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LIFE

OF

MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR THOMAS MUNRO, BART

AND K.C.B.

LATE GOVERNOR OF MADRAS.

WITH EXTRACTS FROM HIS CORRESPONDENCE
AND PRIVATE PAPERS.

BY THE REV. G. R. GLEIG, M.A. M.R.S.L. &c.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION.

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MAJOR GENBRAL

SIR THOMAS MUNEO, BART K.C.B.

TO HIS GRACE

ARTHUR DUKE OF WELLINGTON,

&c. &c. &c.

WHO, FROM A PERSONAL INTIMACY WITH

SIR THOMAS MUNRO,

WAS ENABLED

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS, WITH SENTIMENTS

OF THE MOST PROFOUND RESPECT

AND ADMIRATION,

INSCRIBED.

ADVERTISEMENT

TO

THE SECOND EDITION.

In sending to the press a Second Edition of the Life and Correspondence of Sir Thomas Munro, I should have probably spared the reader the labour of perusing even this brief Advertisement, had the sole task imposed upon me been that of expressing my personal gratification, that in the estimate which I had ventured to form of the public taste, I have not been disappointed. It is, indeed, in the highest degree satisfactory to find, that a series of letters, bearing the ill-omened date of India, have by their intrinsic merit fairly conquered the prejudices, with which almost every species of literary composition connected with our Eastern empire is regarded; and hence, that a ray of hope may be admitted, that the period is not far removed when the affairs of that most valuable portion of the empire shall be treated by Englishmen in general with the attention which they de-But neither this feeling, nor the honest pride attaching to the consciousness that I did not over-estimate the excellence of my materials, would have induced me to trespass for one moment on the time of my reader, had I not been compelled to notice assertions of a nature disgraceful only to those who have been bold enough to advance them. Will it be credited that men exist, so base, or so utterly misled, as to accuse Sir Thomas Munro,—the former of bare-faced knavery in selling his opinions, delivered before the House of Commons, for money; the latter of a species of knavery scarcely less contemptible, by the advocating, for party purposes, of sentiments which he knew to be incorrect, and which bear upon their face the marks of inconsistency!!! Such, however, is the case; and to these charges am I called upon severally to reply!!!

I will not so far insult either the memory of the great man whose career it has been my fortune inadequately to trace, or the good sense of the English public, as to notice the first of these attacks, except in the substance of terms already well applied by a writer in the Quarterly Review. "No man could bring such a charge against Sir Thomas Munro, except a wretch, capable of bartering away the honour of his wife, his mother, or his sister for gold." With respect to the second, as it comes from a quarter more respectable, because not hidden under the cloud of an anonyme, it may be proper to meet it more at length. It amounts to this; that Sir Thomas Munro set himself strongly, in 1813, against the system of free trade, by asserting, contrary to all experience, that Europeans could not with safety to the Government be permitted to deal with the natives of India, except under strict surveillance; and that were they so permitted, the habits of the Hindoos are such, that they never

could be induced to purchase largely from European merchants. Such is the gist of a long catalogue of accusations, brought forward in a recent publication by Mr. Rickards; in which he labours to convict, not Sir Thomas Munro only, but almost every servant of the Company, whose evidence was taken before the Committee in 1813, of gross partiality, —I might almost have said, of open tergiversation.

The best answer which I can make to such a charge as this is, by begging the reader to peruse with attention the paper introduced into Chapter VI. of the First Volume of this work,-bearing in mind the state of prices, both in England and India, as it existed at the time when the paper in question was written. If, however, he will take the trouble to look a little farther, he will see, in the Supplement to the Fifth Report, that Colonel Munro expressly declares "that the Hindoo has no prejudices against any thing which he can convert to useful purposes;" that "while he can get clothing better and cheaper in his own country, the influence of climate, his religious and civil habits, and the excellence of his own manufactures, will preclude the consumption of European articles;—that until we can very greatly reduce our prices, we shall find no market in India; -that there must be a very great improvement in our machinery for the manufacture of woollens, before we can sell them in India; -that the reduction in our prices was not likely to be such, except at some distant period, as to create any material increase of demand for the export of our manufactures to India;" and that, "until we can undersell them in such articles as they require for their own use, we can have no hope of extending the use of our manufactures in India;" nay more, "that if we could furnish our woollens (and if woollens, other manufactured goods of course,) as cheap or something cheaper than the natives can furnish their own. there would be a very considerable demand, and that any improvement in the means of the natives would greatly tend to facilitate their consumption." Now to what does all this amount? To a question of price, and to nothing more—to an assertion on the part of Sir Thomas Munro, that in 1813 European manufactured goods, whether woollen or cotton, could find no market in India, because they were much dearer than those produced by the Hindoos themselves, and that there was then no probability, as far as human foresight extended, that a different result would ensue. Can it then be said that Sir Thomas Munro advanced a single statement in which both facts and probabilities failed to bear him out? for surely no person will deny, either that the price of our manufactures was in 1813 such as to render them quite unsaleable in an Indian market, or that of the improvements in machinery and other causes which have since operated to reduce their cost, the most sagacious speculatist could have then formed no anticipation. Yet upon this ground has Mr. Rickards ventured to build up against the memory of Sir Thomas Munro a charge of grievous inconsistency, not to call it by a harsher term.

