
LETTER FROM GENERAL M. M. TUCKER

A P P E N D I X.

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LETTER FROM GENERAL MATHEWS,

TO

THE COURT OF DIRECTORS OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

(REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING LETTERS.)

HONOURABLE SIRS,

I HAVE the honour of informing you of the success of your arms on the Malabar Coast. You will have received advices of the outset of the Expedition from Bombay, and the general purport of it. On the 12th of December, I sailed with a small party; and thought proper, of my own accord, to land at Rajamundroog, in preference to any other place—because, on this part of the Coast, I had the double advantage of being able to secure myself until reinforced, and to procure provisions, which I could not have done at Cundapore, or any place to the Southward, by reason of the numerous garrisons, and the vicinity of them to the capital. The measures and dispositions

of the Gentlemen at Bombay were such, that I could not place any dependence upon being timely reinforced from thence, or of having any supply of provisions. Rajamundroog is on the top of a high hill, and commands the entrance of the best river on the Coast. We took it by storm. The moment we landed, a short time was taken up in preparing to move towards Onore; for we had not a cooly, carriage, or bullock, to convey any stores. The battering cannon, ammunition, provisions, &c. were sent by sea; and the great additions that HYDER had made to the fortifications of Onore and fortified Island, prevented my entering the river with the small craft, and obliged me to land every thing through a heavy surf on the beach, and then to cross the river to the Northward of the fort. These impediments were got over; and a practicable breach being effected, the assault was made—and the garrison, consisting of two thousand five hundred men, were either killed, drowned, or made prisoners.—Shortly after this event, the troops from the Southward, under Lieutenant Colonel MACLEOD, were landed at Rajamundroog. To wait for a junction, would take up much time: so, that not a moment should be lost, I embarked, and landed near Cundapore, under the fire of the Bombay Grab and the Intrepid, and immediately seized a small fort that served to secure our stores. The enemy were in fight, and seemed numerous: some prisoners that we took, reckoned them at twelve hundred Horse, one thousand Sepoys, and five hundred Peons. My party was composed of three hundred and fifty Europeans, six hundred Sepoys, and four small field-pieces—with which I marched, first towards the enemy, who drew back, and then I proceeded to Cundapore. They incommoded my rear very much; but being determined to attack the fort, I only acted on the defensive, and at seven in the evening got possession of the fort, and the several redoubts that commanded the river. The grand object of the Expedition, an attack upon Bidanore, remained to be undertaken; and much serious reflection it required before the hazardous enterprize should be determined on.—Your Honours will now take a view of the state of my army: No carriage-bullock, and the few draft not able to draw eight light field-pieces—

not a cooly to carry musquet, ammunition or provisions—not a tent—and many Officers, HIS MAJESTY'S in particular, had not a single servant—neither bullock or sheep to be had, the enemy having drove them off. The army, at this time, consisted of about eleven hundred effective Europeans, and three thousand Sepoys. The distance from Cundapore to the foot of the Ghaut is thirty miles, through a woody country: the enemy's army had been reinforced, and lay in the way. The reports of the strength of the various works that defended the pass up the mountains, was such as gave me but very faint hope of success; and the difficulty of supplying my troops with rice, was almost of itself sufficient to deter a person from the attempt. However, having positive orders to take possession of Bidanore, I resolved to make a trial, and issued directions for the march. We had not gone six miles, before the enemy opposed us in force. We pushed forwards; and, by the effect of well-served artillery, and the steadiness of the men, the enemy retired as we advanced. The skirmish continued about three hours—after which we were left to pursue our route unmolested; nor did the enemy make any stand till we were on the fourth day's march, within three miles of the pass—where, the ground being favourable, they attempted opposition, and were roughly treated, losing, by the bayonet and shot, above three hundred men. They were pursued to a small fort, which was immediately abandoned; and then fled to the first barrier or entrance of the pass. This was a line of masonry that covered all the open ground, and was closed by woods to the right and left. Upon six bastions were mounted fifteen pieces of cannon; and on the left was a work on a steep mountain, with two twelve pounders. This altogether had too formidable an appearance to attack in front; but having reconnoitred the right, I imagined that the flank might be turned by ascending the hill through the wood. Early in the morning, two parties were formed—one to attempt the flank, the other to escalate the wall; but the enemy saved us that trouble by evacuating the place. This was a happy moment to try the pass; for the enemy, by felling trees, &c. would have thrown so many obstacles in the way, that the want of provision

