

after his arrival, the *enceinte*, the ravelins, and the covered way, were completed, and the other parts were in a very forward state.

Before this, however, had been accomplished, Clive had to encounter a trial sufficient to disturb the equanimity of a man who was conscious of having rendered great services to his country. On the 20th June there arrived in Calcutta despatches from the India Office, penned after Clive had recaptured Calcutta but before he had achieved any of the successes which followed the recapture, imposing a new constitution for the government of the Company's possessions in Bengal. This constitution was ridiculously absurd. It provided that the Council should consist of ten members, and that the four senior of these should preside for three months at a time. The ten members were all nominated, and the list did not include the name of Clive. This omission was truly accounted for at the time by the belief that the home authorities were under the impression that Clive had simply carried out the programme allotted to him, and after the recapture of Calcutta had returned to Madras. But the features of the constitution were not the less ridiculous. Government by a rotation of five years has been often found to have many inconveniences, but government by a rotation of three months would, in India, even at the present day, be unworkable.

From the dilemma which was thus imposed upon the authorities in Calcutta the Bengal settlement was saved by the good sense of the ten gentlemen upon

whom power had been so unceremoniously thrust. They were perfectly conscious that any attempt they might make to perform the play of "Hamlet" without Hamlet would terminate in their unceremonious dismissal from the stage. They, therefore, unanimously requested Clive to accept the office of President of the Council, and perform its duties till the pleasure of the Court of Directors should be known. Clive, after some consideration, gracefully acceded to their request.

It was no time, indeed, for holding back. The long-threatened storm of French invasion had burst upon Southern India. A powerful French force, commanded by a brilliant general, Count Lally, escorted by an equally powerful French fleet, had arrived at Pondichery. Two encounters had taken place, both undecided, between the French and English ships. Lally, summoning Bussy from Haidar-ábád, had marched to Tanjúr, the conquest of which place would be, it was believed, a prelude to a march upon Madras. Under these circumstances an urgent request was transmitted to Clive, who had, it will be recollected, been only lent to Bengal, to return and save the territories which were the cradle of his renown.

Urgent as was the request, tempting to an ambitious man as was the offer, Clive was unable to accede to the one or to accept the other. His place, he felt, was still in Bengal. The services he had rendered to Mír J'afar had been so burdensome that revolt against the English yoke had been the secret thought

of his son, his kinsmen, his confederates, his courtiers—his own one cherished hope. Nor was the situation without danger. Rumours of the two encounters between the rival fleets, of the magnitude of the military armaments of the French, of their march against Tanjúr, of the terror and disquietude of the English, had reached Murshidábád in an exaggerated form. The party which disliked the English alliance seized the opportunity to urge Mír J'afar to break at once with those whom they regarded as his masters. By an intrigue, the minister devoted to English interests, Rájá Dúlab Rám, was dismissed. It is possible that, in spite of a visit paid to Calcutta by the Núwáb at the period of the disgrace of his minister, the Court party would have proceeded further, but that immediately after Mír J'afar's return the security of his quasi-throne was threatened by an invasion from the north.

The Mughul empire had not recovered, it never did recover, from the blows dealt it by the invasions of Nádir Sháh and Ahmad Sháh. Thenceforward chaos reigned supreme. Order, discipline, authority, disappeared, and the right was the right of the strongest. Such was the state of things when Sháh A'lam, heir to the throne, tired of the bondage in which he was held by the all-powerful minister of his father, the Emperor Alamghir Sáni, broke loose from restraint, entered Rohilkhand, raised there an army, and with the active support of the Núwáb of Alláhábád, of the Rájá of Banáras, and of the powerful zamíndárs of Northern Bihár, and the encouragement of the

Núwáb-Vazír of Awadh (Oudh), invaded Bihár and marched directly on Patná.

The intrigues, conspiracies, and underhand dealings against the English, which constituted at the time the statecraft of the Court of Murshidábád, gave way, on receipt of this news, to abject and degrading fear. The Núwáb and his friends mistrusted everyone, from Rámnarain, Governor of Patná, whom they hated and feared, down to the sentry at the palace gates. The treasury was empty; the provinces had been exhausted to meet the English demands; the Séths, more disgusted with the rule of Mír J'afar than they had been with that of the man against whom they had conspired to instal him, were engaged in making a pilgrimage to Jagannáth; the Núwáb had scarcely a resource left. In the frenzy of his despair he sent an urgent request to his old enemies, the Maráthás, to march to his aid; then, as the invader might come before the ally, scarcely less to be dreaded, should arrive, he debated with his confidants as to the mode in which it would be possible to raise sufficient money to buy off the invasion. When the empty treasury, the desolate condition of the provinces, the absence of the Séths, forced him to dismiss this idea, he turned then to the course, alike the most natural and the most hateful to him; he implored urgently, beseechingly, even abjectly, the assistance of the English.

Clive was not unprepared to employ the troops of the presidency to support the Núwáb of his own creation. Immediately after he had taken upon him-



self the duties of President of the Council he had set himself to work to reorganise the local army. The Bengal European Battalion, subsequently the 1st Fusiliers and till the abolition, within the last few months, of the regimental numbers, the 101st Regiment of the Line, had been raised to full strength by the volunteering into its ranks of almost all the men of the detachment of the 39th Foot, ordered home, and by the incorporation into it of the European detachments brought from Madras and Bombay. He had formed the artillery into two companies, and had increased the native army by the raising of a fourth battalion. Major Kilpatrick, the able coadjutor who had fought with him in Southern India and in Bengal, having died, Clive had selected as his successor Major Forde of the 39th Foot, then at Madras, an officer of very remarkable ability. Forde had in consequence come round to Calcutta, and, holding the rank of lieutenant-colonel, commanded all the Company's troops in Bengal. Clive had scarcely completed these arrangements when he received a message from the Rájá of Vijiyanagaram to the effect that by the withdrawal from Haidarábád of the French force under Bussy, the Northern Sirkárs had been left without sufficient protection, that he and his confederates had risen in revolt, and that the assistance of an English force would enable them to expel the few French troops who were there. Clutching at an opportunity which, if well employed, would consummate the work he had begun six years before, Clive, denuding himself, despatched Forde (12th October) at the head of

five hundred Europeans and two thousand native troops with some guns to Visbákpatanam (Vizagapatam) to conquer the Northern Sirkárs for the English, and to eradicate French influence at Haidarábád. The despatch of this expedition reduced the European force in Bengal to little more than three hundred men, including artillery, nor did the arrival of recruits during the four months that followed increase that number very considerably. The returns, dated the 6th February 1759, show that inclusive of non-commissioned officers and drummers the whole European infantry in Bengal consisted at that date of three hundred and ninety-five men—of whom a hundred and forty were recruits—and the artillery of ninety-three. During that month, however, the total was largely increased by arrivals from England, and, in view of coming contingencies, Clive at this period raised a fifth battalion of sipáhís.

