

says Walpole. Pitt kept very quiet. He took no decided part in the Inquiry about Minorca, which resulted, not in a vote of approbation or a vote of censure, but in a long recapitulation of the circumstances, ending in declaring that no more ships and no more troops could have been sent on that service. Twelve weeks were now spent in negotiations for the formation of a government. Newcastle was sent for. The duke, dreading Pitt's popularity, wished to coalesce with him. Pitt would not accept office, without the entire direction of the war. Newcastle then told the king, under a solemn promise, that he would have nothing to do with so intractable a man. The old scheme of Newcastle and "his footmen," as the king termed the duke's ministerial dependents, was then resorted to. That would not answer; and Newcastle and Pitt were brought together again, by the mediation of lord Chesterfield and lord Bute. The king was enraged that Pitt had once more been applied to, under the violation of Newcastle's pledge. George then tried his own hand at making a ministry; and proposed to associate his personal friend, lord Waldegrave, with Mr. Fox. Lord Holderness, one of the Secretaries of State, and the remaining powerful body of the Newcastle "footmen,"—powerful in their votes, if not in their abilities,—threatened to resign. There was no resource. Pitt saw that if his magnificent boast, "I am sure that I can save this country, and that nobody else can,"—if that grand ambition was to be realized,—he must not trust alone to oratory or popularity; he must command parliamentary support. Newcastle could bring that capital into a political partnership. The king had no choice. He empowered lord Hardwicke to negotiate with Newcastle and Pitt. The eloquent Commoner again became Secretary of State upon his own terms. The influential duke returned to the head of the Treasury, without any real power in the direction of the great affairs of the nation, at a memorable crisis in its fate. On the 29th of June, commenced what is emphatically termed "Mr. Pitt's Administration." It mattered not to contemporaries or to posterity, who was First Lord of the Treasury, or who presided over the Admiralty, or who was Commander-in-chief. It was "Mr. Pitt's Administration."

From the Midsummer of 1756 to the Midsummer of 1757, whilst England was lying under the dread of foreign invasion; calling for vengeance on those who had lost Minorca; distracted by political rivalries,—events were taking place in the most distant settlement of the East India Company, of which the nation had no instant cognizance, but which were as important to its future destiny as the changes to be produced by the altered character of its government.

There first came, slowly travelling for months from the Ganges to the Thames, the news of a terrible atrocity of oriental despotism, which filled every heart with grief and indignation. Six months later the report came of a swift retribution, inflicted by the hero of Arcot; and six months after that, the great intelligence arrived, that a victory had been won—the victory of Plassey, which raised the British merchant-settlers of India into the condition of conquerors and dictators, and laid the foundation of an empire which can scarcely be contemplated by us at this day without a mixed feeling of awe and pride. The fearful tragedy known as that of the Black Hole of Calcutta took place on the 20th of June, 1756, after the city had been taken by the Subahdar of Bengal. Calcutta was retaken by Clive on the 2nd of January, 1757. The battle of Plassey was won by Clive on the 23rd of June of the same year. We must briefly relate these consecutive events.

The rulers of Bengal, Orissa, and Bahar, called Subahdars, or Nabobs, professed to hold allegiance to the Great Mogul, but really exercised all the powers of sovereignty. They dwelt at their capital city of Moorshedabad. In April, 1756, Surajah Dowlah, a cruel, debauched, and ignorant boy of nineteen, succeeded his grandfather as the lord of these vast provinces. He coveted the wealth which he imagined was accumulated in the British factory of Calcutta; and he marched from Moorshedabad to Fort William with a great army. The governor, and the English captain in command, escaped in terror, and left the defence of the factory to the servants of the Company. The Subahdar having bombarded the fort for two days, further resistance was unavailing. Mr. Holwell, a civil officer of the Company, who had been chosen to act as a commander during the two days of their defence, was called before the despot. He was dissatisfied to have found only fifty thousand rupees as his prize; but he assured Mr. Holwell that the lives of himself and of his fellow-prisoners should be spared. There were a hundred and forty-five men and one woman, of this devoted company. They were to be secured for the night in a dungeon of the fort. Into that den, eighteen feet by fourteen, with two small windows, were these hundred and forty-six adults forced by the ferocious guard that the tyrant had set over them; and the door was closed. Mr. Holwell spoke from the window to an old officer, who appeared to have some human pity, promising a reward of a thousand rupees if a portion of the prisoners by his influence could be removed to another room. The officer went to make his humane attempt. He returned to say that the Nabob was asleep, and could not be disturbed. Of that night of horror, the relation given

