

"But how is it, father, if the English never carry weapons and never fight, that they are such brave soldiers? For have they not conquered all our princes and rajahs, and have even beaten Tippoo Sahib and made him give them much of his country?"

"The answer would be a great deal too long to be given to-night, Doast. You had better ask your cousin about it in the morning."

CHAPTER IV

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

THE next morning Dick was up early, eager to investigate the palace, of which he had seen little the night before. The house was large and handsome, the Rajah having added to it gradually every year. On passing the doors, the great hall was at once entered; its roof, of elaborately carved stone, was supported by two rows of pillars with sculptured capitals. The floor was made of inlaid marble, and at one end was raised a foot above the general level. Here stood a stone chair on which the Rajah sat when he adjudicated upon disputes among his people, heard petitions, and gave audiences; while the massive door on the left-hand side gave entrance to the private apartments. These were all small in comparison with the entrance hall. The walls were lined with marble slabs, richly carved, and were dimly lighted by windows, generally high up in the walls, which were of great thickness. The marble floors were covered with thick rugs, and each room had its divan, with soft cushions and rich shawls and covers. The room in which they had supped the night before was the only exception. This had been specially furnished and decorated in English fashion. The windows here were low and afforded a view over the garden. Next to it were several apartments, all fitted

with divans, but with low windows and a bright outlook; they could be darkened during the heat of the day by shutters. With the exception of these windows, the others throughout the house contained no glass, the light entering through innumerable holes that formed a filigree work in the thin slabs of stone that filled the orifices.

The grounds round the palace were thickly planted with trees, which constituted a grove rather than a garden, according to Dick's English notions. This was, indeed, the great object of the planter, and numerous fountains added to the effect of the overhanging foliage. Dick wandered about, delighted. Early as it was, men with water-skins were at work among the clumps of flowers and shrubs that covered the ground wherever there was a break among the trees. Here and there were small pavilions whose roofs of sculptured stone were supported by shafts of marble. The foliage of shrubs and trees alike was new to Dick, and the whole scene delighted him. Half-an-hour later his two cousins joined him.

"We wondered what had become of you," Doast said, "and should not have found you if Rajbullub had not told us that he saw you come out here. Come in now; coffee is ready. We always have coffee the first thing, except in very hot weather, when we have fruit sherbet. After that we ride or shoot till the sun gets hot, and then come in to the morning meal at ten."

On going in, Dick found that his mother and the raneé were both up, and they all sat down to what Dick considered a breakfast, consisting of coffee and a variety of fruit and bread. One or two dishes of meat were also handed round, but were taken away untouched.

"Now come out to the stables, Dick," the Rajah said. "Anwar, the officer who commanded the escort, will meet us there. He will be your instructor."

The stables were large. The horses were fastened to rings along each side, and were not, as in England, separated from

each other by stalls. A small stone trough, with running water, was fixed against each wall at a convenient height, and beneath this was a pile of fodder before each horse.

"This is the one that I have chosen for you," the Rajah said, stopping before a pretty creature, that possessed a considerable proportion of Arab blood, as was shown by its small head; "it is very gentle and well trained, and is very fast. When you have got perfectly at ease upon it you shall have something more difficult to sit, until you are able to ride any horse in the stable bare-backed. Murad is to be your own property as long as you are out here."

A syce led the horse out; it was bridled but unsaddled, and Anwar gave a few instructions to Dick and then said, "I will help you up, but in a short time you will learn to vault on to his back without any assistance. See! you gather your reins so, in your left hand, place your right hand on its shoulder, and then spring up."

"I can do that now," Dick laughed, and, placing his hand on the horse's shoulder, he lightly vaulted into his seat.

"Well done, Dick," the Rajah said, while the two boys, who had been looking on with amused faces, clapped their hands.

"Now, Sahib," Anwar went on, "you must let your legs hang easily. Press with your knees, and let your body sway slightly with the movement of the horse; balance yourself rather than try to hold on."

"I understand," Dick said. "It is just as you do on board ship when she is rolling a bit. Let go the reins."

For half-an-hour the horse proceeded at a walk along the road that wound in and out through the park-like grounds. "I begin to feel quite at home," Dick said, at the end of that time. "I should like to go a bit faster now. It is no odds if I do tumble off."