Such was the military condition of the English zamíndarí when Clive received from Mír J'afar the urgent, beseeching, even abject requests for aid, of which I have spoken. Once again was he the master of the situation, the arbiter of the destinies of Bengal! For it was not only Mír J'afar who solicited his aid. Almost simultaneously there reached him letters from Sháh A'lam reminding him that he was a noble of the Mughul empire, a commander of six thousand horse, and summoning him to render lawful service to himself in his expedition. The letter was accompanied by many promises of personal advantages.

Clive was well aware that his title as a noble of the

empire bound him to act not with but against a rebel to its lord. He was well acquainted, too, with the ill-assorted nature of the confederation of which the Sháhzádah was the head. Moreover, Mír J'afar was his creation, and he never, throughout his service in India, lost sight of that fact. It did not require, then, the letters which he, nearly at the same time, received from the Emperor, soliciting his assistance against his "misguided and rebellious son" to decide him to march with all his available force to the assistance of Mír J'afar.

With this object in view, he set out from Calcutta on the 25th February (1759) at the head of his whole available effective force, consisting of four hundred and fifty Europeans and two thousand five hundred sipáhís. So important did he consider the crisis that he was content to leave Calcutta to be guarded by a few sick and newly-arrived recruits, a small detail of gunners, and a portion of the newly-raised fifth battalion of sipáhís. He reached Murshidábád on the 8th March, set out again with the Núwáb's army, commanded by his son Míran on the 13th, and marched into Patná on the 8th April. Before he arrived there, however, the rumour of the action he was taking had done its work. The army of the Sháhzádah had fallen back, baffled and disorganised.

It happened in this wise. The march of the rebel army towards Patná and its near approach to that city had produced in the mind of the governor, Rám-narain the greatest apprehensions. Rám-narain was bound to Mír J'afar neither by the ties of affection

nor by those of a similar faith. For the times in which he lived he was regarded as a man of a singularly loyal political character, and he had clung to Siráju'd daulah as long as that prince exercised the office of Núwáb of the three provinces. On the fall of Siráju'd daulah he had recognised his successor, but he was soon made aware that his previous loyalty had rankled in the mind of Mír J'afar, that but for Clive's personal exertions he would long since have been removed, and that even then he held the office of governor of Bihár by a very precarious tenure. He was now called upon to oppose, in the interests of a master who hated him, the army of a prince who in a few years would, in all probability, be master of the Mughul empire. Placed in this position he acted with remarkable discretion. Massing his forces, he took up a position outside the city, whence he could communicate easily alike with the Núwáb and the Sháhzádah. Then, writing to the former and to Clive that, not strong enough to give battle to the enemy, he held his position pending the arrival of reinforcements, he sent a message to the Sháhzádah to assure him of his good will. He had resolved, in fact, to follow the advice given him by Mr. Amyatt; the head of the English factory at Patná, and "act as he found most to his own advantage."

As the Sháhzádah approached nearer, Mr. Amyatt and the English embarked on board boats which had been prepared, and proceeded down the river. As soon as they were well out of sight, Rámnarain acted upon a resolution which had long been forming in his

mind—to pay a visit to the camp of the Sháhzádah and judge for himself of his prospects of success. He proceeded thither, was received with the greatest consideration, clothed with a dress of honour, and confirmed in the government of Bihár. But whilst these ceremonies were progressing Rámnarain had used well his own eyes and the eyes of his confidants. He had noticed the want of cohesion, the hollow fidelity and the interested motives of the hungry adventurers who followed the Sháhzádah, and he had made up his mind. Prolonging his stay as long as possible to retard the progress of the rebel army, he returned, when the march was again resumed, to Patná, nominally to prepare that city for the Sháhzádah's reception, really to arrange for its defence. He performed this latter task so effectually that when, on the 23rd March, the rebel army appeared before Patná its leaders found they had to undertake a siege. In the interval between that date and the 4th April Rámnarain repulsed several attacks, each one of which, however, rendered his position less and less secure. Help, however, was at hand; and the arrival of a detachment of English-trained *s páhís*, commanded by an English officer, on the last-named date, so disheartened the besiegers that they raised the siege and retired.

The crisis was now over. The ill-assorted federations of which the Sháhzádah's army had been composed broke up and dispersed, and the Sháhzádah himself, joined by the French detachment under Law, took refuge in the territories of the Rájá of Bundelkhand.

Before his retreat he had written a humble letter to Clive imploring pecuniary aid to enable him to effect it, and had received for that purpose a donation of eight thousand rupees.

Such was the position when, on the 8th April, the united army of Clive and Míran reached Patná. Having repaired the defences of the city, Clive and his ally marched to the banks of the Karamnásá river to clear the country of the detached parties who still lingered there plundering. This task was soon accomplished. Clive then returned to Patná to receive there the expressions of boundless gratitude poured upon him by Mír J'afar, and the more substantial present, as a personal jaghír, of the zamíndarí of the whole of the districts south of Calcutta, then rented by the East India Company, and bringing in an income calculated at thirty thousand pounds a year. This was the famous jaghír the denial of his right to which in later years roused so much bitterness. Leaving a European garrison in Patná, Clive returned, accompanied by Mír J'afar and his son Míran, to Calcutta, and arrived there in June. He had been cheered, some time before his return, by intelligence of the complete victory obtained by Colonel Forde over the Marquis de Conflans at Kondúr, and of the subsequent storming of, and surrender of the French army at Machhlípatanam (Masulipatam), and he was awaiting with a calm certainty the information that not only the Northern Sirkárs, but paramount influence at the Court of Haidarábád, had been permanently transferred from the French to the East India Company.