by Mr. Holwell is one of the most powerful narratives of the extremity of suffering which was ever penned.\* The expedient of the prisoners to obtain more room and air, some sitting down never to rise again, through their companions falling upon them; the calling out to the guard to fire and relieve them from their misery; the raging thirst; the delirium; the stupefaction; the many dead trampled upon by the few living,—these are horrors without a parallel in history or fiction. An order for the release of the prisoners came from the Subahdar at six o'clock in the morning. One hundred and twenty-three had been released by death. The English lady survived, to endure the harder fate of being consigned to the haram of the Subahdar. Surajah Dowlah called for Mr. Holwell. Unable to stand, he was borne before the despot, who exhibited no remorse for the acts of his murderous guards. All he talked of was buried treasure. He sent Mr. Holwell and two of the chiefs of the factory to his capital as prisoners; the others were set at liberty. Fort William was occupied by a Mohammedan garrison of three thousand men; and the victor returned to Moorshedabad, and decreed that, in honour of his triumph, Calcutta should be called by the name which signified the Port of God.

Colonel Clive, upon his return to India, had co-operated with admiral Watson, who was in command of a British squadron off Bombay, to effect the destruction of a formidable body of pirates, who issued from their fortified headland of Gheriah, to the terror of every merchant vessel on the Indian Ocean. This stronghold was taken without much effort. Clive returned to his command as governor of Fort St. David, in June. It was not till August that the news of the terrible occurrences at Calcutta reached Madras. Admiral Watson was at anchor in the roads. Clive was sent for by the Presidency, and the command of an expedition was offered to him. There was a struggle about the claims of a senior officer, who thought that his rank, whatever was his inexperience of Indian warfare, ought to outweigh the deference paid to a young man who had captured and defended Arcot, and won the great victory of Arnee. The Presidency were firm; and so was the jealous colonel Adlerson. The Council of Madras gave the command to Clive. The colonel, who had the control of the king's stores, refused him the royal artillery. With nine hundred Europeans—which number included the 39th regiment,—that regiment which, after many glorious campaigns, proudly bears on its colours the suggestive inscription, "Primus in Indis,"—the armament set sail. The winds

\* Printed first in the "Annual Register" for 1758.

were contrary. Two months elapsed before they entered the Hooghly. Calcutta was taken on the 2nd of January, with little trouble. At the head of forty thousand men, Surajah Dowlah marched from Moorshedabad, and encamped near Fort William. Clive went forth to a night attack upon the camp, but retired, after some loss, having been embarrassed by a thick fog. Yet the Subahdar, terrified by this exhibition of prowess sought to conclude a peace with the English, and yielded to every condition that was proposed for the future security of Calcutta. There was no satisfaction for the murders of the 20th of June. Clive even consented to a treaty of alliance with this miscreant. The honest admiral refused to sign this agreement. The Calcutta merchants had pressed it upon Clive, as they thought the alliance would enable them to get rid of the rival French station at Chandernagore. The Subahdar gave a doubtful answer to their proposal to attack this settlement, which Clive interpreted as an assent. The French were overpowered, and surrendered their fort. Surajah Dowlah was now indignant against his recent allies; and sought the friendship of the French officers. Clive, called by the natives "the daring in war," was also the most adroit, and,—for the truth cannot be disguised,—the most unscrupulous in policy. The English resident at the Court of Moorshedabad, under Clive's instructions, encouraged a conspiracy to depose the Subahdar, and to raise his general, Meer Jaffier, to the supreme power. A Hindoo of great wealth and influence, Omichund, engaged in this conspiracy. After it had proceeded so far as to become the subject of a treaty between a select Committee at Calcutta and Meer Jaffier, Omichund demanded that a condition should be inserted in that treaty to pay him thirty lacs of rupees as a reward for his service. The merchants at Calcutta desired the largest share of any donation from Meer Jaffier, as a consideration for themselves, and were by no means willing that three hundred thousand pounds should go to a crafty Hindoo. Clive suggested an expedient to secure Omichund's fidelity, and yet not to comply with his demands—to have two treaties drawn; a real one on red paper, a fictitious one on white. The white treaty was to be shown to Omichund, and he was to see with his own eyes that he had been properly cared for. Clive and the Committee signed this; as well as the red treaty, which was to go to Meer Jaffier. Admiral Watson refused to sign the treacherous document. On the 19th of May, 1773, Clive stood up in his place in the House of Commons, to defend himself upon this charge against him, amongst other accusations. He boldly acknowledged that the stratagem of the two treaties was his invention;—that admiral Watson did not

