

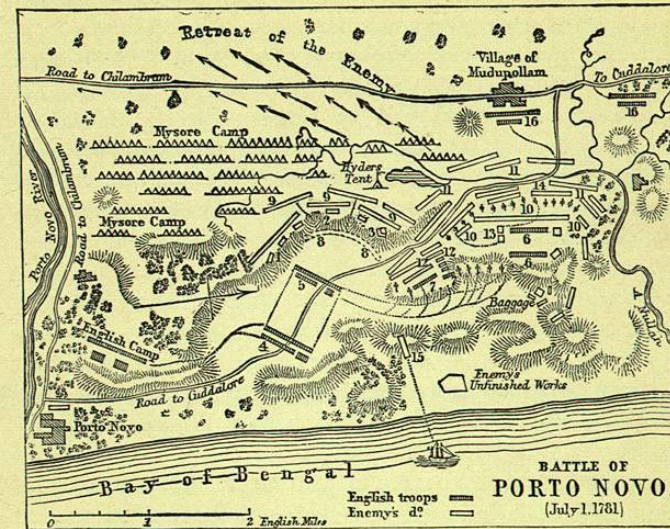
take possession of the place, but it was supposed that I should find it empty.'

“‘I should say that you had better try, with or without orders,’ my father replied. ‘The annihilation of Baillie’s force and the miserable retreat of Munro, have made a terribly bad impression through the country, and a success is sorely needed to raise the spirits of our friends.’

“‘We will do it,’ Captain Davis said, and called up a few English engineers and a company of white troops he had with him, and ordered them to blow in the gate.

“My father volunteered to follow close behind them with his dismounted cavalry, and when the word was given, forward we went. It was hot work, I can tell you. The enemy’s guns swept the road, and their musketry kept up an incessant roar. Many fell, but we kept on until close to the gate, and then the white troops opened fire upon Hyder’s men on the walls, so as to cover the sappers, who were fixing the powder-bags. They soon ran back to us. There was a great explosion, and the gates fell. With loud shouts we rushed forward into the fort; and close behind us came the Sepoys, led by Captain Davis.

“It took some sharp fighting before we overcame the resistance of the garrison, who fought desperately, knowing well enough that, after the massacre of Baillie’s force, little quarter would be given them. The British loss was considerable, and twenty of my father’s little company were among the killed. Great stores of provisions were found here, and proved most useful to the army. The news of the capture of Carangooly so alarmed the besiegers of Wandiwash that they at once raised the siege and retreated, and on the following day Sir Eyre Coote and his force arrived there. It was a curious thing that on the same day of the same month Sir Eyre Coote had, twenty-one years before, raised the siege of Wandiwash by a victory over the army that was covering the operation. Wandiwash had been nobly defended by a young lieutenant named



- 1, 2, 3. The enemy's masked batteries, placed to oppose our march to Cuddalore.
- 4, 5. First and second positions of the English advancing.
6. First English line during the cannonade.
7. Second English line during the cannonade.
8. A chain of Hyder's irregular horse posted as a decoy to the masked batteries.
9. First position of the Mysoreans.
10. Second position of Hyder's infantry, over whom his guns fired from the sand-banks.
11. Position of Hyder's horse during the cannonade.
12. Attempt by Hyder's grenadiers to gain the hill.
13. Attempt by Kiram Sahib to charge our line, where he and most of the party were killed.
14. Hyder's station during the action.
15. An armed ship firing upon the enemy.
16. English camp after the battle.

Flint, who had made his way in through the enemy's lines a few hours before the treacherous native officer in command had arranged with Hyder to surrender it, and, taking command, had repulsed every attack, and had even made a sortie.