"Shake your rein a little; the horse will understand it," Anwar said.

Dick did so, and Murad at once started at a gentle canter. Easy as it was, Dick thought several times that he would be off. However, he gripped as tightly as he could with his knees, and as he became accustomed to the motion and learned to give to it, acquired ease and confidence. He was not, however, sorry when, at the end of another half-hour, Anwar held up his hand as he approached him, and the horse stopped at the slightest touch of the rein. As he slid off, his legs felt as if they did not belong to him, and his back ached so that he could scarce straighten it. The Rajah and his sons had returned to the palace, and the boys were there waiting for him.

"You have done very well, cousin," Doast said, with grave approval; "you will not be long before you can ride as well as we can. Now you had better go up at once and have a bath, and put on fresh clothes."

Dick felt that the advice was good, as, bathed in perspiration, and stiff and sore in every limb, he slowly made his way to his room. For the next month he spent the greater part of his time on horseback. For the first week he rode only in the grounds of the palace; then he ventured beyond, accompanied by Anwar on horseback; then his two cousins joined the party; and, by the end of the month, he was perfectly at home on Murad's back.

So far, he had not begun to practise shooting. "It would be of no use," the Rajah said, when he one day spoke of it; "you want your nerves in good order for that, and it requires an old horseman to have his hand steady enough for shooting straight after a hard ride. Your rides are not severe for a horseman, but they are trying for you. Leave the shooting alone, lad; there is no hurry for it."

By this time the Rajah had become convinced that it was useless to try and dissuade either his sister or Dick from attempting the enterprise for which they had come over. Possibly the earnest conviction of the former that her husband was still alive influenced him to some extent, and the strength

and activity of Dick showed him that he was able to play the part of a man. He said little, but watched the boy closely, made him go through trials of strength with some of his troopers, and saw him practise with blunted swords with others. Dick did well in both trials, and the Rajah then requested Anwar, who was celebrated for his skill with the tulwar, to give him, daily, half-an-hour's sword-play, after his riding lesson. He himself undertook to teach him to use the rifle and pistol.

Dick threw himself into his work with great ardour, and in a very short time could sit any horse in the stable, and came to use a rifle and pistol with an amount of accuracy that surprised his young cousins.

"The boy is getting on wonderfully well," the Rajah said one day to his sister; "his exercises have given him so much nerve and so steady a hand, that he already shoots very fairly. I should expect him to grow up into a fine man, Margaret, were it not that I have the gravest fears as to this mad enterprise, which I cannot help telling you, both for your good and his, is, in my opinion, absolutely hopeless."

"I know, Mortiz," she said, "that you think it is folly on my part to cling to hope; and while I do not disguise from myself that there would seem but small chance that my husband has survived, and that I can give no reason for my faith in his still being alive, and my confidence that he will be restored to me some day, I have so firm a conviction that nothing will shake it. Why should I have such a confidence if it were not well founded? In my dreams I always see him alive, and I believe firmly that I dream of him so often because he is thinking of me. When he was at sea, several times I felt disturbed and anxious, though without any reason for doing so, and each time, on his return, I found, when we compared dates, that his ship was battling with a tempest at the time I was so troubled about him. I remember that the first time this happened he laughed at me; but when, upon two other occasions, it turned out so, he said, 'There are things we do not

understand, Margaret. You know that in Scotland there are many who believe in second sight, as it is called, and that there are families there, and they say in Ireland also, where a sort of warning is given of the death of a member of the family. We sailors are a superstitious people, and believe in things that landsmen laugh at. It does not seem to me impossible that when two people love each other dearly, as we do, one may feel when the other is in danger, or may be conscious of his death. It may be said that such things seldom happen; but that is no proof that they never do so, for some people may be more sensitive to such feelings or impressions than others, and you may be one of them. There is one thing, Margaret: the fact that you have somehow felt when I was in trouble, should cheer you when I am away, for if mere danger should so affect you, surely you will know should death befall me; and as long as you do not feel that, you may be sure that I shall return safe and sound to you.' Now, I believe that firmly. I was once troubled—so troubled, that for two or three days I was ill—and so convinced was I that something had happened to Jack, and yet that he was not dead, that when, nigh two years afterwards, Ben came home, and I learned that it was on the day of the wreck of his ship that I had so suffered, I was not in the least surprised. Since then I have more that once had the same feelings, and have always been sure that at the time Jack was in special danger; but I have never once felt that he was dead, never once thought so, and am as certain that he is still alive as if I saw him sitting in the chair opposite to me, for I firmly believe that, did he die, I should see his spirit, or that, at any rate, I should know for certain that he had gone. So whatever you say, though reason may be altogether on your side, it will not shake my confidence one bit. I know that Jack is alive, and I believe firmly, although of this I am not absolutely sure, that he will some day be restored to me."

