

were instantly made to repel an attack, when a soldier rode in and announced that the horsemen were the advance party of two Mahratta armies close at hand. This was welcome news indeed, for Lord Cornwallis had no idea that the Mahrattas were within two hundred miles of him, and had come to believe that they had no intention whatever of carrying out their engagements. They had, it appeared, sent off a messenger every day to inform him of their movements; but so vigilant were Tippoo's cavalry that not one of them ever reached the British. In a few hours the junction was completed, and the sufferings of the army were at an end. Stores of every kind were abundant with the Mahrattas, and not only food, but clothing, and every necessary of life, could be purchased in the great bazaars occupied by the Mahratta traders who accompanied the army.

Had the two Mahratta armies arrived a couple of days earlier, the destruction of the siege train would have been avoided, Seringapatam would have been besieged, Abercrombie's army of eight thousand men have joined, and the war brought at once to a conclusion. It was now, however, too late; the means for prosecuting the siege of so powerful a fortress were altogether wanting, and the united armies returned by easy marches to Bangalore. On the march, the future plan of operations was decided upon. Lord Cornwallis sent orders for the sum of $\text{₹}1,500,000$, that had been intended for China, to be at once despatched to Bangalore for the use of the army and the allies. The larger of the Mahratta forces, under Purseram Bhow, with a detachment of Bombay troops that had accompanied it, were to march to the north-west and reduce some of the forts and towns still held by the troops of Mysore; the other Mahratta force, consisting chiefly of cavalry, under Hurry Punt, were to remain at Bangalore.

The cause of the long delay on the part of the Nizam and the Mahrattas was now explained. The Nizam's troops had

spent six months in the siege of the fortress of Capool, while an equal time had been occupied by Purseram Bhow in the siege of Durwar, a very strong place, garrisoned by ten thousand men.

Tippoo began negotiations immediately after his defeat near Seringapatam, and these were continued until July, when they were finally broken off. Some months were occupied in reducing a number of the hill-forts commanding the entrances to the various passes. Among these, two, deemed absolutely impregnable, Savandroog and Nundidroog, were captured, but the attack upon Kistnagherry was repulsed with considerable loss. By the capture of these places Lord Cornwallis obtained access to supplies from the Malabar and Carnatic coasts, and was thus free from the risk of any recurrence of the misfortunes that had marred his previous attempt to lay siege to Seringapatam; and, on the 5th of February, 1792, he again came within sight of Tippoo's capital.

CHAPTER IX

NEWS OF THE CAPTIVE

DURING the nine months that had elapsed since the retreat from before Seringapatam, Dick had been occupied in following out the main object of his presence in Mysore. Finding that Purseram Bhow's army was the first that would be engaged in active service, he asked permission from the general to join it. This was at once granted, and Lord Cornwallis introduced him to the officer in command of the Bombay troops attached to that army, informing him of the object that he had in view.

"He will not be of much use as an interpreter," he said, "for as the country in which you are going to operate formed, until lately, a part of the Mahratta dominions, Mahratti will

be principally spoken. He will therefore go simply as an officer of my staff, attached for the present to your command. He has asked me to allow him to take with him twenty men belonging to the troop of his uncle, the Rajah of Tripataly. His object in doing so is that he will be able to traverse the country independently, and can either rejoin me here or go to one of the other columns operating against the hill-forts, if it should seem to him expedient to do so. Should you desire to make a reconnaissance at any time while he is with you, you will find him useful as an escort, and will not be obliged to ask Purseram Bhow for a party of his cavalry."