provision would have compelled me to relinquish the design. A party was instantly ordered to follow the enemy up the hill, which, with little loss, gained the second barrier, on which were mounted eleven guns. Fifty of the enemy were killed or taken at this work. Having this success, I relieved the exhausted by fresh detachments, which excited emulation, and encouraged the ardour of the Sepoys; for, to the unremitting exertions of this branch of your troops is due the honour of this day. Battery after battery was taken; and the possession of the fort on the top of the Ghaut, about five in the afternoon, called Hyderghur, crowned the whole. At this fort we found mounted thirty pieces of cannon, from twenty-four to four pounders; and at the different works in the pass, forty others, from four to twelve.

When we contemplated the numerous redoubts and the height of the Ghaut, and were told by prisoners that we had drove off seventeen thousand men, including dismounted Cavalry, regular Sepoys, and match-lock Peons, we could not consider the victory we had gained as due to us—our weak efforts would have been in vain. The progress of your arms is to be ascribed to the Divine Will. In the course of this war, Providence has been peculiarly bountiful—When we were in want of rice, we were sure to find a supply left for our use by the enemy—when our musquet-ammunition was expended, the enemy's magazines furnished us abundantly—cannon we found in every fort, and such quantities of warlike stores, that we are apt to suppose that HYDER supplied all his garrisons from this Coast and from Bidanore. Hyderghur is about fourteen miles from Hydernagar, *alias* Bidanore, the capital of the Province.

In the night of the day that we gained the Ghaut, I was visited by Captain DONALD CAMPBELL, the son of Colonel CHARLES CAMPBELL. He had been wrecked off the Coast, was seized, and kept in irons, until the approach of this army caused the Jemadar to release him, to employ him as an Ambassador. His message was, that the Jemadar having lost his Master (HYDER), and being upon bad terms with TIPPOO SAHIB, would willingly put himself under the protection of the Company, provided that the management of the Country was continued

to him. The idea of getting possession of the capital and the forts of the Kingdom towards Seringapatam, as well as the very great advantage I might expect from his experience, abilities and influence, with the weak state of my army, induced me to close with the proposal; and I sent him a cowl, signifying that his power and influence should not be lessened. This, tho' not drawn with a pen of a Lawyer, was equal in value to the capital of Bidanore. Captain CAMPBELL returned with it, and was to tell the Jemadar that I should march in the morning.

Not expecting the great success that we had met with by forcing the pass on the main road, I had detached Lieutenant-Colonel MACLEOD to the left, to ascend the Ghaut through a narrow path, in order to attack Hyderghur in the rear. The absence of this detachment, and the fatigue of the former day, reduced my party to about four hundred Europeans and seven hundred Sepoys; and all my guns were at the bottom of the Ghaut. With this detachment I moved towards Bidanore, and was within a mile of the walls before any message came from Captain CAMPBELL or the Jemadar: but having nothing to apprehend in the field from the panic-struck enemy, we continued our march until the welcome approach of Captain CAMPBELL assured me the place was our own. On entering it, I was pleased to see about four hundred of your Sepoys that had been taken in the Carnatic, who offered me their service. Upon visiting the Jemadar, I repeated my assurances, that while he behaved faithfully to the Company, the management of the Country should be continued to him; and, although the sword must be in your hands, that he should have as much power and influence as his station required, and that you would not refuse settling upon him very ample allowances. The enemy being in force, and my army much weakened, with other disagreeable matters that occurred, prevented my further advance than to take possession of two forts to the Eastward; for, being apprehensive that the Killidar of Mangalore would not deliver up that place to the order of HYAT SAHIB, and considering that famous sea-port of more consequence to your affairs than acquiring territory beyond the mountains, I held myself in readiness to march that way, and was forced to lay siege to it.

