

CHAPTER XXIX.

**Surrender of Abdul Khalik, another son of Tippu—
Funeral of Tippu—Heavy thunderstorm at the close—
Colonel Arthur Wellesley on the real cause of the war.**

On the morning of the 5th May, Abdul Khalik, the second son of Tippu and one of the former hostages in the hands of Lord Cornwallis surrendered himself to General Baird. He was on the previous day in command of the southern face of the fort but had managed to escape when the storming party entered the fort. Colonel Dalrymple who was posting guards at the Daria Dowlat Bagh on observing a small party of horsemen on the north bank of the river waving a white hand-kerchief sent his Brigade-Major Captain Gerard to learn what they wanted. One of the horsemen approaching the Captain informed him that one of the sons of Tippu was desirous of delivering himself up to the English on obtaining assurances of personal protection and the preservation of his honour. Gerard pledged himself for the observance of these stipulations and met the prince in the middle of the river and repeated these assurances. Abdul Khalik was then conducted to General Baird who is said to have received him with every mark of kindness and accompanied him to General Harris' camp. After meeting General Harris who also assured him of protection, Abdul Khalik met Meer Alum with whom he took some refreshments. On his way to the fort he was informed by some of his servants of the fate which had befallen his father and on entering the palace he was permitted to see the body. Turning to Colonel Wellesley who happened to be there, he requested him to hasten the burial and suggested that the body might be placed by the side of Haidar Ali in the Mausoleum in the Lal Bagh. The same forenoon the two princes were sent back to the palace from Harris' camp and when they were informed of their father's fate were extremely affected.

In the meanwhile, General Harris had requested Meer Alum to make every preparation needed for the funeral of the deceased ruler in the afternoon with all the honours due to his distinguished

position. The head Khaji was sent for and the body being covered with fine muslins and rich cloths was placed in the State palanquin. The bier carried by the servants of the palace was preceded by two companies of British troops and immediately followed by Abdul Khalik on horseback, accompanied by the Killedar and a great number of Mussalmans on foot and with two companies in the rear. During the procession the Khaji chanted verses from the Koran in which the attendants joined. The streets were crowded with the inhabitants, many of whom prostrated themselves as the corpse passed and were loud in their lamentations. Meer Alum and other officers of the Nizam's service with Captain Malcolm and a great number of officers of the army were at the gate of the Lal Bagh and having paid their respects to the corpse joined in the procession.

As the procession approached the Mausoleum, the British troops lined themselves on either side and as the bier passed, presented arms. A salute of minute guns corresponding in number to the age of the deceased was also fired. The body was then placed next to that of Haidar Ali and the usual prayers and ceremonies being performed, 5,000 rupees which had been given by order of Colonel Wellesley for the purpose was distributed by the Khaji among the fakirs and the poor who attended.

Several elegiac verses were composed on the occasion and the following is a translation of one of them :—

'Tippu Sultan was slain unexpectedly. He shed his blood for the sake of the religion of the true God on Saturday the 28th Zikad. The Day of Judgment manifested itself at the seventh hour from the morning. Blood flowed from every wall and door in the streets of Seringapatam. His heart was ever bent on religious warfare and at length he obtained the crown of martyrdom, even as he desired. Ah! at the destruction of this prince and of his kingdom, let the world shed tears of blood. For him the Sun and the Moon shared equally in grief. The heavens were turned upside down and the earth darkened. When I (the poet) saw that sorrow for him pervaded all, I asked Grief for the year of his death and an angel (Hatif) replied—'Let us mourn his loss with burning sighs and

tears, for the light of the religion of Islam has departed from this world! An inscription was also placed on Tippu's tomb, the translation of which is as follows:—'The light of Islam and the faith left this world. Tippu became a martyr for the faith of Muhammad. The sword was lost. The offspring of Haidar was a great martyr.' All these phrases in the original produced on adding up the numerical value of the words composing them the year 1213 of the Hijira or the year 1799 of the Christian Era. Scarcely had Tippu's remains been committed to the earth, when a most tremendous storm of thunder, lightning and rain commenced and continued its violence for some hours. So fatal was the effect of lightning that some lives were lost. It is curious to observe how this one and the same event received two opposite interpretations based on preconceptions. An English writer remarked that it looked as if the demons of air were rejoicing over the downfall of Tippu, the Tiger of Mysore, while a Mahomedan writer considered that for him the Sun and the Moon shared equally in grief and the heavens were turned upside down and the earth darkened. Thus ended the house of Haidar after a brief rule of about 40 years, during which period the Mysore Kingdom reached the zenith of its glory and fell to the deepest depth of degradation almost touching the verge of extinction.