Dick was sorry to leave his uncle, whose tent he had now shared for the last ten months. He found himself, however, very comfortable with the Bombay troops, being made a member of the mess consisting of the officer in command and the four officers of his staff. Wishing to have some duties with which to occupy himself, he volunteered to act as an aide-de-camp; and although the work was little more than nominal, it gave him some employment. When not otherwise engaged he generally rode with Surajah, whom his uncle had appointed to command the twenty troopers. In the year that had elapsed since his arrival in India, Dick had grown considerably and broadened out greatly, and was now a powerful young fellow of over seventeen. He had, since the troop joined the army of Lord Cornwallis, exchanged his civilian dress for the undress uniform of an officer, which he had purchased at the sale of the effects of a young lieutenant on the general's staff, who had died just as the army arrived before Bangalore. It was, indeed, necessary that he should do this, riding about, as he did, either on the staff of the general, or with the officers of the quartermasters' department. There would be no difficulty in renewing his uniform, for hardship, fever, and war, had carried off a large number of officers as well as men, and the effects were always sold by auction on the day following the funeral.

Many hill-fortresses were captured by the Mahrattis, but few offered any resistance, as their commanders knew well that there was no chance of their being relieved, while the men were in most cases delighted at the prospect of an escape from their enforced service, and of freedom to return to their homes. In a few of these forts, English captives were found. Some had been there for years, their very existence being apparently forgotten by the tyrant. Some had been fairly treated by the Mysore governor, and where this was the case, the latter was furnished by the British officers with papers testifying to the kindness with which they had treated the prisoners, and recommending them to the officers of any of the allied forces they might encounter on their way home, or when established there. Upon the other hand, some of the prisoners were found to have been all but starved, and treated with great brutality.

In two cases, where the captives said that some of their companions had died from the effects of the ill-treatment they had received, the governors were tried by court-martial and shot, while some of the others they sentenced to be severely flogged. Every captive released was closely scrutinised by Dick and eagerly questioned. From one of them he obtained news that his father had certainly been alive four years previously, for they had been in prison together in a hill-fort near Bangalore.

"I was a civilian and he a sailor," he said, "consequently neither of us were of any use in drilling Tippoo's battalions, and had been sent up there. Your father was well then. The governor was a good fellow, and we had nothing much to complain of. Mr. Holland was a favourite of his, for, being a sailor, he was handy at all sorts of things; he could mend a piece of broken furniture, repair the lock of a musket, and make himself generally useful. He left there before I did, as the governor was transferred to some other fort—I never heard where it was—and he took your father with him. I don't

know whether he had Tippoo's orders to do so, or whether he took him simply because he liked him. At any rate he was the only prisoner who went with him; the rest of us remained there till a few months back, when the fort was abandoned. It was just after the capture of Bangalore, and the place could have offered no resistance if a body of troops had been sent against it. At any rate, an order arrived one morning, and a few hours afterwards the place was entirely abandoned, and we and the garrison marched here."

"My father was quite well?"

"Quite well. He used to talk to me at times of trying to make his escape. Being a sailor, I have no doubt that he could have got down from the precipice on which the fort stood; but he knew that if he did so we should all suffer for it, and probably be all put to death as soon as Tippoo heard that one of us had escaped—for that was always done, in order to deter prisoners from trying to get away."

"Do you think that there is any chance of his being still alive?"

"That is more than I can possibly say. You see, we have not known much of what is passing outside our prison. Some of the guards were good-natured enough, and would occasionally give us a scrap of news; but we heard most from the ill-tempered ones, who delighted in telling us anything they knew that would pain us. Three or four months ago we heard that every white prisoner in Seringapatam had been put to death by Tippoo's orders, and that doubtless there would be a similar clearance everywhere else. Then again we were told that the English had retreated, beaten, from before Seringapatam, and that the last of them would soon be down the ghauts. But whether the prisoners have been killed in other hill-forts like this I cannot say, although I suppose not, or we should not have escaped."

"Certainly no such orders can have been sent to the forts here, for we have found a few prisoners in several of them.