But before this consummation was attained a difficulty with another power presented itself. The Dutch at Chinsurah had for some time past noticed with jealousy and alarm the growing importance of the English settlers. The special advantages with respect to trade, and the monopoly of saltpetre, had affected their revenues, whilst the right claimed and exercised by them to search all vessels coming up the Huglí, and the insistence on the employment only of English pilots, had touched their pride to the quick. All these evils had come upon them since the fall of Siráju'd daulah. They were the natural consequences of the elevation to the chief place in Bengal of a Núwáb entirely dependent upon the English. Chafing under these evils, the Dutch had watched with the keenest interest the gradual alienation of Mír J'afar from his English patrons. Before the invasion of the Sháhzádah had terrified the Núwáb into a renewal of his amicable relations with Clive, the negotiations between Chinsurah and Murshidábád had reached a very critical phase. It might almost be said that a secret alliance had been formed for the expulsion of the English. This much is certain, that, utterly unknown to the latter, the Núwáb had given his countenance, support, and approval to the Dutch scheme of introducing into Bengal a body of troops far exceeding in number those at the disposal of Clive.

The repulse of the invasion of the Sháhzádah, the consequent re-knitting of ties with the English, the gratitude at the result of Mír J'afar, came to cool

the passionate desire by which the latter had been animated before those occurrences, to shake off the English yoke. But the Dutch preparations had proceeded too far to be suddenly stopped. Letters containing the terms of the alliance with Mír J'afar, accompanied by earnest requests for the means to execute the conditions agreed upon, had been despatched to, and received at, Batavia, and an armament was already on its way to the Huglí.

Rumour, how originated it is difficult certainly to affirm, but arising probably from the indiscretion of the Núwáb and his confidants, had spoken early in 1759 of the proximate arrival of a large Dutch force, and an incident occurred in the month of August, just six weeks after the return of Clive from the campaign against the Sháhzádah, which seemed to indicate that it was not altogether baseless. During that month a Dutch vessel, having on board a large number of Malayan soldiers, arrived at the mouth of the Huglí. Clive at once informed the Núwáb of the event, and took precautions to prevent alike the passage of the ship up the river and the march inland of the Malays. In vain did the Dutch authorities at Chinsurah declare that the ship was really for Nágapatanam (Negapátam), and had been driven to the Huglí by stress of weather; that as soon as she should receive water and provisions she would resume her voyage. A clandestine attempt made by the Dutch Master Attendant to convey eighteen of the Malayan soldiers in his official barque to Chinsurah—an attempt discovered and frustrated



—threw great doubt on this pacific declaration. Finally, however, the ship resumed her voyage. Unsupported, she had been powerless, in the face of the suspicions her presence had awakened, to effect anything against the English.

But in the October following, when Mír J'afar was actually in Calcutta, the guest of Clive, the more serious attempt, the result of his negotiations with Chinsurah, was actually made. In that month there arrived at the mouth of the Huglí seven Dutch ships full of troops, Europeans and Malays. The Núwáb affected to treat the matter lightly, and announced his intention of immediately proceeding to his own town of Huglí, to summon thither to his presence the Dutch authorities, and insist upon their at once dismissing their ships, or, in case of their refusal, of chastising them and driving them out of Bengal. Mír J'afar did proceed to Huglí; he did summon to his presence the Dutch authorities. What actually passed in secret conference cannot be known; but the historian has the authority of Clive himself for asserting that the Núwáb "received them in a most gracious manner, more like friends and allies than enemies to him and to his country." A few days later Mír J'afar wrote to Clive to inform him that he had granted the Dutch some indulgences with respect to their trade, and that they had engaged to leave the river with their ships and troops as soon as the season should permit.

The occasion was one of those which brought into the strongest light all the higher qualities of Clive.

In the presence of danger his intellect was always clear, his judgment unerring, his action prompt and resolute. Not for a moment was he taken in by the specious letter of the Núwáb. Reading between its lines, he saw, not only that the Dutch had no intention of sending away their ships, but that they had obtained the Núwáb's assent to bring them up to Chinsurah. He at once resolved, to use his own emphatic words, that they "should not" bring them up. The events of the few days immediately following came to justify his prescience. Certain information reached him that the Dutch ships had weighed anchor and were moving upwards, that Dutch agents were active at Chinsurah, at Kásimbázár, and at Patná, in raising troops, and that at these acts the Núwáb was conniving.

The position was such as would have driven an ordinary man to despair. On board the Dutch vessels in the river were seven hundred European and eight hundred Malay troops, well armed and equipped; at Chinsurah was a Dutch force of a hundred and fifty men, and native levies daily increasing in number; behind the Dutch was the Núwáb, as ready now to act as he had been at Plassey, the moment fortune should seem to declare in their favour. To meet this enemy Clive had, at Calcutta, three hundred and thirty Europeans and twelve hundred sipáhís. It is true that he had other detachments scattered over the province; but the nearest of them was too distant to be available at the crisis now impending. In this hour of

danger Clive was cool, calm, self-reliant, even confident. He took at once every possible precaution. He sent special messengers to summon all available men from the outposts: he called out, to defend the port and the town, the militia, amounting to three hundred men, five-sixths of whom were Europeans: he formed half a troop of horse of some twenty to thirty volunteers, and enlisted as infantry nearly a similar number of men who could not ride. Of the four English vessels then in the Huglí, he despatched one, the smallest, with an express to Admiral Cornish, then cruising on the Arakan coast, asking for immediate aid; the three others he ordered up to aid in the defence of the town. The batteries which commanded the most important passages of the river near the town, Tannah fort, and Charnock's battery,\* were greatly strengthened. Heavy cannon were mounted at each, as well as on the face of the new fort, Fort William, commanding the river. Just at this moment Colonel Forde, fresh from the storming of Machhlípatanam, arrived, accompanied by Captain Knox, his coadjutor in that glorious event. To the first Clive assigned the command of the whole of the available force, to the latter that of the parties at Tannah fort and Charnock's battery.