sign it; but that he should have thought himself authorised to sign for him in consequence of a conversation; that the person who did sign thought he had sufficient authority for so doing. "He [Clive] forged admiral Watson's name," says lord Macaulay. Clive thus defended his conduct: "The treaty was immediately sent to Omichund, who did not suspect the stratagem. The event took place, and success attended it. The House, I am fully persuaded, will agree with me, that when the very existence of the Company was at stake, and the lives of these people [the conspirators] so precariously situated, and so certain to be destroyed, it was a matter of true policy and justice to deceive such a villain."\* The courage, the perseverance, the unconquerable energy of Clive have furnished examples to many in India who have emulated his true glory. Thank God, the innate integrity of the British character has, for the most part, preserved us from such exhibitions of "true policy and justice."

The English resident, Mr. Watts, left Moorshedabad. Clive wrote a letter of defiance to Surajah Dowlah, and marched towards his capital. The Subahdar had come forth from his city, as populous as the London of a century ago, to annihilate the paltry army of a thousand English, and their two thousand Sepoys disciplined by English officers, who dared to encounter his sixty thousand. He reached the village of Plassey with all the panoply of original warfare. His artillery alone appeared sufficient to sweep away those who brought only eight field pieces and two howitzers to meet his fifty heavy guns. Each gun was drawn by forty yoke of oxen; and a trained elephant was behind each gun to urge it over rough ground or up steep ascents. Meer Jaffier had not performed his promise to join the English with a division of the Subahdar's army. It was a time of terrible anxiety with the English commander. Should he venture to give battle without the aid of a native force? He submitted his doubt to a Council of War. Twelve officers, himself amongst the number, voted for delay. Seven voted for instant action. Clive reviewed the arguments on each side, and finally cast away his doubts. He determined to fight, without which departure from the opinion of the majority, he afterwards said, the English would never have been masters of Bengal. On the 22nd of June, his little army marched fifteen miles, passed the Hooghly, and at one o'clock of the morning of the 23rd rested under the mangoe-trees of Plassey. As the day broke, the vast legions of the Subahdar,—fifteen thousand cavalry, forty-five thousand infantry,—some armed with muskets, some with

\* "Parliamentary History," vol. xvii. col. 873.

bows and arrows, began to surround the mangoe-grove and the hunting-lodge where Clive had watched through the night. There was a cannonade for several hours. The great guns of Surajah Dowlah did little execution. The small field-pieces of Clive were well served. One of the chief Mohammedan leaders having fallen, disorder ensued, and the Subahdar was advised to retreat. He himself fled upon a swift camel to Moorshedabad. When the British forces began to pursue, the victory became complete. Meer Jaffier joined the conquerors the next day. Surajah Dowlah did not consider himself safe in his capital; and he preferred to seek the protection of a French detachment at Patna. He escaped from his palace disguised; ascended the Ganges in a small boat; and fancied himself secure. A peasant whose ears he had cut off recognised his oppressor, and with some soldiers brought him back to Moorshedabad. In his presence-chamber now sat Meer Jaffier, to whose knees the wretched youth crawled for mercy. That night Surajah Dowlah was murdered in his prison, by the orders of Meer Jaffier's son, a boy as blood-thirsty as himself. At the installation of Meer Jaffier, as Subahdar of Bengal, Clive conducted him to the seat of honour. His gratitude was not withheld from those who had raised him to his power. Under the treaty made before the battle of Plassey, large concessions were to be made to the Presidency of Calcutta; and money amounting to two millions and three-quarters sterling was now granted as a payment to the fleet, the troops, and the Committee, by whose agency this revolution was effected. Clive was content with something under three hundred thousand pounds. He subsequently declared in the House of Commons, that when he walked through the Treasury at Moorshedabad, and saw gold and silver and jewels piled up to the right and the left, he might have helped himself to what he pleased. He added, with an oath, "at this moment do I stand astonished at my own moderation." When Omichund was denied his expected gratuity, and was told of the disgraceful fraud that had been practised upon him, he fainted, and was carried home, to exhibit during the small remainder of his days, an impaired intellect, and to die a broken-hearted idiot.

