

Chapter IX

THE LAST PHASE



Wellesley was appointed Governor-General in October 1797. He sailed for Cape of Good Hope in February 1798 and arrived at Calcutta on 17th May 1798. At the time of his arrival, Tipu was on good terms with the English, but in less than a year they destroyed him. When Wellesley arrived Tipu wrote to him a congratulatory letter assuring him of his friendship towards the English. Yet within a short period a war was precipitated which took the life of Tipu.

Wellesley came to India with an obsessed mind that Tipu should be removed at all costs to protect British interests. His reasons for this decision were: Tipu's power had enormously increased; the internal tranquility of his kingdom, the improvement of his finances, and the discipline of his armies had upset the balance of power brought about by the Treaty of Srirangapatna; he was stirring the country powers against the English since 1792; he was negotiating

with the Nizam for a hostile alliance; he had contacted the Marathas too for the same purpose; and worse still he was conspiring with Zaman Shah for invasion of India.

But the immediate cause for chastisement was his dispatch of an embassy to Mauritius seeking French aid to subvert the British power. He had completed his preparations at home, and was only awaiting the arrival of a French force to launch his offensive. Whether small or big the French had responded favourably to his request, and had actually sent a force which was accepted and enrolled in his army. He had approved the activities of his envoys and received them with honour which meant ratification of Malartic proclamation. If the French had sent a larger force he would have declared the war. Although the help received was insignificant, the nature of Tipu's transactions was most provoking and insulting to the English. Wellesley thought that Tipu had taken these steps unprovoked at a time when the English were troubled by the Napoleonic menace in Europe and the break-up of the triple alliance in India. The growing influence of the French in India, the disturbed conditions in Poona Court, and the 14000 strong troops of Raymond with whom Tipu was in touch, would have considerably facilitated his designs, according to the English, if he had decided on quick action¹.

Wellesley regarded these activities as a breach of the existing treaties and contrary to the laws of nations which provide every State the right to preserve its independence. These rights entitle a State to call for an explanation. In case of a denial or evasion of an explanation, the injured party can resort to force of arms in vindication of its rights. But the offence of Tipu was considered by Wellesley not an injury but an open declaration of war. Tipu was charged of the guilt of stationing his forces near the borders of the Company and of hostile negotiations with Poona, Hyderabad and Paris against the English. Wellesley observed, "The act of Tipu's ambassadors, ratified by himself and accompanied by the landing of a force in his country is a public, unqualified and unambiguous declaration and act of war, aggravated by an avowal that the object of the war is neither expansion, reparation nor security, but the total destruction of the British Government. No State in India can misconstrue the conduct of Tipu"². A mere explanation in such circumstances would be "disgraceful in its principle and frivolous in its object". It would exhibit to the other powers the weakness of the Company, and would offer Tipu a pretext for war. The question of asking reparations was considered equally impolitic, as Tipu's

1. Martin, Vol. I, p. 643.

2. Ibid., pp. 172-73

actions were an injury only intended and not executed. Tipu had seized no property, invaded no lands and violated no right and hence could not be legally asked to pay reparations. Yet he should be punished as he was guilty of a much more serious crime. While professing friendship with the Company, he had completed the means of their destruction. His failure to secure adequate aid could not lessen the degree of his offence. He should be rated as an irreconcilable, desperate and treacherous enemy. Therefore, nothing less than a substantial reduction of his power would satisfy the English and guarantee their safety. Since he would not voluntarily surrender such territory, a war was felt an absolute necessity. The Court of Directors, Wellesley maintained, had empowered him to declare war if the French landed in India. The French had actually landed and hence the Parliamentary restraints of the Charter Act of 1793 had been removed. Though the number that had arrived was insignificant, Wellesley defended by saying that even a small force could cause great mischief.

These were the grounds on which Wellesley declared war. But the real cause of the war was neither the embassy of Tipu to Mauritius, nor the Proclamation of Malartic, nor Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, nor the threat of Zaman Shah's invasion, but the aggressive designs of Wellesley, who was bent on war and found the plausible excuses. The Court of Directors had changed their pacific policy and had deliberately chosen an aggressive and ambitious Governor-General who fought with every important power in India. Wellesley had already conceived of his hostile design on Tipu before he knew of the proclamation. His letters from Cape of Good Hope betray his scheme to reduce Tipu whose power was exaggerated beyond all proportions. Wellesley observed, "I have averted in this letter to the increased assiduity with which Tipu had endeavoured to raise animosities against us among the native powers and to his intercourse with Zaman Shah. I wish to know from you whether we ought to suffer, without animadversion and spirited representation, such open acts of hostility on the part of Tipu"³. He desired to restore the political balance which had gone against the English. He came to India highly prejudiced against Tipu. He hated anything that had any connection either with the French or with Tipu.

Though Tipu had sent embassies before for the same purpose of seeking foreign aid, which was well-known to the English, that was at no time made the ground of war. Sir John Shore was aware of Tipu's overtures to Poona and Hyderabad, and he had taken no action. Nothing extraordinary had happened since Shore left India to

3. Ibid., Letter to the Court, p. 30.

justify a war. On the other hand the death of Raymond, the frustration of Tipu in winning the support of the Indian powers, and the ridiculously small force he received from Mauritius proved that Tipu was less capable of disturbing the peace. Even Wellesley confessed that Tipu had committed no legal wrong, "seized no property, invaded no territories and violated no rights".

Tipu's bitter hostility towards the English was no new thing. The Anglo-Mysore rivalry was there since the rise of Haidar. The English were aware that Tipu had not reconciled himself to his losses of 1792, and that he would unite with any power. Indian or foreign, to recover his losses, Cornwallis had concluded the Peace of 1792 knowing fully well that Tipu continued to entertain the same antipathy towards the English, yet he was spared because the essential question was his capacity to subvert British power. He had been sufficiently crippled in 1792, lest he should cause trouble in future. The Company was never before so powerful and extensive as in 1798. If Tipu could be defeated at the height of his power in 1792, he could easily be punished in 1798, when he had lost half of his strength. With all the strategic forts and passes in the hands of the English, and when he had received no effective help from anywhere, the Company was not in real danger. Whereas all the Indian powers had suffered, Tipu by his defeat of 1792, the Nizam by the disaster of Kurdla and the Marathas by their internecine wars, the Company alone had enjoyed peace and prosperity since 1792. Even Wellesley acknowledged that Tipu alone, unaided by others, could not hazard a rupture with the English"⁴.

Therefore the only possibility of Tipu's offensive would have been in the event of his receiving enough aid from outside, which he had neither received in 1798, nor was there any hope of receiving. None of the Indian powers was in a position to join him. Even the Nizam's French corps was not a source of threat as Raymond was dead and the Nizam was willing to disband the corps, provided the English substituted it by their own. In October 1798 it was actually disbanded, and hence the English apprehensions on this score were frivolous.