There are other statements hazarded by Mr. Rickards, which a strong disinclination to occupy too much space alone prevents me from noticing at large. He reprobates Sir Thomas Munro's principles at one page in his book, because

that gentleman had ventured to assert that British traders ought not to be permitted to settle in India, except where a European magistrate resides; — at another, as if Sir Thomas were the unflinching advocate of monopolies—and of monopolies, too, in the hands of the Company! man who peruses these volumes will, I think, give Mr. Rickards credit even for common discernment; for surely the Company never sent forth a servant more zealous than Sir Thomas Munro in restraining its monopolies. Let any man consult the document given in the Appendix relative to the timber trade in Malabar, and that alone will satisfy him. With respect again to the other charge, I admit it to its fullest extent; and I do so, because I see in it one proof, in addition to numberless others, of the sound judgment and discretion of the accused. Sir Thomas Munro knew perfectly well that to the prejudices of the natives, Englishmen are not, even after a long sojourn in the country, too attentive: he could not, therefore, fail to discover, that were strangers permitted to rush into the interior, where no such authority as they would respect restrained them, the most flagrant outrages must ensue. I confess that I am neither able nor willing to enter the lists with Mr. Rickards on this head.

What then were the opinions of Sir Thomas Munro in 1813, when his evidence was given before a Committee of the House of Commons? They were those of a man, who, having spent a quarter of a century among the natives of India, having studied their institutions, made himself thoroughly conversant with their habits, dived into their pre-

judices, and conceived a just estimate of their feelings, was not willing to make furious inroads upon all these, for the mere purpose of yielding to a popular clamour, and that too while no prospect of advantage even to the clamourers was held out. On the general subject of a free trade to India, however, his opinions never varied. He uniformly contended that so soon as we should be able to bring into the Indian market goods at a rate cheaper than that attainable by the Natives, then, and not till then, might this trade be opened with advantage. What man, possessed of the commonest reflection or judgment, would have spoken otherwise? Nor is this all. Sir Thomas Munro was, from first to last, an advocate for a free trade with India, on terms of strict reciprocity. "What we want most," says he, "is as free an export of our produce to England, as from England to India; admission to all our silks and coloured cloths, and on moderate terms." Such were his sentiments, expressed in a letter to a friend, dated so recently as 1823; and the public are at length beginning happily to discover, that the India trade is more fettered by the heavy duties imposed in this country on the produce of India, than by the few and unimportant restrictions which the Company are permitted to continue on the export trade of England.

Mr. Rickards is a man of indisputable talent; but, as his late work proves, strongly imbued with personal and political prejudices. With these I have no desire to interfere further than by assuring him, that he need not hope to erect a reputation for himself on any ruins which he can effect in the well-earned fame of Sir Thomas Munro.

PREFACE.

In spite of the unaccountable apathy with which every subject connected with the administration of British India is regarded, there are few persons conversant with the transactions of the last fifty years, to whom the name of Sir Thomas Munro can be absolutely unknown. The many striking and important transactions in which he bore a part; the high and responsible offices which he filled; the friendships which he contracted with most of the distinguished characters of the age; and the estimation in which he was held by them, these circumstances have all contributed to draw him more generally into notice than almost any Indian functionary of modern times; whilst the attention thus excited, has rarely failed to be kept alive, by an examination, however superficial, into his own merits and services. No apology, therefore, seems necessary for the attempt now made, to make his countrymen in general better acquainted than they are with the history of a man, "than whom," Mr. Canning with no less truth than elegance has declared, "Europe never produced a more accomplished statesman, nor India, so fertile in heroes, a more skilful soldier."*

But though the extraordinary merits of the individual himself might well justify the desire of rendering the particulars of his career as public as possible, it is due to the

Speech of Mr. Canning, on occasion of a vote of thanks being passed in favour of the army employed against the Mahrattas in 1817, 18, and 19.

feelings of those most deeply interested in the present undertaking, to avow, that they have been actuated by other, and no less praiseworthy motives. Few public men have owed less to others, or more to themselves, than Major-General Sir Thomas Munro. He entered the military service of the East India Company at the early age of eighteen; if not absolutely destitute of money and interest, at all events not more abundantly provided with either than the generality of youths similarly circumstanced; yet, by dint of his own genius, his own industry, his own integrity, and his own sound discretion, he rose to fill the highest station in the Presidency to which he was originally attached as a Cadet.

Were there no other reason, therefore, to be assigned for the present publication, the act might be justified on the ground that such a work is calculated to teach a very important lesson, by impressing upon the minds of young men employed in the public service, that there is no prize beyond the grasp of talent, provided it be accompanied by industry and strictly honourable conduct.

