

CHAPTER XXIII.

Termination of hostilities and negotiations for peace— Conditions of peace—Surrender of hostages—Return of the confederate armies.

Cornwallis now began to make vigorous preparations for the siege of the fort. The Bombay army under Abercrombie effected a junction with the British troops at Seringapatam on the 16th February. About this time Parasuram Bhow also reached with a cavalry of 20,000. Lord Cornwallis had also the entire command of the grain merchants in all quarters and supplies of provisions freely reached him. The allies were in exultation on the prospect of capturing the fort and sharing large amounts of prize money. On the 24th February however, the army received orders to discontinue working in the trenches as negotiations for peace were proceeding.

Though it was believed everywhere that Cornwallis held Tippu in the hollow of his hand on account of the advantages he possessed, still when proposals for peace were made, Cornwallis showed no reluctance to enter into negotiations and there were two reasons for such an attitude on his part. The first was that public opinion in England was opposed to further conquests in India and he had been denounced as having gone to war for reasons of personal avarice. Cornwallis at the same time was himself not in favour of entirely crushing Tippu's power, as thereby he thought he would be placing the Mahrattas in a position of such preponderance that a conflict between them and the English would be inevitable. Whatever might have been the working of his mind, it is enough for our purposes here to state that he now showed no disinclination to consider the terms of peace proposed by Tippu.

Tippu even in the previous year had expressed a desire for peace. In August of that year he had sent Appaji Rao to Cornwallis but the mission had proved fruitless. In January following he made a further attempt to induce Cornwallis to receive an envoy, but the latter had replied that he could give no ear to any such proposal till amends were made for the detention of two British

Officers of the Coimbatore garrison as prisoners of war in violation of the terms of capitulation concluded with his commander Kamruddin. Now that the gathering storm was about to burst over his head, Tippu thought more seriously of peace and on the evening of the 8th February sent for these two officers Lieutenants Chalmers and Nash who found him seated in a small tent on the south glacis of the fort plainly attired and with only a few attendants. After acquainting them with the fact of their release, he asked Chalmers if he would see the Governor-General on going to the British Camp. On being answered in the affirmative, he put a letter into that officer's hands saying that it was on the subject of peace and expressing a wish that he should return with an answer and concluded the interview by presenting him two shawls and five hundred rupees. Cornwallis agreed on the 11th February with the concurrence of his two allies to receive an envoy on behalf of Tippu. Gulam Ali who it will be remembered had been sent as an ambassador to Constantinople was selected by Tippu as his envoy and with him was associated Ali Raza of Gurumkonda. They were met on behalf of Lord Cornwallis by Sir John Kennaway, Political Resident at the court of Hyderabad, by Meer Alum on the part of Sikander Jah and by a person deputed by Haripanth who was conversant with revenue matters. Four conferences, each lasting nearly the whole day generally with the intervention of a day for reference and instruction, brought the demands of the confederates to a distinct issue and on the 22nd their final decision was sent to Tippu containing the following conditions:—

1. One half of the Mysore territories as they stood before the commencement of the war was to be ceded to the allies adjoining their respective territories.
2. Three crores and thirty lakhs of rupees to be paid either in Gold Mohars, pagodas, or bullion, half immediately and the other half in instalments.
3. All prisoners of the allied powers from the time of Haidar Ali to be unequivocally restored.
4. The second and third sons of Tippu to be given as hostages for a due fulfilment of the conditions of the treaty.

On the 23rd Tippu assembled his principal officers in the great mosque in the fort and laying before them the Koran adjured them to give him their undisguised opinion on the terms of the ultimatum. The officers unanimously replied that though they were ready to lay down their lives for their master, yet the morale of the army had been considerably shaken and that further fighting was not likely to be attended with success. The preliminary articles duly signed and sealed by Tippu were then sent to Lord Cornwallis on the same day. On the 26th the two hostages Abdul Khalik aged ten and Mohiuddin aged eight were sent to the English camp, and the scene as described by Major General Dirom in his account of the third Mysore War is pathetic.

