nor is any such desperate course of proceeding to be apprehended from the Raja of Berar. Uncombined with the power of Sindiah, Holkar will not probably venture to resist the Peshwa. Holkar also has anxiously solicited the arbitration of the British government with respect to his claims. He has transmitted distinct propositions with that view to Lieutenant-Colonel Close."¹

The substance of the propositions was that the Peshwa should give to him a crore of rupees for the payment of his troops; that he should also give to him a fortress, as he had given Ahmednuggur to Sindiah; that he should effect the release of Kundee Rao, and grant him investiture, as the heir and representative of the Holkar family. Both the Governor-General and the Peshwa held these demands inadmissible. So far from yielding money to Holkar, the Peshwa thought he ought much rather to get money from him, on account of the depredations committed on his dominions. The gift of a fortress to one person was no reason, he said, why he should be called upon to give one to another; and as to the proposition for disinheriting Cashee Rao, it was forbidden by justice, and by the investiture which had been bestowed upon him during the life of his father; at the same time there was an expedient for reconciling the interests of both, as Cashee Rao had no children, and might secure the succession of Kundee Rao by adoption. The Governor-General held, that the rights of Cashee Rao, founded on descent, should on no account be allowed to be disputed. But he was of opinion, that the Peshwa ought willingly to grant a considerable sum of money, to obtain the departure of

¹ Papers, ut supra, p. 69.



Holkar; and was even ready to guarantee a loan raised for that purpose; and, if the grant of a fort and jaghire would suffice to avert a rupture, it would not, he conceived, be good policy to withhold it.¹

“On the receipt of these instructions,” says the Governor-General, “Colonel Close endeavoured to persuade his Highness the Peshwa to offer to Holkar such concessions as might induce Holkar to compromise the subsisting differences, and to admit his Highness’s peaceable return to his capital. His Highness, however, manifested an insuperable aversion to offer any concession to Holkar, whom he considered to be a rebel against the legitimate authority of the sovereign power of the Mahratta empire.” It then remained for Colonel Close to communicate by letter to Holkar, the sentiments of the Governor-General on the subject of his demands; the assurance, that the British government would use its influence to adjust his claims upon Sindiah; an offer to guarantee any adjustment which he might accomplish with the Peshwa; and lastly, the expression of a hope that he would not oppose the execution of the recent engagements between the British and Poonah states.²

The expectations of the Governor-General that he might be able, through the operation of the new treaty with the Peshwa, to intimidate Sindiah into an acceptance of the chains which he had forged for him, he did not easily relinquish. That chieftain, after such operations as he had in his power for the increase and equipment of his army, proceeded towards the south; crossed the Nerbudah on the 4th of February; and on the 23rd arrived in the vicinity of Boorhanpore. Colonel Collins, who had left the camp of Sindiah early in the preceding May, but had received in the month of December commands to return for the purpose of proposing to him a treaty, on similar terms with that of Bassein, arrived at his camp on the 27th of February. “The advices,” says the Governor-General in his address to the home authorities of the 19th of April, 1802, “which I received from that officer, and from other quarters, induced me to entertain suspicions that Dowlut Rao Sindiah meditated an accommodation with Jeswunt Rao Holkar; and confederacy with that chieftain,

¹ Papers, ut supra, p. 414, 415, 82, 83.

² *Ibid.* p. 86, 87.



SUSPICIOUS CONDUCT OF SINDIAH.

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CHAP. XI.

1803.

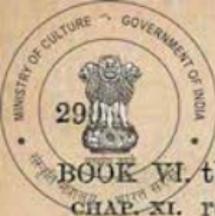
and with the Raja of Berar, for the purpose of frustrating the success of the arrangements concluded between the British government and the Peshwa: without, however intending to proceed to the desperate extremity of provoking a contest with the British arms.

"This suspicion," he adds, "was corroborated, by the artifices practised at the camp of Sindiah, upon the arrival of Colonel Collins, with a view of eluding the communication of the propositions with which Colonel Collins was charged, under my authority. And the appearance of Sindia's intentions became still more unsatisfactory, from the evasive, and indirect, or vexatious replies, which Colonel Collins received to my propositions, after he had, at length, obtained access to Dowlut Rao Sindia."

At an interview, which the Resident at last obtained with Sindia, on the 24th of March, that chief informed him that a messenger was on his way to his camp from the Peshwa, for the purpose of explaining to him the nature and extent of the engagements recently concluded between the Peshwa and the British government, and that till the communications of this agent were received, he could not give a decided answer to the proposition about concluding with the English a treaty similar to that of Bassein. He gave, at the same time, the strongest assurance, that he had no intention to obstruct the execution of the agreement between the Peshwa and the British government; on the other hand, that he desired to improve the friendship at present happily existing between that government and the Peshwa, as well as himself.

In this declaration, the Governor-General professed his belief that Sindia was perfectly sincere. "Nor is that sincerity," said he, "inconsistent with a desire to delay his assent to the treaty of Bassein, and to the propositions immediately affecting his separate interests, until he shall have received a direct communication from the Peshwa; or incompatible with the project for a confederacy between Sindia, Holkar, and the Raja of Berar, for purposes of a defensive nature—which I consider to be the extreme object of Sindia, in negotiating such a confederacy, without any views whatever of hostility towards the British power."

Berar was the next, in power and consequence, among



the Mahratta states. "The intelligence which I have received from the court of the Raja of Berar," says the Governor-General, "indicates that chieftain's dissatisfaction at the conclusion of defensive engagements between the British government and his Highness the Peshwa.—Whatever may be the aversion of the Raja of Berar to the interposition of the British government, in the affairs of the Mahratta empire, any attempt, on the part of that chieftain, to obstruct the execution of the treaty of Bassein, would be inconsistent with the systematic caution of his character ; and imprudent, in the actual state of his military power, and in the exposed situation of his territories."¹

At so late a date, therefore, as the 19th of April, 1803, the home authorities were assured by their Indian substitute, that no prospect of a war, the offspring and consequence of the treaty of Bassein, presented itself in any quarter.² The same language was employed even so late as the 20th of June. "Every circumstance," he assured them, "connected with the restoration of the Peshwa, justifies a confident expectation of the complete and pacific accomplishment of the beneficial objects of the late alliance.—Although the information," he added, "contained in Lieutenant-Colonel Close's address to your Honourable Committee, and the tenor of latest advices from the Courts of Dowlut Rao Sindia, and the Raja of Berar, tend to countenance the rumours of a projected confederacy between these chieftains and Jeswunt Rao Holkar, the existence of any such confederacy is still a subject of considerable doubt.—If any such combination has been formed, its object is probably restricted to purposes of a defensive nature, without involving any views of hostility towards the British power.—The local situation, and comparative power and resources, of Sindia and Ragojee Bhonsla, preclude the apprehension of any attempt

¹ For the despatch from which these quotations and facts are extracted, see papers, *ut supra*, p. 85—91.

² It cannot be justly affirmed that they were assured there was no prospect of a war. The especial purport of the despatch of the 19th of April, was to report upon the suspicious conduct of the Mahratta chiefs: that it might not end in war was argued upon obvious considerations of what their interests were; but it is no where positively affirmed that there would not be war, and its possibility is implied by the whole tenor of the letter. Despatches, iii. 72.—W.



1803.

of these chiefs to subvert the Peshwa's government, or the treaty of Bassein, at the desperate hazard of a war with the British power. The situation of Holkar's power is entirely precarious and accidental. The instability of the resources of that adventurer reduces the continuance of his power to the utmost degree of uncertainty; and absolutely deprives him of the means of opposing any systematic or formidable resistance to the operation of an alliance with the Poonah state.—My instructions to Colonel Collins, of the 5th of May, and to Lieutenant-Colonel Close, of the 7th May, together with my letter of the 15th May to the Raja of Berar, have probably already produced an arrangement of a pacific nature with all the chiefs of the Mahratta empire, whose formal accession to the treaty of Bassein has not yet been signified to me.”¹

The Peshwa received not the treaty, ratified by the Governor-General in Council, earlier than the 18th of March, 1803. The Governor-General informs the Court of Directors, that “he received it with demonstrations of the highest satisfaction.”²

As early, however, as the month of November preceding, the Governor of Fort St. George, under intimations from both the Governor-General and the Resident at Poonah, was induced to assemble a considerable army at Hurryhur, on the Mysore frontier; which, under the character of an army of observation, might be ready to be employed as events should determine. The Governor of Bombay

¹ Papers, ut supra. p. 98, 99.—M. Despatches, iii. It is very evident, from the tenor of the letter of the 20th of June, that the Governor-General was now too sanguine in his anticipations of continued tranquil relations with Sindiah and the Raja of Berar. He gave them credit for a more accurate estimate of their own force, and that of the English, than they were capable of forming; and he was not aware of the encouragement to interfere which they received from the Peshwa. At the same time it is equally evident that he considered the result as uncertain, and the home authorities must have seen clearly the probability of hostilities. It cannot be affirmed, as it is the object of the text to insinuate, that they were imposed upon by partial misrepresentation. The possible occurrence of the events which took place, however improbable it may have been thought, is decidedly expressed in the paragraph of the letter of the 20th of June: “The judicious arrangements which Major-General Wellesley has effected for the disposition of the troops under his command, is calculated to meet every emergency of affairs, even under the improbable supposition that Sindiah, the Raja of Berar, and Jeswunt Rao Holkar, have really entertained designs of a hostile nature against the British Government or the allies.”—W.

² Governor-General's Narrative of the late Transactions in the Mahratta Empire. Ibid. p. 309.



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received, in like manner, instructions to hold in readiness for immediate service the disposable force of that Presidency. And a considerable detachment of the subsidiary force at Hyderabad was, through the Resident, directed to be placed in a similar state of preparation.¹

At the end of February, the whole of the subsidiary or hired force in the service of the Nizam, under the command of Colonel Stevenson, together with 6000 infantry, and 9000 of that Prince's native cavalry, marched from the capital towards the western frontier of the Hyderabad dominions, and reached Paraindah, distant 116 miles from Poonah, on the 25th of March.

From the army assembled at Hurryhur, under the immediate command of General Stuart, the General-in-Chief of the forces under the Presidency of Madras, a detachment, consisting of one regiment of European, and three of native cavalry, two regiments of European, and six battalions of native infantry, with a due proportion of artillery, amounting, in the whole, to 1709 cavalry and 7890 infantry, exclusive of 2500 horse belonging to the Raja of Mysore, began to advance towards Poonah, on the 8th of March. For the command of this detachment; a service, requiring, as he affirmed, considerable skill, both military and diplomatic; the Governor of Fort St. George recommended the brother of the Governor-General, Major-General the Honourable Arthur Wellesley, as a man who, not only possessed, in a high degree, the other requisite gifts, but who, by his command at Seringapatam, had been accustomed to transactions with the jaghiredars of the Poonah state, and successful in gaining their confidence and respect. A man so related, and so recommended, was not likely to see the merits of any competitor set in preference to his own.²

On the 12th of April, the force under General Wellesley crossed the Toombudra. On the 15th, the distance was not great between him and Colonel Stevenson, who arrived

¹ Narrative, ut supra. Ibid. p. 307.—M.

These arrangements were subservient to the restoration of the Peshwa in case of opposition, apprehended chiefly from Holkar.—W.

² The spirit of this remark cannot be mistaken; but it is not the less true that General Wellesley was eminently fitted for the duty by his popularity with the Mahratta Jagirdars of the South, and his knowledge of the country and the people. See his Memorandum upon Operations in the Mahratta territory. Despatches, i. 111; also, Correspondence, 91, 92, 94, etc.—W.



MARCH OF GENERAL WELLESLEY TO POONAH.

at Aklooss. Jeswunt Rao Holkar, who had some time BOOK VI.
quitted Poonah, arrived at Chandore, 300 miles from CHAP. XI.
Poonah, on the same day on which Colonel Stevenson
arrived at Aklooss; and nothing remained to oppose the
British army. It was unnecessary, therefore, to carry the
whole of the troops to Poonah, where the country was
too recently and severely ravaged, to yield any supplies.
Colonel Stevenson was directed to place the troops of the
Nizam at Gardoon, within the Nizam's frontier, and to
take post with the subsidiary troops, augmented by the
King's Scotch Brigade, further up the Beema, near its
junction with the Mota Mola.

1803.

Amrut Rao was left at Poonah, with a guard of about
1500 men, alone, and helpless, when Holkar marched. It
was, nevertheless, reported, that this defenceless individual,
who from first to last is represented, by the English them-
selves, as utterly averse to the part which he was con-
strained by Holkar to act, had it in contemplation to burn
the city of Poonah; that is, to render his peace imprac-
ticable with the people into whose hands he saw that he
must inevitably fall. Intimation of this report, and, it
would seem, of some belief in the danger which it an-
nounced, was transmitted (repeatedly we are told) by
Colonel Close to General Wellesley. The Peshwa, by whom
it is not wonderful that it was believed, transmitted an
urgent request that General Wellesley would detach some
of the Poonah officers with their troops to provide for the
safety of his family. Counting the Poonah officers, with
their troops, a security ill-proportioned to the danger,
General Wellesley resolved to attempt an unexpected
arrival. Intelligence was received on the 19th, that Amrut
Rao was still at Poonah on the 18th, and had removed
the family of the Peshwa to Servagur; which was con-
cluded to be a step preparatory to the burning of the
town. General Wellesley, therefore, taking with him only
the cavalry, and making a night march through a difficult
pass, and a rugged country, arrived at Poonah on the 20th,
having accomplished, from the evening of the 19th, a
march of forty, and from the morning of that day, that
is, in a period of about thirty-two hours, a march of sixty
miles.¹ Amrut Rao heard of the march of the British

¹ Despatches of the Duke of Wellington, i. 142.—W.



BOOK VI. cavalry on the morning of the 20th, and quitted Poonah, CHAP. XI. but without any act implying that he had ever entertained a thought of setting fire to the place.

1803.

In conducting the Peshwa to Poonah, it only now remained to provide a sufficient quantity of pomp. The description shall be given in the words of the Governor-General himself. "During these transactions, arrangements were made by the Governor of Bombay, and by Lieutenant-Colonel Close, for the march of the Peshwa towards Poonah. A detachment, consisting of his Majesty's 78th regiment (which left Bengal on the 7th of February, and arrived at Bombay on the 5th of April, 1803), five companies of his Majesty's 84th regiment, a proportion of artillery, and 1035 sepoy—in all 2205 men, was formed, and placed under the command of Colonel Murray, of his Majesty's 84th regiment, as an escort to his Highness, who left Bassein, attended by Colonel Close, on the 27th of April.

"On the 7th of May, the Peshwa passed General Wellesley's camp, at Panowallah, near Poonah. On the 13th, his Highness, attended by his brother Chimnajee Appa, and by a numerous train of the principal chiefs of the Mahratta empire, proceeded towards the city of Poonah; and, having entered his palace, resumed his seat upon the musnud, and received presents from his principal servants.

"During the procession, the British Resident, accompanied by his suite, paid his compliments to his Highness, when a salute was fired by the British troops, encamped in the vicinity of Poonah, under the command of General Wellesley. This salute was immediately answered from the fortress of Seonghur.

"While the procession passed the bridge into the city, a second salute was fired from the British camp; and as the Peshwa approached the palace, salutes were fired from the several posts of the Mahratta troops. At sunset, salutes were fired from all the hill-forts in the vicinity of Poonah."¹

Notwithstanding the confident expectation which the Governor-General had expressed to the home authorities, not only on the 19th of April, but as late as the 20th of

¹ Governor-General's Narrative. Ibid. 307—311.



June, that no war would rise out of the treaty of Bassein;¹ yet before that time, as he himself informs us, "he had great cause to doubt the sincerity of Sindiah's professions; while the increasing rumours of a hostile confederacy against the British government, between that chieftain and the Raja of Berar, rendered it indispensably necessary to ascertain, with the least practicable delay, whether the British government were likely to be exposed to a contest with the confederated chieftains. These considerations determined the Governor-General to lose no time in furnishing Colonel Collins with detailed instructions for the guidance of his conduct, in this important and delicate crisis of affairs. With a view to expedition, the Governor-General's instructions were, in the first instance, transmitted in the form of notes, under date the 5th of May, 1803, and were afterwards formed into a detailed despatch, which was forwarded to Colonel Collins on the 3rd of June."²

Nay, when the time arrived, at which it was desirable to make it appear, that the hostile mind of Sindiah, and not provocation by the British government, had produced the calamity of war, the Governor-General actually enters into an argument to prove, that from an early date, he had evidence which rendered in no respect doubtful the existence of hostile projects in the mind of Sindiah. After a display of the motives, in their own ambition, which Sindiah and the Raja of Berar, had for aversion to the treaty of Bassein, "The belief," he says, "that those chieftains entertained designs hostile to the British government, at the earliest stages of the negotiation between the resident and Dowlut Rao Sindiah, is supported by the information which the Governor-General has from time to time received of the proceedings of that chieftain." Of this information he specifies three instances; one contained in a letter of Colonel Collins, dated the 9th of March; a second received on the 17th of June; and the third alone, not more conclusive than the former, sent by Colonel Collins on the 14th, not received till after the date of his pacific declaration to the home authorities. "These facts," he then subjoins, "reciprocally confirm

¹ Vide supra, p. 290.

² Narrative, ut supra, p. 317, 318.—M. Despatches, iii. 120.—W.



1803.

each point of the evidence of Sindiah's hostile projects; and combined with information, at various times communicated, by the Resident with Dowlut Rao Sindiah, of the proceedings of that chieftain, with the repeated rumours of the formation of a hostile confederacy between Dowlut Rao Sindiah, and the Raja of Berar, and Jeswunt Rao Holkar, and with the tenor and result of the Resident's negotiations, must be considered to amount to full proof of the alleged design of subverting the alliance formed between the British government and the Peshwa."¹

The Resident with the Dowlut Rao Sindiah, having received the Governor-General's instructions, obtained an audience of that chief on the 28th of May. He was encamped at a place called Chickley, not far from Boorhanpore, where his own dominions border on those of the Raja of Berar. The conference was opened, on the part of the Resident, by communicating to Sindiah the treaty of Bassein, of which a copy was presented and read. "When the whole of the treaty had been distinctly explained to the Maharaja, I then asked him," says the Resident, "whether he thought it contained any thing injurious to his just rights; since I had reason to think some doubts had arisen in his mind on this head?"—It was one of his ministers who thought proper to reply; "acknowledging," says the Resident, "that the treaty did not contain any stipulation prejudicial to the rights of the Maharaja; to which the latter assented."

"I proceeded," says Colonel Collins, "to state—that negotiations had of late been carried on between Dowlut Rao Sindiah and the Berar Raja—that these chiefs were, I understood, to have an interview shortly, somewhere in the vicinity of this place—that the Maharaja had concluded a peace with Jeswunt Rao Holkar, in whose camp a vakeel also now resided on the part of Ragojee Bhonslah—that Sindiah had likewise avowed an intention of proceeding with his army to Poonah, accompanied by the Berar Raja—and that, on combining these circumstances, I could not but suspect that this court meditated designs adverse to the interests of the British government;—for, since his Highness the Peshwa was restored to the musnud of Poonah, the presence of the Maharaja at that capital

¹ Narrative, ut supra. Ibid. p. 334.



could not now be of any use, but, on the contrary, might be productive of evil consequences—nor could the longer continuance of the Maharaja in the Deccan be necessary to his security, since he had come to an accommodation with the only enemy from whom he had any thing to apprehend south of the Nerbuddah; that, therefore, I felt it my duty to require an unreserved explanation from this court, as well respecting the intent of the proposed interview between the Maharaja and the Berar Raja, as regarding the nature of the engagements entered into by those chiefs with Jeswunt Rao Holkar—as their recent union and present proceedings induced some suspicion, that they were confederated, either for the purpose of invading the territories of our allies, his Highness the Peshwa and Nabob Nizam; or of subverting the arrangements lately concluded between the British government and Bajee Rao.”¹

The Resident repeated the assurance of the peaceable and even amicable views of the British government; and stated the arguments of himself and of the Governor-General, to prove to Sindiah, not only that the British government and the Peshwa had a perfect right to contract the engagements into which they had entered, but that the interests of Sindiah, by that means, were in no respect affected.

On the part of Sindiah it was, in like manner, affirmed, that he had no intention whatever to invade either the territory of his Highness the Peshwa, or of the Nabob Nizam. But in regard to the negotiations with the Berar Raja and Holkar, the Resident was informed, that Sindiah could afford him no explanations till the conference between him and Ragojee Bhonslah had taken place. No mode of address, conciliatory or menacing, was left untried by the Resident, to extort a declaration, whether opposition to the treaty of Bassein was or was not in contemplation. Sindiah was informed, that if he maintained his present suspicious attitude, the British government would be called upon to make preparations upon his frontier, which would be attacked in every part, the moment that intelligence was received of his accession to any hostile

¹ Colonel Collins's despatch, dated 29th May, 1803. Ibid. p. 153.—M.
Despatches, iii. 159.—W.

HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA. CSL

BOOK VI. confederacy. After various expostulations, both with the
CHAP. XI. ministers and Sindiah himself, the Resident says, that he
1803. turned at last to Sindiah, and "conjured him, in language
both urgent and conciliatory, to remove all his doubts
and suspicions, by an immediate and candid avowal of
his intentions."

"Dowlut Rao," he continues, "in reply to these instances
on my part, said, that he could not, at present, afford me
the satisfaction I demanded, without a violation of the
faith which he had pledged to the Raja of Berar. He
then observed, that the Bhonslah was distant no more
than forty coss from hence, and would probably arrive
here in the course of a few days: that immediately after
his interview with the Raja, I should be informed whether
it would be peace or war."

It is proper to state, that the Resident, in answer to his
remonstrance against the march of Sindiah and the Raja
of Berar to Poonah, received a solemn assurance, which he
appears not to have disbelieved, that the Peshwa, after his
return to his capital, had repeatedly written to the Maha-
raja and the Berar Raja, inviting them both to Poonah.
It is also proper to give the following circumstance, in the
words of the Resident; "Neither Sindiah," says he, "nor
his ministers, made any remarks on the treaty of Bassein,
nor did they request a copy of it."¹

It will hardly be pretended that the words of Sindiah,
"after my interview with the Raja, you shall be informed
whether it will be peace or war," yielded any information
which was not conveyed by the more evasive expressions
of his ministers; "till after the Maharaja's interview with
the Raja, it is impossible for him to afford you satisfac-
tion with regard to the declaration which you require."
That the words were intended by Sindiah to convey a
menace or insult, there is not a single circumstance to
countenance the slightest suspicion. And it is visible
from the words of the Resident, that they were not by
him understood in that sense. "These words he deli-
vered," says he, "with much seeming composure. I then
asked, whether I must consider this declaration as final
on his part; which question was answered in the affirma-
tive by the ministers of Dowlut Rao Sindiah. Here the

¹ Despatch, ut supra. Ibid. p. 153, 154.



PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.

BOOK VI.

CHAP. XI.

1803.

conference, which had lasted three hours, ended; and I soon after took a respectful leave of the Maharaja."

The Governor-General describes as very great, the effect which was produced upon his mind, by the phrase of the Maharaja. "This unprovoked menace of hostility," says he, "and the insult offered to the British government, by reference of the question of peace or war to the result of a conference with the Raja of Berar, who, at the head of a considerable army, had reached the vicinity of Dowlut Rao Sindiah's camp, together with the indication which it afforded of a disposition on the part of those chieftains to prosecute the supposed objects of their confederacy, rendered it the duty of the British government to adopt, without delay, the most effectual measures for the vindication of its dignity, and for the security of its rights and interests, and those of its allies, against any attempt on the part of the confederates, to injure or to invade them."¹

In consequence of a movement of Holkar towards the frontier of the Nizam, and some depredations committed in the vicinity of Aurungabad, General Wellesley, at the end of April, had directed Colonel Stevenson, with the British force under his command, and the united troops of the Nizam, to move northwards to that city. Towards the end of May, General Stuart, with the army under his command, amounting to three companies of European artillery, one regiment of European, and two regiments of native cavalry, three corps of European infantry, and five battalions of sepoy, with a large train of artillery, crossed the Toombudra, and proceeded forward to Mudgul, a position where, without abandoning the defence of the English frontier, he was sufficiently near the scene of action, to support the advanced detachment, and overawe those who might be found refractory among the Mahratta chiefs. On the 4th of June, Major-General Wellesley marched from Poonah, with the main body of the forces under his command, and on the 15th, encamped at Augah, near Sindiah's fortress of Ahmednuggur, at the distance of about 80 miles from Poonah. "The total number of British troops," says the Governor-General, "prepared on the 4th of June,

¹ Letter from Governor-General to home authorities, dated 1st August. Ibid. p. 143.



HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA.

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BOOK VI.
CHAP. XI.

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1803, on the western side of India (exclusive of Guzerat), to support the arrangements with the Peshwa, amounted to 28,244 men; of this number, 16,823 were under the immediate command of General Wellesley, and destined for active operations, against the confederated chieftains, in the event of its being necessary to proceed to hostilities against those chiefs."¹

The expense of bringing such an army as this into the field was no trifling price to pay for those "arrangements with the Peshwa," which this great force was "prepared on the 4th June, 1803, to support." Yet this was not enough; for, immediately on the intelligence of Sindiah's phrase about "peace or war," the Governor-General issued private instructions to the Commander-in-Chief of the Company's forces in India, to assemble the Bengal army on the Company's western frontier, and to prepare for an eventual war.

It deserves to be noticed, that the letter of the Governor-General to the home authorities, assuring them confidently that no war would rise out of the recent alliance contracted with the Peshwa, was dated on the 20th of June. The instructions to the Commander-in-Chief, which directed the assembling of the army, and laid down a plan of the war, were dated on the 28th of the same month.

In the demand for prompt decision which might arise in the present eventful position of the British government with the Mahratta states, the Governor-General considered that his own distance from the scene of action would require a dangerous suspension of operations, if the power of adapting measures to the exigencies as they arose were not consigned to some individual upon the spot. So much would of necessity depend upon the person at the head of the military force, that a peculiar advantage would arise from combining in his hands, if adapted to the trust, the political powers which it was thought advisable to convey. In General Wellesley the Governor-General imagined he saw the requisite qualifications very happily combined. That officer was accordingly vested with the general controul of all affairs in Hindustan and the Deccan, relative either to negotiation or war with the Mahratta states. The

¹ Narrative, ut supra. Ibid. p. 325, 326.



instructions with which he was furnished for guidance in the use of those extraordinary powers are dated on the 26th of June. The new authority was to pass to General Stuart, as Commander-in-Chief at the Madras presidency, if circumstances (an exigency very unlikely to arise) should render it necessary for that officer to unite the whole force of the army in the field, and to assume in person the general command. And the plenipotentiary commission of General Wellesley remained subject, of course, to the commands of the authority from which it was derived.¹

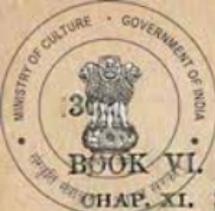
On the 13th of May, the Governor-General addressed a letter to Sindiah, and another to the Raja of Berar. These letters, while they paid to these chieftains the compliment of conveying immediately from the head of the English government, intimation of the treaty of Bassein, and affirmed that no injury was done to the rights of either of them by that engagement, which it was within the undoubted competence of the Peshwa to contract, offered to each the benefit of a similar engagement, if they were sufficiently wise to see how deeply their interests were concerned in it; asserted the pacific views of the British government, even if they should reject this generous offer; informed them, however, of the suspicions, which several parts of their recent conduct had a tendency to raise, of their intention to form a hostile confederacy against the late arrangements; directed them, if they wished that their pacific declarations should be deemed sincere, to abstain from occupying with their armies an alarming position on the frontier of the Nizam, the British ally; desired Sindiah, in particular, to carry back his army to the northern side of the Nerbudda; and declared to them, that, if they persisted in maintaining a warlike attitude, the British government must place itself in a similar situation, and the moment they rendered their hostile designs indubitable, would in its own defence be constrained to attack them.²

¹ Narrative, ut supra, p. 149, 162.

² Ibid. p. 133—136.—M.

There was other correspondence with the Raja of Berar. Prior to the date of Lord Wellesley's letter, or on the 4th of May, the Raja wrote to the Nizam, to announce his proposed interview with Sindiah, and thus explained its object.

³ After a meeting shall have taken place, and an arrangement for the reconciliation and union between Sindiah and Holkar shall have been effected, a specific plan for the adjustment of the state and government of Rao Pundit Pradhaun, (the Peshwa,) such as the honour and integrity of the Raj Indis-



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The Raja of Berar, having arrived within one march of Sindiah's camp on the 3rd of June, was met by that Prince on the following morning. "The secretary of the British Resident, who was despatched to him with a complimentary message on the 5th, he received with distinguished attention: and he expressed with apparent sincerity," says the Governor-General, "his solicitude to maintain the relations of friendship which had so long subsisted between the British government and the state of Berar." A conference between the chieftains took place on the 6th. On the 9th, the British Resident sent to importune Sindiah for the answer which he promised after his interview with the Raja of Berar. Having received an evasive reply, the Resident addressed, on the 12th, a memorial to Sindiah, informing him, that if he should now refuse to give an explicit account of his intentions, and should continue with his army on the south side of the Nerbudda, "such refusal or delay would be regarded as an avowal of hostile designs against the British government." The Resident requested either the satisfaction which he was commissioned to demand, or an escort to convey him from Sindiah's camp.¹

Having received a verbal message, which he regarded as an evasion, stating that the required explanation should be afforded in two or three days, the Resident informed the Maharaja, that he received this communication as a final answer, refusing the satisfaction which the British government required; and that he purposed leaving his camp without further delay. The two Mahratta chiefs invented expedients for preventing the departure of the Resident, and at the same time evaded his endeavours to obtain a declaration of their designs. At length, on the 4th of

pensably calls for, and is calculated for the prosperity of the country, shall, with a due attention to the complexion of the times, be maturely devised and executed." This letter was, of course, communicated to the British government, and Lord Wellesley again, on the 22nd of May, addressed the Berar Raja to express his surprise and disappointment at learning so plain an avowal of an intention to form a confederacy for the subversion of the arrangements concluded with the Peshwa. He also apprized the Raja, that any advance into the territories of the Nizam, would be considered as an act of hostile aggression; exhorted him earnestly to return peaceably into his territories, and distinctly intimated that the question of peace or war between the two states, depended entirely upon the Raja's conduct. The interview that followed was, therefore, most unequivocally an act of defiance, and equivalent to a declaration of war. Despatches, iii. 104, and App. 661.—W.

¹ Narrative, ut supra, p. 166, 323.



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July, he obtained an audience of both together in the tent of the Raja of Berar. He entertained them with the old story — “That the treaty of Bassein” (I quote the words of the Governor-General, as combining his authority with that of his agent) “contained no stipulation injurious to the rights of any of the feudatory Mahratta chieftains; but, on the contrary, expressly provided for their security and independence — That the Governor-General regarded the Raja of Berar, and Sindiah, as the ancient friends of the British power; and was willing to improve the existing connexion between their states and the British government — That the British government only required a confirmation of the assurance made by Sindiah, that he had no intention whatever to obstruct the completion of the engagements lately concluded at Bassein, together with a similar assurance on the part of the Raja of Berar — And that it was the earnest desire of the Governor-General to promote the prosperity of the respective governments of Dowlut Rao Sindiah, and the Raja of Berar; so long as they refrained from committing acts of aggression against the English and their allies.”

The Mahratta chiefs did not think proper to make any remarks upon the assertions and argumentation of the British Resident. They contented themselves with declaring, through the mouth of the Berar minister, by whom on their part the discourse was principally held, that it was the duty of the Peshwa to have consulted with them as chiefs of the Mahratta state, before he concluded a treaty which so deeply affected the interests of that state; and, moreover, that they had a variety of observations to make upon the stipulations, themselves, of the treaty of Bassein. The British minister insisted, as he had done so frequently before, on the right of the Peshwa to make a treaty for himself; but, with regard to the observations proposed to be made upon the several articles of the treaty of Bassein, he requested they might be committed to writing, and submitted to the consideration of the Governor-General.

Notwithstanding these allegations of grounds of complaint, the Mahrattas re-affirmed their sincere disposition to cultivate the friendship of the British government; and declared that they had no design whatever to oppose any



engagements with it into which the Peshwa might have entered; and promised that their armies should neither advance to Poonah, nor ascend the Adjuntee Ghaut, across the mountainous ridge which separated their present position from the frontier of the Nizam. Remarking, however, that the British troops had crossed the Godaveri river, and were approaching the Adjuntee Ghaut; they requested that Colonel Collins would use his endeavours to prevent their advance. The Colonel replied that it was incumbent upon Sindiah to lead his army across the Nerbudda, and the Raja of Berar to return to Nagpoor, if they wished their actions to appear in conformity with their pacific declarations; and in that case, the British army, he doubted not, would also be withdrawn.¹

On the 14th of July, General Wellesley addressed a letter, couched in respectful terms, to Dowlut Rao Sindiah, setting before him the reasons which the British government had to consider his present menacing position an indication of designs, which would render it necessary to act against him as an enemy, unless he withdrew his army across the Nerbudda; but making at the same time the correspondent offer, that, as soon as the Mahratta chiefs should lead back their armies to their usual stations, he would also withdraw from its advanced position the British army under his command.

A conference on the subject of this letter took place between the chieftains on the 21st of July. To a note, the next day addressed by the Resident to Dowlut Rao Sindiah, requesting an answer to the letter of General Wellesley, no reply was returned. The Resident received the General's instructions to urge them once more on the separation of their armies; and received an appointment for a conference with Sindiah on the 25th. On this occasion he was told, "that the forces of Sindiah and the Raja of Berar were encamped on their own territories; that those chieftains had solemnly promised not to ascend the Adjuntee pass, nor to march to Poonah; that they had already given to the Governor-General assurances in writing, that they never would attempt to subvert the treaty of Bassein, which assurances were unequivocal proofs of their amicable intentions; lastly, that the treaty

¹ Narrative, ut supra, p. 324.



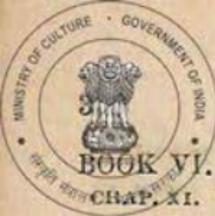
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at that time under negotiation between Sindiah and Holkar was not completely settled; and that until it should be finally concluded, Dowlut Rao Sindiah could not return to Hindustan." The Resident remarked, that, as the actual position of the Mahratta armies could afford no advantage to their respective sovereigns, unless in the event of a war with the British power, the British government could not conclude that the determination of these sovereigns to keep their armies in such a position was for any other than a hostile purpose; and that, for the negotiation with Holkar, Boorhanpore was a much more convenient situation than the frontier, so much more distant, of the British ally. After much discussion, the 28th was named, as the day on which the Resident should receive a decisive reply. The 28th was afterwards shifted to the 29th; the Resident threatening to depart, and making vehement remonstrance against so many delays. The interview on the 29th was not more availing than those which preceded. The Resident sent forward his tents on the 30th, intending to begin his march on the 31st, and refused to attend a conference to which he was invited with Sindiah and the Raja of Berar. As he was prevented, however, from setting out on the 31st, by the heaviness of the rain, he complied with a request from both chieftains to meet them on the evening of that day at the tents of the Raja of Berar.

After the usual topics were once more gone over, the Mahratta chieftains offered the following proposition: that the forces of the Raja and of Sindiah should, in conjunction retire to Boorhanpore; while the British General should withdraw his troops to their usual stations. As these respective movements would leave to the Mahratta chieftains nearly all their present power of injuring the British state, while they would deprive the British government of the security afforded by the present position of its troops, the Resident assured them that a proposition to this effect could not be received.

The Princes made a second proposal. That the Resident should fix a day, on which both the Mahratta and the British armies should begin to withdraw to their respective stations. Beside that the Resident had no power to engage for the movements of the British army, he plainly



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gave the Princes to understand, that their promise about withdrawing their armies was not sufficient security for the performance.

They lastly offered to refer it to General Wellesley, to name a day on which the British troops, and theirs, should begin their march; to name also the time at which he thought the British troops might reach their usual stations, when they too would so regulate their marches as to arrive at their usual stations at the same precise period of time. If this proposition was rejected, they said they could not retire without an injury to the honour and dignity of their respective governments.

The Resident consented to postpone his departure, till time was given for referring the last proposition to General Wellesley; but required, as a condition, that the letters to that effect should be with him for transmission before noon of the following day. The letters came; submitting for decision, however, not the last, but the first, of the three propositions which had been previously discussed. Observing this coarse attempt at more evasion and delay, this officer made immediate arrangements for quitting the camp of Dowlut Rao Sindiah, and commenced his march towards Aurungabad on the 3rd of August.¹

Aware of the great unpopularity in England to which wars in India, except wars against Tippoo Sahib, were exposed; aware also of the vast load of debt which his administration had heaped upon the government of India, a load which a new and extensive war must greatly augment, the Governor-General has, in various documents, presented a laboured argument to prove, that the appeal to arms now made by the British government was forced, and altogether unavoidable.² It may be requisite, as far as it can be done with the due restriction in point of space, to show how far his arguments are supported by the facts.

When Dowlut Rao Sindiah and the Raja of Berar united their armies, under circumstances so warlike and in a position so threatening, as those of the union which took

¹ Governor-General's Narrative, *Ibid.* p. 327—331; Notes relative to the late Transactions in the Mahratta Empire, *Ibid.* p. 225—230; Letter from Governor-General in Council to the home authorities, dated 25th of September, 1803, *Ibid.* p. 170—176.—M. See also Despatches, *III.* 159, 170, 236.—W.

² In his Narrative, *ut supra*, p. 331; Notes, *ut supra*, p. 230; Despatch of the 23th of September, 1803, *ut supra*, 176.—M.
Despatches, *III.* 330.—W.



place on the borders of Nizam Ali's dominions in 1803; and when the English, should they begin to act in the rainy season, would enjoy important advantages, of which, if they left the enemy to begin operations in the dry season, they would be deprived, it will hardly be denied that the English had good reasons for commencing hostilities, if no other expedient could be devised to procure the dispersion of those armies, the position of which created that danger, which it was the professed object of the war to avert.

Still, however, two questions will remain, both of which must be clearly and decisively answered in the negative, to make good the Governor-General's defence. In the first place, allowing the necessity of war in August, 1803, to have been ever so imperative, was it, or was it not, a necessity of that Governor's own creating, a necessity of whose existence he alone was the author, and for which it is just that he should be held responsible? In the next place, were the objects, on account of which this necessity was created, equal in value to the cost of a war? In the last place, was it true, that the alleged necessity existed, and that no expedient but that of war could avert the danger which the new position of the two Mahratta chieftains appeared to involve.

The answer to the first of these questions will not require many words. The necessity, whatever it was, which existed for war at the time when hostilities commenced, was undoubtedly created by the Governor-General himself. The proof is so obvious, that hardly does it require to be stated in words. That necessity was created by the treaty of Bassein; and the treaty of Bassein was the work of the Governor-General. The Governor-General had no apprehension of war, either on the part of Sindiah, or of the Raja of Berar, previous to the treaty of Bassein, as is proved by all his words and all his actions. If we are to believe his solemn declarations, he had little apprehension of it, even after the treaty of Bassein, nay till six weeks before the declaration of war.

For believing that, but for the treaty of Bassein, war, either on the part of Sindiah, or of the Raja of Berar, was in no degree to be apprehended by the British government, the current of the history, the circumstances



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and character of those Princes, and even the succeeding results, prove that he had sufficient and superabundant reasons. Undoubtedly those reasons must have been strong, when they sufficed to convince the Governor-General, even after these Princes had received all the alarm and provocation which the treaty of Bassein was calculated to produce, that they would yet be deterred from any resistance to the operation of that treaty, by the awful chances of a conflict with the British power. The weakness of which these Princes were conscious, as compared with the British state, was the first solid ground of the Governor-General's confidence. The extremely indolent and pacific character of the Raja of Berar was another. Unless in confederacy with the Raja of Berar, it was not to be apprehended that Sindiah would venture upon a war with the British government; and scarcely any thing less rousing to his feelings than the treaty of Bassein would have induced that unwarlike Prince to form a confederacy with Sindiah, in defiance of the British power. As for Holkar, it was the weakness of Sindiah which made him any thing; and the united force of both, if, without the treaty of Bassein, it would have been possible to unite them, would have constituted a feeble source of danger to the British state.

The treaty of Bassein, therefore, as it was the cause assigned by these Princes themselves for their union and the warlike attitude they had assumed, so it will hardly admit of dispute that it was the real cause. The Governor-General himself, when he came at last to the endeavour of making out as strong a case as possible for the necessity of drawing the sword, exhibits reasons which operated both on Sindiah and the Raja of Berar, for going to war on account of the treaty of Bassein, reasons which, to men of their minds, he seems to represent as little less than irresistible. "The conduct," says he, "of Dowlut Rao Sindiah towards the Peshwa, during a long course of time antecedent to the Peshwa's degradation from the musnud of Poonah, and the views which that chieftain, and the Raja of Berar are known to have entertained with respect to the supreme authority of the Mahratta state, afford the means of forming a correct judgment of the motives which may have rendered those chieftains desirous



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of subverting the treaty of Bassein." Of these views he then exhibits the following sketch. "The whole course," says he, "of Dowlut Rao Sindiah's proceedings, since his accession to the dominions of Madajee Sindiah, has manifested a systematic design of establishing an ascendancy in the Mahratta state upon the ruins of the Peshwa's authority." After adducing a number of facts in proof of this proposition, he draws the following conclusion: "The actual re-establishment of the Peshwa in the government of Poonah, under the exclusive protection of the British power, and the conclusion of engagements calculated to secure to his Highness the due exercise of his authority on a permanent foundation, deprived Dowlut Rao Sindiah of every hope of accomplishing the objects of his ambition, so long as that alliance should be successfully maintained. This statement of facts sufficiently explains the anxiety of Dowlut Rao Sindiah to effect the subversion of the treaty of Bassein, and his prosecution of hostile designs against the British government."¹ "The motives which must be supposed to have influenced the Raja of Berar, in combining his power with that of Dowlut Rao Sindiah, for the subversion of the alliance concluded between the British government and the Peshwa, were manifestly similar to those which actuated the conduct of Dowlut Rao Sindiah. The Raja of Berar has always maintained pretensions to the supreme ministerial authority in the Mahratta empire, founded on his affinity to the reigning Raja of Sattarah. Convinced that the permanency of the defensive alliance, concluded between the British government and the Peshwa, would preclude all future opportunity of accomplishing the object of his ambition, the Raja of Berar appears to have been equally concerned with Dowlut Rao Sindia in the subversion of that alliance."

The Governor-General subjoins a reflection, actually founded upon the improbability there was of a union between those Princes, till the treaty of Bassein gave them

¹ In transcribing these words, I have left out three expressions, two of vague reprobation which the Governor-General bestows upon the actions of Sindiah, and one of applause which he bestows upon his own, because they have only a tendency to substitute the opinion of the Governor-General upon these points, for the opinion which the pure facts may suggest; and I have so altered another of the expressions as to render it grammatical.



so extraordinary a motive. "Although the views ascribed to those chieftains," says he, "were manifestly incompatible with the accomplishment of their respective designs; the removal of an obstacle which would effectually preclude the success of either chieftain, in obtaining an ascendancy at Poonah, constituted an object of common interest to both."

The Governor-General then states his conjecture of the mode in which the treaty of Bassein induced them to reconcile their conflicting interests. "It appears," he says, "to be chiefly probable, that those chieftains, sensible that the combination of their power afforded the only prospect of subverting the alliance concluded between the British government and the Peshwa, agreed to compromise their respective and contradictory projects, by an arrangement for the partition of the whole power and dominion of the Mahratta state."¹

The circumstances on which these conclusions are founded were all as much known to the Governor-General before, as after he concluded the treaty of Bassein. He was, therefore, exceedingly to blame, if he formed that agreement, without an expectation, approaching to a full assurance, that a war with the power of Sindiah and the Raja of Berar, if not also (as might have been expected) with that of Holkar combined, would be a part of the price which the British state would have to pay for the advantages, real or supposed, of the treaty of Bassein.²

¹ See Governor-General's Letter, ut supra, p. 179, 180: Narrative, ut supra, p. 331, 332.

² It is admitted in a preceding page, that, according to the Governor-General's solemn declarations, he had little apprehension of war, even till a few weeks before the declaration of it: he had, therefore, no expectation, approaching to a full assurance, that hostilities would be the consequences of the treaty of Bassein. Then, says our author, "he was exceedingly to blame; because the circumstances on which he accounted for the eventual occurrence of the war, must have been known to him as well before, as after, he concluded the treaty of Bassein." It is one thing, however, to discover motives for actual conduct, and another to anticipate their existence; it is also far from a necessary conclusion, even when motives may be suspected, that they will be followed by acts, especially when it is obvious that other motives, equally or still more cogent, must exist, by which the former may be neutralized, and that the acts are so obviously impolitic as to render it probable that they will not be perpetrated. That the interference of the British, in behalf of the Peshwa, might be distasteful to the principal Mahratta chiefs, may, have been little doubted, but it could scarcely have been deemed of sufficient intensity to instigate actual hostilities, particularly when such a result was incompatible with all rational policy. It was thought likely that Sindiah would know his strength rather than to hazard a contest with the British government; that the Raja of Berar, beside his inactive temperament, had inter-

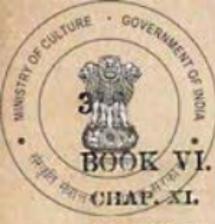


The question, then, or at least one of the questions, to which he should have applied the full force of a sound reflection, equally free from oversight or prepossession, was, whether the benefits, which could reasonably be expected from the treaty of Bassein, were a full compensation for the evils ready to spring from the wars to which it was likely to give birth : on the contrary, if he allowed his mind to rebel from itself, as far as possible, all expectation of the expensive and bloody consequences likely to issue from the treaty ; and, fixing his attention almost exclusively upon the advantages painted in his imagination, decided upon what may be regarded as a hearing of only one side, that the treaty ought, if possible, to be made, he pursued a course which, in the management of public affairs, is indeed most lamentably common, but which on that account only deserves so much the more to be pointed out to the disapprobation of mankind.

The discussion of a question like this requires the use of so many words, because it imports a reference to so many particulars, that it would produce an interruption incompatible with the due continuity of a narrative discourse. It may, notwithstanding, have its use to point out merely the paths of inquiry.

To them, on whom, in this instance, peace or war depended, it belonged to ask themselves, whether the act of grasping at a new set of advantages, in relation to other states, which act it is pretty certain that those states, or some of them, will hostilely resent, does not constitute

rests opposed to those of Sindiah, which rendered their union improbable ; and that, even should it take place, and Holkar be joined with them, the confederates would still be too doubtful of their strength to risk the encounter. That these Mahratta chiefs had no real grievance to complain of, that the treaty of Bassein encroached not on their territories or their legal authority, and that whatever obstacle the English alliance might oppose to their unjustifiable pretensions, the cost and danger of removing it by an appeal to arms, would be so much more than equivalent to any possible advantages to be attained, were reasons authorizing the conclusion that the absurdity of hostile collision would be too obvious to the understanding of princes, not devoid of political sagacity or knowledge, to permit of their adopting such a line of policy. The Governor-General was mistaken in supposing that the Mahratta princes attached due weight to those considerations, but they were sufficiently palpable to justify him in believing that they would not have been disregarded, and that they would have formed a counterpoise to feelings of personal mortification and disappointment sufficient to have prevented the actual occurrence of war. He was not, therefore, exceedingly to blame in entertaining expectations, approaching to full assurance that the treaty of Bassein would not be followed by hostilities.—W.