Regarding the French corps with Tipu, which was a very small unit, it should be remembered that other rulers too had maintained, and of late had increased the French corps in their armies. Tipu had always retained a French corps, Wellesley accepted the fact the arrival of a handful French volunteers in 1798, some of whom were mechanics, had not changed Tipu's position. Mere solicitous of aid does not constitute a breach of existing treaties. Tipu was an independent prince and he had the right to negotiate alliances with other powers.

4. Ibid., p. 275.

Wellesley's conduct could have been justified if any forces had been dispatched from Mauritius, or if the French had a strong squadron off the coast, or if they had fortified possessions on the mainland, or if Tipu was actually at war with the Company. Wellesley proceeded on the ground of an injury intended and not executed for which the laws of nations do not prescribe so serious a penalty as total destruction. Even a British historian, Malcolm, held the view, "His conduct since the Peace of 1792 has shown that, though he possesses those feelings which are allowed not only to be natural but honourable, in a humble monarch (viz., a spirit of ambition to regain his lost power and fame and a spirit of revenge against the State that has humbled him), yet that he pursues these objects, not with heedless passions, but with that unremitting activity and zealous warmth which we could look for in a prince who had come to a serious determination to endeavour by every reasonable means in his power to regain what he had lost"⁵. The gravity of an offence is determined by the injury done, and Tipu was not guilty of doing any injury. The incident of Mauritius only indicated how ineffective was his attempt to secure foreign aid.

Wellesley's apprehension that Franco-Mysore co-operation might endanger at any time Company's position was also baseless. The French had been steadfast in their hostility against the English for half a century, and yet they had not been able to inflict any injury. Even when they had co-operated with Mysore in the past, they had not been able to reduce the English. There was no comparison between the relative strength of the French and the English in India in 1798. Even if there had been a danger to the English by the Napoleonic expedition to Egypt, his defeat at Aboukir Bay in 1798 had dispelled all thoughts of alarm. The English maintained such vigil over seas that the French lamented their inability to send one sail in safety to India⁶. Napoleon could not have come overland after his defeat at the hands of Sydney Smith at Accre in Syria. The revolutionary upheavals and the constitutional crisis in Paris precluded any large transshipment of French troops to India. Wellesley was aware of that fact when he said, "I do not apprehend unless some new revolution happens in the Isle of France that Tipu will be able to derive any considerable aid from that quarter"⁷. Yet he did not relax his preparations for war.

The war was not felt a necessity by all the servants of the Company. When Wellsley first mooted it, it came as a surprise to many. Memorandums were

5. Malcolm, J. A Sketch of Political History of India.

6. Asiatic Annual Register, 1799, p. 31.

7. Martin, Vol. I, p. 162.

submitted to him to avert it and even Wellesley's displeasure was incurred by suggesting its postponement. If the war had been in self-defence, it would have received the approval of all. The Madras Government opposed the war so strongly that only the superior authority of Wellesley could silence the opposition. Wellesley said "This opposition I am resolved to crush; I possess sufficient powers to do so; and I will exert those powers to the extreme point of their extent, rather than suffer the smallest particle of my plans for the public service to be frustrated by such unworthy means"⁸. Josiah Webb, the Governor of Madras, observed, "The late intelligence from the Islands, which leaves us no room to doubt that the military have been sent to France and the French dispensed, satisfies me that no immediate cooperation can take place; and consequently, that no rupture is to be apprehended but by our own provocation"⁹.

Thus the main cause of the war was the ambition of Wellesley to reduce Tipu. A successful war would bring limitless advantages. The authorities approved of Wellesley's action because "the only question was whether or not the British interests were promoted"¹⁰. The Home Government would have censured Wellesley only in one case, in the event of discomfiture and defeat, which he was determined to avoid by his thorough preparations.

If there had been any doubts as to his aggressive designs, they were removed by his later policy to attack Tipu unaware after keeping him in false security for seven months. The Court of Directors had instructed "that the utmost discretion should be used that we may not be involved in a war in India without the most inevitable necessity"¹¹. By December 1798 there existed absolutely no necessity for war. Nelson's victory, the liquidation of French corps in Hyderabad, the conclusion of a subsidiary treaty with the Nizam, the retreat of Zaman Shah, and Tipu's willingness for accommodation made this war the most unprovoked war. Wellesley grew more and more aggressive as the war preparations were more and more advanced. At first he desired to demand a bare guarantee from Tipu of his pacific intentions, but ultimately he proceeded to destroy him completely. At one stage he was prepared to adjust his differences with Tipu on these conditions: the exclusion of the French from Mysore, the admission of a British Resident, and the exchange of Canara and the coastal area for some other English districts¹². But with every addition in

8. Ibid., p. 218.

9. Ibid., p. 74.

10. Mill, Vol. VI, p. 88.

11. Martin, Vol. I, p. 162.

12. Ibid., p. Vol. I, p. 206.

Company's strength, the terms were made more harsh. Tipu was willing to concede any reasonable terms which would leave him "an independent prince"¹³. But Wellesley would not negotiate until a substantial part of Tipu's country was actually in English hands.

Tipu was not given even a chance to explain his position. When in the last minute Wellesley made a show of it, he was not sincere, and only desired to escape the censure of Home authorities if the war went against him. Even after Tipu agreed to receive Major Doveton, the invasion was not stopped. Unprovoked by Tipu and only on the basis of imaginary dangers, the English proceeded to declare war. The Act of Parliament had categorically prohibited all wars of aggression, and yet when Tipu's power was subverted, no action was taken against Wellesley. On the other hand encomiums were showered on him. If Tipu had been unable to vindicate his just rights in Wynad, he was much less capable of carrying on an aggressive war on the English. The real reason for his removal was that he was an obstacle for further growth of British power in India. Even the most pacific Governor-General like Sir John Shore had cherished the desire to reduce him, but nothing less than the total destruction of Tipu would satisfy Wellesley whose mind was peculiarly inflamed by the dread of Tipu.

Preparations of War

Within a month after Wellesley's arrival, on 9th June 1798, the proclamation was received which was forwarded to General Harris suggesting the possibility of a war. At first Wellesley also doubted its authenticity and regarded it as an exaggerated or misrepresented statement deliberately fabricated to ruffle the Anglo-Mysorean relations¹⁴. Yet he asked Harris to be ready for war. Only five days later on 14th June he wrote a letter to Tipu regarding Wynad and Coorg villages. He was conciliatory in tone and informed him that on examining all papers concerning Wynad, Amarah Sulliya and Isvara-Seemay, he could not establish the undoubted right of either party. He felt happy on Tipu's assurances to remain peaceful and in his turn assured, "you will always meet with a religious adherence to every article subsisting between us"¹⁵. For the settlement of outstanding border disputes he suggested the appointment of Commissioners by both parties to meet on the frontiers to discuss the claims of both parties. He further assured that he would abide by the result of the Commission. "I will not suspend for one moment the full acknowledgement of

13. Asiatic Annual Register, 1799, p. 93.

14. Martin, Vol. I, p. 54..

15. Ibid., p. 60.

whatever shall appear to be your just rights"¹⁶. In the meanwhile he asked Tipu to withdraw his forces from these villages.