On the day mentioned, the young hostages left the fort mounted on a richly caparisoned elephant. The ramparts were crowded with soldiers and citizens whose sympathies were deeply excited, while Tippu himself was on the bastion above the main entrance and even he, it is said, found a difficulty in concealing his emotion. As the elephants issued from the archway, the artillery at Seringapatam fired a salute and as they approached the British lines, a salute was also fired there. Sir John Kennaway who negotiated with Tippu's envoys met the young princes with the vakeels of the Nizam and the Mahrattas at the British outposts under a guard of honour and conveyed them with all respect within the British lines. The two boys were each seated in a howdah of chased silver and were attended by their vakeels with 200 sepoy in addition to the body-guards who brought up the rear. The procession was splendid and picturesque in the extreme. It was led by several camel harkars and seven standard bearers carrying small green standards, followed by a hundred pikemen bearing spears inlaid with silver. The princes were received by the troops in line presenting arms, beating drums, and officers in front saluting.

Attended by his staff and the colonels of regiments, Lord Cornwallis received them at the entrance of his tent, where after they had descended from their howdahs, he embraced them and led them in taking each by the hand. Though the children were young, they had been educated with care and the spectators were surprised to find

in them all the reserve, the politeness and attention of maturer years. When Lord Cornwallis had placed one on each side of him as he sat, Gulam Ali surrendered them formally saying:—"These children were till this morning the sons of my master. Their situation is now changed and they must look up to your Lordship as their father." Cornwallis then assured the vakeel that his protection would be fully extended to his interesting hostages and he spoke so kindly and cheerfully that he is said to have at once won the confidence of the two boys. The boys were dressed in flowing robes of white muslin and wore red turbans on their heads, each of which had a bunch of richest pearls. Round their necks were strings of the same jewels, to which was suspended a pendant consisting of an emerald and a ruby of great size surrounded by diamonds. To each boy Lord Cornwallis gave a gold watch and in return he was presented with a fine Persian sword. Then betelnut and attar of roses were distributed and the two boys were next conducted to their own tents under a guard of honour.

It took some time to determine the limits of the territories to be ceded to the allied powers and when at last the schedules were sent to Tippu for inspection and reference, it was found that in the English share Coorg had been included for restoration to the Raja of that country. Tippu is said to have become frantic with rage and to have exclaimed, "To which of the English possessions is Coorg adjacent? Why do they not ask for Seringapatam itself? They know that I sooner would have died in the breach than consent to such a cession and dared not bring it forward until they had obtained possession of my children and treasure." Cornwallis however was unyielding, for the Raja of Coorg, Veera Raj, had been a staunch ally and had proved himself most useful in the military operations against Tippu in that quarter. Tippu showed much vacillation and procrastination in ratifying the treaty but he had to yield to Cornwallis' firmness in the end and the final scene was enacted on the 19th March 1792. At 10 o'clock in the morning of that day the young princes formally delivered the treaty to Lord Cornwallis. Subsequently on the arrival of the vakeels of the Nizam and the Mahrattas, the elder boy receiving two copies of the treaty from the hands of Lord Cornwallis delivered a copy to each

of these vakeels, which he is said to have done with great manliness. The princes having completed the ceremony and delivered this final testimony of their father's submission, took their leave and returned to their tents. Thus ended the last scene of this important war which cost Tippu the loss of 70 fortresses, 800 pieces of cannon, 3 crores and 30 lakhs of rupees, 50,000 men in killed, wounded and missing and the cession of half of his dominions.

The cession of the territories carried the limits of the Mahratta country to the river Thungabhadra, their frontier in 1779, and also restored to Nizam Ali his possessions to the north of the same river and the province of Kadapa to the south which had been lost about the period. The English obtained Malabar and Coorg, the province of Dindigul and Baramahal. Shortly after, Cornwallis returned to Madras with the hostages and the troops of the Nizam and of the Mahrattas also returned to their respective territories.