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the war, a war of aggression, on the part of the state which wilfully performs the act out of which it foresees that war will arise. A war, which is truly and indisputably defensive, is a war undertaken in defence, that is, to prevent the loss of existing advantages. And though a state may justly assert its rights to aim at new advantages, yet, if it aims at advantages which it cannot attain without producing a loss of existing advantages to some other state, a loss which that state endeavours to prevent with a war, the war on the part of the latter state is truly a defensive, on the part of the other is truly an aggressive, and, in almost all cases, an unjust war.

The Governor-General is so far from denying that the treaty of Bassein did import the loss of advantages to Sindiah, that we have just heard him enumerating the advantages of which it deprived that Mahratta chief; advantages on which it was natural for him to place the highest possible value; the power, as he imagined, of establishing his controlling influence over the Peshwa, and, through him, over the whole or the greater part of the Mahratta states.

Many times is the answer of the Governor-General repeated in the documents which he has liberally supplied. These advantages, he cries, on the part of Sindiah, existed only for purposes of injustice; his complaints are, therefore, to be treated with indignation.

The man who carefully visits the sources of Indian history, is often called to observe, and to observe with astonishment, what power the human mind has in deluding itself; and what sort of things a man can pass upon himself for conclusive reasoning, when those against whom his reasoning operates are sure not to be heard, and when he is equally sure that those to whom his discourse is addressed, and whom he is concerned to satisfy, have all the requisites for embracing delusion; to wit, ignorance, negligence, and, in regard to the particulars in question, a supposition, at the least, of concurring, not diverging interests.

It is truly surprising, that the object, which is marked by the Governor-General as the most profligate ambition, and the most odious injustice, cruelty, and oppression, in Dowlut Rao Sindiah, to aim at, is the same object, exactly



at which he himself was aiming, with so uncommon a degree of ardour and perseverance, and at the expense of so many sacrifices. The object, incontestably, at which both were aiming, was an all-controlling influence over the Peshwa, and through him, as far as possible, over the other Mahratta governments. As far, then, as concerned the object of pursuit, the coincidence is complete, manifest, and indubitable, between the ambition of Sindiah, and the ambition of the Governor-General. Wherein, then, did the ambition of these two leaders differ, so as to entitle the Governor-General to cover the ambition of Sindiah with the epithets most expressive of the disapprobation and abhorrence of mankind, his own with epithets the most expressive of their approbation and favour? One mighty difference there was; that the one was the Governor-General's own ambition, the other that of another man; and a man the gratification of whose ambition in this instance was incompatible with the gratification of his. Another difference, which would be felt where it was desirable for the Governor-General that it should be felt, was, that the benefits, which were said to be great, arising from the accomplishment of this object of the Governor-General's ambition, were to be English benefits. From the accomplishment of the same object of Sindiah's ambition would arise nothing but the prevention of these English benefits. Under this mode of viewing the question, however, it cannot be disguised, that Sindiah would have the same grounds exactly for applying epithets of applause to his own ambition, and of abuse to that of the Governor-General.¹

But differences, such as these, are more frequently the

¹ There is one important difference in the relations in which the English and Sindiah stood to the Peshwa, which is wholly overlooked in this argument: the different mode in which they prosecuted the objects of their, be it admitted, equal ambition. The English acted with the professed acquiescence of the Peshwa; Sindiah notoriously in his despite. The English placed the Peshwa on his throne, and kept him there, and allowed him the independent enjoyment of extensive authority; Sindiah occupied Poonah with an almost hostile force; compelled the Peshwa to submit entirely to his will, and was yet unable to protect him against his enemies. The English did not march to Poonah to hold the Peshwa in subjection; the Peshwa fled to them, and was glad to resume his principality under the shadow of their banners. Admitting, then, that the establishment of British control at Poonah was the result of the Governor-General's ambition, that ambition differed from Sindiah's in seeking to effect its objects by gentle, not by violent means; with the concurrence, not in defiance of, those over whom it aspired to rule.—W.



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grounds of action in human affairs, than acknowledged, or even known, to be so ; since nothing is more easy for the greater part of men, than to be ignorant of the motives by which they are actuated, and, while absorbed in the pursuits of the most vulgar and selfish ambition, to be giving themselves credit for the highest virtue, before the tribunal of their own consciences. What then will be said ? That of this controlling power, at which Sindiah and the English both of them aimed, Sindiah would make a bad use, the English a good one ? If one ruler has a title to make at his pleasure this assumption in his own favour, so has every other ruler ; and a justification is afforded to the strong, who are always in the right, for extending, as far as they please, their oppressions over the weak.

If we should allow, that the English government would make a better use of new power than a native one, as it would be disgraceful to think it would not, the reason would go further than the Governor-General would wish ; for upon this reason not one native government should be left existing in India.

But beside this ; what is it that we are precisely to understand by a better use : is it a use better for the English ? Or a use better for the English and Mahrattas both ? This latter assertion is the only one which it would answer any purpose to make ; meaning, in both cases, the people at large, not the handful of individuals composing the government, whose interests are worth no more than those of any other equally minute portion of the common mass.

That the use of it, on the part of the English, would be good even for themselves, was so far from being a decided point, that all connexions of the same description stood condemned and forbidden, by a memorable clause of that very act of parliament on which the government of the East India Company rested, and of which, by consequence, the treaty of Bassein was a flagrant violation. By how many of the Court of Directors, not to speak of other classes of men, it was condemned as injurious to British interests, we shall afterwards have occasion to observe.¹

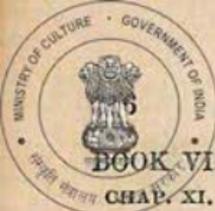
¹ The condemnation of the principle of the extension of the British power in India by the Court of Directors, and by the Parliament, was much too ph



But whatever the effects in regard to the English, unless it appear that the control over the Peshwa and the Mahratta states, which was equally the object of ambition to Sindiah and the Governor-General, would have been attended with worse consequences to the Mahrattas, if in the hands of Sindiah, than if in the hands of the English, it will be difficult to show in what respect the ambition of Sindiah was selfish and wicked; that of the English full of magnanimity and virtue. In what respects then were the people of the Mahratta states to be the better for the control of the English? Not as regarded oppression at the hands of their several and respective governments; for, in regard to the treatment which those governments might yield to their subjects, the English were ready to bind themselves not to interfere; and we have seen, in the case of the Nabobs of the Carnatic and of Oude, that the motives of misrule in the native governments, upheld by British power were not diminished; but increased a hundred fold.

The grand benefit held out by the Governor-General is, that the Mahrattas would be withheld from war. But this, if foreign war is meant, the Mahrattas had always regarded, and except in a few instances, had always found, a source of benefit, rather than harm. If internal wars are meant, these, it is plain, would be as effectually prevented, if the control of Sindiah, as if that of the Eng-

lophilical to be of any practical applicability to the mingled character of human occurrences. It might have had some credit for benevolence, if there was not reason to believe that it was prompted, in some degree, by party and personal feeling. It is not entitled to commendation for foresight, as events have shown it to be idle: and it deserves not the character of wisdom, for it was irreconcilable with the whole position of the English in India. The very foundation of a political power involved the consequence of extension: an empire, once planted in India, must either have been soon rooted up, or it must have continued to grow. The sagacity of Clive foresaw the necessity, and he had told the public that it was impossible to stop. We were in a situation in which we must either go forward or backwards; our whole progress was one of aggression, and it is much less easy to defend our being in India as a political power at all, than to justify our engrossing all the political power of the country. Once there, as rulers and princes, it was for the honour and profit of Great Britain that we should be paramount. It is not necessary here to advocate the extension of British power as conducive to the benefit of India. What statesman or historian will venture now to affirm that the extension of the British Indian empire has not been advantageous to Great Britain. Every step of advance made in India has opened new fields to British industry; has added largely to British capital; has augmented our population and wealth, and has extended the resources, whilst it has elevated the reputation of the ruling state.—W.



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lish, became complete over all the Mahratta states.¹ and Sindiah, had he been as skilful a rhetorician as the English rulers, would, as gairishly as they, have described the preventing of internal war, and the union and tranquillity of the Mahratta powers, as the grand, the patriotic, and virtuous aim of all his thoughts, and all his actions.

But this is not all. Not only did Sindiah lose advantages, in respect to a favourite object of ambition, which was exactly the same object, by the gaining of which the English had deprived him of those advantages; but, if he had been the greatest lover of peace and justice of all the princes upon the face of the earth, he would still have had the greatest reason to resent the formation of the treaty of Bassein, and to resist to the utmost its execution. What is that, on the strength of which we have already seen the Governor-General boasting of the prodigious value of the treaty of Bassein? Not the circumstance of its having made a dependant of the feeble and degraded Peshwa. This in itself was a matter of little importance. The treaty, for receiving the British troops, concluded with one of the chief Mahratta states, was declared to be valuable, because it afforded a controlling power over all the other governments of the Mahratta nation.² And

¹ The benefits of British supremacy, as far as the people of any Indian state are affected, is a very different question from the advantages to Great Britain. The results are of a more mingled nature; many are evil, but the good, perhaps, predominate, at least we would wish to hope so. In this particular instance, however, the argument confined to the suppression of internal war amongst the Mahrattas is easily answered, as it turns upon an impossible condition. If the control of Sindiah became as complete over the Mahratta states as that of the English, internal wars would be as effectually prevented. That Sindiah could not acquire such control was clear: he had tried it and failed; he had been baffled by a rival who commenced his career with seven horsemen. Holkar, at one time little better than a petty freebooter, had driven Sindiah and the Peshwa from Poonah; what guarantee of internal tranquillity could the power of Sindiah afford?—W.

² The following are some of the Governor-General's expressions: "If the negotiation shall prove successful, there is reason to expect that it will promote the complete accomplishment of the general system of defensive alliance, by inducing the other Mahratta powers to concur in the proposed arrangement—with a view to avoid the dependant and subordinate condition to which they must be reduced by their exclusion from an alliance of which the operation, with respect to them, must be, to control all ambitious views and aggressive designs on their part, without affording to those powers the benefit of the general guarantee." (Narrative, ut supra, p. 10.)—"The same conveyance will furnish you with a detail of the negotiations conducted by the Resident at Poonah, under my authority, with the view to the accomplishment of the important object of comprehending the Mahratta states in the general system of defensive alliance with the Honourable Company and its allies, on the basis of the treaty concluded with his Highness the Nizam, in the month of October, 1800." (Ibid. 29.)—"The intimate connexion with the Peshwa, on principles



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what is meant by a controlling power? The power, undoubtedly, of preventing them from doing whatever the English government should dislike. But the state, which is prevented from doing whatever another state dislikes, is in reality dependent upon that state; and can regard itself in no other light than that of a vassal. If the loss of independence, therefore, is a loss sufficient to summon the most pacific prince in the world to arms, Dowlut Rao Sindiah, and the Raja of Berar, had that motive for offering resistance to the treaty of Bassein.

It will not weaken the argument, to say, that the Governor-General was deceived in ascribing these wonderful powers to the treaty of Bassein; because it was not surely unnatural in the Mahratta princes to apprehend that which the Governor-General hoped, and to do what lay in their power to prevent it.

It was idle, too, in the Governor-General unless for the sake of immediate effect upon the minds of his ministerial and directorial masters, to which it was not ill-adapted, to declare so often, and with so much emphasis, that Sindiah himself was unable to show wherein he was injured by the treaty of Bassein, and could not deny that his rights continued unimpaired. What then? Because Sindiah and his ministers were far less skilful than the Governor-General in the use of language; had objections to the treaty of Bassein which they did not think it politic to acknowledge; knew not how to separate the objections they might wish, from those they did not wish, to avow; and agreeably to the rules of Eastern etiquette, which never in general terms condemns, but always approves of, every thing proceeding from the will of a superior, did, in general courtesy, when urged and importuned upon the subject, apply a vague negation of injustice to the treaty of Bassein; does that hinder it from being now clearly seen that the treaty of Bassein had an operation injurious to that prince,

calculated to secure to him the constant protection of the British arms, could not be formed, without at the same time establishing our ascendancy in the Mahratta empire." (Ibid. 34.)—In the next page (35) he calls it "that degree of control and ascendancy, which it must be our interest to establish in the Mahratta state, and which it is his object to avoid."—"The Peshwa is aware, that the permanent establishment of a British force in the neighbourhood of Poonah, would immediately place him, in some degree, in a state of dependence upon the British power." (Ibid.)



BOOK VI. an operation which the Governor-General regarded as the
CHAP. XI. great source of all the good which it was expected to produce?¹

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One thing, indeed, is to be considered, that in a great part of all that is said by the Governor-General, it is pretty distinctly implied that to render the Indian princes dependent upon the British government was not an injury to them, but a benefit. If this were allowed to be true; and if it were possible, in other indulgences, to make up to a prince for the loss of his independence; yet, in such cases, the consent of the prince in question would seem a requisite, even were his subject people, as they usually are, counted for nothing; because, if any ruler, who has the power, may proceed to impose by force this kind of benefit upon any other ruler at his pleasure, this allegation would prove to be neither more nor less than another of the pretexts, under which the weak are always exposed to become the prey of the strong.

In the only objections which Dowlut Rao Sindia and the Raja of Berar explicitly produced to the treaty of Bassein, it must be owned they were not very happy. Sindiah observed, that he was guarantee of the treaty which was in force between the British and Poonah governments at the period when the treaty of Bassein was depending. And both princes affirmed, that the Peshwa, as a member of the Mahratta confederacy, ought not to have concluded a treaty but with consent of the leading chiefs of whom the confederacy was composed.

With regard to the first of these pleas, the answer of the Governor-General was conclusive. When a compact is formed between two parties, the office and duty of a guarantee is, to hinder one of the parties from neglecting, while the other fulfils, the obligations which it imposes. He is not vested with a right to hinder them from mu-

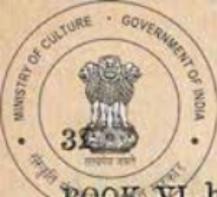
¹ The pains taken in the text to show that Sindiah had reason to be dissatisfied with the treaty of Bassein are very superfluous. Undoubtedly he had, but he was not the principal party to be consulted. The question at issue was the restoration of the Peshwa, the nominal, and until lately, the actual head of the Mahratta confederacy. As a former ally, a friendly potentate, he had a right to the good offices of the English; he had called for them, and they were granted on conditions unquestionably beneficial to the English, and in intention, at least, beneficial to the Peshwa. It would have been a base abandonment of positive obligations, as well as an improvident rejection of advantages, to have withheld all assistance from the Peshwa, through dread of Sindiah's displeasure, or apprehension of his power.—W.



ually annulling the obligations, if both of them please. It was not by the dissolution of the treaty of Salbye, nor in his capacity of its guarantee, it was by the formation of the treaty of Bassein, and his capacity of a sovereign prince, that Sindiah was injured, if injured at all.

In the answer of the British ruler to the second of those pleas, there is something which will require rather more of development. That the Peshwa had a right to conclude the treaty of Bassein, without consulting any of the Mahratta princes, makes a great figure among the arguments of the Governor-General. The idea of a confederacy does not imply that a member shall make no separate engagement, only no separate engagement which in any respect affects the confederacy. The Governor-General truly affirmed, that there was nothing in the treaty of Bassein, which affected the Mahratta confederacy, that is, directly; though it was not less true, that, indirectly, it dissolved it. The Governor-General calls the other Mahratta princes, as distinct from the Peshwa, "the feudatory chieftains of the empire," though feudality is a sort of bondage which never had existence in any part of the world, but in Europe in the barbarous ages. And under this fiction, he proceeds so far as to say, "it may be a question, whether the Peshwa, acting in the name and under the ostensible sanction of the nominal head of the empire;" (that is, by the right of a gross and violent usurpation, and in the name of a man whom he kept a degraded, wretched, and hopeless prisoner;) "might not conclude treaties which should be obligatory upon the subordinate chiefs and feudatories, without their concurrence."

The Governor-General proceeds to speak a more rational language, in the words which immediately follow. "But," says he, "it would be absurd to regulate any political question, by the standard of a constitution, which time and events have entirely altered or dissolved. The late Maharajah Sindiah and Dowlut Rao Sindiah, have uniformly exercised the powers of independent dominion — by making war on the neighbouring states, by concluding engagements with them, and by regulating the whole system of their internal administration — without the participation, or previous consent of the Peshwa, whose supremacy,



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however, both Maharajah Sindiah and Dowlut Rao Sindiah have uniformly acknowledged ; Dowlut Rao Sindiah, therefore, could not — even on the supposed principles of the original constitution — deny the right of the Peshwa to conclude his late engagements with the British government, without impeaching the validity of his own proceedings, and those of his predecessor. Nor could he — according to the more admissible rules, derived from practice and prescription — justly refuse to admit the exercise of these independent rights of dominion, on the part of the Peshwa, which both Sindiah and his predecessor assumed, in a state of acknowledged subordination to his Highness's paramount authority."¹

The observation is emphatically just. It is the weakness of pedantry, or the villany of imposture, to affect to "regulate any political question by the standard of a constitution;" when, however, the name may remain as it was, the thing is wholly or materially altered. And the inference is conclusive, that, if Sindiah and his predecessor had a right to adopt, without reference to the other states, what measures they chose in regard to foreign policy, so had the Peshwa; if it was not unlawful in the Peshwa, it had in them been heretofore unlawful. In his anxiety, however, to uphold the fiction of a feudal superiority in the Peshwa, the Governor-General uses a language almost contradictory, when he says, both that Sindiah and his predecessor had "uniformly exercised the powers of independent dominion," and that they had "uniformly acknowledged the supremacy of the Peshwa:" the uniform exercise of the powers of independent dominion is the negation of all external supremacy. Besides, the word *supremacy* is a great deal too strong to express the sort of relation which the Peshwa ever bore to the rest of the Mahratta rulers. It imports, as borrowed from European affairs, a combination of ideas, which represents not any thing which ever existed in India; and, if employed as an accurate representation of any thing which ever existed in India, is only calculated to mislead.

It is curious to observe with what assurance the Governor-General makes, and repeats again and again,

¹ Governor-General's Narrative. ut supra. Ibid. p. 319. Also the Governor-General's instructions to the Resident with Dowlut Rao Sindiah. Ibid. p. 129.



BRITISH INTERESTS, HOW AFFECTED.

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the assertion, that "the treaty of Bassein not only offers no injury to the independence of the feudatory Mahratta chiefs; but expressly provides additional security for it."¹ The treaty was so worded, as not, in its terms, to contradict such an assertion. But what sort of a conduct is this? Does it justify the attempt to pass upon the belief of other men a proposition, if it is true only in sound, how great soever the difference between the sound and the substance?

The only article of the treaty of Bassein, which referred directly to the other states, was the 12th; according to which the Peshwa bound himself to make no war upon other states, and to submit all his differences with them to the English government. And to this it is that the Governor-General in his said declarations refers. But what was this except transferring the power of attempting to subvert the independence of the "feudatory Mahratta chiefs" from the Peshwa whom they did not fear, to the English whom they excessively feared? In this manner it was, that the treaty of Bassein afforded additional security for their independence?

But let us pass from the question, whether the Mahratta chiefs had or had not just reason for resenting the treaty of Bassein: and let us consider the question of English interests naked, and by itself. What benefits to that people was it calculated to yield? And those benefits, were they an equivalent for the evils which, as it did produce them, so it ought to have been expected to produce?

The Governor-General's own opinion of the good things likely to flow from the treaty of Bassein, is adumbrated in a great variety of general phrases, though they are exhibited nowhere in very distinct enumeration. We shall adduce a specimen of the more remarkable of his forms of expression, and endeavour, with as much precision as possible, to ascertain the particulars at which they point.

"The stipulations of the treaty of Bassein have been framed exclusively with a view to maintain the general

¹ For this specimen, see Governor-General's Narrative. Ibid. p. 318. See, too, p. 312. Also his instructions to the Resident, ut supra, p. 129; and the despatch, 25th September, 1803, commencing Ibid. p. 169.



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tranquillity of India, by preventing the destruction of the Peshwa's power, and by securing his just rights from violence and usurpation."¹

"The object of Lord Wellesley's policy is to establish a permanent foundation of general tranquillity in India, by securing to every state the free enjoyment of its just rights and independence, and by frustrating every project, calculated to disturb the possessions, or to violate the rights of the established powers of Hindustan, or of the Deccan."²

"Every principle of true policy demands, that no effort should be omitted by the British government to establish a permanent foundation of general tranquillity in India, by securing to every state the free enjoyment of its just rights and independence, and by frustrating every project, calculated to disturb the possessions, or to violate the rights, of the established powers of Hindustan, and of the Deccan."³

"The conclusion of the treaty of Bassein promises to establish the British interests in the Mahratta empire, on the most solid and durable foundations; to afford additional security for the permanent tranquillity and prosperity of the British dominions in India, and to effectually exclude the interests and influence of France from the Mahratta empire."⁴

The object of the Governor-General, as he himself is fond of describing it, was, "A system of general defensive alliance between the British power and the several states of Hindustan."⁵ This was indeed a great and operose scheme of policy. Equally great, however, were the effects which the Governor-General expected from it; permanent tranquillity, as he thus declares, and justice, over the whole of India.

When the Governor-General, however, after ascribing these grand effects to the consummation of his proposed alliance, not with one, but with all, or most of the leading states of India, proceeds, in the warmth of his mind, to

¹ Governor-General's Narrative. Ibid. p. 312.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid. p. 303.

⁴ Ibid. p. 318.

⁵ Instructions to Colonel Collins. Ibid. p. 8. See, too, his instructions to the Resident at Poonah, 22nd of November, 1802, where he describes it as a plan "to combine the principal powers of Hindustan in a general system of defensive alliance and guarantee." Ibid. p. 65. See also Governor-General's Narrative. Ibid. p. 307.



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ascribe them all to the single treaty with the Peshwa, we find him practising a very ordinary fallacy, that is, predicating of a part, what ought to have been predicated only of the whole; as if, because the head, limbs, and trunk, constitute a man, it should be affirmed that the human foot is a rational animal.

It cannot bear to be affirmed, in a distinct proposition, that the mere addition of the inconsiderable power of the Peshwa gave the British government such a commanding and absolute power all over India as every where to secure justice and tranquillity; that is, to compel undeviating obedience to its commands on the part of every government on that continent.

Besides, if it were allowed, for the sake of argument, that such a proposition were capable of being maintained, it followed, that no general system of alliance was required; that an alliance with the Peshwa alone, exclusive of the rest of the Indian princes, accomplished simply all that was proposed to be accomplished, by the immense, and troublesome, and complicated machinery of alliances with all the princes in India. Why, then, did the Governor-General aim at any more?

It is reasonable, however, to suppose, that the Governor-General means, what he so often tells us that he means, namely, that the alliance with the Peshwa was to be considered as about to fulfil the hopes which he held forth, only in so far as it had a tendency to produce other alliances, from the union of which, all taken together, those great effects might be expected to proceed.

But what tendency, then, had the alliance with the Peshwa to produce other alliances of the same description? We have seen, already, in what manner the Governor-General and his agents *supposed*, that it would produce them. They supposed that it would place the British power in a situation to coerce completely the other Mahratta sovereigns; that is, to restrain them from every course of action of which the British government should disapprove; and that the Mahratta sovereigns, seeing the coercion unavoidable, would choose coercion with the benefit of having the British government bound to defend them, rather than coercion detached from that benefit.

Experience, in a very short time, demonstrated the



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lacy of these expectations. The treaty with the Peshwa did not produce an alliance with any other of the Mahratta states whatsoever. It did not produce the tranquillity of all India. It produced one of the most widely extended wars which India had ever seen. If this war reduced the Mahratta princes to the necessity of submitting to the will of the conqueror, it was not the alliance with the Peshwa, but the war, by which that submission was produced; an effect which the same cause might have equally secured, if the treaty of Bassein had never existed. If it be said, that the treaty of Bassein produced the effects which the Governor-General applauds, by producing at any rate the war out of which they flowed; what is this, but to say, that the treaty of Bassein was good, only as creating a pretext for war; and that it was fit and proper to be made, for the mere purpose of creating it? But to perform a public act, with an intention to produce a war, is purposely to be the author of the war, only with a machination contrived to impose a contrary, that is, a wrong belief, upon the world.