But the peaceful intentions of Wellesley were suddenly changed the moment he regarded the Proclamation as authentic. He received so "violent an impulse" that he decided on immediate war. He conveyed his determination to fight to Harris on 20th June 1798 and ordered the instantaneous mobilization of forces in the Carnatic¹⁷. The objects were; first, to seize the whole of the remaining maritime territory of Tipu on the Malabar coast; secondly, to compel him to cede the coastal districts by marching upon his capital; thirdly, to make him pay the expenses of the war; fourthly, to impose a permanent resident at his court; and lastly to have all Frenchmen expelled from his service. Wellesley sent the Proclamation to Poona and Hyderabad and demanded their co-operation.

Wellesley could not immediately strike Tipu because the civil and military authorities were not ready. Even Harris who believed that Tipu had attempted to subvert the British power was not in favour of war. He desired to offer Tipu a chance to explain and make "amend honourable" in view of the Company's financial distress and the possible repercussions of a war in India on European politics¹⁸. "Our debts are so injurious to our credit that until something is done in liquidation of them, we cannot expect to raise a rupee of loan"¹⁹. Joseah Webb and Colonel Close also urged that a sudden war would be dangerous and would involve the English in international complications. The weakness of the Marathas and the Nizam would not permit the English to expect any help from them. Moreover, the presence of the French troops in Hyderabad, the difficulty of securing carriage cattle, the scarcity of provisions, the dispersal of the Carnatic army, the Company's broken credit, the ruined finances, and Tipu's superiority in cavalry compelled Wellesley to postpone his decision of war by a few months. It was suspected that if Tipu was provoked to a war, the French would "actually foment and keep it alive"²⁰. The movement of the British troops and their preparations could not escape the notice of Tipu who might in self-defence actually invade the Carnatic before the Company was ready to resist him. These forceful persuasions together with the fear of censure from Home in case of failure compelled Wellesley to relinquish the idea of immediate war with "regret and pain".

16. Ibid., p. 60.

17. Ibid., p. 64.

18. Ibid., p. 65.

19. Ibid., p. 66.

20. Ibid., p. 67.

He thought of calling an explanation from Tipu concerning the purpose of his embassy to Mauritius and the object of the forces he had received from there²¹. But he gave up that idea thinking that Tipu would make that an excuse for war. His intentions at this time were not the total destruction of Tipu. He felt that war should be declared only in two situations, if Tipu refused to explain the purpose of his embassy, and if he took the initiative of war²². He declared that his main object was to prevent war, if possible by impressing on Tipu the readiness of the English to fight, or to accept accommodation in vindication of their rights²³. He desired to invite his allies to join him in remonstrating against Tipu. He actually drew up a paper and was about to dispatch when he gave up the idea until he completed preparations for war. He directed the British fleet to be vigilant on the western coast. He issued preemptory orders to Madras to expedite war preparations and to exert their utmost to assemble the finest army in the shortest period. He supplied them liberally with men and money from Bengal.

While preparations were going on in the Carnatic, Wellesley engaged himself in concluding alliances with the Nizam and the Marathas. He proceeded to disband the French troops in Hyderabad, and to conclude a subsidiary alliance with the Nizam. Raymond who had formed a strong corps of 14,000 had passed away on 25th March 1798, and Azim-ul-Umrah was in charge of the business of the State. Wellesley wrote on 8th July 1798 to Resident Kirkpatrick to carry out the dismissal of the French corps as early as possible. A new treaty was to be proposed by which the Company would be empowered to arbitrate in the disputes of the two powers; the succession of Sikandar Jah was to be assured; and the Nizam was to subsidise the English corps maintained in his dominions. On 19th August 1798 the Resident informed Wellesley the acceptance of all proposals by the Nizam, and that he would join the English in a war against Tipu²⁴. The Nizam signed the new Subsidiary Treaty on 1st September 1798 by which 6000 English troops were to be stationed in Hyderabad. The Company's detachment was hastened to Hyderabad, and under the pretext of mutiny the French corps was disbanded on 22nd October 1798. Their officers were taken captive and sent to Calcutta as prisoners of war. The English promised to assist the Nizam in case of any unjust demands by the Marathas. Wellesley was happy that he not only secured the Nizam's alliance but also disbanded the French corps. He was thus successful in his first diplomatic measure to isolate Tipu.

21. Ibid., p. 84.

22. Ibid., p. 85.

23. Ibid., p. 221.

24. Ibid., p. 269.

He had invited the Marathas also to conclude a similar treaty with the Company. He desired to reduce Tipu with the consent of both the powers, lest he should be involved later in complications. But he was not successful in his efforts at Poona. At first the Peshwa seemed willing to join the English and informed Palmer that Sindhia could have no objection to the entry of English troops in Poona, which would very much strengthen the position of the Peshwa²⁵. As a precaution Wellesley persuaded Sindhia to return to Delhi, where his possessions were threatened by the possible invasion of Zaman Shah. Wellesley urged Palmer not only to force a new treaty on the Peshwa but also to induce him to participate in the war against Tipu. After the conclusion of the Treaty with the Nizam, more pressure was brought on Poona to sign a similar treaty. When the Peshwa was not inclined for this, he was asked to implement at least the thirteenth article of the Treaty of Srirangapatna by which the Marathas were expected to co-operate with other allies in case of Tipu's aggression on any one of them.

At first Bajji Rao was keen on having good relations with the English, as that would release him from Sindhia's control. Nana was also in favour of assisting the



Madhava Rao, Peswa and Nanapadnavis

English as he too desired to eliminate Sindhia from Poona politics. He offered Palmer a force of 25,000 and Madhava Rao Ramachandra was asked to raise this force²⁶. Parashuram Bhao was entrusted with the command. Dhando Pant Gokhale was directed to take action in co-operation with the Bombay detachment. But having gone so far, the Poona Court revised its decision. Bajji Rao II under the influence of Sindhia refused to be a party to any war against Tipu. Sindhia was alarmed at the rapid growth of British power, and desired to check it by co-operating with Tipu. He was prevented from doing so only by the threat of an English attack on his possessions in the north while he was engaged in the south.

25 Ibid., p. 87.

26 Gupta, Bajji Rao II and the East India Company, p. 57.

He thought it wise to prevent the Peshwa at least from joining the English. The exertions of Palmer and the promises of Nana did not succeed in including the Peshwa to act contrary to the suggestions of Sindhia.

Though Wellesley could not secure the active support of the Marathas, he was satisfied that they would remain neutral, as Sindhia would not come out in open opposition to the Company in the interests of safety of his own possession in the north. Wellesley asked Palmer to drop negotiations with Poona, and resolved that the English would fight on their own.