These preparations were made not a moment too soon. In the second week of November the Dutch, finding further delay would not serve them, threw

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\* The fort of Tannah was five miles below Calcutta on the right bank of the river, Charnock's battery was nearly opposite to it,

off the mask, and forwarded to Calcutta a long remonstrance, recapitulating all their grievances, and threatening vengeance and reprisals, unless the English should renounce their claim to the right of search, and all opposition to the free progress of their ships and their vessels. Clive replied, with a specious audacity, that the English had offered no insult to the colours, attacked no property, and infringed no privileges, of the Dutch; that, if their boats had been stopped and searched, and the advance of their troops opposed, it had been by the express direction of the Nûwáb, acting with the authority of the Emperor. He concluded by referring them to the Nûwáb, and by offering his services as a mediator on the occasion. Notwithstanding the tone of this reply, Clive, as he records himself, was not a little embarrassed as to the course he should adopt in case the Dutch, continuing to advance, should pass the batteries below Calcutta. The responsibility of commencing hostilities against an ally of England was very great, and Clive and the Council felt grave doubts as to whether the Court of Directors would hold him justified in incurring it.

From further anxiety on this head he was saved by the conduct of the Dutch. The reply of Clive, containing as it did expressions which, though true in the letter, were the reverse of true in their plain signification,\* exasperated them to a degree

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\* Though Clive had the authority of the Nûwáb for the acts complained of by the Dutch, it was an authority which he had himself solicited for the protection of British interests; and the

beyond endurance. Without attempting further diplomatic intercourse, they attacked and captured seven small English vessels lying off Faltá, tore down the English colours, and transferred the guns and stores they carried to their own ships. Amongst the captured vessels was the despatch-boat carrying Clive's letter to Admiral Cornish, asking for assistance. At the same time, landing troops at Faltá and Riápúr, they burned the houses and effects of the English agents stationed there. Their ships then stood up the river. Having no pilots, however, their progress was necessarily slow.

This action on the part of the Dutch reassured Clive. He at once sent a despatch to the Núwáb, apprising him of the acts of violence which had been committed, and stating his wish that, as the quarrel lay only between the Dutch and the English, it might be fought out between those two nations alone. Whilst, however, asking no direct assistance, he added that the Núwáb would convince him of his sincerity and attachment if he would "directly surround their (the Dutch) subordinates, and distress them in the country to the utmost." Whilst thus writing to the Núwáb, Clive directed Florde to take possession of Bárnagar (Barnagore): to cross there the river, with his troops and four field-pieces, to Shrirámpúr (Serampore), and to march thence on Chandranagar, the object being not only to strike terror into Chinsurah, but to be

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Núwáb, who had given him that authority, had encouraged and even implored the Dutch to pay no regard to it, as having been extracted from his necessities, and being therefore void.

ready to intercept the Dutch troops in case they should endeavour to gain that place by land. I shall describe in its proper place the manner in which these instructions were executed.

Meanwhile the Dutch ships were moving upwards. On the 21st they anchored in Sankrál reach, just below the point of the fire of the English batteries. The next day they landed their troops (seven hundred Europeans and eight hundred Malays) on the right bank of the river, with directions to march to Chinsurah, and then dropped down to Melancholy Point.

This action cleared the ground for Clive. He had now two distinct objects before him, each to be met on its own ground. The landing of the Dutch troops had severed them from their base—the ships which had conveyed them. To attack and overthrow these troops before they could gain a new base—that at Chinsurah being the only possible one—and, at the same time, to attack and destroy the old base, the Dutch ships—these were the clear and definite objects at which he aimed. Sending information to Forde of the landing and march of the Dutch troops, and directing Captain Knox with the parties at the batteries to join him with all possible expedition, he proceeded to deal with the Dutch ships.

I have stated in a previous page\* that before the commencement of hostilities Clive had but three ships of any size at his disposal, and that he had directed

these to come up close to Calcutta, so as to aid in the defences of the town. They were three Indiamen, the "Duke of Dorset," 544 tons, Captain Forrester; the "Calcutta," 761 tons, Captain Wilson; the "Hardwicke," 573 tons, Captain Sampson. They all carried guns. When the senior officer, Captain Wilson, who acted as commodore, received the order to bring his ships nearer to Calcutta, the Dutch squadron had already passed him. He had therefore followed it up steadily, anchoring some distance below it. But when, on the 23rd, the Dutch squadron, after having landed its troops, fell back to Melancholy Point, Wilson made as though he would go by them. But the Dutch commodore, noticing his intention, sent him a message to the effect that if he persisted in the attempt he would be fired upon. Wilson, having no orders to engage, at once desisted, but sent a report to Clive. Clive's answer was clear and precise. He directed Wilson to send at once a despatch to the Dutch commodore, demanding immediate restitution of the vessels, property, and British subjects he had seized, a full apology to the English flag, and his immediate departure from the river. If these terms were not complied with, Wilson was to attack the Dutch squadron.

To understand the nature of the task which Clive had imposed upon this brave sailor I may mention that whereas he had at his disposal only three vessels, each capable of carrying at the most thirty guns, the Dutch squadron was composed of four ships, the "Vlissingen," the "Bleiswyk," the "Welgeleegen,"

and the "Princess of Orange," each carrying thirty-six ; of two, the "Elizabeth Dorothea" and the "Waeseld," each carrying twenty-six ; and of one, the "Mossel," carrying sixteen guns. It was a force which exceeded his own by nearly two to one.