The good things derived from the treaty of Bassein, must, then, be regarded as all summed up in these two effects; first, the war with the Mahratta chiefs; and, secondly, the means which it contributed to the success of the war. As to the war, if that was a good thing, it might have been easily produced without the treaty of Bassein. Therefore the treaty of Bassein deserves but little admiration or applause upon that account. As to the other question; namely, in what proportion it contributed to the success of the war, the Governor-General presents an answer on which he appears to lay the greatest stress. The treaty of Bassein was a contrivance to prevent the union of the Mahratta states. It is necessary, therefore, to inquire, how far the truth of this allegation extends.

The treaty of Bassein was calculated to withhold the Peshwa from any confederacy hostile to the English. It was so far from calculated to prevent, that it was calculated to produce, a confederacy hostile to the English of all the rest of the Mahratta states.

A very limited question thus remains to be answered; namely, how much the chance of the accession of the



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Peshwa would add to the dangers arising from the chance of a confederacy, hostile to the English, among the other Mahratta states; and how much would those dangers be lessened, by the certainty of his absence? The item in the account, it is evident, is the power of the Peshwa; and, that being remarkably small, as the danger of a confederacy could not be greatly augmented by its presence, so it could not be greatly diminished by the reverse.

There is, however, a view of the danger, which is drawn by the Governor-General, in very frightful colours. He says, that either Sindiah or Holkar must have prevailed in the contest subsisting between them at the time when the treaty of Bassein was framed; that the successful prince, whoever it was, would have engrossed the power of the Peshwa; would thence have become too powerful to be resisted by any of the other Mahratta princes; would of course have subdued them all; and, uniting under his sceptre the whole power of the Mahratta nation, would have become a dangerous neighbour to the British state. From this danger it was delivered by the treaty of Bassein.

To make of this an argument in favour of the treaty of Bassein, two things must be allowed: it must be allowed that the danger held forth was such as it is represented; and it must be allowed that there was no better method of averting that danger. Both may be disputed. First, it is by no means certain, that the Mahratta state would have assumed a shape more formidable to the English, had the contending princes been left to themselves. It is not even probable. The probability is, that Sindiah and Holkar, neither being able to succeed to the extent of his wishes, would have been obliged to compromise their differences; and the Peshwa might have acquired rather more of power and independence, than he had previously enjoyed. But if Sindiah prevailed; as the greater power of that chieftain rendered it probable, if any of them prevailed, that he would be the successful contender; in what respect would his power be greater, than it was before Holkar appeared? At that time, he was master of the Peshwa; and yet so little had he increased his strength, that a mere adventurer was able in a few years to raise an army, an army against which he found it difficult to



contend. Sindiah possessed not talents to bind together the parts of an extensive dominion, as discordant as those of a Mahratta empire; and had he united the Holkar possessions, and even those of the Peshwa, to his own, he would have diminished, rather than increased, his efficient power. Experience showed that by the attention he was obliged to bestow in holding in obedience the Peshwa's dominions in the south, his authority became little more than nominal, over his own in the north.

It would be tedious to run over all the possible shapes into which, if left to themselves, the Mahratta states might then have fallen; but it may safely be affirmed that no shape which they had any chance to assume would have been so formidable to the English, as that into which they were thrown by the treaty of Bassein.

But if the reality of the danger, which the Governor-General thought he foresaw, were as well proved as it appears to stand unsupported by proof, it would still remain to inquire whether it might not have been averted by other and better means, than the treaty of Bassein. Had the mind of the Governor-General not been imperiously guided by his passion for "the system of general defensive alliance between the British power, and the several states of Hindustan," he might have interposed, with so much effect, in the character of an arbitrator, as to establish a balance in the Mahratta empire; and a balance, which it would have been easy for the British government to keep perpetually trimmed. He might have so terminated the subsisting disputes, as to make the power of Sindiah, of the Peshwa, Holkar, and the Raja of Berar, nearly equal. In the contests which would of course prevail among them, the British government, by always showing itself disposed to succour the weakest party, might have possessed a pretty complete security for maintaining the Mahratta empire, if there was any use in such a care, in the shape which it had thus been intentionally made to assume. Not only did the power of the British state enable it to interpose with a weight which none of the parties would have been easily induced to resist; but such was in fact the state and disposition of the parties, that they all appealed eagerly to the British government, and most earnestly solicited its interference.



MAHRATTA WAR CAUSED BY THE TREATY.

The Governor-General, by rushing, with eyes fixed on nothing but the beauties of his "defensive system," to the conclusion of a treaty which gave to the British the government in fact of one member of the Mahratta state, and threatened in a most alarming manner the independence of all the rest, sacrificed the high advantage of acting as a mediator among the Mahratta princes, and created a confederacy which hardly any other combination of circumstances could have produced.

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The Governor-General ascribes to the treaty of Bassein only one other advantage, of the importance of which it seems desirable that an estimate should be made; namely, the destruction of the French influence in the Mahratta state. In the first place, it was not the treaty of Bassein by which that destruction was produced; it was the war with Sindiah; and a war with Sindiah, if it had been worth a war, would have produced it without the treaty of Bassein. But, though what the treaty of Bassein did not produce was the destruction of the French influence, what the treaty of Bassein did produce was the union of Sindiah with the Raja of Berar, and the necessity, in order to accomplish that destruction, of vanquishing both of those princes together, instead of one.

The Governor-General, as suited his argument, and probably at that time his state of mind, represents the danger from French influence as prodigiously great. Not only does he affirm the power possessed by the French officers in the service of Sindiah, to have been highly alarming to the British government; but he holds it out as probable, that some of the contending parties in the Mahratta state would have solicited the aid of the French government, have received a French army from Europe, have prevailed over all its opponents, and so have established a great Mahratta empire, supported and governed by the French. Upon this theory of evil it will probably not be expected that I should bestow many words.

The influence of the French with Sindiah was at this time so far from great, that it was completely undermined, and tottering to its fall. So well aware of this was Perron, the officer at the head of the French party, that he had already intimated to the English an intention, which he soon after fulfilled, of withdrawing himself from the



BOOK VI. Mahratta service. Not only Sindiah, but all his chiefs, had become jealous of the French to the highest degree.

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It was known to the English, that he meditated, and had already begun, a reduction of their power; ¹ the English found, at the end of the war, that, instead of objecting to the condition which they proposed to him, of excluding the French from his service, he was eager to close with it; and there seems little room for doubt, that if the treaty of Bassein had not been concluded, the Governor-General might, if he chose, have made an arrangement with Sindiah for discharging the French, without the lamentable expense of war. ²

But if the condition and influence of the French officers had much more nearly corresponded with the apprehensions of the Governor-General, it is high time that a more sober estimate of the danger, than hitherto they have been accustomed to make, should be suggested to him and to his countrymen. If the assertion were made, that it would not be in the power of the French officers to render Sindiah, or any native power, much more formidable than it would be without them, it would not be easy to refute that opinion. What renders the native sovereigns weak, is less the badness of their military officers, than the badness of their governments; and, under such governments, no officers can be very instrumental in the creation of strength. If the commanding officer has not land assigned for the maintenance of his troops, he is always without resources: if he has land he becomes a civil ruler; and the multiplicity and extreme difficulty of his civil functions leave little of his time for military cares. Besides, he has then an interest in peace; both because his country yields most when he is most attentive to it, and because his troops are more easily maintained at home than in the field. In the next place, to form a right judgment on this important subject, it is necessary duly to consider how many powerful causes must all be united, all operate in conjunction, to produce an efficient and formidable army. Of these, some of the most im-

¹ Col. Collins's Despatch. *Ibid.* p. 17, 18.

² The Governor-General himself was of this opinion, when he first sent Colonel Collins to the camp of Sindiah, with an expectation that he would not only dismiss the French officers, but accept the English subsidiary force; that is, give up his military power entirely to the English.



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portant are incapable of existing in the armies officered by Europeans in the service of the native princes of India. Allowing, what never would happen, that the physical requisites of an army were all provided, and bearing in mind that all the efficiency of these requisites depends upon the sort of machine which the officers, considered as an organized body, compose, the reader will easily perceive, that of the causes necessary to render that machine a good one, some of the most important cannot, in the circumstances we are contemplating, ever be found. To give to a body of men, that most peculiar, that highly artificial, and, when contemplated by itself, most extraordinary turn of mind, which is necessary to convert them into an organ of life, of unity, of order, of action, and energy, to the animate and inanimate materials of an army, requires the utmost force of the legal and popular sanctions combined. But neither the legal nor the popular sanction can be made to operate with any considerable force upon Frenchmen, in such a situation as that of officers in the army of an Indian Prince. What is there, in such a situation, to restrain the operation of private views, arising from the love of money, or the love of power, from pique, from jealousy, from envy, from sloth, and the many thousand causes, which are always producing opposition among men when they are not under the operation of the strongest motives to resist them? Under a European government, it is not the power of the General, which produces that unity of will by which an army is animated. In general, his power would be far from adequate to so extraordinary an effect. The whole power of government, operating with unlimited command over the means both of reward and punishment; the whole force of the popular sanction, holding forth the hatred and contempt, or the love and admiration, of those among whom he is to spend his days, as the portion of every man who conforms, or does not conform, to what is expected of men in his situation, are not only added to the authority of the General, but, so difficult is the effect accounted, that, even when all these forces, operating together, produce it to any considerable degree, the world thinks that it never can express sufficient admiration, never bestow a sufficient portion of applause. Which



of these great, and indispensable powers, had any existence in the case of Perron, or any other officer, in a similar case? Upon his officers, it is plain, the popular or moral sanction had no means of operation. What cared they, what should be thought of them by the people of Sindiah's court or kingdom, as soon as it was more agreeable for them to be gone than to remain? What cared they for his punishments, when they had it in their power to make their escape from his dominions? A body of officers, in such a situation, is a rope of sand. The General who leads them is their slave; because he can retain their service only by pleasing them: he can seldom please one set of them, without displeasing another: and he dares not restrain their excesses; which produce two deplorable effects, the unavoidable loss of discipline, and the hatred, wherever he advances, of the people whom he is unable to protect. The chances, therefore, are innumerable, against the event, that an army, officered as that of Sindiah by Frenchmen, should ever become formidable to one officered as that of the British in India.

Of this truth, the Governor-General himself appears to have been not altogether unapprized. The evidence is exhibited in the instructions which he issued to the Commander-in-Chief, at the commencement of the war, for holding out to the French officers inducements to abandon the service of Sindiah; and in the hopes which he entertained that those invitations would produce their effect.¹ It is exhibited also in the declarations which he makes of the acquiescence with which, in several states of circumstances, he would have beheld the continuance of the French officers in the service of Sindiah. Thus, the Governor-General, when he conceived suspicions that the Peshwa, even subsequent to his flight from Poonah, would refuse to execute his engagements for receiving the English mercenary force, declared that he would not attempt compulsion, nor risk a war with a combination of the Mahratta powers, even for the mighty benefits of the treaty of Bassein.² Again, when he despaired of inducing Sindiah to accede to the terms of his defensive alliance, he assured him, that the English government would still

¹ See papers of Instructions. Ibid. p. 156, &c.

² Papers on the Mahratta War, ut supra, p. 68.



gladly preserve with him the relations of amity and peace, provided he did not resist the treaty of Bassein, or infringe the rights of any British ally.¹ In other words, had the Peshwa not agreed to put his military power into the hands of the English, the Governor-General would have quietly beheld the whole of the Mahratta states, Sindiah's Frenchmen and all, existing in their usual independence and turbulence, rather than incur the evils of a war for the sake of producing a change; and had Sindiah not assumed an attitude which implied a determination to resist the treaty of Bassein, the Governor-General would not have made war upon him, in order to effect the destruction of his European force; a war which, nevertheless, had that destruction been essential to the security of the state which he ruled, it would have been incumbent upon him to make.²

As to the chance of the arrival of a French army from Europe, a chance which the Governor-General represents as most formidable, how that was diminished by the treaty of Bassein, it is not easy to perceive. If anything was likely to induce Sindiah and the Raja of Berar to seek assistance from an army of Frenchmen, of whom they were jealous only somewhat less than they were of the English, it was the treaty of Bassein. If it be said, that the reduction which was effected of the power of Sindiah would have deprived a French army of the assistance to which it might otherwise have looked, it was the war, by

¹ Governor-General's letter to Sindiah, *Ibid.* p. 134, also 129.

² When the Governor-General, it may be further observed, tells Sindiah, that he had not the means of defending himself against the miserable power of Holkar, (*Ibid.* p. 131, 133,) he surely made a very small account of Perron and his battalions. It has been given, in parliament, as the opinion of two men, not apt to agree on disputable ground, of both Hastings and Francis, that European officers, and disciplined battalions, were to the native princes, especially the Mahrattas, a source of weakness, not of strength, who, though formidable by their irregular warfare, could not be so in a pitched battle. See Report of the debate, on the state of affairs in India, 5th of April, 1805. It was affirmed on that occasion by Mr. Francis, that after the minutest investigation, he found there were not more than twelve French officers in the whole Mahratta service. And it is worthy of remark, that no specific statement of number, nothing but large general expressions, is given by the Indian government. Francis, moreover, affirms, that of the force under the command of Perron, the greater part were ordinary Mahratta troops; but a small portion officered by Europeans, or disciplined in the European manner.—M.

It is very certain that Mr. Francis's information was incorrect. Forty officers, British subjects, serving in Perron's brigades, left the service on the breaking out of the war, and were pensioned. There were as many more Frenchmen and foreigners. Sketch of Native Corps, 60.—W.



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which this effect was produced, not the treaty of Bassein. This is another argument which proves that the treaty of Bassein was good only as furnishing a pretext for the war with Sindiah and Berar.

Had Englishmen been capable of forming a sober estimate of the circumstances of France, at that time in a situation very little calculated for sending an army to India, the value attached to this contingency would not have been great. Neither would it be easy to show, that her chances of success, had France conducted an army to India, would not have been fully as great, at the close of the Mahratta war, as before. A prospect of deliverance from the English would probably have roused the whole Mahratta nation, then peculiarly exasperated, to have joined the invaders. As for the loss of Sindiah's French officers, it would have been easy to supply their place, and to incorporate with the European battalions as many native troops as their funds could maintain. In regard to pecuniary supply, Sindiah could not be less capable of aiding them after the war than before. He was totally incapable at both times.

The Governor-General not only made a very high estimate of the advantages arising from the treaty of Bassein: he had a contrivance for making a very low estimate of the expense which it produced. It produced, indeed, a war, which laid upon the East India Company a frightful load of debt. But the contending armies of Sindiah and Holkar could not, the Governor-General informs us, have been kept in the field, without ravaging the territories of the English and the Nizam; and to stand protected against this danger, armies must have been placed on the frontiers, which would have cost nearly as much as the war. This is one of those vague assertions, which, without much regard to their foundation, are so often hazarded, when they are required to serve a particular purpose, but which answer that purpose only so long as they are looked at with a distant and a careless eye. In the present case, it may be safely affirmed, that all the expense which a plan of defence required would have been the merest trifle in comparison with the enormous expenditure of the war. That much would have been required for defence, is fully contradicted by the Governor-General himself; who con-



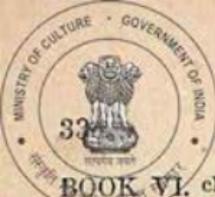
FADNE ESTIMATE BY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

fidently affirmed his belief, that the treaty of Bassein, however alarming and odious to Sindiah and Holkar, would yet be unable to move them to hostilities, because they knew their own weakness, and the dreadful consequences of a war with the British power. If for the mighty interests, placed at stake by the treaty of Bassein, it was yet improbable they would dare to provoke the British anger, it was next to a certainty, that they would be careful not to provoke it for the sake of a little plunder.

To have placed the subsidiary force with the Nizam upon his frontier, and to have increased to the necessary extent the troops stationed in Mysore, presented but little demand for expenditure, beyond what the maintenance of that portion of the army would have required in any other station. If some little expense must have attended these movements, it would be absurd to speak of it coolly as fit to be compared with the huge expenditure of the Mahratta war.

We are now then prepared to exhibit, in a few words, the statement of profit and loss by the treaty of Bassein. What was gained by it was, the dependence of the Peshwa, and nothing more: what was lost by it was, all that was lost by the Mahratta war. The loss by the Mahratta war is the excess of what it produced in evil above what it produced in good. Of the good and the evil which was produced by the Mahratta war, nothing can be spoken with precision, till it is known what they are. An account, therefore, of the events, and of the results of the war, will usefully precede the portion which remains of the inquiry into the nature and effects of the treaty of Bassein.

To have fully exposed the fallacy and unfairness of the assertions in the text, it would have been necessary to have followed it almost phrase by phrase; but this would have involved a prolixity equally tedious. In addition to what has preceded, therefore, it will be sufficient to point out a few of the leading exemplifications of want of candour or correctness, as far as they can be extracted from a very discursive and prolonged series of cavils. In professing to discuss the question of English interests, 'naked' as the writer expresses it, secured by the treaty of Bassein, he does little more than strain Lord Wellesley's vague phraseology to conclusions to which it was not intended to lead. "The stipulations of the treaty of Bassein," says Lord Wellesley, "have been framed exclusively to maintain the general tranquillity of India, by preventing the destruction of the Peshwa's power." Therefore, argues the author, Lord Wellesley either mistook a part for the whole, and identified the Peshwa with all the powers of India, or he concluded that the Peshwa's aid was to give the English the power of controlling or coercing all the rest. Now the Governor-General's object, although he does not always very guardedly express it, is



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clearly the annunciation of a system, not of a particular case. A system of general defensive alliance between the British power and the several states of Hindustan. The policy and practicability of such a system may require investigation; but it is an unworthy occupation to squabble about words, and for a loose phrase or two to fix upon Lord Wellesley the absurdity of confounding the Peshwa with all the states of Hindustan.

The alliance with the Peshwa did not, it is urged, produce a general defensive alliance—it produced war; therefore a war was the good thing realized for the British by the treaty of Bassein. But war, as has been observed, was not the necessary, it was only a contingent consequence of that treaty, and one regarded as improbable. It was a contingency too, worth risking for the establishment of a controlling authority at Poonah, by which an accession of territory was obtained, means of enlarging our military resources acquired, chance of annoyance from foreign foes obviated, and the dominions of the British and the Nizam placed in a position of improved security and strength. These were solid advantages, and that they were worth fighting for was proved by the result, as they were not only preserved, but were largely extended at the termination of the war. So far, therefore, it may be admitted that the war was not a bad thing, but it was not the proposed nor the necessary consequence of the Treaty of Bassein. That in the war which ensued, it was an advantage to have the amity instead of the enmity of the Peshwa, no one but our author could seriously have questioned. That the Mahratta confederacy, concentrated under one powerful head, would have been a dangerous neighbour, is undeniable, although we may admit there was little probability of any such consolidation. And the benefits expected from the pacific mediation of the British power, between the Mahratta states, are controverted by fact and likelihood. What had been the result of a pacific mediation between the Mahrattas and the Nizam? The almost extermination of the latter. No interposition but that of force could have been of the slightest efficacy. It may reasonably be doubted if the British Government, by always showing itself disposed to succour the weakest party, would have been less mixed up with Mahratta politics, would have incurred less trouble and cost, would less assuredly have engrossed the whole military control of the country, than by the Governor-General's system of subsidiary alliances.

The apprehension expressed by the Governor-General of the French in the Mahratta service, may have been exaggerated, but the hostilities that followed showed that the danger, although not such as to have authorized a war, of which the sole object should have been its removal, was not imaginary. The force under General Perron was numerous and well organized, and other disciplined brigades, even without their European officers, were far from being insignificant opponents in more than one engagement. Whatever may have been the probability of succours from Europe, it was infinitely diminished by the Treaty of Bassein, which placed the maritime provinces of the Peshwa, and the subordinate chiefs who were faithful to him, under British military control. That aggressions against the territories of the Company and the Nizam would have occurred, is exceedingly probable, and the means of guarding against them might have been less simple than the text supposes; at any rate, it was a contingency against which it was incumbent effectually to provide, and this provision involved a certain expenditure, as well as a precarious state of relations to which it could not be expected that any government of character would long submit.

In conclusion, it is said, that nothing was gained by the treaty of Bassein but the dependence of the Peshwa, and all that was lost by the war was lost by the treaty. It will be seen, that very great advantages were gained by the war: the immediate gain was also much more than the dependence of the Peshwa. An advance was made in the extension of the British power, not only of immense magnitude in itself, but fertile in consequences the most momentous to our dominions in India. As these results were not fully foreseen, they form no part of the merit of those by whom the ground was prepared for them, but they establish a balance of advantage which is fairly to be taken into account in estimating the consequences of the Mahratta war. We may reply confidently, then, to the two questions of our author,—first, that the treaty of Bassein did not create the necessity although it involved the contingency of war; and, secondly, that the advantages realized by the treaty were not only of sufficient value to render the contingency worth hazarding,



WAR WITH THE MAHRATTAS.

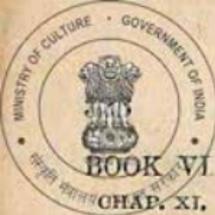
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but they could not have been declined upon the plea of such a contingency, in Justice or with honour. BOOK VI.

The prospect of the war with Sindiah and the Raja of Berar, was contemplated with uneasiness by the authorities in England; and pending instructions from the Select Committee, Lord Castlereagh addressed to the Marquis Wellesley the views which he had been led to entertain, in the form of distinct notes. Although much that is remarked in these notes is just, yet the conclusion is the recommendation of a line of policy which would have led to the same consequences. It was proposed to modify, not to annul the treaty of Bassein; to retain the lands assigned for the subsidiary force, and to hold that force always disposable for the service of the Peshwa, although not stationed within his dominions, and its employment being discounted as much as possible by the Resident. The object of this modification was to avoid the semblance of interfering with the Mahratta confederacy, but the appearance signified little, as long as the interference was real, and the subservience of a British force to the will of the Peshwa was not likely to be an inoperative instrument in his hands. The other Mahratta chiefs would have had as little reason to be satisfied with this plan as with that actually adopted, the modification of which was prevented by the occurrence of hostilities. CHAP. XI.

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Lord Castlereagh's observations were referred by Lord Wellesley to different persons of eminence in India for their opinion, and his printed despatches contain the remarks of Major General Wellesley upon the document. According to General Wellesley's notions, the policy of a connexion with the Mahrattas, did not arise from the connexion subsisting previously to the conquest of Mysore, between the Company, the Mahrattas, and the Nizam, by the treaty concluded in 1790 at Poonah; but subsequently to the conquest of Mysore, it originated, 1st, in the necessity of preserving the state of the Nizam in independence; 2ndly, in the unjust claims of the Mahratta nation on the Nizam; 3rdly, in the certainty that those claims would be asserted in arms, and that the Nizam must submit, unless he should protect himself by raising an army, to be officered by European adventurers, particularly Frenchmen; 4thly, the necessity of preventing the Nizam from entertaining those adventurers, and of affording him protection at least to equal that which he would have procured for himself, by those means, even at the risk of a war with the whole Mahratta nation. There can be little reasonable doubt that the security of the Nizam, by the protection given him by the British, was looked upon by the Mahrattas as snatching from their grasp a certain victim, and that sooner or later they would attempt to vindicate their pretensions by arms. The prevention of this particular event, was, according to General Wellesley the main object of the views of the Governor-General in proposing a general defensive alliance, and in the difficulties attending a general alliance, he sought for that of the Peshwa as dividing and diminishing the Mahratta strength. Another of General Wellesley's arguments in favour of the treaty is, that at the period when it was formed, all the Mahratta forces, Sindiah and Holkar included, repeatedly urged the Governor-General to settle the Peshwa's affairs; and whatever may have been the insincerity of the two principal parties, it was proved, by the alacrity with which many of the chiefs of the Deccan joined the English, that they were well pleased to see them afford succour to the Peshwa. "The southern chiefs, who are the principal support of the government of Poonah, had not submitted to Holkar, they were in arms waiting for the arrival of the British troops, and they joined the army when it arrived in their neighbourhood." The stipulations of the treaty of Bassein, therefore, were not in opposition to the sentiments professed or entertained by the majority of the Mahratta chiefs. Of the general policy of such alliances General Wellesley remarks, that in the actual state of politics among Asiatic powers, no permanent system could be adopted which would preserve the weak against the strong, and would keep all for any length of time in their relative situations, and the whole in peace, excepting there should be one power which either by the superiority of its strength, its military system, or its resources, should preponderate and be able to protect all. That preponderating power was the Company, and the exercise of its authority in defending the weak against the aggression of the strong, in preventing all unjust wars, in prohibiting, in fact, all war within India, was a magnanimous and wise policy, which, although not carried into operation without resistance, and not wholly effected upon the principles which influenced Marquis Wellesley, has ultimately succeeded.