Meanwhile Tipu was also busy trying to disengage the Marathas from the English. Since the death of Madhava Rao II, Tipu maintained a secret emissary, Balaji Rao, at Poona, and in 1797 he had sent other *vakils*. Baji Rao and Sindhia were also anxious to secure Tipu's help and had sent *vakils*²⁷. Tipu would have joined the Peshwa but for the threat of the invasion of his country by the English. He solicited neutrality; if not cooperation on the part of the Marathas in case of an Anglo-Mysore War²⁸. The Mysore *Vakils* worked their way to be received publicly at the Poona Court even after the declaration of war and in the teeth of protests from Palmer. Even after their dismissal they only retired to Kikwee, about 25 miles from Poona. Palmer believed that Tipu had bought the neutrality of the Peshwa by paying thirteen lakhs of rupees with the knowledge of Sindhia²⁹.

Nana played a dubious role. He promised Maratha help to the Company, and as late as 16th January 1799 he informed Palmer that in spite of Tipu's inducements, the Marathas would keep to their engagements³⁰. Nana had compelled Baji Rao to dismiss Tipu's *vakils*, but before they reached Srirangapatna, Tipu had fallen. His death came as a great shock to Baji Rao, who called it as "the loss of his right arm"³¹. Baji Rao, Sindhia and Tipu had drawn a scheme of mutual co-operation against the English by which the Marathas would at first attack the Nizam. When the new subsidiary treaty would oblige the Company to come to his rescue, it should be a signal for the combined attack on the English³². But these designs were forestalled by Wellesley's swift and decisive blow on Tipu.

Wellesley sounded not only the Nizam and the Marathas but also the other chiefs. He contacted the Raja of Berar who entered into a security treaty with the

27. Duff, Vol. II, p. 285, Pol. Const. 20th May 1799.

28. Pol. Const. 1st Oct. 1798, Pol Const. 33.

29. Duff, Vol. II, p. 291, 20 May 1799, Pol. Const. 19.

30. Pol. Const. 15th April, Const. 7.

31. Gupta, Baji Rao II, p. 58.

32. Ibid.

Nizam against Sindhia³³. The Raja of Travancore was approached to co-operate in the war. Mehdi Ali Khan was entrusted with the task of exciting the Persian jealousy against Zaman Shah. The British ambassador in Iran was asked to conclude a treaty with the Shah by which the English would subsidise the Iranians for harassing the Afghans on their frontiers. The Sultan of Turkey was asked to warn Tipu against the danger of close intimacy with the French. These measures were intended to isolate Tipu from all directions.

Question of Wynad

Wellesley undertook his military and diplomatic preparations with utmost secrecy. Friendly relations were maintained with Tipu to keep him under a sense of false security. He was not asked to explain his strange conduct in dispatching an embassy to Mauritius. On the other hand great liberality was shown in conceding his claim to Wynad. Wellesley voluntarily offered to give up that place at once, although



Sultan Abu-r-Rabi'a Sulayman



Wynad Region

33. Martin, Vol. I, p. 87.

despite great pressure the English had evaded that issue earlier. Wellesley suggested a Commission to look into the matter. He notified his consent to the Commission on 2nd August 1798 and within five days he was convinced of Tipu's right over Wynad³⁴. The whole affair was a stage-managed show. He formally announced the restoration of Wynad to Tipu and felicitated him on the removal of this friction between the two powers. This was just a diplomatic measure to conceal the English design, for right at this time the English were busily engaged in full preparations of war. The dispute was deliberately decided in Tipu's favour to show that the English had gone to the extreme extent to solve their differences amicably. During all this period Tipu was not even once told that the English resented his dispatch of an embassy to the Isle.

It was only in the month of November, after the completion of military and diplomatic preparations, that Wellesley expressed his concern to Tipu over the embassy. He addressed a long letter to Tipu on 8th November 1798 complaining for the first time of his alliance with the French. He said that the French had instigated him to a war against the English. He wrote, "It is impossible that you should suppose me to be ignorant of the intercourse which subsists between you and the French whom you know to be the inveterate enemies of the Company and to be now engaged in an unjust war with the British nation"³⁵. He threatened that such connections would spell disastrous results to Tipu's interests. He suggested that there was only one alternative to avert the impending calamity, namely the unconditional acceptance of an English proposal which Major Doveton would present to him. He enquired about the place and date for the reception of Doveton, and in conclusion he once again urged that compliance with the English demand alone would save him from destruction.

Wellesley no doubt accused Tipu of his connections with the French, but did not set down the specific grievances of the British against him. He desired to convey them through Doveton but the English no longer wanted any redress of their grievances. Their aim was to impose a subsidiary treaty on Tipu similar to the one that was imposed on the Nizam. It would have compromised Tipu's independence, as it meant the acceptance of a British Resident, the maintenance of a subsidized English force and the exclusion of all his connections with the outside powers. Wellesley wanted an implicit and unconditional acceptance of these terms, besides the surrender of the rich coastal areas. The issue was no longer the discussion or

34. Ibid., p. 327.

35. Ibid., p. 327.

explanation for Tipu's offence of sending an embassy but the submission of Tipu to a further reduction of his power.

Tipu remained silent for long without protesting against the preparations for war by the English. He witnessed the dissolution of the French corps at Hyderabad, the conclusion of a new alliance with the Nizam, the appearance of the British fleet off the coast of Malabar, and the vigorous preparations of war, but he thought that the English would not take the offensive unless he provoked them. Being afraid that his protests might be exploited as a pretext for war, he refrained from even enquiring about the purpose of such military preparations. But when the situation grew very alarming, he wrote a letter to Wellesley on 20th November 1798 expressing his concern over the hostile activity of the English. He once again assured them of his peaceful disposition. "I have no other intention than to increase the friendship and my friendly heart is to the last degree bent on endeavours to confirm and strengthen the foundations of harmony and union"³⁶.

Tipu received another letter from Wellesley intimating the British victory at Aboukir Bay to which he replied on 18th December 1798 expressing his great satisfaction over the event. He denounced the French activity and praised the English. His tone was pacific and accommodative. Regarding the dispatch of an embassy and the receipt of a French force he wrote:



Malabar Coast

36. Ibid., p. 348.

"In this Sircar there is a mercantile tribe who employ themselves in trading by sea and land. Their agents purchased a two-masted vessel, and having loaded her it rice, departed with a view to traffic. It happened that it went to Mauritius, from where forty persons French, and of a dark colour, of whom ten or twelve were artificers, and the rest servants, paying the hire of the ship, came here in search of employment. Such as chose to take service were entertained, and the remainder departed beyond the confines of the Sircar. And the French who are full of vice and deceit have perhaps taken advantage of the ship to put about reports with a view to ruffle the minds of both the Sircars"³⁷.

Regarding the deputation of Major Daveton who would communicate a new plan, Tipu did not feel its necessity, as nothing extraordinary had happened to justify it and expressed that the subsisting treaties among the allies were enough to preserve the peace. "I cannot imagine that means more effectual than these can be adopted"³⁸. He professed his most sincere intentions to maintain peace but he could not agree to the new plan as it meant a new treaty involving fresh sacrifices on his part. It would not be different from the one just concluded with the Nizam which had compromised his independence.