On the 24th, Wilson transmitted his demand. It was promptly refused. Upon this Wilson directed his squadron to weigh anchor and stand for the Dutch squadron. Captain Forrester, in the "Duke of Dorset," the best sailor of the three, took the lead and soon laid his ship along the "Vlissengen," which bore the flag of the Dutch commodore. He had scarcely taken up this position when the wind changed, and his consorts were unable for some time to come near him. With great gallantry, however, he attacked his antagonist, and though the mark himself for the first half-hour of other ships in the Dutch squadron, he stuck to her, and, after a combat which lasted two hours, forced her to strike. Meanwhile the "Hardwicke" and "Calcutta" had succeeded in approaching the other ships. So well were they managed and so hot was the fire they maintained that in a very short time two of their smaller adversaries cut their cables and fled, whilst a third was driven on shore. The other ships maintained the combat till the "Vlissengen" had struck, when, with one exception, they followed her example. The exception was the "Bleiswyk," the captain of which made his way to Kálpí, the English ships being too crippled to follow him. He was not, however, destined to escape. At Kálpí he met two English ships, the



"Oxford" and the "Royal George," which had arrived at the mouth of the Huglí two days before, and were now hastening upwards. They made an easy capture of the last of the Dutchmen.

In this most brilliant action the loss of the English in killed was very slight. The "Duke of Dorset," though riddled through and through, though ninety shots were in her hull, and her rigging was cut to pieces, and though many of her crew were wounded, did not lose a single man. The Dutch lost, in killed and wounded, upwards of a hundred men. On the "Vlissingen" alone thirty were killed, and more than double that number wounded. It was an action worthy to be compared with the best achievements of the British navy.

Thus successfully had been carried out one of the two clear and distinct objects which Clive had determined to accomplish. I turn now to record the manner in which he dealt with the other. The reader has seen that Clive had no sooner heard of the debarkation of the Dutch troops and of their march towards Chinsurah than he sent information to Forde and directed Captain Knox to join him with the troops manning the two river batteries. I proceed now to examine the manner in which those two officers improved their opportunities.

Obeying the first orders transmitted to him on the 19th November, Forde, at the head of a hundred Europeans, four hundred sipáhís, and four guns, had, the day following their reception, attacked and captured the Dutch factory of Bárnagar. Crossing the river to

Shrirámpúr he marched thence towards Chandranagar, and encamped on the night of the 23rd in the gardens south of the Fort. It had been his intention to march the next morning and take up a position nearer Chinsurah, which lies only three miles north of Chandranagar. But the Dutch had not noticed in vain the advantage which taking the initiative gives to fighting-men. They did not take into consideration the fact that about fourteen hundred of their own soldiers were marching on Forde's rear, and that if they could only hold their own in Chinsurah till their arrival Forde would be between two fires. They heedlessly resolved to anticipate them. They therefore sent from Chinsurah, on the evening of the 23rd, their whole available force, amounting to a hundred and twenty Europeans and three hundred native soldiers, and bade them take up a position in the ruins of Chandranagar and hinder the further progress of the English. In that position, supported by four field-pieces, Forde found and attacked them on the morning of the 24th. The numbers were about equal on both sides, but on that of the English the soldiers, native and European, had been inured to Indian warfare. The result was never doubtful. Forde drove the Dutch from their position up to the very walls of Chinsurah, and captured their guns. The arrival of Knox the same evening raised his numbers to three hundred and twenty Europeans, eight hundred native infantry, and fifty European volunteer cavalry. The Núwáb had also placed about a hundred horsemen at his disposal—not, indeed, to fight, but to spy.

From the prisoners he had taken, and from other sources, Forde learned that same evening that the Dutch force landed from the ships would certainly arrive the following day. He at once sent off an express to Clive, stating that he thought he had a fair prospect of destroying the enemy, and demanding explicit instructions as to the course he should pursue. Clive was engaged in playing whist when this note reached him. He read it; then, without quitting the table, he wrote on the back of the note in pencil: "Dear Forde, fight them immediately; I will send you the Order in Council to-morrow," and dismissed the messenger.

Armed with this authority, Forde, early on the morning of the 25th, took up at Biderra, about midway between Chandranagar and Chinsurah, a position commanding the road to the latter place. His right rested on the village of Biderra, his left on a mango grove, both of which he occupied; his front was covered by a broad and deep ditch. Securely planted behind this, his guns commanded the treeless plain in front of it. It was the very best position that could have been taken, for whilst very defensive it commanded all the approaches. At about 10 o'clock in the morning the Dutch force, led by Colonel Roussel, a French soldier of fortune, was seen advancing across the plain. As soon as they arrived within range the four guns of the English opened fire; notwithstanding the gaps they made, the Dutch still pressed on. The ditch, however, of the existence of which they were ignorant, stopped them. The con-

fusion which this necessary halt caused to their rear-most files, and the exposure of their line at the same time to a concentrated fire of small-arms from their enemies, some posted in the village, some in the grove, were fatal to the Dutch. Unable to press on, and the greater number of them ignorant of the cause of the stoppage, they fairly turned. Forde used the first moment of wavering which they displayed to launch at them his English cavalry. The small number of these was not at the moment apparent to the enemy, and the charge, made at an opportune moment, forced their masses back in disorder. Seeing the effect produced, that the Dutch were fairly beaten, the cavalry of the Núwáb, which had not responded to the invitation to accompany their European comrades in the first charge, dashed forward and completed the defeat. The Dutch and Malays, fresh from the confinement of shipboard, the latter unused to fight cavalry, then fairly turned and fled. No victory was ever more decisive. Of the seven hundred Europeans and eight hundred Malays composing the Dutch force, a hundred and twenty of the former and two hundred of the latter were left dead on the field, three hundred, in about equal proportions of both, were wounded; whilst M. Roussel, fourteen of his officers, three hundred and fifty Dutch, and two hundred Malays were made prisoners.\* Some sixty of the former and two hundred and fifty of the

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\* I have followed in the main the account of this contest given by the Dutch East India Company. Vide Grose's *Voyage to the East Indies*, vol. ii. p. 376.

latter escaped, and of these only fourteen eventually succeeded in finding their way to Chinsurah.\*

In this brilliant manner did Forde carry out the second distinct object aimed at by Clive. The policy of the latter had been carried out to the letter. By vigour, decision, and daring a danger greater than any which, since January 1757, had threatened the British settlement in Bengal had been encountered and overthrown. Of the secret understanding between the Dutch and the Núwáb there can be no doubt whatever. Clive entertained none. The Núwáb, in fact, groaning under the restraints imposed upon him by the British connection, was anxious to substitute for a foreign master a foreign ally. His troops were ready for action. Had the Dutch squadron beaten the three English ships in the river, and had Forde been beaten at Biderra, these troops would have joined the Dutch in an attack upon Calcutta. If that attack had succeeded, the Núwáb, grown wise by experience, would have imposed upon the Dutch terms far less galling to himself than those which had made him little more than a pageant sovereign guided by English counsels.