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Some of the more powerful of the aggressors have, in defence of their rights, committed aggression, provoked the British power to inflict upon them political extermination, but the greater number of the weaker princes have been rescued from the most grievous and intolerable oppression, the people have been protected from plunder and devastation, and the general condition of India has been changed from a scene of perpetual warfare to a state of universal tranquillity. Wellesley Despatches, vol. v. Letter from Lord Castlereagh, President of the Board of Control, with paper of observations, 4th March, 1804, p. 302. Major General Wellesley's observations on the preceding document, p. 318.

CHAPTER XII.

Objects to which the Operations of the Army in the North were to be directed.— Objects to which the Operations of the Army in the South were to be directed.— Minor Objects of the War.— General Lake takes the field.— History of the French Force in the Service of Sindiah, and of his Possessions in the Doab.— History of the Emperor Shah Aulum continued.— Battle of Allyghur, and Capture of the Fort.— Battle of Delhi, and Surrender of the Emperor to the English.— Agra taken.— Battle of Laswaree.— French Force in the Service of Sindiah destroyed, and his Dominions in the Doab transferred to the English.— Operations of the Army under General Wellesley in the South.— Ahmednuggur taken.— Battle of Assye.— Boorhanpore and Asseerghur taken.— Sindiah makes an Overture towards Peace.— Battle of Argaum.— Siege and Capture of the Fort of Garvilghur.— Operations in Bundelcund.— In Cuttack.— In Guzerat.— Negotiation with the Raja of Berar.— Treaty concluded.— Negotiation with Sindiah.— Treaty concluded.— Engagements with the minor Princes near the Junna.— Sindiah enters into the defensive Alliance.— Governor-General's Account of the Benefit derived from the defensive Alliances, and the Mahratta War.— Investigation of that Account.

FOR the war, as soon as it should begin, the Governor-General had prepared a most extensive scheme of operations. To General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief, at that time present with the army on the upper frontiers, instructions had been sent on the 28th of June; pointing out, not only the necessity of placing the army under his command, with the utmost expedition, in a state of pre-

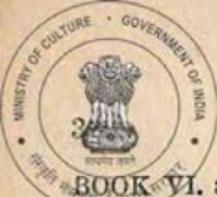


parade for the field, but also, though briefly, and in the form of notes, the objects to the attainment of which the operations of that army would immediately be directed. On the subsequent exertions of the Commander-in-Chief, to make ready for action, the Governor-General bestows unqualified praise. "By the indefatigable activity," says he, "zeal, ability, and energy of General Lake (whose personal exertions have surpassed all former example, and have been the main source of the success of the war in that quarter) the army of Bengal, on the north-west frontier of Oude, was placed, towards the close of the month of July, in a state of preparation and equipment favourable to the immediate attack of M. Perron's force, as soon as authentic advices should be received of the commencement of hostilities in the Deccan."¹

In this part of the extensive field, which the plan of the Governor-General embraced, he gave notice of two military, and two political, objects. The first of the military objects was to conquer the whole of that portion of Sindiah's dominions which lay between the Ganges and the Jumna; destroying completely the French force by which that district was protected; extending the Company's frontier to the Jumna; and including the cities of Delhi and Agra, with a chain of posts, sufficient for protecting the navigation of the river, on the right bank of the Jumna. The second of the military objects was of minor importance; the annexation of Bundelcund to the British dominions.

The political objects were also two. The first, to use the language of the Governor-General, was, "the possession of the nominal authority of the Mogul;" that is to say, the possession of his person, and thereafter the use of his name, to any purpose to which the use of that name might be found advantageous. Together with the city of Delhi, the person of the Mogul had for a series of years been subject to Sindiah; more immediately, at that particular moment, to Perron, as the vicegerent of Sindiah in that part of his kingdom. The acquisition of the country would, of course, place the Mogul, too, in British hands. The second of the Governor-General's political objects was, an extension of his general scheme of

¹ Letters, ut supra, p. 154, 234.



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alliance. He desired that the whole of the petty states to the southward and westward of the Jumna, from Jyneghur to Bundelcund, should be united in "an efficient system of alliance" with the British government.¹

Such were the ends to be pursued in the north ; for the accomplishment of which the Commander-in-Chief was vested with the same sort of powers, which had already been conveyed to General Wellesley, for the more secure attainment of those which were aimed at in the south. General Wellesley was expected, with the force under his command, to defeat the confederate army of Sindiah and the Raja of Berar ; to protect from all danger, in that direction, the dominions of the Company and their allies ; and to establish, in their subsidizing form, the governments of the Nizam, the Peshwa, and Gaekwar.

The province of Cuttack separated the Company's dominions in Bengal, from the Northern Circars. By the conquest of this district, the territory of the English nation in the northern part of India would be united, on the eastern coast, with that in the south, and would extend in one unbroken line from the mountains on the frontier of Tibet to Cape Comorin ; the Mahrattas on that side of India would be deprived of all connexion with the sea, and hence with the transmarine enemies of the Anglo-Indian government ; a communication not liable to the interruption of the monsoons would be formed between Calcutta and Madras ; and an additional portion of the Bengal frontier would be delivered from the chance of Mahratta incursions. The province of Cuttack belonged to the Raja of Berar. Preparations were made for invading it about the time at which the operations of the principal armies should commence.²

Sindiah possessed the port of Baroach, and a contiguous

¹ Governor-General's Letter to the Commander-in-chief, dated 27th of July, 1803. Ibid. p. 156.

² Whatever difference of opinion may prevail as to the merits of the Marquess Wellesley's public correspondence relative to Mahratta politics before the war, it is impossible to withhold admiration from it after the war had become inevitable. It is a remarkable exhibition of activity and comprehensiveness of mind. All the great objects both of a political and military nature are pointed out with a most perfect knowledge of the situation and circumstances of the different native chiefs, and with a distinct and full enunciation of the purposes most advantageous to British interests. At the same time he is most liberal in his confidence as to the means by which the objects are to be effected, and most prodigal in his gratitude for their successful accomplishment.—W.



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District on the coast of Guzerat. The government of Bombay was made ready to seize them, as soon as the war should be declared. BOOK VI. CHAP. XII.

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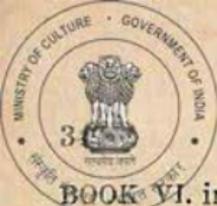
General Lake took the field with an army of 10,500 men, consisting of about two hundred European artillery, three regiments of European, and five of native cavalry, one regiment of European, and eleven battalions of native infantry. Beside this force, about 3,500 men were assembled near Allahabad for the invasion of Bundelcund; and about 2000 were collected at Mirzapoor, to cover Benares, and guard the passes of the adjoining mountains.

The army of Sindiah, to which General Lake was to be opposed, was under the command of a Frenchman, named Perron, and stated by the Governor-General, on grounds of course a little uncertain, to have consisted of 16,000 or 17,000 infantry, formed and disciplined on the European plan; with a large body of irregular infantry, from fifteen to twenty thousand horse, and a train of artillery, which the Governor-General describes, as both numerous and well appointed.¹

To understand the nature of the power of Sindiah, in this quarter of India, a short history is required, not only of the peculiar composition of his army, but also of the territorial acquisitions which he there retained. Deboigne, though not the first Frenchman who was admitted into the army of Sindiah, was the first who obtained any considerable degree of power. Born a Savoyard, of parents respectable, though poor, after having served some time

¹ Vide Governor-General's Notes relative to the late transactions in the Mahratta empire. *Ibid.* p. 225. It is instructive to observe the prevalence of exaggeration: Col. Collins, in his letter from Sindiah's camp, dated 7th of April, 1802, says, "Since my arrival at this court, I have obtained more accurate information of the state of the regular infantry in the service of Dowlut Rao Sindiah than I heretofore possessed. I believe your Lordship may rely on the correctness of the following statement. General Perron commands four brigades of native infantry, each consisting of ten battalions of sepoy. The complement of a battalion is 716 firelocks, and every corps is commanded by two or three European officers." *Ibid.* p. 17. By this statement, Perron's infantry amounted to 28,640, more than one-half beyond the estimate of the Governor-General, which yet we may suppose beyond the mark.—M.

The author of the account of the Corps in the Service of Native Princes states, that Perron commanded at the breaking out of the war, forty battalions of 700 men each, with a train of 140 pieces of cannon, and 5000 cavalry. General De Boigne's own statement to Colonel Franklin was, that the force which he raised was of three brigades, amounting to 24,000 men, with 130 pieces of cannon. *Life of Shah Alem*, 192.—W.



HISTORY OF BRITISH INDIA.

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BOOK VI.
CHAP. XII.

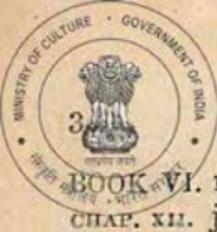
1803.

in the army of his own prince, he entered the more splendid service of France, in quality of an ensign in the Irish brigades.¹ In the vicissitudes of his early life, we must content ourselves with effects; the causes very frequently remain unknown. We find him, next, an ensign in a Russian army, serving against the Turks. He was here taken prisoner; carried to Constantinople; and sold as a slave. After the war, being redeemed by his parents, he repaired to St. Petersburg, found means to recommend himself, and was made a lieutenant. He was detached to some Russian post on the Turkish frontier, and had some fortune to command the escort which attended Lord Percy in a progress among the Grecian Islands. In consequence of the impression which he must have made upon that nobleman, Lord Percy furnished him with two letters of recommendation, one to Mr. Hastings, Governor of Bengal, and another to Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras, to whose acquaintance, it is said, he had already been admitted, during the residence of that nobleman as British ambassador at St. Petersburg. It is surmised, that he obtained the consent of the Empress to make a voyage to India, from which he was to return by way of Cashmere, Tartary, and the borders of the Caspian Sea. Be that as it may, he arrived at Madras in the year 1780, and engaged as an ensign in the service of the Nabob of Arcot. In 1782 he repaired to Calcutta, where the letter of Lord Percy procured him a favourable reception from Mr. Hastings. Without disclosing his connexion with the Russian government, he described to that Governor the journey by Cashmere, and the shores of the Caspian, as the object which he now had in view; and was furnished by him with a recommendation to the Nawab of Oude, and the British Resident at Lucknow. It is said, that he was accommodated by the Nawab with a bill of exchange on Cashmere for 6000 rupees, with which, instead of prosecuting his journey, he purchased arms and horses, and entered into the service of the Raja of Jeypoor; that upon intelligence of this proceeding he was ordered down

¹ This sketch of the history, both of Deboigne and Perron, for which I have been obliged to trust to sources a little uncertain, is given, as exhibiting, which is enough for the present purpose, an idea, correct as to the class of men to which they belonged, rather than, in every minute particular, as to the individuals who are named.



to Lucknow by Mr. Hastings, whom he thought it his interest to obey; that he found the means of exculpating himself in the mind of that ruler, and was permitted to return to Lucknow; that he now engaged in trade, which he prosecuted with success; that he came to Agra, in 1784, at which time the Rana of Gohud was closely besieged by Madajee Sindiah; that he suggested to the Rana a plan for raising the siege, but Sindiah intercepted his correspondence, and, impressed with the proof of military talents which it displayed, consulted Mr. Anderson, the British Resident, on the propriety of taking him into his service; that Mr. Anderson, to whom he had letters of recommendation, sent for him, introduced him to Sindiah, and procured him the command of two battalions, to be disciplined in the European style. The terror which Sindiah found to march before the grape and bayonets of Deboigne's battalions, and the effects which they produced in the battles of Lallsort, Chacksana, and Agra, from 1784 to 1789, made him eager to increase their number to eight, then to sixteen, and afterwards, it is said, to twenty battalions, at which amount they remained. A battalion complete, consisted of 500 muskets, and 200 gunners, with four field-pieces and one howitzer. The military talents of Deboigne, and the efficiency of his troops, were the grand instrument which facilitated, or rather produced, the victories, and enlarged the dominions of Sindiah, in the region of the Jumna. In 1792, with eight battalions, he fought the desperate battle of Mairta against a great army of Rattores, a wariike tribe of Rajpoots. In the same year, and with the same force, he defeated, after an obstinate conflict at Patun, the formidable army of Ismael Beg. In 1792, he defeated the army of Tuckojee Holkar, containing four battalions disciplined, and commanded by a Frenchman; and at last made Sindiah, without dispute, the most powerful of the native princes in India. Deboigne was a man above six feet high, with giant bones, large features, and piercing eyes; he was active, and laborious to an astonishing degree; understood profoundly the art of bending to his purposes the minds of men; and was popular (because men felt the benefit of his equitable and vigilant ad-



BOOK VI. ministration), though stained with three unpopular vices,
CHAP. XII. jealousy, avarice, and envy.¹

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Perron came into India as a petty officer of a ship, either with Suffrein, or about the time of Suffrein's arrival. Having travelled into the upper provinces, he first received employment in the army of the Rana of Gohud, where he served under the immediate command of an Englishman. After the destruction of the Rana, he joined, in quality of quarter-master-serjeant, a corps commanded by a Frenchman in the service of Sindiah. Though he soon raised himself to a higher command, his corps was reduced, upon the return of the army into cantonments; and he was even unsuccessful in an application for employment in the army of the Begum Sumroo. When the brigade of Deboigne began to be formed, the prospects of Perron revived. He received the command of the Boorhanpore battalion; and had an opportunity of distinguishing himself in the battle of Patun. He commanded the detachment of Deboigne's army which besieged Ismael Beg in Canoor: and it was to him that Ismael Beg surrendered. To the honour of their European education, Deboigne and Perron resolutely protected their prisoner from the death which Sindiah, who had suffered from his prowess, thirsted to inflict upon him: and he remained in the fort of Agra, with a considerable allowance for his subsistence. When the corps of Deboigne became sufficiently numerous to be divided into two brigades, he gave the command of the first to M. Frimont, and that of the second to M. Perron, who, accordingly, upon the death of M. Frimont, became second in command. When the ambition of Sindiah to establish a control over the Peshwa carried him to Poonah, it was the brigade of Perron which attended him thither, and formed the principal part of his force. Perron, thus about the person of Dowlut Rao from the moment of his accession, and one of the main instruments of his power, easily succeeded to the whole authority of Deboigne, when,

¹ This account, which savours of exaggeration, is derived from an English gentleman, who served at the same time with Deboigne as an officer in Sindiah's army. See *Asiat. An. Register* for 1805, Characters, p. 22.—M.
It was written by Major L. F. Smith, and is added to his *Sketch of the History of the Disciplined Regiments in the Service of Native Princes*, first published in Calcutta—reprinted in London, 1805.—W.



in 1798, the commander withdrew with his fortune to Europe.¹

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M. Deboigne had received a large tract of country, in the region of the Jumna, in assignment for the maintenance of his troops. Not only the territory as well as the army which had devolved upon Perron required his presence upon the departure of Deboigne; but the presumption of the Governors both of Delhi and of Agra, had so much increased by the long absence of Sindiah in the south, that it seemed to be high time to reduce them to obedience. In the month of October, 1798, Perron sent two battalions, commanded by Colonel Sutherland, one of the Englishmen who helped to officer Sindiah's regular brigades, with an expectation that the Kelledar would deliver up the fort; but disappointed in that hope, he sent three battalions more, and the place was invested. Though, from a humane regard to the aged Mogul and his family, who were kept as a sort of prisoners in the fort, much caution was used in firing at the place, it was ready for assault in nineteen days, when the Kelledar capitulated and surrendered.²

This was the occasion, on which, for the first time, the custody of the Emperor was placed in the hands of a Frenchman. He had now, during ten years, been subject to the power of Sindiah, under which he had fallen by the following means.

In 1782, when Mr. Hastings so eagerly made peace with the Mahratta powers, their dominions were bounded, on the north, by that great chain of mountains, which extends in a direction nearly east and west, from Cuttack in the Bay of Bengal to Ajmere, and forms a great boundary between the southern and the northern portions of the Indian continent. This physical barrier against the dangers to which the English dominions in the north of India were exposed, from the vicinity of the Mahrattas, was not all. On the western half of this chain of mountains, on its northern side, and immediately bordering upon the Company's frontier, or that of their dependant,

¹ These particulars, collected by the well-informed editor of the earliest volumes of the *As. An. Reg.* (see vol. iii. *Charac.* p. 39), are confirmed by common history in all the leading and material points.

² See letters from an officer in Perron's army. *Asiat. An. Register*, vol. i. *Chron.* p. 50.



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the Nabob of Oude, were placed, forming another line of defence, a number of small independent states, all jealous of the Mahrattas, and all dreading any extension of their power. The whole of that wide expanse of country, which extends from near Allahabad on the east to the river Sutledge on the west; bounded on the south by the mountainous ridge just mentioned; on the north, as far as Shekoab, by the Jumna; thence by a line passing near Secundra to the Ganges, and by the Ganges to Hurdwar; was, by the policy of Mr. Hastings, left open to the ambition of the Mahrattas. This country contained, among other principalities, the territory of Bundelcund and Narwar; that of Gohud, including Gwalior and Bind; and the great provinces of Agra and Delhi, including the Jaat country, and nearly one half of the Doab, subject chiefly to the Emperor Shah Aulum, and a few other Mohammedan chiefs. Sindiah was the Mahratta prince, who, from the vicinity of his territories, and from his power, was best situated for availing himself of the offered advantage; and he did not allow the opportunity to escape. Another Mahratta chieftain, indeed, found means to get a partial possession of Bundelcund, while Sindiah was engrossed with the business of other acquisitions; but all the rest of that extensive country was wholly appropriated by the latter chieftain.¹

Sindiah had already made great progress in subduing this region, when, with Ismael Beg, he approached Delhi in 1788. Gholam Kadur, a son of Zabita Khan; who, having from some cause of displeasure been banished from the presence of his father, had received an asylum from

¹ See Rennel. *Asiatic An. for 1804, Miscel. Tracts, p. 77*: Hamilton's *East Ind. Gazetteer*. The policy of letting him take possession of this country is thus represented by Lord Wellesley: "The territories of Sindiah between the Jumna and the Ganges, interrupt the line of our defence in that quarter; and some of his principal posts are introduced into the centre of our dominions; while the possession of Agra, Delhi, and of the western and southern banks of the Jumna, enables him to command nearly the whole line of the western frontier. In the event of any considerable accession to Sindiah's power, or in the event of his forming any connexion with France, or with any enemy to the British interests—the actual position of his territories and forces in Hindostan would furnish great advantages to him, in any attack upon the Company's dominions." Governor-General's Instructions to the Commander-in-Chief, dated 27th July, 1803, *Ibid.* p. 156. As the Governor-General was making out a case, allowance is to be made for exaggeration.—M.

There is no exaggeration in the Governor-General's assertion, that the position of Sindiah was favourable to an attack upon the British provinces in Upper India, including those recently ceded by the Nawab Vizir.—W.



ACCOUNT OF SINDIAH'S DOMINIONS.

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Shah Aulum, and growing into his favour, had been created by him Ameer ul Omrah; enjoyed at that time the principal power at Delhi. The Emperor appears to have been desirous of emancipating himself from the dominion of Gholam Kadur, a man of a haughty and ferocious character; and informed him that, having no money to carry on the contest, he regarded resistance as vain. Gholam Kadur himself undertook for resources; only insisting, that, as "the presence of the monarch was half the battle," the Emperor should head the army in the field; and to this the Emperor assenting, commissioned Gholam Kadur to make the requisite preparations for war. Next day, it is said, a letter from the Emperor to Sindiah was intercepted, in which the Emperor exhorted Sindiah to use the greatest possible despatch, for the purpose of destroying Gholam Kadur; "for Gholam Kadur," said he, "desires me to act contrary to my wishes, and oppose you." Upon this discovery, Gholam Kadur, burning for revenge, ordered an attack upon the fort, in which Shah Aulum resided; carried it in a few days; flew to the apartment of the monarch, whom he treated with every species of indignity; and then put out his eyes. After plundering the Emperor and his family, and sparing no expedient, however degrading, to strip the females of all their valuable ornaments, he fled upon the approach of Sindiah; who thus became master of the legitimate sovereign of India, and of all the territories which yet owned his sway.¹

¹ Of this, as of other parts of the Mahratta history in which the English were not immediately concerned, when our knowledge is sufficiently certain in all the points of any material importance; we must, for the minute particulars, be satisfied to know that they cannot be very remote from the truth.— The remaining history of Gholam Kadur is short. He took refuge in Agra, which Sindiah besieged. Seeing resistance hopeless, he took advantage of a dark night, stuffed his saddle with the jewels which he had plundered from the family of the Emperor, and with a few followers took his flight towards Persia. On the second night, having fallen from his horse, he gave time to his pursuers to come up, and make him prisoner. Sindiah, after exposing him for some time, first in irons, next in a cage, ordered him to be deprived of his ears, nose, hands, feet, and eyes; in which deplorable condition he was left to expire. The party who pursued him was commanded by a Frenchman of the name of Lostoneaux. It was under him that Perron is said to have been first admitted into the service of Sindiah, when he served as a quarter-master-serjeant. Lostoneaux is said to have got possession of the saddle, which Gholam Kadur is supposed to have stuffed with diamonds. This at least is known, that he soon after contrived to slip away, and returned to Europe. His corps breaking up after his desertion, Perron was in danger of losing em.



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Though the Emperor was allowed by Sindiah to remain in the fort of Delhi, with the nominal authority over the city, and a small district around, he was held in a state of poverty, in which not only the decencies, but almost the necessaries of life were denied to him and his family. A Kelledar or Governor was placed in the fort, by whom he was guarded as a prisoner. And Sindiah at times had made him set forth his claim, not only to the tribute which the English had covenanted to pay to him for Bengal, which they had so early found a pretext for not paying, and which now, with its interest, amounted to a great sum; but to the wide extended sovereignty which had ceased to be his, only by successful usurpation and rebellion.

As there is no reason to believe that Perron behaved not to Shah Aulum with all the humanity and delicacy, practicable in the circumstances of Perron, so there is reason to believe that the condition of the unhappy monarch was ameliorated after he became subject to that European officer. M. Perron is represented, by all those from whom we receive any accounts of him, except the English rulers, as not only a man of talents, but a man of humanity and moderation.¹

ployment, till Sindiah's general gave him a battalion of his own. *Asiat. An. Reg.* for 1804, *Chron.* p. 63.—Also for 1801, *Charac.* p. 39.—M.

The first of these accounts is a very loose and inaccurate statement. The Mahrattas had been in possession of Delhi before Gholam Kadur's last administration; he had recovered it by surprise, but conscious of his inability to resist the advance of Sindiah's general, Rana Khan, resolved to plunder the palace and retire. Shah Alem's inability to comply with the Rohillas' requisitions of treasure, was resented by the most brutal treatment and the loss of his eyes. The ruffian fled to Meerut; not to Agra. See Franklin's *Shah Alem.*—W.