“ There was now a long pause ; having no commissariat train, Sir Eyre Coote was forced to make for the sea-shore, and, though hotly followed by Hyder, reached Cuddalore. A French fleet off the coast, however, prevented provisions being sent to him, and, even after the French had retired, the Madras government were so dilatory in forwarding supplies that the army was reduced to the verge of starvation. It was not until the middle of June that a movement was possible, owing to the want of carriage. The country inland had been swept bare by Hyder, and, on leaving Cuddalore, Sir Eyre Coote was obliged to follow the sea-coast. When he arrived at Porto Novo, the army was delighted to find a British fleet there, and scarcely less pleased to hear that Lord Macartney had arrived as governor of Madras.

“ Hyder's army had taken up a strong position between the camp and Cuddalore, and Sir Eyre Coote determined to give him battle. Four days' rice was landed from the fleet, and with this scanty supply in their knapsacks the troops marched out to attack Hyder. We formed part of the baggage guard and had, therefore, an excellent opportunity of seeing the fight. The march was by the sea. The infantry moved in order of battle in two lines. After going for some distance we could see the enemy's position plainly. It was a very strong one ; on its right was high ground, on which were numerous batteries which would take us in flank as we advanced, and their line extended from these heights to the sand - hills by the shore.

“ They had thrown up several batteries, and might, for aught we knew, have many guns hidden on the high ground on either flank. An hour was spent in reconnoitring the enemy's position, during which they kept up an incessant cannonade,

to which the English field-guns attempted no reply. To me and the officers of this troop it seemed impossible that any force could advance to the attack of Hyder's position without being literally swept away by the cross-fire that would be opened upon it; but when I expressed my fears my father said, 'No; you will see no repetition of that terrible affair with Baillie's column. The English have now got a commander who knows his business, and when that is the case there is never any fear as to what the result will be. I grant that the look-out seems desperate. Hyder has all the advantage of a very strong position, a very powerful artillery, and has six or seven to one in point of numbers; but for all that I firmly believe that before night you will see us in possession of those hills, and Hyder's army in full flight.'

"Presently we saw a movement. The two lines of infantry formed into columns, and instead of advancing towards Hyder's position, turned down towards the sea, and marched along between it and the sand hills. We were at the same time set in motion, and kept along between the infantry and the sea, so as to be under their protection if Hyder's cavalry should sweep down. All his preparations had been made under the supposition that we should advance by the main road to Cuddalore, and this movement entirely disconcerted his plans. The sand-hills completely protected our advancing columns, and when they had reached a point almost in line with Hyder's centre, the artillery dashed up to the crest of the hills and the first column passed through a break in them and moved forward against the enemy, the guns above clearing a way for them. A short halt was made until the artillery of the second line came up, and also took their position on the hill; then the first column, with its guns, moved forward again.

"Hyder had in the meantime moved back his line and batteries into a position at right angles to that they had before occupied, and facing the passage through the sand-hills by which the English were advancing. As soon as the column

issued from the valley a tremendous fire was poured upon it, but it again formed into line of battle, and, covered by the fire of the artillery, moved forward. It was a grand sight. My father and I had left the baggage, which remained by the sea, and had ridden up on to a sand-hill, from which we had a view of the whole of the battle-ground. It was astonishing to see the line of English infantry advancing, under that tremendous fire, against the rising ground occupied by the dense masses of the enemy. Presently there was a movement opposite, and a vast body of cavalry moved down the slope. As they came the red English line suddenly broke up, and, as if by magic, a number of small squares, surrounded by glistening bayonets, appeared where it had stood.

“Down rode Hyder’s cavalry. Every gun on our side was turned upon them. But though we could see the confusion in the ranks caused by the shot that swept them, they kept on. It seemed that the little red patches must be altogether overwhelmed by the advancing wave. But as it came closer, flashes of fire spurted out from the faces of the squares. We could see the horses recoil when close to the bayonets, and then the stream poured through the intervals between the squares. As they did so, crackling volleys broke out, while from the batteries on the sand-hills an incessant fire was kept up upon them. Then, following the volleys, came the incessant rattle of musketry. The confusion among the cavalry grew greater and greater. Regiments were mixed up together, and their very numbers impeded their action. Many gallant fellows, detaching themselves from the mass, rode bravely at the squares, and died on the bayonets; others huddled together, confused and helpless against the storm of bullets and shot; and at last, as if with sudden impulse, they rode off in all directions, and, sweeping round, regained their position in the rear of their infantry, while loud cheers broke from our side.