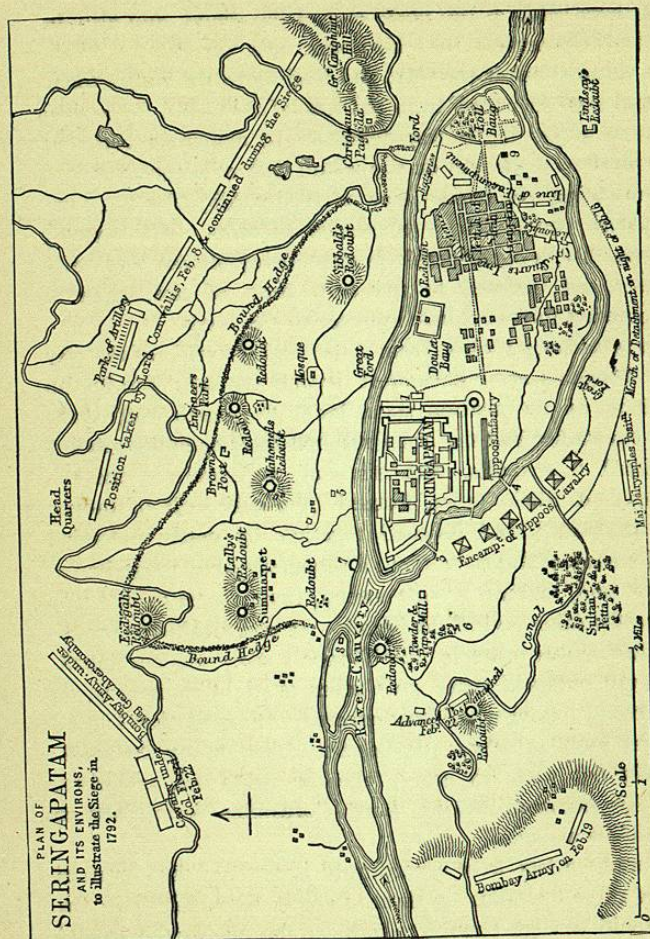
Of course it may be otherwise in the forts near the capital, which Tippoo might have thought were likely to fall into our hands, while he may not have considered it worth while to send the same orders to places so far away as this, where no British force was likely to come. Still, at any rate, it is a great satisfaction that my father was alive four years ago, and that he was in kind hands. That is all in favour of my finding him still alive in one of the places we shall take, for Lord Cornwallis intends to besiege some of the fortresses that command the passes, because he cannot undertake another siege of Seringapatam until he can obtain supplies freely and regularly from beyond the ghauts, as nothing whatever can be obtained from the country round, so completely is it wasted by Tippoo's cavalry. I have, therefore, great hopes that my father may be found in one of these forts."

"I hope, indeed, that you may find him. I am convinced that the governor would save his life if he could do so; though, on the other hand, he would, I am sure, carry out any order he might receive from Tippoo. Of course he may not be in charge of a fort now, and may have been appointed colonel of one of the regiments. However, it is always better to hope that things will come as you wish them, however unlikely it may seem that they will do so. We have been living on hope here, though the chances of our ever being released were small indeed; of course we did not even know that Tippoo and the English were at war until we heard that an English army was besieging Bangalore, and even then we all felt that, even if Tippoo were beaten and forced to make peace, it would make no difference to us. He kept back hundreds of prisoners when he was defeated before, and would certainly not surrender any he now holds unless compelled to do so; and no one would be able to give information as to the existence of captives in these distant forts. And yet, in the teeth of all these improbabilities, we continued to hope, and the hopes have been realised."

The capture of forts by the Mahratta army was abruptly checked. Having, so far, met with such slight opposition, Purseram Bhow became over-confident, and scattered his force over a wide extent of country, in order that they might more easily find food and forage. In this condition they were suddenly attacked by Tippoo, who took advantage of the English being detained at Bangalore while the transport train was being re-organised, to strike a blow at the Mahrattas. The stroke was a heavy one; many of the detached parties were completely destroyed, and the Mahratta general, after gathering the rest to his standard, was forced to retreat until strong reinforcements were sent him from Bangalore. Learning from them that it was probable Lord Cornwallis would advance as soon as they rejoined him, Dick determined to go back to Bangalore, as it was unlikely that, after the severe check they had received, the Mahrattas would resume the offensive for a time.