¹ The English officer, from whose letters, in the *Asiat. An. Reg.* vol. i. *Chron.* p. 50, we have the account of the surrender of Delhi to Perron's battalions, says, "The General from that amiable humanity, which is a noble trait in his character, endeavoured to avoid recourse to hostile measures, in regard to the old king, the numerous princes, and princesses, who are detained in the fort: and even when the siege was laid, it was with full permission of the king, and every measure adopted to obviate any possible injury to the old monarch and the royal family. Though the troops in the fort, amounting to 600, were debarred from all exterior supplies of provision, yet General Perron ordered that the royal persons should be amply supplied, and their provisions pass unmolested." The author of a very intelligent letter (dated Oude, November, 1799, on the military state of the north-west part of the Company's frontier, published in the *Asiat. An. Register* for 1804, *Miscel. Tracts*, p. 77) says "General Perron, a French officer of great experience and consummate abilities, both as a statesman and soldier, represents Dowlat



SINDIAH JEALOUS OF PERRON.

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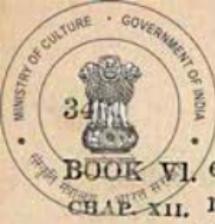
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By the distance at which Sindiah, while engaged in establishing his authority in the south, was kept from his dominions in the north, the administration of the government of his new acquisitions, in the region of the Jumna, fell almost entirely into the hands of Perron, who was present with an army, and had a large portion of it in assignment for the maintenance of his troops. We have the testimony of a most unexceptionable witness, Colonel Collins, both that he made a wise and excellent use of his power; and that the success of his administration had created incurable jealousy and hatred in the breast both of Sindiah's nobles, and of Sindiah himself. "I have it," says that Resident, in his letter dated 30th of March, 1802, "from good authority, that the Sirdars of this court have frequently remonstrated with the Maharaja, on the subject of the extensive authority vested in General Perron; and I have also been told in confidence, that, whenever the disturbances in this quarter are composed, so far as to admit of Sindiah's repairing to Agra, it is the intention of the Maharaja to deprive the General of the command of those fortresses which he now possesses in Hindustan. Nor do I doubt the truth of this information; when I reflect on the general disposition of the Mahrattas; they being, as your Lordship well knows, at all times inclined to suspicion and jealousy; of which I saw strong symptoms, at my audience with the Maharaja on the 27th ultimo. The ministers, who were present at this interview, having put various questions to me respecting the state of Sindiah's possessions in the Doab, I purposely spoke of them, as being in the most flourishing condition, ascribing the same to the able management of General Perron, to whom, as your Lordship recollects, they are assigned in *jeядad*. I also noticed the unwearied attention of the General, to improve and strengthen the works of the different fortresses garrisoned by his troops; and mentioned likewise the high estimation in which he was held by all the Rajpoot and Seik Sirdars, who were chiefly guided by his councils and directions." Though we may

Rao Sindiah in Hindustan; and is invested with the most full and absolute authority over every department of the government, civil and military.—This power he exercises with great moderation, at the same time with a degree of judgment and energy, that evince very superior talents."
 1 Papers relative to the Mahratta war in 1803, ut supra, p. 17.



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easily enough suppose in this language a degree of exaggeration, to which the occasion may be supposed to have presented temptation, yet we cannot suppose a gentleman, of an English education, and of a high character, to have made a deliberate statement for which he knew there was no foundation in fact. In his next letter, Colonel Collins says, "Such Mahratta Sirdars, as are envious or jealous of the power of M. Perron, do not scruple to affirm, that he by no means wishes the total ruin of Holkar ; since, in this event, the Maharaja would be enabled to repair to Hindostan, and to take upon himself the chief direction of affairs in that quarter. Whether or not Sindiah has been influenced by these suggestions, I shall not presume to determine ; but I believe it to be an undoubted fact, that General Perron has been given to understand he must relinquish the collections of all the districts which he now possesses in Hindostan, excepting those appertaining to his jeydad, the annual revenues of which are estimated at forty lacs of rupees ; at present the General collects nearly eighty lacs."¹ From Futtu Ghur, to which, for the purpose of avoiding the unhealthy season, he had returned from Sindiah's camp, having by the way paid a visit to Perron at his head-quarters at Cowle, Colonel Collins, on the 24th of June, 1802, wrote again, as follows : "General Perron has been peremptorily directed by Sindiah to give up all the Mehals in his possession, not appertaining to his own jeydad. And I understand, from good authority, that the General is highly displeased with the conduct of Sindiah's ministers on this occasion ; insomuch that he entertains serious intentions of relinquishing his present command in the service of the Maharaja. Indeed, when I was at Cowle, he assured me, that ere long I might expect to see him at Futtu Ghur."²

The first object to which General Lake was commanded to direct the operations of the war, was the destruction of the force of General Perron. This force the Governor-General, though he very seriously, not to say violently, dreaded it, yet at the same time, with a very possible inconsistency, so much despised, that he confidently

¹ Letter to Governor-General, dated Camp, near Ougein, 18th April, 1802. *Ibid.* p. 18. Compare the statement of 1,35,00,000 in the Governor-General's notes. *Ibid.* p. 222.

² *Ibid.* p. 24.



expected the complete annihilation of it, before the end of the rains. "I desire," says he, "that your Excellency will compose the main army, and regulate the strength and operations of the several detachments, in a manner which shall appear to your judgment to afford the most absolute security for the complete destruction of M. Perron's force before the conclusion of the rains."¹

Not arms alone, other expedients were to be employed. "It would be highly desirable," says the Governor-General, "to detach M. Perron from Sindiah's service, by pacific negotiation. M. Perron's inclination certainly is, to dispose of his power to a French purchaser; I should not be surprised if he were to be found ready to enter into terms with your Excellency; provided he could obtain sufficient security for his personal interests.— I empower your Excellency to conclude any agreement for the security of M. Perron's personal interests and property, accompanied by any reasonable remuneration from the British government, which shall induce him to deliver up the whole of his military resources and power, together with his territorial possession, and the person of the Mogul, and of the heir apparent, into your Excellency's hands. The same principle applies generally to M. Perron's European officers. And the proclamations with which I have furnished your Excellency will enable you to avail yourself of the first opportunity of offering propositions to those officers, or to the several corps under M. Perron's commands."²

On the 7th of August, the General marched from Cawnpore. On the 28th he reached the frontier; and early on the morning of the 29th moved into the Mahratta territories, with a view of attacking a part of M. Perron's army assembled near the fortress of Alighur. The British army reached the enemy's camp about seven o'clock in the morning; and found the whole of his cavalry drawn up on the plain, close to the fort of Alighur. Appearing to be strongly posted, with their right extending to the fort of Alighur, and their front protected by a deep morass, the General resolved to make his attack on their left flank, which had no protection except from two

¹ Letter to Lord Lake, 27th July, 1803. Ibid. p. 159. Dispatches, iii. 208.
² Letter, ut supra. Ibid. p. 161.



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detached villages. The British cavalry were formed into two lines, supported by the line of infantry and guns; but the enemy retired as they advanced, and quitted the field without an engagement. They were estimated at 15,000 strong. As if to show the extreme want of all cohesion, and hence of stability, in the materials of Perron's power, the Commander-in-Chief informs the Governor-General, and the Governor-General with exultation informs his employers; that upon so very trifling an occasion as this, "many of the confederates of M. Perron left him; and "I learn," says the General, "from all quarters, the most of the enemy's cavalry who opposed us yesterday, have returned to their homes, declaring their inability to oppose the English."¹

The town of Coel immediately surrendered to the English; but the garrison of Alighur resisted all the motives with which Lake endeavoured to persuade them. After consideration, he deemed it practicable to carry the fort by assault; and this he preferred to the slow operations of a siege. The place was strong, with a broad and deep ditch, a fine glacis, the country levelled for a mile round, and exposed in every direction to the fire of the fort. Lieutenant-Colonel Monson was chosen to lead the attack: and the preparations were completed before the 4th of September. At three o'clock on the morning of that day, the troops moved down to a distance of 600 yards from the sortie. After waiting till half after four, the storming party advanced under cover of a heavy fire from the British batteries erected for the purpose, and arrived within a hundred yards of the fort before they were perceived. There was only one passage across the ditch into the fort, by a narrow causeway, where, the enemy having commenced a mine, but omitted a draw-bridge, the British troops were enabled to pass, and assault the body of the place. As soon as Colonel Monson perceived that the garrison had received the alarm, he pushed on with two flank companies of Europeans, hoping to enter the gate along with the external guard. The gate was found shut; and the ladders were applied. Major Macleod of the 76th regiment, and two grenadiers, began to mount; but so formidable an array of pikemen appeared to receive

¹ Letter, ut supra. Ibid. p. 267, 268.



FORT OF ALIGHUR TAKEN BY ASSAULT.

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from, that it would have been vain and foolish to persist. A gun was now required to blow open the gate. Being situated near the angle of a bastion, it was difficult to place a gun in a situation to act upon it. Four or five rounds were fired, before it was blown open; the troops were stopped about twenty minutes; during which they were raked by a destructive fire of grape, wall-pieces, and matchlocks; Colonel Monson was wounded; six officers were killed; and the principal loss in the assault was sustained. A narrow and intricate passage of considerable length, all the way exposed to a heavy cross fire in every direction, led from the first gate to that which opened immediately into the body of the place. To this it was a work of great difficulty to bring up the gun, and when it was brought up, the gate was found too strong to be forced. In this extremity Major Macleod pushed through the wicket with the grenadiers, and ascended the ramparts. After this but little opposition was made. The garrison endeavoured to escape in every direction. Many jumped into the ditch, of whom some were drowned. About 2000 perished. Some surrendered, and were permitted to quit the fort, by the Commander-in-Chief, who was close to the scene of action, to witness an attack which nothing but the persevering bravery of the men permitted to succeed. The English loss was fifty-nine killed, including six, and 212 wounded, including eleven European officers.¹

The fort was esteemed an acquisition of great importance, as being the ordinary residence of M. Perron, and the principal place of deposit for his military stores; of which the quantity found by the English, probably because it was inconsiderable, is not specified, in any of the printed documents in which the value of the acquisition is presented to view.

The same day on which Alighur was taken, the Commander found it necessary to send a considerable detachment, to join the officer left at Futty Ghur, charged with a convoy for the army. Five companies of sepoy, with one gun, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Coningham, left at Shekoabad, had been attacked on the

¹ See the Governor-General's Notes, *Ibid.* p. 247 — and the Dispatch of the Commander, p. 268.



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2nd of September, by a body of cavalry, commanded by a Frenchman of the name of Fleury. Though much superior in force, the assailants were repulsed, but returned to the attack on the 4th, when the English capitulated, their ammunition being nearly spent. Before the reinforcements sent by the General arrived, the enemy crossed the Jumna, and disappeared.

On the 5th of September, M. Perron addressed a letter to General Lake, which was received on the 7th. In that letter Perron informed the British Commander, that he had resigned the service of Dowlut Rao Sindia, and requested permission to pass with his family, his effects, and the officers of his suite, through the Company's dominions to Lucknow. The instructions of the Governor-General, to purchase, if possible, the surrender of the military resources of Perron, have already been mentioned. We are informed by the Governor-General, that "on the 20th of August the Commander-in-Chief received a letter from General Perron, indicating a desire on the part of that officer, to effect an arrangement, which might preclude the necessity of an actual contest between the British forces, and those under the command of General Perron" We learn, on the same occasion, from the same high authority, that some time previously Perron had applied for leave to pass through the Company's territories, as being about to resign the service of Sindiah; and had, at the request of the Commander-in-Chief, sent to the English camp a confidential agent, with whom a discussion took place on the 29th of August. All that we further know is, that the agent departed without effecting any arrangement. The Governor-General tells us, that "he evaded the propositions of the Commander-in-Chief, for the surrender of M. Perron." Perron might have received a large sum of money, had he bargained for his own retirement, and transferred to the English any considerable portion of the military resources with which he was intrusted. Perron retired, without bargaining at all: and, although he had the greatest cause of resentment against his employer, without transferring to his enemies the smallest portion of the resources with which he was intrusted.

The Governor-General informs us, that M. Perron stated

¹ Letter from Governor General in Council, 25th Sept. 1803. Ibid. p. 187.



Two facts, which remarkably confirm what I have already suggested, with regard to the miserable foundation and feeble texture of all such power as his. "M. Perron stated, that his reason for retiring proceeded from his having received intelligence that his successor had been appointed; and was actually on his way to take possession of his new charge. M. Perron also observed, that the treachery and ingratitude of his European officers convinced him that further resistance to the British arms was useless."¹

General Lake, who estimated, and knew that the Governor-General estimated, highly the value of removing M. Perron, granted him, in a prompt and handsome manner, the indulgence which he requested; and that General proceeded in consequence to Lucknow.

On the same day on which General Lake received the letter of Perron, measures being completed for the possession of Alighur, he began his march for Delhi. On the 9th of September, he reached Secundra; and during the next two days advanced about eighteen miles beyond Soorajepoor, when intelligence was received, that the army which had belonged to Perron, now commanded by another Frenchman of the name of Louis Bourquin, had crossed the Jumna from Delhi during the night, with a view to meet and repel the British army.

The troops, fatigued with eighteen miles of march, and the heat of the day, reached their ground of encampment (six miles from Delhi) about eleven o'clock, and had scarcely pitched their tents, when the outposts were attacked. The General, having reconnoitred, and found the enemy drawn up in order of battle, immediately ordered out the whole line. The position of the enemy was on a rising ground, with swamps on either flank; their front, where alone they could be attacked, was defended by a numerous artillery and a line of intrenchments. The number of the British troops amounted to about four thousand five hundred men. That of the enemy is stated at nineteen thousand. The British infantry were ordered to advance from the right of battalions in open columns of companies; and during this operation, the cavalry were commanded to precede. Advancing two miles in front, they were exposed for one hour to a severe cannonade

¹ Governor's-General's Notes. Ibid. p. 248.



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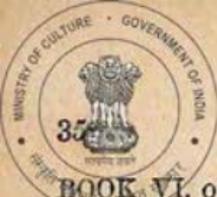
before they were joined by the infantry ; the Commander-in-Chief had his horse shot under him ; and a considerable loss was sustained. As the infantry approached, the General ordered the cavalry to fall back, with a view both to cover the advance of the infantry, and if possible to draw the enemy forward from their intrenchments upon the plain. The enemy fell into the snare, believed the movement a retreat, and advanced, shouting, with the whole of their guns. The British cavalry retired, with the utmost steadiness and order, till joined by the infantry, when they opened from the centre, and allowed the infantry to pass to the front. The whole were instantly formed, the infantry in one line, the cavalry in a second, about forty yards in the rear of the right wing. The enemy had halted, on perceiving the British infantry, and began a tremendous fire of round, grape, and chain shot. The General having placed himself on the line, the men advanced with steadiness, and without taking their muskets from their shoulders, till within a hundred paces of the enemy, who began to pour upon them a shower of grape from the whole of their guns. Orders were given to charge with bayonets. The line fired a volley and rushed on, with their gallant commander at their head, when the enemy gave way and fled in every direction. As soon as the troops halted after the charge, the General ordered the line to break into columns of companies, which permitted the cavalry to pass through the intervals with their galloper guns, and complete the victory. The enemy were pursued with slaughter to the banks of the Jumna. This battle, though small in scale, and not very trying, from the resistance of the enemy, affords a high specimen both of the talents of the General, and the discipline and bravery of the men.

The enemy left the whole of their artillery, sixty-eight pieces of ordnance, with a great quantity of ammunition, and two tumbrils containing treasure, on the field. In men, their loss was estimated at three thousand : that of the English, in killed, wounded, and missing, was four hundred and eighty-five. After being seventeen hours under arms, the British army took up fresh ground towards the river, and next morning encamped, opposite to the city of Delhi. As the enemy had evacuated both the city and fort, Shah Aulum sent a message to express his desire



of placing himself under the protection of the victors. An intrigue had been opened with him before, and means had been found to convey to him a letter from the Governor-General, promising to him, in case he should find the means, during the present crisis, "of placing himself under the protection of the British government, that every demonstration of respect and attention would be paid towards his Majesty, on the part of that government, and that an adequate provision would be made for the support of his Majesty, and of his family and household." To this secret communication a secret answer was received by the Commander-in-Chief on the 29th of August, "expressing," says the Governor-General, "the anxious wish of his Majesty to avail himself of the protection of the British government."¹ On the 14th the British army began to cross the river. And on the same day, the General Bourquin, who commanded in the late action, and four other French officers, surrendered themselves prisoners to General Lake. On the 16th he paid his visit to Shah Aulum. The language of the Governor-General, on this occasion, is something more than pompous. "His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief, had the honour to pay his first visit to his Majesty Shah Aulum on the 16th of September; and to congratulate his Majesty on his emancipation from the control of a French faction who had so long oppressed and degraded him. His Majesty was graciously pleased to direct his eldest son, and heir apparent, the Prince Mirza Akbar Shah, to conduct the Commander-in-Chief to his royal presence. The Prince was to have arrived at the Commander-in-Chief's tent at twelve o'clock; but did not reach the British camp until half-past three o'clock, p.m. By the time his Royal Highness had been received, remounted on his elephant, and the whole cavalcade formed, it was half-past four o'clock. The distance being five miles, the Commander-in-Chief did not reach the palace at Delhi until sun-set. The crowd in the city was extra-

¹ Letter from Governor-General in Council, to the Secret Committee, 12th of April, 1804; Papers relating to the King or Mogul at Delhi, ordered to be printed 12th March, 1805. See also the Message of the King, *ibid.* p. 9, which, so far from expressing great anxiety of wish, exhibits much distrust of the English, complaining of their late conduct, and declaring an apprehension "lest when they gain possession of the country they may prove forgetful of him."



ordinary; and it was with some difficulty that the cavalcade could make its way to the palace. The courts of the palace were full of people; anxious to witness the deliverance of their sovereign from a state of degradation and bondage. At length the Commander-in-Chief was ushered into the royal presence: and found the unfortunate and venerable Emperor; oppressed by the accumulated calamities of old age, degraded authority, extreme poverty, and loss of sight; seated under a small tattered canopy, the remnant of his royal state, with every external appearance of the misery of his condition."¹

In another passage the Governor-General speaks of this event, as "delivering the unfortunate and aged Emperor Shah Aulum, and the royal house of Timour, from misery, degradation, and bondage; and rescuing his Imperial Majesty, the Mogul, from the hands of a desperate band of French adventurers."²

With regard to the French officers, this is a language in the highest degree illiberal, if not unjust, and moreover, indecent. It was not they who degraded, if that was a crime, the house of Timour; it is in evidence that they improved the condition of its surviving members; it is not in evidence that they did not improve it as far as that improvement depended upon them. It is manifest, that certain forms of respect, and a less penurious supply of money, was all that could depend upon them. Of these there is no indication that the first were withheld. Of the second, the French had little to bestow. The revenues of Perron's government must, with great difficulty, have met its charges, and he departed at last with no more than the fortune of a private individual. Whatever he afforded to Shah Aulum beyond the allowance prescribed by Sindiah, he must have paid out of his own fortune. And had Shah Aulum been supported out of the pocket of any English gentleman, of the Governor-General himself, though doubtless he would have dealt by him kindly, and even generously; yet I may venture to affirm, that his "royal state," would not have exhibited great magnificence.

Besides, who would not imagine, upon hearing this lan-

¹ Papers relating to the Mahratta War, ut supra, p. 249.

² Papers, ut supra, p. 234.

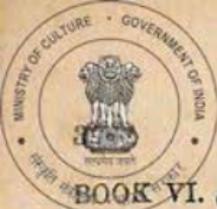


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guage of the English ruler, that he was about to restore his "Imperial Majesty, Shah Aulum (whom his subjects were so anxious to see delivered from a state of degradation and bondage,") to his lost authority? to those territories, from which he had been extruded, only by successful usurpation and rebellion, territories, of which the provinces held by the Company formed a material part? or, if he was not to give him any of the usurped territories which had fallen to the lot of the English, not even that tribute which they had stipulated to pay him, and which they had long withheld; that at any rate he was to bestow upon him those territories, of which Sindiah had deprived him, and which the English had just retaken, or were about to retake? Not an atom of this. The English were to restore no territory. Even that which they were now taking from Sindiah, and of which by Sindiah the Emperor had but lately been robbed, the English were to keep to themselves. The English, therefore, were to hold his "Imperial Majesty" still degraded from all sovereign power: still in bondage, as much as ever. The very words of the Governor-General are, that only so much "regard should be paid to the comfort and convenience of his Majesty and the royal family as was consistent with the due security of their persons," in other words, their imprisonment. Wherein then consisted the difference of his treatment? In this alone, that he would enjoy more of the comforts which in a state of imprisonment money can bestow, and was secure from personal violence.

The lofty description afforded us by the British ruler, goes on in the following words; "It is impossible to describe the impression which General Lake's conduct on this interesting occasion has made on the minds of the inhabitants of Delhi, and of all the Mussulmans who have had an opportunity of being made acquainted with the occurrences of the 16th of September, 1803. In the metaphorical language of Asia, the native news-writers who describe this extraordinary scene, have declared that his Majesty Shah Aulum recovered his sight from excess of joy.¹ In addition to many other marks of royal favour and condescension, the Emperor was graciously pleased to

¹ They probably said something not less extravagant, when he passed into the hands of Sindiah.



BOOK VI. confer on General Lake the second title in the Empire,
CHAP. XII. *Sumsam u dowla, ashgar ul mulk. Khan dowran Khan,*
1803. *General Gerard Lake bahadur, futteh jung: The sword of
the state, the hero of the land, the lord of the age, and the
victorious in war."*¹

Though mention is made of the surrender of no more than one other French officer, named Doderneque;² the letter to the Secret Committee, dated the 31st of October, says, "The Governor-General in Council has the satisfaction to inform your Honourable Committee, that no French officers of any consideration now remain in the service of the confederated Mahratta chieftains."³ This, then, was a danger, of which, whatever else may justly be said of it, there was little difficulty in getting rid.

Appointing Lieutenant-Colonel Ochterlony to hold the chief command at Delhi, and leaving a garrison of one battalion and four companies of native infantry, with a corps of Mewatties, newly raised under the command of Englishmen who had quitted the service of Sindiah at the beginning of the war, the Commander-in-Chief began his march to Agra on the 24th of September, and arrived at Muttra on the 2nd of October, where he was joined by the troops from Futtighur. On the 4th he arrived at Agra; and immediately summoned the garrison, but no answer was returned. He received information, that considerable confusion prevailed within the fort, where all the European officers were placed under confinement.

Finding that approaches could not be made, unless seven battalions were dislodged of the enemy's regular infantry, who, with several guns, were encamped without the fort, and occupied the town of Agra, together with the principal mosque, and some adjacent ravines, General Lake gave directions for attacking the town and the

¹ How often, in looking narrowly into the conduct of public affairs, has the friend of humanity occasion to lament the low state in which *political morality* remains! its deplorable state compared even with private morality! How many men would disdain the practice of hypocrisy in private, who, in public life, regard it, even in its grossest shape, as far from importing the same baseness of mind. Notes, ut supra, p. 249.

² It is scarcely worth making any remark on this statement, except to show its spirit. The same sentence that mentions M. Doderneque's (Dudernaigue's) surrender, adds, he was accompanied by a French officer in Sindiah's service; our author should therefore have admitted that there were at least 'two' Frenchmen in the Mahratta army. Despatches, iii. 426.—W.

³ Notes, ut supra, p. 203.



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ravines on the 10th, both at the same time, the one with a brigade, the other with three battalions of sepoy. The attack succeeded in both places, though not without a severe conflict; and the troops engaged in the ravines, being carried by their ardour to quit them, and gain the glacis, for the purpose of seizing the enemy's guns, were exposed to a heavy fire of grape and matchlocks from the fort, and suffered proportionally both in officers and men. Another occurrence was, that the defeated battalions agreed afterwards to transfer their services to the British commander, and marched into his camp, to the number of 2,500 men, on the 13th of October.

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CHAP. XII.

1803.