Wellesley was enraged to find his proposals rejected by Tipu. His explanation of the embassy to Mauritius was regarded as a piece of gross falsehood, and his unwillingness to receive Doveton as criminal evasion. He called it prevarication and duplicity. He proceeded to Madras in December 1798 from where he wrote another letter on 9th January 1799. He charged Tipu with having conspired with several powers of Asia to subvert the British power. He stated that he possessed the full proceedings of Tipu's envoys at Mauritius, and accused him of breaking the existing treaties by his solicitation of French aid, by his proposal of an offensive alliance with them, and by his enrolment of a French force in his army. He once again called upon Tipu to receive Major Doveton, but allowed him only one day for the reply. He said, "Dangerous consequences result from the delay of arduous affairs"³⁹. He was not willing to waste time in lengthy negotiations lest the monsoon should set in soon. Impossible stipulations were proposed and hardly a day was allowed to take the momentous decisions. Wellesley wrote again on 11th January 1799 forwarding a letter of the Turkish Sultan which condemned the French activity. It mentioned, "The further project of the French is to divide Arabia into various republics; to attack the

37. Ibid., p. 382.

38. Ibid., p. 383.

39. Ibid., p. 400.

whole Mohammedan sect, in its religion and country and by a gradual progression to extirpate all Mussalmans from the face of the earth"⁴⁰. It advised Tipu not to hazard a rupture with the English. Sultan Salim himself offered to mediate and settle the existing disputes. Wellesley in his covering letter called the French conduct as full of "boundless ambition, insatiable rapine and indiscriminate sacrilege"⁴¹.

Invasion of Mysore

When Tipu was convinced of the futility of evading the English demands, he expressed his willingness to receive Doveton "slightly attended or unattended"⁴². Wellesley received the letter on 13th February 1799, but he felt that Tipu was only gaining time. The preparations of war had matured and orders for march had been given to General Harris on 3rd February. Tipu's offer to receive Doveton was received eight days later, which was made an excuse to deny Tipu a chance for peaceful accommodation. On 22nd February Tipu was informed of the rejection of his request, "as it had come too late"⁴³. However, Harris was empowered to receive any ambassadors whom Tipu might depute to enter into a new treaty "on such conditions as appear to the allies to be indispensably necessary to the establishment of a secure and permanent peace"⁴⁴. A Commission was formed to assist Harris on political matters, if Tipu opened negotiations, General Stuart was ordered to advance from Malabar to co-operate with Harris for the siege of Srirangapatna. Though Tipu was informed that Harris would receive any propositions which he might make, Harris was strictly instructed to forward this letter to Tipu only after he was within one day's march from the frontiers of Mysore. He was further instructed not to make any conditions of peace until the commencement of the siege of Srirangapatna or the occupation of an equally advantageous position"⁴⁵.

There were other secret instructions to Harris concerning the procedure to establish peace, if Tipu submitted to him. Two sets of the Draft of the Preliminary Articles to a new treaty were proposed called Draft A and Draft B. Draft A which was less harsh was to be applied if Tipu sued for peace before the opening of the batteries on Srirangapatna, and Draft B, in case of submission subsequent to it. Draft A stated: First, reciprocal reception of an ambassador from both the parties;

40. Ibid., p. 414.

41. Ibid., p. 417.

42. Ibid., p. 434.

43. Ibid., p. 453.

44. Ibid., p. 454.

45. Mly. Courtm 11th June 1799, Vol. 254-A, p. 3317.

second, dismissal of all Frenchmen and other Europeans from his service; third, renunciation of all contacts with the French in future; fourth, surrender to the Company of the whole of Malabar coast; fifth, relinquishment of all claims over Amarah Sulliya, Eswara-Seemay and the Tambacherry pass; sixth, payment of an indemnity of one and a half crores, half of it immediately and the balance within six months; seventh, release of all prisoners; and eighth, surrender of three of the eldest princes as hostages, besides certain fortresses, other than Srirangapatna. Cessation of hostilities was to be effected only after the surrender of hostages and payment of the indemnity, but the evacuation of Tipu's land would be only after the delivery of security forts. A memorandum was added to these articles setting apart a share to the Marathas, irrespective of their participation in the war. The Nizam and the Marathas were to get territories adjacent to their frontiers such as Gurramconde, Gutty, Anegundi, Raidroog and Harpanahalli. The security fortresses demanded were Sadashivgarh to the Company, Gutty to the Nizam and Raidroog to the Peshwa.

In Draft B articles, 1, 2, 3 and 5 were common with A, but the fourth and the sixth relating to the cession of territories and the indemnity of war was harsher. Instead of one-fourth, one-half of Tipu's remaining kingdom was demanded, besides two crores by way of indemnity. Tipu's entire possessions were estimated at 39½ lakhs in total (6½ lakhs to each of the allies) were to be ceded.

Harris was instructed in detail about the mode of using these sets of drafts. If Tipu opened negotiations previous to the arrival of the General at Srirangapatna or before commencing the siege of the capital, Harris was to consult the Commissioners but not disclose the full demands until all preparations were completed for the siege. Then, either through an embassy or through a flag of truce, Draft A was to be communicated, insisting on its compliance within 24 hours, with a warning that its refusal would mean "Draft B". If Tipu accepted them Stuart was to take immediate charge of Malabar. The Peshwa's share was to be in the Company's charge and Harris was to procure his assent to the treaty within three months. Srirangapatna was not to be evacuated until the surrender of the security forts. Even if the English were to suffer any reverses in the war no treaty was to be concluded with Tipu unless he consented to the surrender of the whole of Malabar, besides making payment of a sufficient indemnity. Negotiations were to be discouraged until Tipu realized the danger to his capital and was made helpless. In no case was the advance on Tipu's dominions to be relaxed. The letter of 23rd April imposed still harsher terms obliging Harris to reduce Tipu's power to the lowest possible extent

and "even to utterly destroy it if the events of the war should afford the opportunity"⁴⁶.

The English army that marched from Vellore on 11th February was quite formidable in strength, discipline and experience. It exceeded 20,000 men with 4000 Europeans, besides the Nizam's army of 16,000 and the Bombay army of 6000, and a considerable force from the south under Colonels Read and Browne. The campaigns of the Third Mysore War facilitated the operations by affording a thorough knowledge of the defences of Srirangapatna and of the routes leading to the capital. Tipu's efforts to stop the main army from Madras and the Bombay army from the west failed. Avoiding the route which Cornwallis had used in 1791, Harris judiciously decided to cross the Kaveri at Sosilly, about 15 miles east of Srirangapatna, and encamped on the ground previously occupied by General Abercomby in 1792. He settled down for the siege of the capital on 5th April, exactly one month after he had crossed the Mysore frontier.