"You did not tell me this before, Margaret," the Rajah

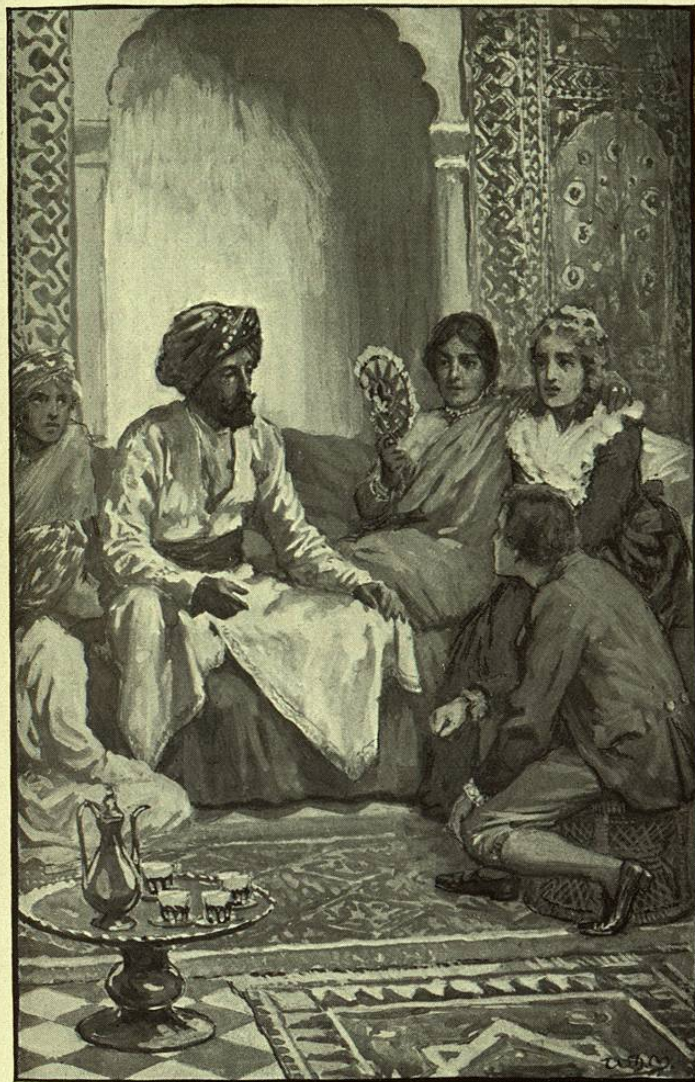
said, "and what you say goes for much with me. Here in India there are many who, as is said, possess this power that you call second sight; certainly some of the Fakirs do. I have heard many tales of warnings they have given, and these have always come true. I will not try, in future, to damp your confidence, and will hope with you that your husband may yet be restored to you."

One evening Dick remarked: "You said down at Madras, Uncle, that you would some day tell me about the invasion by Hyder Ali. Will you tell me about it now?"

The Rajah nodded. His sons took their seats at his feet, and Dick curled himself up on the divan by his side.

"You must know," the Rajah began, "that the war was really the result of the intrigues of Sir Thomas Rumbold, the governor of Madras, and his council. In the first place they had seriously angered the Nizam; the latter had taken a French force into his service which the English had compelled Basult Jung to dismiss, and Madras sent an officer to his court, with instructions to remonstrate with him for so doing. At the same time they gave him notice that they should no longer pay to him the tribute they had agreed upon, for the territory called the Northern Circars. This would have led to war, but the Bengal government promptly interfered, cancelled altogether the demands made by the Madras government, and for the time patched up the quarrel. The Nizam professed to be satisfied, but he saw that trouble might arise when the English were more prepared to enforce their demands; he therefore entered into negotiations with Hyder Ali and the Mahrattas for an alliance, whose object was the entire expulsion of the British from India.