On that day the garrison desired a parley; but while a British officer, sent into the fort, was endeavouring to remove their objections to the terms of capitulation, they recommenced firing, and would admit of no further intercourse. The breaching batteries, however, having opened on the morning of the 17th, and threatening a speedy catastrophe, they capitulated in the evening, on terms of safety to their persons and private property.¹

A force, composed of fifteen regular battalions, sent north by Sindiah at the commencement of the campaign, and of two battalions which had joined them from Delhi, after the battle of the 11th of September, still remained. They had occupied a position about thirty miles in the rear of the British army, during the siege of Agra, but without attempting interruption. And they were understood to have in view a march upon Delhi, with the hope of recovering that important post. In quest of this enemy, the British army moved from Agra on the 27th of October. Retarded by the heaviness of the rain, they left the heavy guns and baggage at Futtypore, and on the 30th and 31st, marching twenty miles each day, they encamped on the 31st, a short distance from the ground which the enemy had quitted in the morning. The General conceived the design of overtaking them with the cavalry, and giving them, by a slight engagement, interruption till the arrival of the infantry. Marching from 12 o'clock on the night of the 31st, till sunrise the next morning, a distance of twenty-five miles, he came up with the enemy, retreating as he imagined, and in confusion.

¹ Notes, ut supra, p. 251.



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BOOK VI. Eager not to permit their retreat to the hills, and to
CHAP. XII. secure their guns, he resolved, as he himself expresses it,
"to try the effect of an attack upon them with the
cavalry alone."
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The advance of the cavalry was slow, the road having been rendered difficult by the water of a reservoir, the embankment of which the enemy had cut. The British General, having commanded the advanced guard and first brigade, led by Colonel Vandeleur, to march upon the point, where the enemy, who had for some time been covered by the clouds of dust, had been observed in motion, directed the remainder of the cavalry to attack in succession as soon as they could form and come up. When they advanced sufficiently near to perceive the enemy, they found them occupying an advantageous position, with their right upon a rivulet which the British had immediately passed, their left on the village of Laswaree, and their whole front amply provided with artillery. The point to which the advanced guard and first brigade were directed, was found to be the left of the enemy's new position, which, without hesitation, they attacked. They forced the line, and penetrated into the village, Colonel Vandeleur having fallen in the charge; but they were exposed to so galling a fire of cannon and musquetry, that it was impossible to form the squadrons for a second attack, and the General was obliged to draw them off. They left for want of draught cattle, the guns of the enemy which had fallen into their hands; and the other brigades retired from the fire to which they found themselves exposed, without being able to discover the enemy, though they fell in with and carried away a few of their guns. The British infantry, which had left their former ground at three in the morning, arrived on the banks of the rivulet about eleven. After so long a march, some time for refreshment was indispensably required. During this interval a proposal was received from the enemy, offering on certain conditions to surrender their guns. The General, eager to stop the effusion of blood, offered immediately to comply with their terms, and allowed them an hour to come to a final determination. In the meantime, the disposition was made for battle. The whole of the infantry was formed on the left, with a view to attack the right flank of the enemy, which,



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since the morning had been thrown back to some distance, leaving an interval to the rivulet. The British infantry was formed in two columns, the first destined to turn the right flank of the enemy, and assault the village of Mohaulpoor, the second, to support the first. The cavalry was formed into three brigades, of which one was to support the infantry in the attack of the enemy's right, another was detached to the right of the British army, to watch the enemy's left, avail itself of any confusion, and attack them in their retreat; the third composed the reserve, and was formed in the space between the preceding two. The enemy were drawn up in two lines, which had the village of Mohaulpoor between them on the left, and extended beyond it on the right.

The time for parley being expired, the British infantry moved along the bank of the rivulet, through high grass and broken ground, which afforded cover. The enemy, as soon as the movements of the British columns to turn their flank became visible, threw back their right, forming an acute angle in front with their former position, and rendering it impossible to turn their flanks. As soon as the British columns became exposed to the enemy's cannon, the field-pieces which they had been able to bring up, and the galloper guns attached to the cavalry, formed into four batteries, began also to fire. The cannonade on both sides was very spirited and severe. The King's 76th regiment, which headed the attack, and had often signalized its discipline and courage in India, had arrived, together with a battalion and five companies of native troops, within one hundred paces of the enemy, while the remainder of the column, impeded in its advance, was still at some distance behind. This advanced party were exposed to the enemy's fire; and the men were falling very fast. Thus situated, the General thought it better to advance with them to the attack, than wait till the remainder of the column should be able to form. As soon as they arrived within reach of the enemy's canister shot, a tremendous fire was opened upon them; and their loss was exceedingly severe. The regularity of their advance being disturbed by the severity of the cannonade, the enemy's cavalry were encouraged to charge. The steadiness, however, of "this handful of heroes," as they are justly denominated by their grateful

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commander, enabled them to repulse the assailants with their fire. They rallied, however, at a little distance, and resumed a menacing posture; when the General ordered an attack by the British cavalry. It was performed, with great gallantry and success, by the 29th regiment of dragoons, whose commander, Major Griffiths, was killed by a cannon-shot immediately before the charge. The infantry, at the same time, advanced upon the enemy's line, which they broke and routed. The remainder of the first column of British infantry arrived just in time to join in the attack of the enemy's second line, of which the right had been thrown back in the same proportion as that of the first. Major-General Ware, who commanded the right wing of the British army, fell about the same time by a cannon-shot. After a good resistance, and losing all their guns, the enemy were driven back towards a small mosque in the rear of the village, when the three brigades of British cavalry, advancing upon them from their different positions, charged them with great execution. A column of the enemy on the left attempted to go off in good order with a part of the baggage: but were turned by the brigade of horse which had been detached to the right of the British army, and shared the same fate with the rest of their companions. About two thousand of the enemy, seeing it impossible to escape, threw down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners, with the baggage and everything belonging to their camp.

This battle appears to have been gained principally by the admirable discipline and bravery of the 76th regiment. Of the commander, the gallantry was probably more remarkable than the generalship. He was frustrated in two of his plans; in his attack with the cavalry in the morning, and in turning the flank of the enemy in the afternoon; and the victory was gained at last by mere dint of hard fighting, to which the general himself set a conspicuous example. He led the charge of the cavalry in the morning; and at the head of the 76th regiment (which he allowed to come up too soon) conducted in person every operation of the day. Two horses were shot under him; and his son, acting as his aide-de-camp, was wounded by his side, in circumstances resembling those of poetic distress. The son had but just persuaded the father to mount

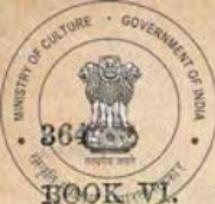


his horse, after one of his own had fallen under him, BOOK VI.
pierced by several shots, when he himself was struck CHAP. XII.
with a ball; and at that instant the father was obliged
to lead on the troops, leaving his wounded son upon the
field. 1803.

With seventeen battalions of infantry, the enemy are supposed to have brought into the action more than four thousand horse. Their guns, in number seventy-two, being all taken, were more precisely known. The English loss amounted to 172 men killed, 652 wounded. Three months only had elapsed since General Lake crossed the Mahratta frontier; and not only the whole of that army which the Governor-General had treated as an object of so much apprehension, was destroyed, but the whole of that extensive territory in the region of the Jumna, which the predecessor of Dowlut Rao had so laboriously added to his dominions, was placed in the hands of the English.¹

¹ Notes, ut supra, p. 251 to 254, 288.—M.

Although the account given of the battle of Laswari, in the official despatches, is repeated verbally in the Notes on the Mahratta War, and Major Thorn's Memoir of the War in India, there is some indistinctness in the early part of the narrative, and it is left doubtful by the Dispatch whether the Mahratta army was attacked by the cavalry before its change of position. There can be no doubt, however, that it was so attacked, but without effect, as the new position was taken up without any serious opposition, by noon. The charge then effected by the advance and first brigade was evidently a failure also; although they broke through the first line, it would seem, that they made no impression on the second, and were exposed to so heavy a fire that it was impossible to form the squadrons for a second attack, and the enemy kept their ground. The statement that the other brigades were unable to discover the enemy, although they fell in with and carried away a few of their guns, is somewhat incongruous, and is incorrect. The third brigade was ordered to turn the right flank of the enemy, and failed not to discover and to feel them, although their guns, being concealed by a high grass jungle, became perceptible only when a tremendous shower of grape and double-headed shot poured upon the advancing squadrons. The cavalry, however, it is said, broke through the line, although the guns were chained together, and charged backwards and forwards three times. Here, again, is some want of precision, as it is added that their battalions, which were drawn up behind a deep intrenchment, kept up a galling fire with musquetry, which did great execution. Their line, therefore, was not broken, although it might have been penetrated by the cavalry, who suffered most severely in these fruitless displays of headstrong valour. It is undeniable, therefore, that until the infantry came into action, the Mahrattas had the best of the day; and after they were attacked by the whole British force, they maintained a stout resistance, and inflicted terrible destruction upon their assailants. It is justly remarked by Major Thorn, that throughout the war, every conflict gave evidence of the improvement made by the natives in military knowledge, through their connexion with the French. On the present occasion the effect of their influence and instruction was fully experienced in the organization of the army of Sindiah, which evinced all the characteristics of European arrangement and discipline. It is worthy of remark, too, that these disciplined battalions were in the battle of Laswari left to themselves. It is doubtful if they had any European officers with them; certainly they had



During the time of these exploits, the great division of the English army in the south had been employed in the following manner. The strong fortress of Ahmednuggur, held by Sindiah, with its adjoining territory, was the object of the first operations of General Wellesley. He moved from his camp at Walkee on the 8th of August, and, arriving at Ahmednuggur, took the pettah by escalade, on the same day. The English had thirty-three men killed, and eleven wounded. They opened a battery against the fort on the 10th; and on the 11th the Kelledar or Governor offered to negotiate; and on the 12th evacuated the fort, on condition of safety to the persons and private property of the garrison. This acquisition was of some importance; one of the strongest fortresses in India, in good repair, on the frontier of the Nizam, covering Poonah, and a point of support to the future operation in advance.¹

In taking possession of the districts of 6,34,000 rupees estimated revenue, dependent on Ahmednuggur, and making arrangements for the security of the fort, the General was occupied for several days, and crossed the Godavery only on the 24th. On the same day, Sindiah, and the Rajah of Berar, having ascended the Adjuntee Ghaut, entered the territory of the Nizam with a large body of horse. On the 29th, General Wellesley arrived at Aurungabad, between which place, and the corps under Colonel Stephenson, who had moved to the eastward toward the Badowly Ghaut, the enemy had passed, and had reached Jalnapoor, about forty miles east from Aurungabad.² The enemy continued their march in a south-east direction, with a view, as was reported, to cross the Godavery, and march upon Hyderabad. To intercept them in this intention, General Wellesley regained the river, and moved eastward along its northern bank. The enemy, however, soon altered their course, and proceeded to the north of Julnapoor. Colonel Stephenson returned from the eastward on the 1st of September, and on the 2nd

none of character. The cavalry, too, although it has been affirmed that the Mahratta chiefs should have looked to that as their national and only effective force, gave no support to the infantry in this engagement. Thorn's Memoir of the Campaign in Hindustan, 219.—W.

¹ Notes, at supra, p. 239, 266.—M. Wellington Despatches, i. 299.—W.

² Wellington Despatches, i. 344.—W.



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attacked and carried the fort of Julnapoor.¹ After this, he made several attempts to bring the enemy to action, and actually surprised their camp on the night of the 9th of September. They continued their northern movement toward the Adjuntee pass, near which they were joined by a detachment, it is said, of sixteen battalions of Sindiah's regular infantry, commanded by two Frenchmen.² On the 21st, the divisions of the British army were so near, that the two commanders had a conference, and concerted a plan for attacking the enemy jointly on the morning of the 24th. Colonel Stephenson marched by a western route, General Wellesley by the eastern, round the hills between Budnapore and Jalna. On the 23rd, General Wellesley received intelligence that Sindiah and the Raja had moved off with their cavalry in the morning; but that the infantry, about to follow, were still in camp at the distance of about six miles.

This intelligence, from which the General inferred the intention of the enemy to escape, made him resolve to attack them, without waiting till the following morning for Colonel Stephenson. He found the whole combined army near the village of Assye, encamped on the bank of the Kailna river. His road brought him first in front of their right; but as it was composed almost entirely of cavalry, and the defeat of the infantry was most likely to be effectual, he resolved to attack the left. Marching round, he crossed the River Kailna, at a ford beyond the enemy's left flank; and formed the infantry in two lines, and the British cavalry as a reserve in a third; leaving the Mahratta and Mysore cavalry on the other side of the Kailna, to hold in check a large body of the enemy's cavalry, which had followed the British army from the right of their own position. As soon as the enemy perceived the intention of the British general to attack their left, they changed the position of their infantry and guns. Another stream, called the Juah, of nearly the same size with the Kailna, flowed in a parallel direction: at a small distance beyond it, the enemy formed a line, having its right on the Kailna, and its left on the Juah. This line

¹ Wellington Despatches, 355.

² They were joined by the brigades of Col. Pohlman, M. Dupont, and Begum Sumroo. Ibid. 355.—W.



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and that of the British army faced one another; but the enemy formed a second line on the left of their position, nearly at right angles to their first, extending to the rear along the banks of the Juah. The fire of the enemy's guns performed dreadful execution, as the British army advanced. The British artillery had opened upon the enemy at the distance of 400 yards; but the number of men and bullocks that were disabled soon rendered it impossible to bring on the guns; and as they were found to produce little effect, the General resolved to advance without them. The right of the British line was so thinned by the cannon of the enemy's left, that a body of their cavalry was encouraged to charge it. A body of the British cavalry, however, were prepared to intercept them, and they were repelled with slaughter. The steady advance of the British troops at last overawed the enemy, and they gave way in every direction. The cavalry then broke in, and charged them with the greatest effect. The enemy fled, but the force of the English was too small to render the victory decisive. Some of the enemy's corps went off in good order; and Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell was killed, in charging with the British cavalry a body of infantry, who had again formed, but soon resumed their retreat. Many also of the enemy's guns, which had been left in the rear by the British line as they advanced, were, by a practice common in the native armies of India, turned upon the British by individuals who had thrown themselves as dead upon the ground. The General thought it necessary to take a regiment of European infantry, and one of native cavalry, and proceed in person to stop this fire, which for some time was very severe. His horse in this operation was shot under him. The enemy's cavalry, which had been hovering about during the action, continued for some time near the British line. But at last, the whole of the enemy went off, leaving ninety-eight pieces of cannon, and seven standards, in the hands of the English, with 1200 men, it is said, dead on the field.

It required no ordinary exertion of discipline and courage in the men, to advance with so much steadiness under the carnage of such a fire. The personal courage, too, was abundantly displayed, of the General who led them on. And unless in as far as the wisdom may be questioned,



first, of sacrificing so great a number of men for the only object which could be attained by it; next, of not waiting for the arrival of Stephenson, when the victory would have been attended with much greater, perhaps with decisive effects, the conduct of the action, it is probable, possessed all the merit of which the nature of the case allowed. Of the British army, 428 were killed, 1138 were wounded. As the whole are said to have consisted of only 4500 men, between one third and one half of the whole army were either killed or wounded. This was paying very dear for so indecisive an affair.¹

Colonel Stephenson, though his march had been retarded by some unexpected impediment, arrived on the 24th; and was immediately sent after the enemy, whom

¹ Notes, ut supra, p. 239, &c. and 280.—M. Despatches, i. 336. Sir Thomas Munro thus expresses the opinion upon the battle of Assye that was very generally entertained in India:—"If there was anything wrong at Assye it was in giving battle; but in the conduct of the action everything was right. General Wellesley gave every part of his army its full share, left no part of it unemployed; but supported, sometimes with cavalry, sometimes with infantry, every point that was pressed, at the moment that it was most necessary. Life, i. 354. The letter, in which this occurs, is dated February, 1804; his opinion had not been changed, therefore, by the letter of General Wellesley to him of the 1st Nov., 1803, in answer to his objection to the action, that Col. Stevenson had been detached. General Wellesley, in this letter, and in his own remarks on the action, published in his despatches, i. 393, shows that the separate march of his corps and Col. Stevenson's was unavoidable, but that it was so arranged as to have brought them to the point, where, according to their intelligence, the enemy was to be found, at the same time. Owing to a misapprehension of the intelligence, by which the name of a district was confounded with that of a village in it, and the consequent conclusion that they were in the village of Bokerdur, instead of the village of Assye, in the district of Bokerdur, General Wellesley came upon their left wing at the latter village, six miles nearer than the former. Here he learned that they were retreating. He conceived it dangerous to ascertain this by a reconnoissance of part of his force, and to have reconnoitred them with the whole, and then attempted to retire, would have been difficult, if not impossible, in the face of their numerous cavalry; he, therefore, with the promptitude of a resolute judgment, determined to make it a battle. That the loss was so severe was in part attributable to the officer who led the picquets on the right, and was followed by the 79th direct upon the village of Assye, instead of keeping out of the range of the shot, as he was directed, the British commander having determined to manœuvre by his left. The corps on the right were then separated from the left by a large break, and were not only exposed to a terrible cannonade from Assye, but were charged by the enemy's cavalry; to repel this charge the British cavalry were brought into action sooner than was intended. It was thus brought into the cannonade; horses and men were lost; it charged among broken infantry, and separated; the unity of the body was destroyed, and it was no longer possible to use it as had been planned, when it was placed in the third line to pursue and cut up the defeated and broken enemy. From this vindication of his measures it is clear that the action could not have been avoided without mischief, and that the cost of its purchase might have been less but for one of those chances which, according to the historian of the Duke of Wellington's Peninsular campaigns—and we cannot wish for better authority—so frequently influence the fate of battles.—W.



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the state of the troops under General Wellesley rendered him unable to pursue. The enemy had been so little broken or dispersed by their defeat, that they had little to dread, from the pursuit of Colonel Stephenson; and proceeded westward, along the bank of the Taptee, as if they meditated a descent upon Poonah by a march to the southward through the Caserbary Ghaut. General Wellesley imagined that this was a demonstration to prevent a northern movement of the British troops against the city of Boorhanpore, the fortress of Asseerghur, and the rest of Sindiah's places in Candesh. But that General deemed himself sufficiently strong, both to proceed against the places in question, and to watch the movements of the enemy towards the south. Remaining with his own army to the southward, he sent his commands to Stephenson, who had descended the Adjuntee Ghaut, in pursuit of the enemy, to continue his march to the northward, and attack Boorhanpore and Asseerghur. As soon as the plan of the British General came to the knowledge of the enemy, the Raja of Berar and Sindiah separated their armies, the former marching towards Chandore, the latter making a movement to the northward, for the purpose of yielding protection to his threatened possessions. General Wellesley followed to the north, and descended the Adjuntee Ghaut on the 19th of October; Sindiah, upon this, instead of continuing his movement to the north, gave it an easterly direction through the valley formed by the Taptee and Poorna rivers; while the Raja of Berar passed through the hills which formed the boundary of Candesh, and moved towards the Godavery. This seemed to require again the presence of General Wellesley in the south, who accordingly ascended the Adjuntee Ghaut on the 25th of October, and, continuing his march to the southward, passed Aurungabad on the 29th.

In the mean time Colonel Stephenson had easily accomplished the service upon which he had been detached. The city of Boorhanpore was evacuated on his approach; and was entered by the British troops on the 15th of October. On the 17th he marched upon Asseerghur, the importance of which, in the estimation of the people of India, may be conjectured from a name by which it was



distinguished, the Key of the Deccan. On the 18th Colonel Stephenson attacked the pettah, and of course with success. On the 20th the batteries were opened against the fort, and within an hour the garrison offered to accept the conditions which the British commander had proposed on summoning the place. In this manner the fortress was placed in the hands of the English on the 21st, and with it the whole of Sindiah's dominions in the Deccan. The operations of the army were now turned against Berar. Colonel Stephenson began an easterly movement towards Sindiah; and received the commands of the General to prosecute his march as far as Gawilghur, and lay siege to that, the principal fortress belonging to the Raja of Berar.¹

In the first week of November, Jeswunt Rao Gorparah, and another person of inferior rank, arrived in the British camp, commissioned, they said, by Sindiah, to treat with General Wellesley on the subject of peace. As soon after the battle of Assye as the 8th of October, the British General had received a letter from one of Sindiah's ministers, requesting that he would send to the enemy's camp, one of the British, and one of the Nizam's officers, to settle the terms of a peace.² With this request the General deemed it, on two accounts, inexpedient to comply; first, because the letter bore no stamp of the authority of Sindiah, who might afterwards disavow it; next, because a British officer in the camp of the enemy, and the appearance, on the part of the British, of being petitioners for peace, would reanimate the dejected minds of the enemy's troops. But he expressed his readiness honourably to receive any person whom the confederate chiefs might, for that purpose depute, to the British camp. Several subsequent proposals had been submitted to him, but all, through channels, which the principal might have disavowed. Even Gorparah, and his companion, when requested, at their first conference with General Wellesley, to exhibit their credentials, had none to produce. Though liable to be dismissed with disgrace,

¹ General Wellesley's Despatch, Papers relating to East India Affairs, (printed June, 1806,) No. 24, p. 82.—M. Wellington Despatches, i. 468.—W.

² The proposal was not from one of Sindiah's ministers but from Balloojee Koonjurr, the Peshwa's most confidential agent, who, notwithstanding the war, continued in Sindiah's camp. For General Wellesley's reply to his letter, see Wellington Despatches, i. 426.—W.



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they were told by the British General, that they might remain in the camp, till they had time to receive from their master those powers which were necessary to enable them to treat, and those documents to substantiate their powers, without which they ought not to have been sent. In the meantime a letter arrived from Sindiah, declaring his intention to send another commissioner, and disavowing Gorparah and his companion. General Wellesley, who believed, in this case, that the master was the impostor, not the servants, sent for the unhappy men, and made them acquainted with the dangerous situation in which they were placed. They convinced him, that, on their part, there was no fiction, and gratefully received his assurance that he would not render them the victims of the duplicity of their master. In the mean time, Gorparah's application for powers, and his account of his reception by the British General, had been received by Sindiah, and determined that unsteady chief to send him the requisite powers. They arrived in the British camp a few hours after the conference on the disavowal had taken place, but were still defective in one essential point; ¹ for amendment in respect to which, the General advised Gorparah and his colleague again to apply. In the mean time, he solicited an armistice, and that for both confederates. This, as no ambassador, or expression of a desire for peace, had yet arrived from the Raja of Berar, and as it was impolitic to allow the hostile princes to negotiate in common, Wellesley positively refused, in regard to the other chieftain; but granted to Sindiah for the troops in the Deccan. It was dated on the 23rd of November; requiring, that Sindiah should take up a position agreed upon, and not approach the British camp nearer than a distance of twenty coss. Calculating upon the division of the confederates; finding that the Raja of Berar was proceeding towards his own territories, that the number of troops he had with him was small, and diminishing every day; ceasing, in consequence, to have any apprehension for the territories of the Nizam, Wellesley descended the Ghaut by Rajoor.

¹ They were essentially defective, as they did not enable the envoys to cede any portion of the territory as compensation to the British Government and the allies, which was required as the basis of the pacification. Mahr. Hist. Ind. 261. See also Wellington Despatches, i. 495, 514, 522.—W.