Surajah and the men were glad to return to the troop, and as soon as the Mysorean force returned to Seringapatam, Dick, without waiting for the infantry to get in motion, rode rapidly across the country with his little party. He accompanied the English army during their operations, obtaining permission to go with the columns engaged in the siege of the hill-fortresses, and was present at the capture of all the most important strongholds. To his bitter disappointment, no English prisoners were found in any of them, and it was but too certain that all who might have been there had been massacred by Tippoo's orders on the first advance of the British against Seringapatam.

Great indeed was the satisfaction of the army when they at last came in sight of the city. The capital of Mysore stood on an island in the river Cauvery. This was four miles in length and two in breadth; the town stood in its centre, the fort at the northern end. The island was approached by two bridges, one close to the fort, the other at the south, both be-



THE CAPITAL OF MYSORE

1. Bangalore gate.
2. Mysore gate.
3. Old bridge.
4. New bridge.
5. Place for breaching batteries.
6. Place intended for the enfilading battery.
7. Battery to defend the bridge.
8. Montresor's redoubt.
9. Hyder Ali's tomb.

ing defended by strong batteries. There were also three fords, two of these being at the north end of the island, and also defended by batteries; the third was near the centre of the island, a mile below the fort, and leading to the native town. The fort was separated from the rest of the island by a deep ditch cut across it; it was defended by numerous batteries. There were two gardens on the island full of large trees, one of them being the burial-place of Hyder Ali; this was connected with the fort by two avenues of trees. The country round was flat, a considerable portion being almost level with the river, and devoted to the cultivation of rice, while at other points a forest extended almost to the bank.

After obtaining a view, from some high ground, of the city and of Tippoo's army encamped beyond its walls, the British force took up its position six miles to the north-west of the city. No sooner had the army reached their camping ground than Lord Cornwallis, with his staff, reconnoitred the approaches. A thick hedge, formed by a wide belt of thorny shrubs interlaced and fastened together by cords, extended from the bank of the river about a thousand yards above Seringapatam, and, making a wide sweep, came down to it again opposite the other end of the island. It was within the shelter of this formidable obstacle that Tippoo's army was encamped. Within the enclosed space were seven or eight eminences, on which strong redoubts had been erected. Fearing that Tippoo might, as soon as he saw the position taken up by the assailants, sally out with his army, take the field, and, as before, cut all his communications, Lord Cornwallis determined to strike a blow at once.

At sunset, orders were accordingly issued for the forces to move in three columns at three o'clock, by which time the moon would be high enough to light up thoroughly the ground to be traversed. The centre column, consisting of 3,700 men, under Lord Cornwallis himself, was to burst through the hedge at the centre of the enemy's position, to drive the

enemy before them, and, if possible, to cross the ford to the island with the fugitives. This, however, was not to be done until the centre column was reinforced by that under General Meadows, which was to avoid a strong redoubt at the north-west extremity of the hedge, and, entering the fence at a point between the redoubt and the river, drive the enemy before it until it joined the centre column. Colonel Meadows had 3,300 under his command. The left column, consisting of 1,700 men under Colonel Maxwell, was first to carry a redoubt on Carrygut Hill just outside the fence, and, having captured this, to cut its way through the hedge, and to cross the river at once with a portion of the centre column.

Unfortunately, owing to a misunderstanding as to the order, the officer guiding General Meadows' column, instead of taking it to a point between the north-western redoubt and the river, led it directly at the fort. This was stoutly defended, and cost the British eighty men and eleven officers. Leaving a strong garrison here, the column advanced, but came upon another redoubt of even greater strength and magnitude; and the general, fearing that the delay that would take place in capturing it would entirely disarrange the plan of the attack, thought he had better make his way out through the hedge, march round it to the point where the centre column had entered it, and so give Lord Cornwallis the support he must need, opposed as he was to the whole army of Tippoo.

In the meantime, Colonel Maxwell's force had stormed the work on Carrygut Hill, and had made its way through the hedge, suffering heavily as it did so from the fire of a strong body of the enemy concealed in a water-course. The head of the centre column, under General Knox, after cutting its way through the hedge, pushed on with levelled bayonets, thrust its way through the enemy's infantry, and, mingling with a mass of fugitives, crossed the main ford close under the guns of the fort, and took possession of a village half-way between the town and the fort.