A practicable breach being made, the Killidar thought proper to surrender it. Upon this happy event give me leave to congratulate you; for it partly secures our conquests from Carwar to Cananore. There are two or three places that I have not been able to summons; but as these garrisons cannot expect any succour, they will fall of course.

Thus have I given your Honours a short recital, from the first landing of your arms on the 12th of December, to the reduction of Mangalore on the 9th of March; in which short time a series of success has attended us that can hardly be paralleled. All the enemy's marine has fallen in our hands, among which are eight ships of the line, either built or on the stocks; and five of them might be sent to sea in a short time. After informing you of the happy and glorious success of your arms, it is painful for me to tell you, that dissension in the army, on account of plunder and booty, has arisen to such a height as to threaten open mutiny. I have informed your Honours of the terms that the Jemadar required, and that I in your name granted; and you know in how peaceable a manner this capital was resigned to you. I am sorry to say, that HIS MAJESTY'S Officers have been foremost in the clamours; and that the agents appointed by them have occasioned me much trouble and anxiety, and a great deal of discontent throughout the army. I shall send you copies of the several letters that have passed, for your determination. They may suppose that I have appropriated treasure to my own use, or bargained to restore the private property of the Jemadar to him; or that I should agree that he should call all treasure and jewels his private property, to the exclusion of what of right should belong to the Honourable Company or the captors. I have only to assure your Honours, that I have made no bargain whatever, either public or private, but what was expressed in the cowl sent from Hyderghur, to which Captain CAMPBELL was witness; and as I have frequently mentioned to my friends, that I would not receive a present of consequence without the consent of the Honourable Company, I shall inform you, that on my first visit the Jemadar insisted on making me a present of a lack of
rupees;

rupees ; and when he pleased to give a donation to the army of two lacks and thirty thousand of rupees, which sum waits your pleasure, he requested I would accept of another lack of rupees. To both of these requests respecting myself, I replied, that provided your Honours would give me leave, I should certainly embrace that fortunate moment to gain an independence, and shall wait your orders as to the disposal of two lacks of rupees. How far my former and the present services may entitle me to your good opinion, and to your acquiescence in thus rewarding me, is left to the generosity of your Honours ; but I beg that you will believe, that, during the course of my services, every thing of a similar nature shall be laid before you.

If it were possible to satisfy the avidity of a body of men, this little army would have a sufficiency of honour and profit to fill the most greedy ; but the infirmities of nature are not to be controuled by reason. Avarice of the most pernicious tendency has pervaded the limits of sense, and stepped beyond the bounds of duty. The army, not content with acquiring, at the different places that has been taken on the coast in ships of war, naval stores, merchandize, &c. &c. and in goods of various kinds at Bidanore, which altogether the Jemadar says may be valued at thirty lacks of pagodas ; they seek to deprive the Jemadar of his private property, under pretence of the lawful rights of war ; and assume a style and manner in their clamours and united addresses, that appears intended to force from me what I think ought to be preserved for the public service, and for the benefit of the Honourable Company. The manner that the fort and city was delivered to the Company, does not authorize me to touch private property ; and the cowl implies a perfect security for all such. Would your Honours be pleased, that by any rapacious action of your Commander in Chief, that he or the troops should forfeit the good opinion that may be entertained of them from their rapid success, or that the public service should be considered as a secondary object ? Our name has fallen almost to contempt ; but, as far as lays in my power, it shall be recovered, if not raised to its former eminence.

Mangalore, March 16, 1783.

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