"The Mahrattas from Poonah were to operate against Bombay; those in Central India and the north were to make incursions into Bengal; the Nizam was to invade the Northern Circars; and Hyder was to direct his force against Madras. Hyder at once began to collect military stores, and obtained



THE RAJAH TELLS THE STORY OF THE WAR.

large quantities from the French at Mahè, a town they still retain, on the Malabar coast. The Madras government prepared to attack Mahè, when Hyder informed them that the settlements of the Dutch, French, and English, on the Malabar coast, being situated within his territory, were equally entitled to his protection, and that if Mahè were attacked, he should retaliate by an incursion into the province of Arcot. In spite of his threat, Mahè was captured. Hyder for a time remained quiet, but the Madras government gave him fresh cause for offence by sending a force in August 1779 to the assistance of Basult Jung at Adoni.

“To get there this detachment had to pursue a route which led for two hundred miles through the most difficult passes, and through the territories both of the Nizam and Hyder. The Council altogether ignored the expressed determination of both these princes to oppose the march, and did not even observe the civility of informing them that they were going to send troops through their territory. I do not say, Dick, that this made any real difference in the end; the alliance between the three native Powers being made, it was certain that war would break out shortly; still, had it not been for their folly in giving Hyder and the Nizam a reasonable excuse for entering upon hostilities, it might have been deferred until the Madras government was better prepared to meet the storm. The Bengal government fortunately again stepped in and undid at least a part of the evil. It took the entire management of affairs out of the hands of Rumbold's council, and its action was confirmed by the Board of Directors, who censured all the proceedings, dismissed Sir Thomas Rumbold and his two chief associates from the Council, and suspended other members.

“The prompt and conciliatory measures taken by the Bengal government appeased the resentment felt by the Nizam, and induced him to withdraw from the Confederacy. Hyder, however, was bent upon war, and the imbecile government here took no steps whatever to meet the storm. The commissariat

was entirely neglected ; they had no transport train whatever, and the most important posts were left without a garrison. It was towards the end of June that we received the news that Hyder had left his capital at the head of an army of ninety thousand men, of whom twenty-eight thousand were cavalry. He attempted no disguise as to his object, and moved, confident in his power, to conquer the Carnatic and drive the English into the sea. My father had already made his preparations. Everything was in readiness, and as soon as the news reached him, he started for Madras, under the guard of his escort, with my mother and myself, most of the traders of the town, and the landowners, who had gathered here in fear and trembling.

“ It was a painful scene, as you may imagine, and I shall never forget the terrified crowds in the streets and the wailing of the women. Many families who then left reached Madras in safety, but of those who remained in the town all are dead or prisoners beyond the hills. Hyder descended through the pass of Changama on the 20th of July, and his horsemen spread out like a cloud over the country, burning, devastating, and slaughtering. Hyder moved with the main army slowly, occupying town after town and placing garrisons in them. You must not suppose that he devastated the whole country ; he was too wise for that. He anticipated reigning over it as its sovereign, and had no wish to injure its prosperity. It was only over tracts where he considered that devastation would hamper the movements of an English army, that everything was laid waste.

“ On the 21st of August he invested Arcot, and a week later, hearing that the British army had moved out from Madras, he broke up the siege and advanced to meet them. Sir Hector Munro, the British general, was no doubt brave, but he committed a terrible blunder ; instead of marching to combine his force with that of Colonel Baillie, who was coming down from Guntoor, he marched in the opposite direction to Conjeveram, sending word to Colonel Baillie to follow him. Baillie's force

amounted to over two thousand eight hundred men, Munro's to five thousand two hundred. Had they united, the force would have exceeded eight thousand, and could have given battle to Hyder's immense army with fair hope of success. The English have won before now with greater odds against them. My father had marched out with his cavalry one hundred and fifty strong, with Munro. Of course I was with him, and it was to him that the English general gave the despatch to carry to Colonel Baillie. We rode hard, for at any moment Hyder's cavalry might swoop down and bar the road ; but we got through safely, and the next morning, the 24th, Baillie started.