As per Wellesley's desire that he should correspond in future with Harris. Tipu addressed a letter on 9th April enquiring about the purpose of the British invasion. Harris in reply referred him to the previous correspondence of Wellesley on the subject⁴⁷. On 20th April Tipu wrote again expressing his desire to settle the dispute amicably and to depute confidential persons to open negotiations⁴⁸. Harris in reply sent the second Draft B which contained the harsher terms, though it was contrary to his instructions. He made them still more harsh by demanding the surrender of four princes and four principal ministers as hostages, instead of three stipulated in the Draft. Only 24 hours were given for the acceptance of the treaty and another 24 hours for the surrender of the hostages and the payment of the stipulated indemnity. If these demands were not complied within the stipulated time, the English would demand the surrender of the capital itself till the conclusion of the final treaty. Harris had thus departed from the spirit of the instructions in conveying the second Draft, instead of the first, with additional demands. The batteries had not yet been opened and so he should have sent the first Draft. Wellesley condoned this shortcoming. On the other hand he appreciated the action of Harris saying he himself would have taken a similar decision, if he had been present on the spot.

Tipu rejected these demands as they were very harsh. There was no guarantee that even these demands would be faithfully executed, and would not be made more

46. Martin, Vol. I, p. 538.

47. Ibid., p. 552.

48. Ibid., p. 538.

humiliating. As the instructions of Wellesley to destroy Tipu were very specific, the English were not in a mood to be conciliatory. These overtures facilitated Harris to cover up his preparations for the assault on the fort. The breaching parties had commenced their work. On 25th April a battery of four guns were employed to destroy the defences, and by the next day, Tipu's guns were silenced. His entrenchments had been attacked and crossed in advance, after an obstinate battle. By 27th April the British troops made their lodgements secure for the breaching batteries.

When Tipu realized the danger to his capital, he sent another letter on 28th April expressing his desire to depute two persons to a conference as the delicate situation demanded a full and free discussion. Harris replied that he would not make any modifications in the terms already proposed, that any deputation of ambassadors was useless unless accompanied by the hostages and the indemnity and that the time allowed for an answer would be only till 3 O'clock the next day. This sealed all hopes of a settlement. Tipu was enraged at the arrogance behind and unfairness of the demands. His independent spirit and intrepid courage would hardly admit of submission to these harsh terms. He resolved to die honourably like a soldier rather than lead a dependent life like a pensioned Nawab or a Raja. Therefore, he did not reply to Harris. He was now convinced that nothing but his destruction would appease his enemies.

Fall of Tipu

Giving up hopes of accommodation Tipu prepared himself to fight to the last. But the odds were too heavy against him. A formidable army was already well advanced in its siege of his capital. His trusted men were deserting him. Mir Sadiq and his group had entered into a conspiracy with the enemies as was evident from their crossing over the glacis on the night of 3rd May to examine the breach and the manner of the British attack on the fort⁴⁹. It was in consultation with them that 4th May, midday, had been fixed for the assault. Mir Sadiq was to withdraw the troops stationed at the breach under the pretext of disbursing their pay⁵⁰. At last the fateful day, "On the 4th of May, as he sat in the palace in the heat of the noon, he was roused from his dreamy gaze into the pit of fate by the shout of the besiegers. The breach was stormed and Tipu, vainly endeavouring to rally his broken troops, was slain and trampled under foot in the streets of his plundered city"⁵¹.

49. M.H. Khan, p. 315.

50. Kirmani, p. 390.

51. Torrens, p. 225.



Thus fell Tipu, who became a martyr to the cause of independence. He laid down his life defending his country against the ambitions and unscrupulous foreigners. He was the only Indian prince who consistently opposed the English. His unity of purpose, independence of thought and consistency of action had annoyed the Company. His death removed all the obstacles in the way of its rapid growth. The Fourth Mysore War was a major landmark in the history of British expansion in India. It destroyed the regime of Tipu who had made Mysore a dominant power in the South. The joy of the victors knew no bounds. They cried in exultation "India is ours". They had

obtained Srirangapatna "the tower of strength, from which we may at any time shake Hindustan to its centre"⁵². The French influence was eliminated forever from Indian politics. The British empire was firmly established. Its territories were extended, frontiers strengthened, enemies destroyed and resources increased. The Company acquired territories of great intrinsic value in fertility, resources and strategic importance. The new conquests linked the coast of Coromandel with that of Malabar and secured the entire coastal line of Mysore with all the bases on the eastern, western and southern ghats. But the political advantages exceeded those of territorial gains. It made the Company paramount in India, having destroyed its most inveterate foe. The battle of Plassey had only allowed the entry of the British into the politics of India but that of Srirangapatna made them the masters of the country⁵³. Auber goes to the extent of saying, "the Empire of the East is at our feet"⁵⁴. The

52. Martin, Vol. II, p. 38.

53 Thompson and Garrett, p. 206

54 Auber, Rise & Progress of the British Power, Vol. II, p. 192.



Tiger Tipu - V&A Museum, London



Fall of Tipu



Fall of Tipu

death of Tipu relieved Wellesley of the worry of any obstacle to the realization of his ambition. He was also happy to have escaped the embarrassment of what would have happened if Tipu had survived. The war ended the dynasty of Haidar and Tipu, which had made opposition to the British its unalterable purpose.

Settlement of Mysore

Wellesley proceeded to set up a new political framework in India. The concept of British paramountcy was injected by which Indian princes under their control became almost pensioned Nawabs and Rajas. All effective power was taken away from their hands, a Resident was hoisted over their head, a British corps was stationed in their territory, an indemnity was imposed upon them to meet its cost, and they were prevented from all foreign contacts. The Nizam was the first to submit himself to this humiliating subsidiary system by which the English would become overlords. Tipu would hardly yield to such a system and hence he was removed. After his fall Wellesley contemplated the partition of Mysore and the restoration of the old dynasty, long before the event of 4th May. He knew fully well that Tipu would not submit to the drastic reduction of his country and to political subordination, and that the Company would never be secure so long as Tipu retained the Malabar coast which would be the ready means to communicate with the French. He had already thought of making Mysore a landlocked State in the heart of the Deccan plateau. As early as January 1799 he had invited the views of his various officials on the best mode of settlement. His military secretary, Colonel Kirkpatrick had suggested the same stipulations as in Draft B of the Preliminary Articles furnished to Harris on 22nd February 1799. Josiah Webbe, John Malcolm and William Petric had also given their opinions, which had helped Wellesley in framing the Drafts A and B. But as Bannell rightly points out, "It may be supposed that Wellesley did not expect these terms to be accepted, to frame them was merely a political way of arranging a campaign the aim of which was unconditional surrender"⁵⁵.

After the fall of Srirangapatna very intricate issues came up before the victors. On the one hand there was the desire for the annexations of so vast and so rich a country, and on the other, the fear of consequent suspicions and censure both in India and Europe. The apparent principle of partition was that the victors should take only that much territory which was enough to indemnify their war expenses and provide security to their frontiers. The Wodeyar family was actively engaged in trying to secure the restoration of the throne to its earlier legitimate owners and had offered to pay the Company the expenses of war.

55. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, 1952, p. 126.

Wellesley had secretly contacted the agents of this dynasty in order to use them for the speedy conclusion of the war⁵⁶. Josiah Webbe had pleaded in a memorandum for their restoration, and that would please nine-tenth of the population. But Wellesley had not taken any final decision. After the fall of Tipu and the surrender of his sons, Purniah pleaded for the restoration of the throne to Tipu's son on the ground that "the Mohammadan interest is so intimately blended with every department of the State in this country that no plan which is set aside in favour of a Hindu Prince could produce the very desirable effect of restoring tranquility and of reconciling the troops as well as the most powerful class of the inhabitants to the change of Government"⁵⁷. Purniah further assured the British that such a settlement would be acceptable to the entire country.