This conspiracy had been defeated by the calm decision of Clive, by the gallantry, skill, and daring of Forde, and of the officers and men, sailors as well

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\* "Such," writes Colonel Broome, in his admirable history of the Bengal army, "was the brilliant victory of Biderra, marked by an extraordinary degree of skill and courage, and most important in its results—and yet the name of the action is scarcely ever mentioned, and in no way commemorated."

as soldiers, who were engaged. The victory on the Huglí and the victory at Biderra brought the Dutch, hitherto so threatening, to his feet, not only for mercy, but for protection. They sorely needed the latter. Three days after the battle, Míran, the son and heir of the Núwáb, arrived from Murshidábád with six thousand horse. Up to that moment the great opponent of the English alliance, the secret instigator of the intrigues with the Dutch, Míran had come down in the hope of dictating his own terms, if, as he hoped, the English had been checked. But finding them victorious on all points, the Dutch broken, almost annihilated, he, with characteristic versatility, at once changed his language. The yoke of the English must still be borne. His policy must be to ingratiate, not offend. In this view he spoke of nothing less than the extermination of the Dutch, of expelling the remnant of them from Bengal. To protect themselves from the consequences of these threats the Dutch implored the aid of the enemy whom they had so gratuitously provoked. Clive behaved with great generosity. After the victory of Biderra he had responded to the submission of the Dutch by ordering Forde to cease all hostilities. He now proceeded to Chinsurah and succeeded in effecting an accommodation between the Dutch and the Núwáb. The terms of it bore the impress of the practical mind of a man who was resolved that an opportunity should never again be afforded to the Dutch to wage war against the English in Bengal. For, whilst it confirmed all the trading privileges

previously accorded to the former, and gave them permission to maintain a hundred and twenty-five soldiers for the protection of their factories at Chinsurah, at Kásimbázár, at Patná, and at Baleshwar (Balasore); it compelled them to send away their squadron with those prisoners recently taken by the English who would not serve the conqueror, and with any remnants of the discomfited host; to discharge all the native soldiers whom they had raised; and to agree never to carry on hostilities, to enlist or introduce troops, or to erect fortifications in the three provinces.

The other terms of the accommodation with the same people were not less satisfactory. The Dutch agreed to disavow the conduct of their fleet, to acknowledge themselves the aggressors, and to pay ten lakhs of rupees to cover all losses sustained by the English and the expenses of the war.\*

The defeat of the Dutch and their consequent erasure from the list of fighting powers in Bengal formed a fitting close to an administration which had been a series of material triumphs. Arriving in Bengal in December 1756, Clive had begun the year 1757 by

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\* The transactions recorded in the text became the subject of correspondence and investigation in Europe. After some preliminaries the English and Dutch Governments nominated special commissioners to inquire into the matter. The conclusion arrived at was that the Dutch local authorities had been the aggressors, and that the conduct of Clive had been marked by a prudence, a judgment, and a generosity which entitled him to unqualified commendation.

recapturing Calcutta. He had followed up this conquest by forcing the Núwáb to loosen his hold on the possessions of the Company in Bengal. Noting then that the declaration of war between France and England would give the Núwáb an opportunity, for which even then he was hoping, of joining with the French at Chaudranagar to strike again at Calcutta, he, suddenly and with very little warning, dealt a blow at the French which paralysed for ever all possibility of action on their part in Bengal. Left, then, face to face with the irritated Núwáb, he played him as a skilful angler plays a well-hooked salmon. Now he gave him line, now he let him run with the stream, now he checked him; at last he gave him the butt, and thoroughly exhausted him. The boy, Siráju'd daulah, had never the smallest chance with the cool, calculating, unscrupulous craftsman who was bent on dethroning him. In due time Plassey came, and on the seat which Plassey vacated Clive placed one of his own instruments, a man whom he had thoroughly looked over and bought. This man soon felt that in consenting to act as an instrument in the hands of Clive he had in very deed bartered his independence. He kicked, to no purpose, against his position. Circumstances were too strong for him. In vain did he vow that never would he invoke the aid of the English. In every great crisis he was compelled to invoke that aid. To this man, weary, worn-out, disgusted with the mere pageantry—almost all that he possessed—of sovereignty, it at last occurred that a combination with another European power would rid him of his



Frankenstein. But one European power was available—the Dutch. A confidential exchange of ideas with that people soon made him aware that in them he would find willing co-operators. It was a last, but not a desperate chance. The Dutch, acting secretly, could concentrate on the scene of action more ships, more men, than the English had available, and the Núwáb would join them the moment fortune should favour them with her first smile. The bargain was made. The Dutch performed their part of the compact: the Núwáb prepared his army to carry out his part. But again all was vain. The numbers of the Dutch, the secret hatred of the Núwáb, were shattered before the qualities of the man who, conscious that he had his enemies in his grasp, could so command his feelings that, whilst they stormed and intrigued without, he could give his full attention to a game of whist within. The calm sleep of Napoleon before Austerlitz, whilst in spirit akin to, does not, in the self-command it betrays, surpass the rubber played by Clive before Biderra. After that victory, Clive stood again face to face with the Núwáb, but it was with a Núwáb who had lost every outside chance of re-asserting his independence, and who was then and for ever afterwards his puppet.

It was when this seal had been set to his achievements in Bengal that Clive felt he might safely take the repose which he so much needed. Up to that time he had turned a deaf ear to the orders of the Madras Government—which had only lent him to Bengal—to the insinuations conveyed by half-hearted

support from the India Office, to the advice of candid friends. He had determined not to leave Bengal so long as there should remain any danger threatening the English settlement. With the destruction of the aggressive power of the last of its European rivals all danger had disappeared. Clive felt then that he might return to England to recruit the health which exposure and unremitting attention to business of a most absorbing character had impaired, and to enjoy a relaxation from the cares and anxieties which for three years had occupied him incessantly.