“The squares again fell into line, which, advancing steadily, drove Hyder’s infantry before it. As this was going on,

a strong force of infantry and cavalry, with guns, was moved round by Hyder to fall on the British rear. These, however, were met by the second line, which had hitherto remained in reserve, and after fierce fighting were driven back along the sand-hills. But as they were retiring the main body of Hyder’s cavalry moved round to support the attack. Fortunately a British schooner, which had sailed from Porto Novo when the troops started, had anchored near the shore to give what protection she could to the baggage, and now opened fire with her guns upon the cavalry as they rode along between the sand-hills and the sea, and with such effect that they halted and wavered; and when two of the batteries on the sand-hills also opened fire upon them, they fell back in haste.

“This was Hyder’s last effort. The British line continued to advance until it had gained all the positions occupied by the enemy, and these were soon in headlong flight; Hyder himself, who had been almost forced by his attendants to leave the ground, being with them. It was a wonderful victory. The English numbered but 8,476 men, of whom 306 were killed or wounded. Hyder’s force was about 65,000, and his loss was not less than 10,000. The victory had an immense effect in restoring the confidence of the English troops, which had been greatly shaken by the misfortunes caused by the incapacity of Munro and Baillie; but it had no other consequences, for want of carriage, and a deficiency of provisions and equipment, prevented Sir Eyre Coote from taking the offensive, and he was obliged to confine himself to capturing a few forts near the coast.

“On the 27th of August the armies met again, Hyder having chosen the scene of his victory over Baillie’s force to give battle, believing the position to be a fortunate one for himself. Hyder had now been joined by Tippoo, who had not been present at the last battle, and his force numbered 80,000 men, while the English were 11,000 strong. I did not see the battle, as we were at the time occupied in escorting a convoy

of provisions from Madras. The fight was much better contested than the previous battle had been. Hyder was well acquainted with the ground, and made skilful use of his opportunities, by fortifying all the points at which he could be attacked. The fight lasted eight hours. At last Sir Eyre Coote's first division turned the enemy's left flank by the capture of the village of Pillalore, while his second turned their right, and Hyder was obliged to fall back. But this was done in good order, and the enemy claimed that it was a drawn battle. This, however, was not the case, as the English at night encamped on the position occupied by Hyder in the morning.

“ Still the scandalous mismanagement at Madras continued to cripple us. But, learning from the commandant at Vellore that, unless he were relieved, he would be driven to surrender for want of provisions, Sir Eyre Coote marched to his help. He met the enemy on the way. Hyder was taken by surprise, and was moving off when the English arrived. In order to give his infantry time to march away, he hurled the whole of his cavalry against the English. Again and again they charged down with the greatest bravery, and although the batteries swept their ranks with grape, and the squares received them with deadly volleys, they persevered until Tippoo had carried off his infantry and guns, and then, having lost five thousand men, followed him. The English then moved on towards Vellore. Hyder avoided another encounter, and Vellore was relieved. Sir Eyre Coote handed over to its commandant almost the whole of the provisions carried by the army, and, having thus supplied the garrison with sufficient food for six weeks, marched back to Madras, his troops suffering greatly from famine on the way.

“ Nothing took place during the winter, except that Sir Eyre Coote again advanced and revictualled Vellore. In March a French fleet arrived off the coast, landed a force of three thousand men to assist Hyder, and informed him that a

much larger division was on its way. Fortunately, this did not arrive, many of the ships being captured by the English on their way out. In the course of the year there were several fights, but none of any consequence, and things remained in the same state until the end of the year, when, on the 7th of December, Hyder died, and Tippoo was proclaimed his successor. Bussy arrived with fresh reinforcements from France in April, and took the command of Hyder's French contingent, and in June there was a battle between him and a force commanded by General Stuart, the successor to Sir Eyre Coote, who had been obliged to resign from ill health, and who had died in the spring.