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with a view to support, and cover the operations of Stephenson against the fort of Gawilghur. The principal part of the army of the Raja of Berar was encamped under the command of his brother, Munno Bappoo, not far from Elichpoor; and the cavalry of Sindiah, who had not yet ratified the armistice, was encamped at about four miles' distance. Colonel Stephenson had advanced as far as Hattee Anderah, on the 28th of November; when, being apprized of the situation of the enemy, and the approach of General Wellesley, he prudently halted, to enable both armies to co-operate in the attack. They joined, on the 29th, at a place within sight of the enemy's camp. Upon the approach of the British, the enemy retired; and as the troops had performed a very long march on a very hot day, the General had no intention of pursuit. Bodies of horse were in a little time observed in front. And, on pushing forward the piquets for taking up the ground of encampment, the enemy were distinctly perceived, drawn up regularly on the plains of Argaum. Late as was the period of the day, the General resolved to attack. The distance was about six miles. The British army advanced in a direction nearly parallel to that of the enemy's line, in one column, led by the British cavalry, and covered on the left and rear by the cavalry of Hyderabad and Mysore. The enemy's line extended above five miles. Sindiah's part of the force, consisting of one very heavy body of cavalry, was on the right, having some Pindarees and other light troops on their outward flank. The village of Argaum, with its extensive enclosures and gardens, was in the rear of the enemy's line; in its front was a plain, cut by a number of water-courses. The British army was formed in two lines; the infantry in the first, the cavalry in the second; the British, to support the right, the Mogul and Mysore, the left. The British line was not formed exactly parallel to that of the enemy, but with the right a little advanced, to press upon the enemy's left. Some time was spent in forming the order of battle, because part of the infantry which led the column got into some confusion.¹ As soon as the line was

¹ Three regiments of native infantry, which had behaved admirably at Assye, were panic-struck, broke, and were running off, when the cannonade commenced; General Wellesley was luckily at hand, and was able to rally



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formed, the whole advanced in the greatest order. Two regiments on the right were attacked by a large body of Persians, as was supposed, whom they destroyed; a battalion also on the left received and repulsed a charge of Sindiah's cavalry. As the British line advanced, the enemy retired in disorder, leaving thirty-eight pieces of cannon, with their ammunition, in the hands of the assailants. The cavalry continued their pursuit by moonlight; but night rendered it impossible to derive many advantages from the victory. The British loss, in this battle, if battle it may be called, was trifling; total in killed, wounded, and missing, 346.¹

After the battle of Argaum, the General resolved to lose no time in commencing the siege of Gawilghur. He arrived at Elichpoor on the 5th of December, where he endeavoured to collect information for the attack. Gawilghur stands upon a lofty point of a ridge of mountains between the sources of the rivers Poorna and Taptee. It consisted of two forts; the inner, fronting to the south where the rock is most precipitous; and the outer, covering the former, toward the north-west and north. Upon deliberation, it appeared advisable to make the principal attack upon the northern side. To this service the corps of Colonel Stephenson was destined, having been equipped for that purpose at Asseerghur. On the 7th, both divisions of the army marched from Elichpoor; that under Colonel Stephenson, by a road of about thirty miles in length, through the mountains, the road which led most directly to the point of attack; that under General Wellesley, with all the cavalry, in a different direction, with a view to cover, and if possible assist them, by other attacks on the south and the west. The march of Colonel Stephenson, through the mountains, was attended with almost insuperable difficulties. The heavy ordnance, and stores, were dragged by hand, over mountains, and through ravines, for nearly the whole distance, by roads which it

them and restore the day. He adds, "If I had not been there, I am convinced we should have lost the day. As it was, so much time elapsed before they could be formed again, that there was not daylight sufficient for effecting all that might have been performed." Letter to Major Shawe, Despatches, i. 533.—W.

¹ Lieut. Gov.-Gen. in Council to the Secret Committee, dated 28th Dec. 1803, *ibid.* p. 297; also Calcutta Gazettes, *ibid.* p. 290—295.—M. Despatches, i. 528.—W.



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had been previously necessary for the troops to make. On the 12th, Colonel Stephenson reached his ground, and at night erected two batteries in front of the north face of the fort. On the same night the troops of General Wellesley constructed a battery on the mountain under the southern gate; but as it was impossible to get up the heavy guns, it proved of little advantage. On the evening of the 14th, the breaches in the walls of the outer fort were practicable. Preparations were made during the day; and the assault was to be given on the following morning. Beside the party destined for the storm, two detachments were led, one toward the southern, another toward the north-west gate, for the purpose merely of drawing the attention of the enemy, as neither of them could get into the fort till the storming party should open the gates. The troops advanced about ten o'clock; and the outer fort was soon in possession of the assailants. The wall of the inner fort was then to be carried. It had not been breached, and attempts were made in vain upon the gate. A place, however, was found, at which the wall might be escaladed, when Captain Campbell mounted with the light infantry of the 94th regiment, and opened the gate. After this the garrison made no resistance. "Vast numbers of them," says the General, "were killed, particularly at different gates." ¹

While the two great divisions of the British army were thus engaged, the minor objects of the war had been no less successfully pursued.

The detachment of British troops which had been assembled at Allahabad, under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Powell, for the occupation of Bundelcund, crossed the Jumna, and entered that province, on the 6th of September. The situation of the province at that period was briefly as follows:—

Chuttersaul, having succeeded a long line of Hindu ancestors, in the Rajaship of Bundelcund, of whom a considerable number had existed in the state of vassals to the Mogul throne, availed himself of the decline of that monarchy, not only to re-establish his independence, but enlarge his dominions. Alarmed, however, at the prospect of what was likely to follow from the power and disposi-

¹ Despatches, i. 550.



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tion of his Mahratta neighbours, he sought for protection to his house, by securing the favour of the most powerful of the Mahratta leaders. For this purpose, though the father of a numerous offspring, he adopted Bajee Rao, the first Peshwa, as his son; and left him a third part of his dominions. The rest he divided equally between two of his sons. Further subdivisions took place in succeeding generations. Jealousies arose among the different branches of the family; and wars ensued. The country, as was the habitual state of Hindu countries, was perpetually ravaged by hostile contentions; and at last so much enfeebled, that it offered an easy prey to any invader.

While Sindiah made his conclusive attempt, in 1786, upon the expiring sovereignty of Delhi, the Peshwa joined in the expedition, with a view of joining also in the plunder. His object was to obtain the Doab, or district between the Jumna and Ganges; and he placed Ali Bahaudur, the grandson, by an illegitimate father, of Bajee Rao, the first Peshwa, whom he destined to govern it in his name, at the head of the troops whom he sent to join in the expedition. In the course of the enterprise, a breach ensued between Sindiah and Ali Bahaudur, who was joined by another chief, named Raja Himmut Bahaudur.¹ Frustrated in their views upon the Doab, which Sindiah destined, probably from the beginning, for himself, these two chieftains directed their arms against Bundelcund. From the distracted state of the country, it was speedily overrun, and apparently subdued; but in a mountainous region, where every village was a fortress, the authority of the Mahratta government was not easily, indeed never completely, established. Ali Bahaudur agreed to yield obedience and tribute to the Peshwa, the latter of which was never in his power. He died in 1802, having spent fourteen years without completing the reduction of Bundelcund, one of the fortresses of which, the celebrated Callinger, he was fruitlessly besieging at the time of his death. His son, Shumshere Bahaudur, eighteen years of age, was then resident at Poonah; and the Raja

¹ Himmut Bahadur was a religious character, or Gosain, and also a soldier of fortune, who was first in the service of the Nawab of Oude. He availed himself of the state of anarchy of Bundelkand to establish himself in the province, and is said to have invited Ali Bahadur to invade it.—W.



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Himmat Bahaudur, who had always retained a great share of power, and who now found the government at his disposal, appointed a distant relation of the family regent during the absence of the prince.¹ In this situation were the affairs of Bundelcund, when the Peshwa was driven from Poonah, and the war broke out between the British government and the Mahratta chiefs.

In the month of August, 1803, certain alterations were agreed upon between the British government and the Peshwa, in the terms of the treaty of Bassein. Of these the principal were, that the English, in lieu of some of the ceded districts, and as a compensation for an additional number of subsidized troops, should accept of territory in Bundelcund, which it remained for them to subdue, yielding, by estimate, a revenue of 36,16,000 rupees.² As Himmut Bahaudur, in the probable success of the English, anticipated the loss of his own power, he ingeniously resolved to assist them in their project, on condition of obtaining an advantageous indemnity to himself. He was accordingly ready, with a force of about 13,000, or 14,000 men, as soon as the detachment of the British army entered the territory of Bundelcund. He joined the detachment on the 15th of September; on the 23rd they arrived, in conjunction, on the bank of the river Cane; and found the troops of Shumshere Bahaudur, a considerable force, encamped on the opposite side. After reducing several forts, and establishing the British authority in the adjacent district, they crossed the Cane on the 10th of October; and on the 12th gave battle to Shumshere Bahaudur; who retreated with loss, and shortly after, despairing of his ability to maintain the contest, crossed the river Betwa, and retired from the province.

For seizing the province of Cuttack, a part of the

¹ The circumstances are, elsewhere, somewhat differently related. The uncle of Shamsher Bahadur, Ganee Bahadur, placed on the musnud another of his nephews, Zulphikar Ali, an infant, intending to establish his own authority under the title of Regent, with the concurrence of Himut Bahadur. Shamsher Bahadur, however, with the sanction of Amrut Rao, whilst temporary Peshwa, proceeded to Bundelkand, threw his uncle into confinement, and assumed the sovereignty. Himut Bahadur, although he is said to have invited the Raja into the country, and to have aided him in the recovery of his rights, became alarmed at his violence, and sought his own safety by proposing to the British to enter into the province, and co-operated with them in its subjugation. Memoir on Bundelcund, *Asiat. An. Reg.* 1806. Pogson's Account of the Bundelas.—W.

² Letter, ut supra. *Ibid.* p. 200, 525.



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northern division of the Madras army, doing duty in the Northern Circars, was destined to march from Ganjam, and to be reinforced by a detachment of 6216 men from Bengal. Of this detachment, a body of 854 were collected at Jalasore, to be ready to penetrate into Cuttack, as soon as the movements of the principal force should render it necessary; 521 were to take possession of Balasore; and 1300 were to occupy a post at Midnapore, with a view to support the detachments at Jalasore and Balasore, and afford protection to the Company's frontier against any sudden incursion of the Raja's horse. Lieutenant-Colonel Campbell, the officer chosen to conduct this expedition, having been seized with an illness which threatened his life, Lieutenant-Colonel Harcourt was appointed to act in his stead.

The troops marched from Ganjam on the 8th of September, and on the 14th took possession of Manickpatam, whence the Mahrattas fled upon their approach. Application was made to the Brahmens of Juggurnaut to place the Pagoda under British protection; and with this they complied. The next object was Cuttack; but the inundations produced by the rains allowed not the march to begin before the 24th of September, and even then rendered it so laborious and slow, being also, in some degree, harassed by the parties of the enemy's horse, that it was not completed before the 10th of October. The town yielded without resistance, and operations were begun for the reduction of the fort. Of the other detachments, that appointed to take possession of Ballasore had there landed on the 21st of September, and soon overcame all the resistance by which it was opposed. The detachment formed at Jalasore left that place on the 23rd of September, and on the 4th of October arrived without opposition at Ballasore. On the 10th of that month, a force of 816 men marched from Balasore, by order of the Governor-General, to aid Lieutenant-Colonel Harcourt in the reduction of Cuttack. Barabutty, the fort of Cuttack, was a place of considerable strength, and had only one entrance, by a bridge, over a wet ditch of enormous dimensions. A battery, which opened on the morning of the 14th, in a few hours took off nearly all the defence, and silenced the guns on one side, when it was resolved immediately to try



the assault. In passing the bridge, the storming party, headed by Lieutenant-Colonel Clayton, were exposed to a heavy, but ill-directed fire of musquetry from the fort; and forty minutes elapsed before they succeeded in blowing open the wicket, at which the men entered singly. Two other gates were forced open after some resistance; when the enemy hastened to abandon the fort. The fall of this place delivered the whole of the province of Cuttack into the hands of the English.¹

The conquest of Sindiah's territories in Guzerat was made by a force from Bombay, consisting of one European regiment, with a proportion of artillery and sepoy commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Woodington. They marched from Baroda on the 21st of August, and encamped within two miles of Baroach on the 23rd. Though the next day, when the English advanced upon the place, the enemy were seen posted, as for resistance, in front of the pettah, they were soon compelled to retreat within the fort. Next morning, Colonel Woodington took possession of the pettah; and on the 29th, the breach in the fort was reported practicable. The storming party were led by Captain Richardson, and displayed the virtues seldom wanting in British troops on such an occasion. The enemy resisted with considerable spirit, for a little time; but then fled, with slight loss to the assailants. After the capture of Baroach and its dependencies, yielding a revenue of eleven lacs of rupees, Colonel Woodington proceeded against Champaneer, the only district which Sindiah now possessed in the province of Guzerat. It was defended by a fort, on Powanghur, one of the detached hills, which form so many places of great natural strength in India. Champaneer, the pettah, was carried by assault with inconsiderable loss. At first the Kelledar of the fort refused to surrender; but, on the 17th of September, when preparations were made for the assault, he capitulated, and the fort was occupied by the British troops.²

The Mahratta chieftains were now eager to escape by negotiation the ruin which their arms were unable to avert. On the evening of the 30th of November, the day after the battle of Argaum, a vakeel arrived, bearing a letter from

¹ Letter ut supra, Ibid. 243-5.—M. Despatches, iii. 373, 430.—W. ↓

² Letter, ut supra. Ibid. p. 243.—M. Despatches, iii. 416, 432.—W.



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the Raja of Berar, and requesting a conference with the British General. First, a discussion arose about the origin of the war; the vakeel maintaining that the British government, General Wellesley maintaining that the Raja, was the aggressor. The vakeel alleged, that the war commenced, because the Raja did not obey the orders of Colonel Collins, in withdrawing with his troops: Wellesley affirmed that the war commenced, because the Raja, along with Sindiah, had assumed a position which threatened the British allies. The vakeel contended that the troops of the Raja were on his own territory: that his presence there was necessary, both because the contest between Sindiah and Holkar was destructive to Hindustan, and because the Peshwa had made a treaty with the English, contrary to the custom of the Mahratta states. Wellesley replied, that for mediation between Sindiah and Holkar, the position taken by the Raja was unnecessary, and that with the treaty of the Peshwa the English would give him no leave to interfere. The vakeel, as the representative of the weakest party, at last declared, that, however the war began, his master was very desirous of bringing it to an end. He was then questioned about his powers, but said he had only a commission to learn the wishes of the British General, and to express the desire of the Raja to comply. Compensation for the injuries of aggression and for the expenses of the war was declared to be the only basis on which the English would treat. The vakeel applied for a suspension of arms, which was absolutely rejected; and leave to remain in camp, till he should receive powers sufficient to treat, which was also refused, and he was advised to take up his intermediate residence in some of the neighbouring towns.

A second conference took place on the 9th of December, when the vakeel produced letters from the Raja, expressing assent to the conditions which the British General had presented for the basis of negotiation. The cessions demanded by the English, to effect the stipulated compensation, were then described. For the Company, the whole of the province of Cuttack, including the port of Balasore. For their ally the Nizam, the country lying between his own frontier and the river Wurda to the eastward, and between his own frontier and the hills in



which are situated the forts of Gawilghur and Nernulla, to the northward; together with renunciation of all the claims which the Raja might have ever advanced on any part of his dominions. And for their other allies, any of the Zemindars and Rajas, the tributaries or subjects of the Raja, with whom the English had formed connexions during the war, the confirmation of all their engagements. The vakeel exclaimed against the exorbitance of these demands, which were sufficient, he said, not only to reduce, but entirely to destroy the state of his master.

Major General Wellesley replied, that "the Raja was a great politician; and ought to have calculated rather better his chances of success, before he commenced the war: but that having commenced it, it was proper that he should suffer, before he should get out of the scrape."¹

After several discussions, in which General Wellesley relaxed only so far as to reserve to the Raja the forts of Gawilghur and Nernulla, with contiguous districts yielding four lacs of annual revenue, the terms of the treaty were arranged on the 16th, and signed by the British General and the Mahratta vakeel, on the 17th of December, 1803. The forts were left to the Raja, as not being calculated to be of much advantage to the Nizam, while they were necessary to the Raja for coercing the predatory people on the hills; and the contiguous districts were granted, in order to leave him an interest in restraining the depredators, to whose incursions these districts, together with the rest of the adjoining country, were continually exposed. Of the country to which the Raja was thus obliged to resign his pretensions, he had possessed but a sort of divided sovereignty, in conjunction with the Nizam. It was originally a part of the Subah of the Deccan; but the Mahrattas had established over it a claim, at first to one-fifth, afterwards by degrees to one-half, at last to four-fifths, and in some parts to the whole, of the revenues. Though an extensive and fertile country, it was not, however, computed that the Raja had annually realized from it more than thirty lacs of rupees.

¹ Memorandum transmitted by General Wellesley to the Governor-General of the conferences between him and the Ambassador of the Raja of Berar. Papers relating to East India affairs (printed by order of the House of Commons, June, 1806), No. 26, p. 124.



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To some other articles ; as, the exclusion from his service of Europeans and Americans, the mutual appointment of resident ambassadors, and the renunciation of the confederacy ; scarcely any objection was experienced on the part of the Raja.¹

If he had not prevented further hostilities by compliance, the British General was prepared to pursue him to Nagpoor, the capital of his dominions, while the troops in Sumbulpore and Cuttack were ready to co-operate, and General Lake, having subdued all opposition in Hindustan, was at liberty to detach a force into Berar.²

At the very time of negotiation, the Governor-General prepared a copious delineation of his views respecting the objects to be obtained by concluding treaties of peace with the belligerent chiefs, and sent it, bearing date the 11th of December, under title of Instructions, to General Wellesley. Even now the formation of what is called a defensive alliance with Sindiah, that is, the substitution in the service of Sindiah of the Company's troops to Sindiah's own troops, was an object of solicitude with the British ruler : And he prepared two plans of concession ; one on the supposition of his accepting ; another on the supposition of his rejecting, the proposition of a subsidiary force. The singular part of the offer was, to maintain the subsidiary force, if equal to that which was placed at Hyderabad, without any expense to Sindiah, and wholly at the Company's expense ; for it was distinctly proposed, that for the expense of that force, no assignment of territory beyond that of which the cession would at all events be exacted of him, nor any other funds whatsoever, should be required.³

By the ratification of the treaty with the Raja of Berar the whole of the forces under General Wellesley were free to act against Sindiah : the troops which had been employed in reducing the possessions of that chief in Guzerat, having accomplished that service, were now ready to penetrate into Malwa to his capital, Ougein, for which purpose they had actually marched to the frontier of Guzerat : and the detachment which had been prepared by

¹ Memorandum, *ut supra* ; Letter of General Wellesley to the Governor-General ; and copy of the treaty. *Ibid.* p. 122—132.

² Notes relative to the peace. *Ibid.* p. 133.

³ Instructions of Governor-General, parag. 62. *Ibid.* p. 121.



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General Lake to co-operate in the subjugation of Berar, might now commence operations on the unsubdued dominions of Sindiah.¹

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It was not till the 8th of December that the various artifices of that chieftain, to procrastinate, and to evade the proposition of admitting compensation as the basis of negotiation, were terminated. His vakeels insisted that, as his losses were still greater than those of the English, if compensation were the question, it was to him that the greater compensation would be due. It was answered, that he was the aggressor. But this was the point in debate; this was what Sindiah denied. He was given, however, to understand, that he was the unsuccessful party, and of this he had a bitter and certain experience. A long discussion ensued on the cessions to which, under the title of compensation, the English laid claim. A further conference took place on the 11th. Other conferences followed, on the 24th, the 26th, and the 28th; when compliance was expressed with the terms, from which it was found that the English would not recede. On the following day, the treaty was signed. The Maharaja ceded all his rights of sovereignty, in the country between the Jumna and the Ganges, and to the northward of the territories belonging to the Rajas of Jeypoor, Jodepoor, and Gohud; he ceded the fort and territory of Baroach; the fort and territory of Ahmednugger; all the possessions which he had held on the south side of the Adjunttee hills to the Godavery river; all claims upon his Majesty Shah Aulum, or to interfere in his affairs; and all claims of every description upon the British government, or any of its allies, the Subahdar of the Deccan, the Peshwa, and Anund Rao Gaekwar. Provision was made for the independence of all those minor states, in the region of the Jumna, which had formerly borne the yoke of Sindiah, but had made engagements with the English during the recent war. The fort of Asseerghur, the city of Boorhanpore, the forts of Powanghur, and Gohud, with the territories depending upon them, were restored. Sindiah was also allowed to retain certain lands in the vicinity of Ahmed-

¹ Notes relative to the peace with the confederate Mahratta chieftains. *Ibid.* p. 341.—M. Despatches, iii. 497.—W.



nugger; and within the cessions which he had made in the north, his claims were allowed to certain lands which he represented as the private estates of his family, and to the possession of which none of the rights of sovereignty were to be annexed. Certain Jaghires and pensions, which Sindiah or his predecessor had granted to individuals, either of their family, or among their principal servants, in the ceded countries, or upon their revenues, were confirmed, to the amount of seventeen lacs of rupees per annum. Sindiah most readily engaged not to receive into his service any Frenchman, or the subject of any European or American power, that might be at war with the British government. Lastly, an article was inserted, leaving the way open to form afterwards an additional treaty for a subsidiary alliance; which, in this case, was not to be subsidiary; for the English government stipulated to afford the troops their pay and subsistence, without compensation either in money or land.¹

Of these cessions, it was agreed, between the British government and its allies, that the territory situated to the westward of the River Wurda and the southward of the hills on which were the forts of Gawilghur and Nurnulla, together with the territory between the Adjuntee hills and the River Godavery, should belong to the Nizam; that Ahmednugger and its territory should belong to the Peshwa, to whose capital it so nearly approached; and that all the rest should belong to the English. The minor princes in the region of the Jumna, who formerly bore

¹ The reasons for this measure are thus explained by General Wellesley: "Under these circumstances," (the inability of Sindiah, with his reduced resources, to resist Holkar,) "I thought it expedient to hold forth to Sindiah an option of becoming a party to the general defensive alliance; and as a further inducement to him to agree to that treaty, to engage that the assistance to be given to him should occasion no further diminution of his revenues. I was induced to make this last engagement by the consideration that Sindiah would not agree to the treaty of general defensive alliance, although his ministers proposed that he should unite himself more closely with the Company, if he was to be obliged to pay for the assistance which he should receive; and that, if he does agree to that treaty, the peace of India is secured as far as it can be by human means. I have every reason to believe also, that when Sindiah will wind up his affairs at the close of this war, he will not have a disposable clear revenue, such as the British Government would require to pay the expenses of the force which might be given to him." Wellington Despatches, i. 561. The reasons, therefore, were simply that Sindiah would not, and could not bear the cost of the subsidiary force; and as it was considered an object of great political importance that it should be furnished, the British Government necessarily applied to it a portion of the revenue which they had taken away from Sindiah.—W.



the yoke of Sindiah, and whom it was the policy of the Governor-General now to render dependent upon the British government, and to form of them a sort of barrier on the British frontier against any aggression of the Mahratta powers, were the Rajas of Bhurtpore, Jodepore, Jyepoor, Macherry, and Boondee, the Rana of Gohud, and Ambajee Rao Ingliia.

With the first five of these minor princes, who were already in possession of acknowledged sovereignties, treaties of alliance were formed, on condition that the English should take no tribute from them, nor interfere in the affairs of their government; that, in case of the invasion of the Company's territory, they should assist in repelling the enemy; and that the Company should guarantee their dominions against all aggression, they defraying the expense of the aid which they might receive. The case of the remaining two chieftains required some further arrangements. The Rana of Gohud had been dispossessed of his territories by Sindiah; and all of them, together with the neighbouring districts, had been consigned to Ambajee, one of Sindiah's leading commanders, as renter. Ambajee had deserted Sindiah during the war; and it was now determined to make a partition, in sovereignty, of the territories which he rented, between him and the Rana of Gohud, reserving the fort and city of Gualior to the Company. The same condition was contracted, as in the case of the other three princes, respecting mutual defence; but it was appointed that three battalions of the Company's sepoys should be stationed with the Rana, and paid for by him, at the rate of 75,000 rupees a month.¹

The condition to which Sindiah was reduced, by the war, and by the sacrifices which he had made for the attainment of peace, excited in his breast the liveliest apprehensions with regard to the power and designs of Holkar; and he now applied himself in earnest to interpose, if possible, the shield of the Company between

¹ Memorandum of the conferences between Major-General the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, and the Ambassadors of Dowlut Rao Sindiah; Letter from General Wellesley to Governor-General; Treaty of peace with Sindiah; and treaties with the Rajas of Bhurtpore, &c. *Ibid.* p. 132—164; and the Governor-General's "Notes relative to the peace concluded between the British Government and the confederate Mahratta chieftains, and to the various questions arising out he terms of the pacification." *Ibid.* p. 177—190.