Wellesley at first desired to proceed in person to Srirangapatna to arrange the settlement, but later gave up the idea. He sent William Kirkpatrick and Henry Wellesley, his military and Private Secretaries respectively, and himself directed the affairs from Madras. He enquired about the views of Tipu's sons regarding their father's alliance with the French, and demanded more details about the Hindu family. He put forward as a basis of discussion the complete partition of Mysore between the Company and the Nizam with only small enclaves near Bangalore left to Tipu's family, and near Srirangapatna to Wodeyar dynasty⁵⁸. But this basis was discarded as it would excite the jealousy of the Marathas and invite severe criticism from Parliament. It would also have necessitated another expensive war⁵⁹. Wellesley would not give an equal share to the Nizam, for that would make him dangerously strong. Hence, without waiting for the information called for from Mysore, he took the final decision on 27th May of restoring the Wodeyar dynasty with Purniah as the Dewan, to govern over the central table-land. The rest of the kingdom was partitioned among the three allies.

Though at first apprehensions were felt that Tipu's sons and their



Colonel Kirkpatrick



Henry Wellesley

56 Martin, Vol. I, p. 442.

57 Ibid., Vol. II, p. 9.

58 British Museum Add. Mss. Cited IRAS, 1952, p. 128.

59 Martin, Vol. II, p. 203.

followers would oppose such a settlement, Wellesley was determined to force his decision. The claims of Tipu's dynasty were set aside on the ground that a hostile power would be only weakened and not destroyed if they were allowed to rule. He thought that Tipu's successors would never be reconciled to the reduction of their kingdom, the loss of their prestige, the cruel death of their father, and the political subordination to a foreign power. Being brought up on the principles of their father whose "antipathy to the English was the ruling passion of his heart, the mainspring of his policy, the fixed and fundamental principles of his councils and government, it would be too much to expect of them to remain loyal to the English"⁶⁰. The dreadful fate of their father would also serve to excite the spirit of revenge and revolt in them. Having been instructed all their life to oppose the British, they would always conceive designs to subvert the agent of their misfortune. "The interests, the habits, the prejudice and passions, the vice and even the virtues of such a prince must have concurred to cherish an aversion to the English name and power and an eager desire to alert the cause of their enemies"⁶¹. Even the Nizam was against the restoration of Tipu's family⁶².

It was further argued that legally Tipu's sons had no claim, as the English got the throne of Mysore by their right of conquest. Cession of any part or territory was only a concession or a matter of policy, and not justice or right. Usurpation by Haidar further weakened the case of Tipu's successors whose restoration was ruled out on the basis that, "the foundations of the new settlement would have been laid in the very principle of its dissolution"⁶³. On the other hand, numerous advantages were offered to the English if they granted to the old Wodeyar dynasty. It would owe everything to the English and would remain loyal. It had lost all hopes of restoration as the usurpation had subsisted for a long time and it had reconciled itself to its lot. If the English brought it back to power, there was every probability of its remaining submissive and grateful.

On account of these factors Wellesley decided the settlement in favour of the Wodeyar dynasty. He created a Commission for the affairs of Mysore consisting of General Harris, Colonel Wellesley,, Henry Wellesley, Lt. Col. W. Kirkpatrick and Lt. Col. Barry Close to complete the settlement. Two treaties were concluded, one for the partition of the country between the Company and the Nizam, and the other defining the relations between the Company and the Raja of Mysore. The Company

60 Ibid., p. 80.

61 Wilks, Vol. II, p. 385.

62 Sec. Proc. 24th June 1799, Const. No. 7.

63 Martin, Vol. II, p. 81.

reserved for itself a territory yielding 6.9 lakh pagodas consisting of Malabar, Dharmapuram Coimbatore, the whole area between the Company's eastern and western coast, all heads of the passes, forts and ports, the district of Wynad and the fort of Srirangapatna. The Nizam got Gutty, Gurramconda and a few tracts in Chitradurga (but not the fort), Sira, Nandidroog and Kolar. A territory yielding 2.6 lakhs pagodas only was set aside for the Marathas as they had not participated in the war. Their share was between one-half and two-thirds of what others got which included Harpanhalli, Sunda, Anegundi and some other forts.

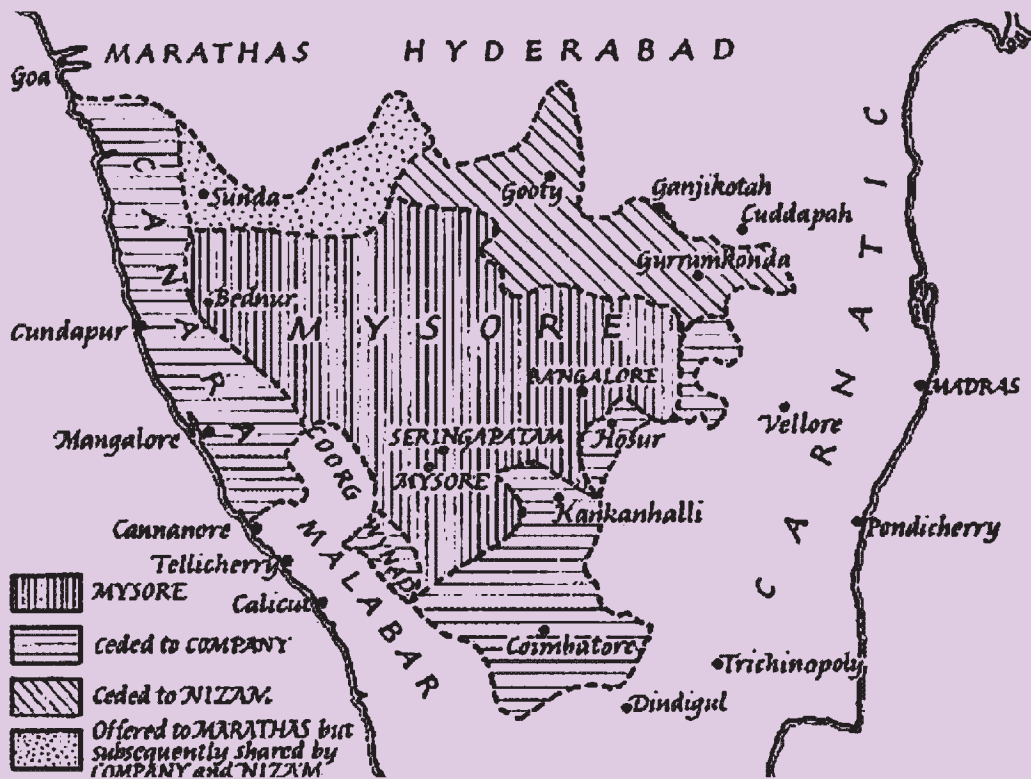
The Raja of Mysore secured an area yielding 13.5 lakhs pagodas annually. The Company's share was by far the most valuable. The treasures of Tipu was reserved for the British army on the ground that it had stormed the fort. Meer Alam resented such a decision. The Nizam was not happy at the principle of partition and the portion allotted to him. He was deliberately denied an equal share as it would enhance his power "beyond all bounds of discretion"⁶⁴. However, to appease him it was stipulated that if the Marathas rejected their share, the Nizam would get out of it double the portion of the Company. For Tipu's family some pensions and jagirs were given and the family was shifted to Vellore. The Raja was placed on the throne on 30th June 1799. The new set up was described by Kirkpatrick thus: "Purnaiyah considers the country to be the Company's and the Raja a mere puppet"⁶⁵. A new Subsidiary treaty was concluded with him according to which the English took over