Whatever may have been the animosities and prejudices which existed in the minds of Englishmen at the time against Tippu, it should now be conceded that the primary cause of his destruction was the rivalry that existed between France and England for ascendancy in India. Colonel Arthur Wellesley who arrived in India towards the end of 1796 in a private letter to his brother Lord Mornington, long before there was any prospect of the latter being appointed Governor-General of India wrote as follows regarding the situation in India:—"People say that Tippu Sahib has an army on foot, which I do not believe. As I have observed since my arrival here, he is a constant object of fear to the English and whenever they want to add a colouring to a statement of danger, they find out that he has an army in motion..... As long as the French have an establishment here, Great Britain cannot call herself safe in

India. They consider that they must be particularly guarded against another war, as that swarms of Frenchmen, aristocrats, democrats, moderates will come here to seek service in the armies of the native princes, and all Frenchmen in such a situation are equally dangerous. They would shortly discipline their numerous armies in the new mode which they have adopted in Europe than which nothing can be more formidable to the small body of fighting men of which the Company's armies in general consist and in the end they would force us to increase our armies and of course our expenses to such a degree that the country could not be kept or indeed would not be worth keeping."

This opinion of Arthur Wellesley receives support from some of the opinions expressed by others in previous years. Edward Moore who was with the army of Lord Cornwallis in the third Mysore War in a book named "Operations of Captain Little's Detachment" written by him and published in 1794 speaking of Tippu recorded this opinion of him:—"Of late years, indeed, our language has been ransacked for terms in which well disposed persons were desirous to express their detestation of his name and character. Vocabularies of vile epithets have been exhausted and doubtless many have lamented that the English language is not copious enough to furnish terms of obloquy sufficiently expressive of ignominy, wherewith they in justice deem his memory deserves to be branded Those, however, who do not choose to be carried away by the torrent of popular opinion, but in preference to thinking by proxy venture to think for themselves, can find the same excuse for the restlessness of Tippu as for that of any other ambitious sovereign and on the subject of his cruelties venture to express a doubt whether they may not possibly have been exaggerated..... When a person travelling through a strange country finds it well cultivated, populous with industrious inhabitants, cities newly founded, commerce extending, towns increasing and everything flourishing so as to indicate happiness, he will naturally conclude it to be under a form of government congenial to the minds of the people. This is a picture of Tippu's country and our conclusion respecting its government." Major Dirom another writer of the same period has recorded the following

opinion of Tipu—"Whether from the operation of the system established by Haidar, from the principles which Tipu has adopted for his own conduct, or from his dominions having suffered little by invasion for many years, or from the effect of these several causes united, his country was found everywhere full of inhabitants and apparently cultivated to the utmost extent of which the soil was capable, while the discipline and fidelity of his troops in the field were testimonies equally strong of the excellent regulations which existed in his army. His government, though strict and arbitrary, was the despotism of a politic and able sovereign who nourishes, not oppresses, the subjects who are to be the means of his future aggrandisement, and his cruelties were in general inflicted only on those whom he considered his enemies."

Almost the first thing that Lord Mornington did after he took charge of his high office was to call upon Tipu to receive an envoy to discuss matters relating to the Malartic proclamation in Mauritius. His minute of 12th August 1798 affords clear proof of his conviction that the presence of the French in India was a menace to the British and that the reduction of Tipu to the position of a subsidiary ally, if not his extermination altogether, was essential for their safety and the result of this conviction was the appalling tragedy enacted at Seringapatam on the 4th of May 1799. Though it is now more than a century and a quarter since the rule of Tipu ended in Mysore, yet posterity has continued to treat his memory with respect and compassion, forgetting his defects of character, especially his obstinacy in his own judgment. Syed Gaffar one of the most devoted adherents of Tipu bitterly complained a few minutes before his death that his master was surrounded by self-seekers and sycophants and that he would not change his belief that the assault would not take place during the day. His father Haidar had very early in the beginning of his ascendancy perceived that the great strength of the English was their navy and that it was prudent to cultivate friendship with them, though his attempts to do so were frustrated by the obtuseness of the members of the Madras Government at the time. The disaster which befell Tipu in the war of 1792 should have been a sufficient warning to avoid involving himself in further complications, especially when to the helm of

affairs in British India there had succeeded in place of the non-interfering Sir John Shore so vigorous and far-sighted a personality as Lord Mornington.