Before, however, he could leave Bengal, it was necessary that he should make efficient provision for the conduct of the civil and military affairs of the Presidency. With respect to the former, he was placed in a position of some embarrassment with respect to his own colleagues. Four of these, Messrs. Holwell, Playdell, Sumner, and McGuire, had announced their intention of retiring. Of the abilities of many of the others, especially of Messrs. Watts and Warren Hastings, Clive has recorded his opinion. They, the two mentioned especially, had served him with a zeal and an energy not to be surpassed. Mr. Watts in particular, had rendered very signal service. It is difficult to understand why these gentlemen were passed over, unless we are prepared to admit that the claims of private friendship weighed more with Clive in this instance than the demands of the public service. They were passed over, however, in favour of Mr. Vansittart, of the Madras Presidency, Clive's intimate and trusted friend. The comparative

youth of Watts and Warren Hastings was alleged as the reason of their non-selection. It cannot fail to strike every candid mind that such a reason was the very last which should have been advanced, with reference to two men who had already displayed very high qualities in Bengal, by a man who had made his own mark before he was twenty-seven. The result proved, moreover, that on no ground was the supersession justifiable. Mr. Vansittart was, I believe, a conscientious English gentleman. But he did not possess the force of character necessary to enable a man to enforce the policy which his inner conscience commended to him. The departure of Clive let loose a deluge of passions which a strong man only could control. Vansittart was not a strong man. Nevertheless, on the recommendation of Clive, he was nominated to be his successor.\*

There remained yet the appointment of a successor in the command of the army. For this post Clive had recommended Colonel Forde. Forde had come out to India as a Major in the 39th Foot. His conversation, his knowledge, the qualities of firmness, of coolness and calmness in danger, the capacity for command which he displayed, had, at an earlier period, won the admiration of Clive. In the choice of officers for command Clive was ever above jealousy. He was too sensible that his own reputation depended on the quality of the officers who served him. He always, therefore, endeavoured to procure

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\* He afterwards became one of Clive's bitterest enemies.

the very best men. Although, therefore, Forde did not accompany the force which left Madras in the autumn of 1756 to recover Calcutta, Clive never lost sight of him. When, then, just a year later, Major Kilpatrick, commanding the Company's troops in Bengal, died, Clive had urged that the appointment should be bestowed upon Major Forde. The proposal, made to the local authorities in Madras, was acceded to; and Forde, leaving the 39th, then under orders for England, came round to Calcutta in April 1758, with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In the October following Forde was despatched with a force of five hundred Europeans and two thousand sipáhís to the Northern Sirkárs to expel the French from those important districts. The courage and conduct he displayed, how he defeated the Marquis de Conflans at the decisive battle of Kondúr, and forced him to surrender with his whole army, a superior force in Europeans, at Machhlípatanam, how he laid a firm foundation for the replacement of French influence by English influence at the Court of Haidarábád, has been already mentioned. His reward for these splendid services had been dismissal. The Court of Directors had not approved his nomination to the command of their troops in Bengal. Forde, thus unceremoniously treated, made over to the next senior officer, a captain, the command of the force with which he had conquered for the Company a most valuable and important province, and came round, accompanied by Captain Knox, to Bengal. How he arrived in the very nick of time, just at the moment when the Dutch were threatening

at Biderra, and by the arrival of further recruits. These augmentations and the raising of the strength of the native battalions to a thousand men,\* increased the European force at the disposal of Clive to ~~the~~ more than a thousand; the native force to ~~the~~ a thousand.

With this force, before he could leave Bengal, it was necessary that he should make a demonstration. The bold attempt of the Dutch, whilst it had engaged the secret sympathies of Mir J'afar, had roused likewise the cupidity of the Sháhzádah. This young prince, not reconciled to the Court of Dihlí, had, in the jungles of Bundelkhand, meditated a scheme whereby, in the general confusion which would be caused by the success of the Dutch, he might reap substantial advantage. Summoning, then, to his standard most of his old supporters, and attracting others from the districts about him, he advanced towards the Karamnáá. To check this advance and at the same time to introduce to Mir J'afar the officer upon whom, after his own departure, he could entirely depend, Clive ordered Caillaud to proceed with three hundred and fifty Europeans and a thousand sipáhís to Murshidábád. Caillaud arrived at that capital on the 26th December, Clive on the 6th January following. The ceremony of the introduction of the new commander was followed by arrangements for the march to Patná of his force and of the

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\* Each native battalion was officered thus: one captain, one lieutenant, one ensign, and four sergeants.

army of the Núwáb under his son Míran. Then ensued the leave-taking and the departure. The last scene between Clive and the Núwáb whom he had created must have been painful to both. It was because he was his creation that Clive liked Mír J'afar. He believed that his sentiments were reciprocated, and though this, in the sense felt by Clive, may be doubted, it was certainly a fact that Mír J'afar regarded Clive as a tower of strength upon which he could lean in any difficulty. He must have felt at this supreme moment that he was parting with the one Englishman upon whom he could absolutely rely, who would support him against all other rivals and opponents. Had it been given to him to glance into futurity he would have seen, indeed, that in losing the Englishman who had made him, he was indeed losing the support without which he could not stand. It was well observed by one of his contemporaries that when Clive left Bengal "it appeared as if the soul was departing from the body." It was more even than that. The spoils of Plassey had roused all the worst passions of Englishmen in India. When the victor of that battle and his friends were succeeded by men who had had no share in those spoils, but who longed to reap on the same field, not only did it become clear that the soul had departed from the government, but that its place was occupied by passions of the meanest and most sordid character. This was the danger to be apprehended by Mír J'afar. In parting with Clive he was parting with his truest supporter, he was preparing a welcome to men pre-

pared to despoil Bengal at his expense, ju had despoiled it at the expense of Siráju'd daula.