Anegundi Fort

64. Ibid., p. 74.

65. British Museum Add. Mss. JRAS, 1952, p. 132.



Mysore Kingdom 1799

the defence of his principality, but the Raja had to bear the expenses by regularly paying a subsidy which could be confiscated if his administration proved unsatisfactory, which was actually done in 1830 only to be given back in 1881. These arrangements placed his entire kingdom at the disposal of the Company.

The Settlement was very advantageous to the English. It concealed the extent of English acquisition under the guise of restoration of the Wodeyar dynasty. It provided an excuse to Wellesley for giving much smaller share to the Nizam. It prevented the Maratha jealousy as a Hindu prince was installed on the throne. It silenced opposition at Home on growing too aggressive and ambitious. The Company became the master of the entire Mysore Kingdom making the Raja a mere puppet. The Nizam later ceded his acquisitions also to the English in exchange for his subsidy, and the Marathas refused their share. The Peshwa wisely rejected the offer as it carried political strings of a subsidiary alliance. He was to get the share only after signing a treaty which would have ended his independence. The Maratha

share was partitioned between the Nizam and the English as per the previous arrangement of two-thirds to the Nizam and one-third to the English. But the Subsidiary Treaty with the Nizam was revised in 1800 by which the Company acquired not only the possessions of the Nizam ceded to him in 1792 but also the new conquests of 1799. The Nizam got practically nothing for all his exertions both in the Third and the Fourth Mysore War except loss of his independence in the bargain. He resented the English on another ground. His share of the treasures was much less. While Harris alone received £ 1,42,902 out of the total prize money of £ 2,000,000 Meer Alam was given only £35,000 (One lakh pagodas) to be distributed among his 6000 troops. Thus Wellesley managed in a shrewd way to secure the entire Kingdom of Mysore, which became British in all but name, and which caused jealousy in the Marathas and the Nizam. The Company assumed paramountcy over Mysore, which became the second Princely State to subscribe to the Subsidiary system of Wellesley.

Review of the War

Thus Wellesley proved himself Jack to the Giant Killer. He aimed at the total destruction of Tipu and not in the reduction of his power. Ever since the Company had transformed itself into a political power, it had never been guilty of a more deceitful conduct, more flagrant breach of trust or more naked aggression. The tragic end of Tipu brought to surface certain facts of great importance. First, Tipu's destruction lay perhaps in the very logic of history. The British who never regarded their neighbours as equals could hardly tolerate a prince, who was so independent in his views, so intrepid in his courage, and so consistent in his opposition to their supremacy. When a die-hard imperialist like Wellesley had come down to India with a pre-meditated design of conquest, and a fully matured policy of subsidiary alliances, when he was firmly resolved upon executing that policy at all costs, and when he commanded all the resources and wherewithal to enforce that policy, it is well-nigh impossible to imagine events taking a different turn.

Secondly, in a ruler's declining phase all his measures, even the best conceived ones seem fated to recoil upon their author. There had been a period when Tipu dictated terms to the English, but after the Third Mysore War despite his best efforts everything he did went wrong. The Nizam had been deceived by the English in his war against the Marathas, and yet he would join hands with the English, and not with Tipu. Zaman Shah, whom Tipu had induced to march on Delhi, had actually advanced as far as Lahore, but had to go back quickly to his own country owing to a

conspiracy of events. Napoleon who had assured Tipu of all his help, was surprisingly defeated in Syria and compelled to retreat. Raymond who commanded the French troops at Hyderabad, was destined at this time to die. Sindhia, who was friendly towards Tipu, could not prevail upon Nana to support Tipu. The torrential rains that came on 5th May, only a day after the assault, had they preceded a day earlier, things perhaps would have been different. Thus, every measure Tipu took failed and even nature which would only weep over his fate, but not save him from destruction.

Thirdly, his measures failed not so much because of his fault, but because of forces over which he had no control. The constant vigilance of the English and their timely diplomacy at Hyderabad, or Poona, or Tehran, or Constantinople forestalled all his designs. Their political insight and resourcefulness, their superior diplomacy and military preparedness, their vast resources and economic power, together with certain British traits such as solidarity, patriotism, national spirit and resoluteness helped them in winning the Empire. Tipu's lot was unfortunately thrown with an adversary of uncommon might and unequalled perfidy.

Fourthly, the formation of British empire in India was the product of a few extraordinary eccentric personalities like Clive, Wellesley and Dalhousie rather than the result of a deliberate policy either of the Company or of the British Government. What these individuals were doing in India was not even known to their masters in England, who were informed only after the fact was accomplished. The masters who were merchants were always interested in their profits, and hence they approved any measure if only it brought them more benefits. Their wrath would fall only when the measures failed, as in the First Mysore War. Therefore, their clever servants would so thoroughly prepare themselves for any event that any defeat was out of question. Wellesley brought against Tipu the finest army that ever was assembled in India. His preparations were so thorough that he personally looked into every minute detail, whether political, military or logistic.

Fifthly, for Tipu's elimination from Indian scene Indians also were as much responsible as the English. The neutrality of the Marathas in the Third Mysore War and their active support to Tipu in the Fourth Mysore War would have changed the political picture of the country. Likewise, if the Nizam had kept himself aloof in both these wars, things would have been different. Moreover, the Raja of Travancore, the Queen Mother of Mysore, the Raja of Coorg and the Nayars of Malabar, all played into English hands. The English conquered India partly because of the active support of the Indians.

Lastly, the Fourth Mysore War is a watershed in Indo-British history. It marked the end of one era, and the beginning of another. It made the English complete masters of the country. Tipu was the last bastion of resistance against their power. The eighteenth century ended, however, with one heroic deed, the martyrdom of Tipu, which did much to wipe off the disgrace that Indian rulers would not hesitate to compromise any principle. Tipu dead became more immortal than Tipu alive, for he left the message that to live like a tiger for a day was far better than to live like a jackal for a hundred years. At the height of Napoleonic glory Pitt is supposed to have said, "Roll up the map of Europe; it is not needed these ten years". Likewise, Tipu while breathing his last might have felt, "Roll up the map of India; it may not be needed for quite a few decades".



Srirangapatna War Commemorative Medals
issued by British in 1799