“ The encampment was within twenty-five miles of Madras, and with one long forced march we could have effected a junction with Munro. The heat was tremendous, and Baillie halted that night on the bank of the River Cortelour. The bed was dry, and my father urged him to cross before halting. The colonel replied that the men were too exhausted to move farther, and that as he would the next day be able to join Munro, it mattered not on which side of the river he encamped. That night the river rose, and for ten days we were unable to cross. On the 4th of September we got over ; but by that time Tippoo, with five thousand picked infantry, six thousand horse, six heavy guns, and a large body of irregulars, detached by Hyder to watch us, barred the way.

“ Colonel Baillie, finding that there was no possibility of reaching Conjeveram without fighting, took up a position at a village, and on the 6th was attacked by Tippoo. The action lasted three hours, and although the enemy were four times more numerous than we were, the English beat off the attacks. We were not engaged, for against Tippoo's large cavalry force our few horsemen could do nothing, and were therefore forced to remain in the rear of the British line. But though Colonel Baillie had beaten off the attacks made on him, he felt that he was not strong enough to fight his way to

Conjeveram, which was but fourteen miles distant, and he therefore wrote to Sir Hector Munro to come to his assistance. For three days Sir Hector did nothing, but on the evening of the 8th he sent off a force composed of the flank companies of the regiments with him. These managed to make their way past the forces both of Hyder and Tippoo, and reached us without having to fire a shot.

“ Their arrival brought our force up to over three thousand seven hundred men. Had Munro made a feigned attack upon Hyder, and so prevented him from moving to reinforce Tippoo, we could have got through without much difficulty. But he did nothing; and Hyder, seeing the utter incapacity of the man opposed to him, moved off with his whole army and guns to join his son. Our force set out as soon as it was dark on the evening of the 9th; but the moment we started we were harassed by the enemy's irregulars. The march was continued for five or six miles, our position becoming more and more serious, and at last Colonel Baillie took the fatal resolution of halting till morning, instead of taking advantage of the darkness to press forward. At daybreak fifty guns opened on us. Our ten field-pieces returned the fire until our ammunition was exhausted. No orders were issued by the colonel, who had completely lost his head; so that our men were mowed down by hundreds, until at last the enemy poured down and slaughtered them relentlessly.

“ We did not see the end of the conflict. When the colonel gave the orders to halt, my father said to me, ‘ This foolish officer will sacrifice all our lives; does he think that three thousand men can withstand one hundred thousand, with a great number of guns? We will go while we can; we can do no good here.’ We mounted our horses and rode off; in the darkness we came suddenly upon a body of Tippoo's horse-men, but dashed straight at them and cut our way through, but with the loss of half our force, and did not draw rein until we reached Madras. The roar of battle had been heard at

Conjeveram, and the fury and indignation in the camp, at the desertion of Colonel Baillie's detachment, was so great that the general at last gave orders to march to their assistance. When his force arrived within two miles of the scene of conflict the cessation of fire showed that it was too late, and that Baillie's force was well-nigh annihilated. Munro retired to Conjeveram, and at three o'clock the next morning retreated, with the loss of all his heavy guns and stores, to Madras.

“ The campaign only lasted twenty-one days, and was marked by almost incredible stupidity and incapacity on the part of the two English commanders. We remained at Madras. My father determined that he would take no more share in the fighting until some English general, possessing the courage and ability that had always before distinguished them, took the command. In the meantime Hyder surrounded and captured Arcot after six weeks' delay, and then laid siege to Amboor, Chingleput, and Wandiwash. In November Sir Eyre Coote arrived from England and took the command; confidence was at once restored, for he was a fine old soldier and had been engaged in every struggle in India from the time of Clive; but with the whole country in the hands of Hyder, it was impossible to obtain draft animals or carts, and it was not until the middle of January that he was able to move. On the 19th he reached Chingleput, and on the 20th sent off a thousand men to obtain possession of the fort of Carangooly. It was a strong place, and the works had been added to by Hyder, who had placed there a garrison of seven hundred men. The detachment would not have been sent against it, had not news been obtained on the way that the garrison had fallen back to Chingleput.

“ Our troop of calvary went with the detachment, as my father knew the country well. To the surprise of Captain Davis, who was in command, we found the garrison on the walls.

“ ‘ What do you think, Rajah? ’ Captain Davis, who was riding by his side, asked. ‘ My orders were that I was to