At last even this painful leave-taking was accomplished. On the 14th January, Clive returned to Calcutta. Staying there some six weeks to complete all the necessary arrangements, he made over the government to Mr. Holwell, pending the arrival in Madras of Mr. Vansittart, and sailed for England on the 25th February. Shortly before his departure he had stated to Vansittart, that with the arrival of the troops then expected, and which had since landed, Bengal would be "out of all danger but that of venality and corruption." Words most true, prophetic even in their truth! It was venality and corruption, greed and lust for gold, which, in the few years following his departure, brought imminent danger on the great structure he had built up, which once again made the very existence of the English settlement dependent on the fate of one decisive battle!

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## CHAPTER XIII.

## THE BREWING OF THE STORM.

CLIVE returned to England in the autumn of 1760 a very rich man. He had received in presents from the Núwáb and in prize-money about three hundred thousand pounds. The annual income of the jaghír bestowed upon him by Mír J'afar amounted, by his own admission, to twenty-seven thousand pounds; and he had still the comparatively small fortune acquired in Southern India. So circumstanced he was able to give free course to his ruling passions. Prominent amongst these was ambition. He had raised himself in India only to take a prominent position in England; and, in times of peace, this end could only be accomplished by entering Parliament.

That during the long course of a voyage round the Cape, Clive must have deeply meditated as to the course he should follow to attain his ambitious aims may be accepted as certain. It is as certain, too, that he expected that the way would be made smooth to him by the conferring upon him a title which would admit



him to the House of Lords. But though Clive's reception by his youthful sovereign was grateful, though the ministers and the Court of Directors were loud in their professions to serve him, he did not immediately attain any honour. It is true that very soon after his arrival in England he was attacked by an illness which threatened to terminate his existence, and the recovery from which was long and painful, but the delay in according to him some mark of the approval of the Crown must be sought for on other grounds. There can be no doubt but that many of his despatches from India had given great offence at the India Office, and it is probable that the latent jealousy of the Court combined with the indifference of the Ministry to delay the conferring of any honour at all, and finally to cause it to take a shape which would not entitle its possessor to a seat in the House of Lords. After a long delay Clive was created an Irish peer.

Some time before Clive had left Bengal he had transmitted to the India Office a letter in which he had commented very freely upon their shortcomings. This despatch had roused the ire of the Court of Directors to such an extent that they had, after his departure, removed from office the members of Council who had joined him in signing it. But another letter, addressed by Clive, in January 1759, not to the Court but to Mr. Pitt, then Secretary of State, had whetted still further the animosity of the former. In that very remarkable letter Clive had foreshadowed the later results which would,

ended, accrue from the collapse of native in Bengal—the acquisition by the English of three large and important provinces. He had proceeded to contend that so large a sovereignty would be too extensive for a mercantile company, and, moreover, that a mercantile company, unless assisted by the nation, would be unable to maintain it. He had, therefore, suggested that the Crown should take upon itself the responsibility of governing the new empire, certain to accrue, in the natural course of events, to British hands. Unfortunately, Mr. Pitt was not in a position then to put into execution a plan, which foreshadowed the far less complete measure which his gifted son subsequently carried out, and which received its full development exactly one hundred years subsequent to the date of Clive's proposal. There are many living who can remember the unwillingness with which the Court of Directors of our own time parted with the interests which they regarded as vested for ever in their body. The dislike, then, which their predecessors of a century earlier must have felt towards the man who, in advance of the age in which he lived, dared to make a similar proposition, may be easily conceived.

The delay in bestowing upon Clive a mark of the approval of the Crown was not the only mortification he experienced at this period. The Court of Directors showed their deep-rooted hostility by disputing his right to the jaghír bestowed upon him by Mír J'afar, and actually sent instructions to their Council at Calcutta to pay into the Company's treasury the

amount due as rental for the same, and to necessary steps to enable the Court to compel a funding by Clive of the sums he had already received on account of it. Clive resisted this act of tyranny, and filed a bill in Chancery against the Company. The matter was about to be carried to extreme lengths, the most eminent lawyers of the day were engaged, when, before it could be brought to an issue, the state of affairs in Bengal forced the hand of the Court. From being bitterly hostile to the man who had given them their influence, they became suddenly his humble slaves.

To understand how this came to pass it is necessary to enter somewhat more into detail. Clive had, at the general election of 1761, obtained a seat in the House of Commons. The Duke of Newcastle was prime minister, Pitt and Bute were secretaries of State. But Pitt almost immediately resigned, the following year the Duke of Newcastle followed his example, and Lord Bute formed a new ministry from which Pitt and Newcastle were excluded. To this ministry, and more especially to the peace which it concluded in 1763,\* Clive offered a determined opposition. He appears, at this time, to have attached himself personally to George Grenville, and to have accepted him as his political leader. His opposition to the ministry greatly strengthened the influence of the strong party opposed to him in the India Office, for the leader of that party, the Chairman of the Court, Mr. Lawrence

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\* The Peace of Paris.

as a firm supporter of Lord Bute. The  
that lord's ministry in 1763, and the conse-  
quent accession of Lord Grenville to office, weakened,  
however, the effect of that hostile alliance.

It was in that year, prior to the fall of the Bute ministry, that Clive, bitterly resenting the manner in which the Court of Directors had treated him, the contempt with which they had received his recommendations, especially those on behalf of Forde and his other companions in arms who had been neglected, endeavoured to break down the power of Mr. Sullivan by the only means left open to him. It happened that the re-election of that gentleman and his friends to their offices depended upon the votes of the proprietors of East India stock. To turn those votes against Mr. Sullivan, Clive left no means untried. He purchased stock to the value of a hundred thousand pounds, and distributed it in parcels of a thousand pounds each amongst friends upon whom he could rely. But all was in vain. Victorious at the meeting by a show of hands, Clive was beaten at the poll. Secure, now, in his seat, Sullivan persuaded his colleagues to pass the measure which would have deprived Clive of the jaghír which had been bestowed upon him by Mir J'afar.

It was when the contest which this extreme measure provoked was about to be transferred to the court of law, that ship after ship from India conveyed the information that the edifice which Clive had erected in Bengal was crumbling to the earth under the effete and corrupt rule of the government which had

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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## CHAPTER XIV.

## THE RULE OF CORRUPTION.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

‡ Page 331.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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## CHAPTER XV.

## SECOND ADMINISTRATION.—INTERNAL.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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\* Mr. Scrafton's letters.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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