“ The French position was a very strong one, and was protected by numerous field-works. The battle was the most sanguinary fought during the war, considering the numbers engaged. The English carried a portion of the works and captured fourteen guns, and, as the French retired during the night, were able to claim a victory. Their loss, however, was over a thousand, while that of the French was not more than a third of that number. During that year there was little fighting down here. A Bombay force, however, under the command of General Matthews, captured Bednore; but Tippoo hastened against him with a great force, besieged Bednore, and forced it to surrender after a desperate defence. Tippoo violated the terms of capitulation, and made the defenders prisoners. Mangalore was next besieged by him, but resisted for nearly nine months, and only surrendered in January, 1784.

“ Tippoo had, by this time, lost the services of his French auxiliaries, as England and France had made peace at home. Negotiations between Tippoo and the English went on till March, when a treaty was signed. By its provisions, Tippoo should have handed back all his prisoners. He murdered large numbers of them, but 1,000 British soldiers and 1,600 Sepoys obtained their liberty. No one knows how many were

retained of the number, calculated at 200,000, of natives carried off from the countries overrun by Hyder's troops. Only 2000 were released. More British would doubtless have been freed had it not been for the scandalous cowardice of the three men sent up as British commissioners to Tippoo. They were treated with the greatest insult and contempt by him, and, in fear of their lives, were too glad to accept the prisoners he chose to hand over, without troubling themselves in the slightest about the rest, whom they basely deserted and left to their fate."

CHAPTER V

WAR DECLARED

"THAT gives you a general idea, Dick, of the war with Tippoo. I saw little of the events after the battle of Porto Novo, as my father was taken ill soon after, and died at Madras. Seeing that there was no probability whatever of the English driving Hyder back until they had much larger forces and a much better system of management, I remained in Madras until peace was made; then I came back here, rebuilt the palace, and have since been occupied in trying to restore the prosperity of my poor people. It is, I feel, a useless task, for it is certain that ere long the English will again be engaged with Mysore, and if they are, it is well-nigh certain that Tippoo's hordes will again sweep down from the hills and carry ruin and desolation everywhere.

"He would, as Hyder had, have the advantage on his side at the beginning of the war. He has a score of passes to choose from, and can descend on to the plain by any one he may select. And even were there a force here capable of giving battle to the whole Mysorean army, it could not watch all

the passes, as to do so the army would have to be broken up into a dozen commands. Tippoo will therefore again be able to ravage the plains for weeks, perhaps, before the English can force him to give battle. But there is no army at present in existence of sufficient strength to meet him. The Madras force would have to wait until reinforcements arrived from Calcutta. It was bad before, but it will be worse now. Hyder, no doubt, slaughtered many, but he was not cruel by nature. He carried off enormous quantities of people, with their flocks and herds, but he did this to enrich Mysore with their labour, and did not treat them with unnecessary cruelty.

"Tippoo, on the other hand, is a human tiger; he delights in torturing his victims, and slays his prisoners from pure love of bloodshed. He is proud of the title of 'Tiger'; his footstool is a tiger's head, and the uniforms of his infantry are a sort of imitation of a tiger's stripes. He has military talent, and showed great judgment in command of his division—indeed, most of the successes gained during the last war were his work. Since then he has laboured incessantly to improve his army; numbers of regiments have been raised, composed of the captives carried off from here and from the west coast. They are drilled in European fashion by the English captives he still holds in his hands."

"But why, Uncle, instead of giving time to Tippoo to come down here, should we not march up the passes and compel him to keep his army up there to defend Seringapatam?"

"Because, Dick, in the first place, there is not an army strong enough to do so; but even were there a force of fifty thousand men at Madras, they could not take the offensive in time. An English army cannot move without a great train to carry ammunition, stores and provisions; and to get such a train together would be the work of months. As I have been telling you, during the three years the last war lasted, the Madras authorities were never able to collect such a train, and the consequence was that their army was unable to