A statute of Clive has recently been erected in Whitehall. It is highly characteristic of a man of strong will and undaunted courage—"not a man to do anything by halves." Macaulay uses this phrase in speaking of Clive's participation in the fraud and forgery by which Omichund was deceived. But this determination to do nothing by halves, though it betrayed Clive into a dishonourable action, made him a "heaven-born general," as Pitt called

him. His wondrous energy led him, after he had placed Meer Jaffer on the throne of Bengal, never to rest until the ascendancy of the English Company in that province was supreme, undisturbed by French or Dutch rivalry. Exactly a year after the battle of Plassey, a Commission arrived at Bengal from London, remodelling the Presidency, and not including Clive in the nomination of officers. The news of the great victory had not reached the India House when the Court of Directors thus threw a slight upon the only man who could preserve their ascendancy. But the members of the Presidency at Bengal had the good sense to request Clive to take the government upon himself. By his exertions, and through his example, the French were gradually driven from every stronghold; and in six months after the accession of George III. not a vestige of the supremacy which Dupleix and Bussy and Lally had won for them, remained in the peninsula.

## CHAPTER II.

The Administration.—Pitt's sole conduct of the war and of foreign affairs.—Frederick's second campaign.—Victory of Prague.—Defeat at Kolin.—Failure at Rochefort.—Convention of Closter-Seven.—Failure of expedition against Louisbourg.—Riots about the Militia Act.—Frederick's victory of Rosbach.—Subsidy to Prussia.—Cherbourg taken, and its works demolished.—St. Maloes.—Operations on the African coast.—Successful expedition against Louisbourg.—The turning point in Pitt's Administration.—Frederick's third campaign.—Zorndorf.—Hochkirchen.—Wolfe appointed to command an expedition to Quebec.—The battle of Minden.—Canada.—Operations in North America.—Wolfe in the St. Lawrence.—His desponding letter.—Heights of Abraham.—Death of Wolfe.—Quebec surrendered.—Hawke's victory in Quiberon Bay.—Death of George the Second.

THE appointments of several of Mr. Pitt's political friends to high offices, in the final arrangement of the Administration, excited no surprise. Earl Temple became Lord Privy Seal, and Mr. Legge, Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the re-appointment of lord Anson to the Admiralty—unpopular as he was, abused as he had been by those who were now to be his associates—was regarded as "a most surprising phenomenon."\* He had been himself a wretched administrator—"an incapable object," as Walpole terms him. It is stated that Pitt took effectual means to neutralize Anson's incapacity. He stipulated with the king that the correspondence with naval commanders should be in his own hands, and that the Board of Admiralty should sign the dispatches without reading them.† Doubtful as this statement may appear, it is unquestionable that Pitt, from the hour of his triumphant return to that post which involved the whole conduct of foreign affairs and of the war, determined that no coadjutor should interfere with his plans. The prospect before him was not very brilliant. The nation was committed to its alliance with Frederick II.; and at the very moment when the new ministry had entered upon their duties, came the news of a great disaster—"the reversal of all the king of Prussia's triumphs."‡ Frederick had commenced his second campaign at the end of April. Even in the days of Marlborough, Europe had not seen such a vast array of mighty armies moving in every direction—Austrians, troops of the Empire, French, Swedes—four hundred and thirty thousand men gathering together to crush the prince of a small German state, who had only a hun-

\* Waldegrave—"Memoirs," p. 155.

† Thackeray—"Life of Chatham," vol. i. p. 293. ‡ Walpole to Mann, July 3.