It must, however, be confessed, that other motives besides these have had their full weight on the present occasion. Perhaps there never lived an European more intimately acquainted than Sir Thomas Munro, with the characters, habits, manners, and institutions of the natives of India; because there never lived an European who at once possessed better opportunities of acquiring such knowledge, and made, more ample use of them. Profoundly versed in the Hindostance and other vernacular languages, and thrown continually into situations where the vernacular languages were alone spoken, he saw a great deal both of Hindoos and Mohammedans, in what may be termed their natural state; and hence the conclusions at which he arrived touching their dispositions and customs were at once more philosophical, and more likely to be correct, than those of men who have conversed only with the corrupt and degraded race that frequent our Courts of Law, or surround our Presidencies. It was an

act of justice, both to his ewn memory and to the inhabitants of British India, that his sentiments on these heads should not be concealed; whilst their publication, if it lead but to farther inquiry, may be productive of the most important benefits, not merely to the dependent, but to the ruling country. It is not within my province, did I possess the ability, to pass judgment, in a work like this, on the system of internal administration pursued in British India; but he must be a bold man who will contend that it is, in all respects, absolutely perfect; and sure I am, that by none have more judicious schemes of amelioration been pointed out, than by the distinguished subject of the present memoir.

. Again, there are many persons who, without perplexing themselves with questions of police and revenue, are nevertheless desirous of knowing something of the general history of India, - of the nature of the climate, of the condition of the inhabitants, of the productions of the soil, and of the state of trade. By all such, the life of Sir Thomas Munro will be found well worthy of perusal; inasmuch as there was not one of these points to which he failed to turn his attention, or of which he has neglected to give an account, as accurate as it is entertaining. Then again, if wit and playful humour, if vivid description and lively narrative, possess attractions in the eyes of readers in general, they are all to be found here; whether the subject discussed be the operations of armies, the proceedings of social circles, points of literary disquisition, or the feelings of the individual himself. word, the memoir is given to the public for three excellent reasons: first, because it is the right of eminent services that they should not be at once forgotten; secondly, because the work may, it is hoped, prove useful; and, thirdly, because, unless I grossly deceive myself, it will be found both interesting and amusing among others, besides circles strictly Indian.

Having thus explained the motives which led to the publication of the present memoir, it remains for me to say a few

words touching my own situation, as connected with its publication.

I had not the happiness to be in the slightest degree acquainted with the late distinguished Governor of Madras.— I never so much as saw him; but I have long known and admired his character and conduct, both as a soldier and a statesman. Circumstances having induced me to pay more attention to Indian subjects than is perhaps usual with men not personally connected with that country; I have found many opportunities of estimating, as they deserved, the sound judgment and high talents of Sir Thomas Munro; and hence, as far as a just conception of the principles and order of his public life qualify one man to write the history of another, I am willing to persuade myself, that I am not unfit to appear as his biographer. But on my own qualifications, whether extensive or otherwise, I have, happily, not been obliged to depend. There is another gentleman connected with this undertaking, to whom by far the greater share of its merits, if it have any, is due; I mean J. G. Ravenshaw, Esq. one of the Directors of the East India Company,—a name not to be mentioned without respect. That gentleman had actually prepared a work, similar in almost every respect to mine, which, with the utmost liberality, he put into my hands, to be used as materials only. It is but just to add, that Mr. Ravenshaw is not responsible for any opinions which I have ventured to advance. These, whether sound or unsound, are my own: but the principal labour of collecting the correspondence, a good deal of the arrangement, and, to a certain extent at least, the drawing up of the plan, devolved upon him. It is true, that I have not considered myself bound to adhere to his suggestions in every respect; many letters which he had marked for insertion I have omitted, and several which he had omitted I have introduced; but, on the whole, my obligations to him are too numerous and too weighty, not to be thus publicly and gratefully acknowledged.

With respect to the plan itself, it has been adopted as presenting the best opportunities of making the reader come, as it were, into personal contact with the individual whose story he peruses. In his own letters, especially in those addressed to his nearest relatives and most intimate friends, a much more accurate idea is to be formed of a man's character, than from any history detailed in the third person; and if these exhibit, as the letters of Sir Thomas Munro unquestionably do, marks of deep thought and brilliant genius, they are infinitely more attractive than any other species of literary composition. I do not, therefore, hesitate to own, that if the following correspondence be not widely read and universally relished, I shall for the future greatly distrust my own judgment in such matters.

The following interesting epitome of his services, drawn up, I believe, on the occasion of his advancement to the Order of the Bath, was found among the private papers of Sir Thomas Munro. It is given, as forming no inapt introduction to the more detailed account which will be found in the sequel.

MEMORANDUM OF SERVICES.

the Carnatic, in the war with the Mysoreans and the French, from the commencement of hostilities by Hyder Ally, until the cessation of arms with the French, on the 2nd of July 1783.

I was present in the retreat of Sir Hector Munro from Conjeveram to Madras, after the defeat of Colonel Baillie by Hyder Ally, on the 10th of September 1780.

I was with the army under Sir Eyre Coote, at the relief of Wandiwash, on the 24th of January 1781.

At the cannonade by Hyder Ally, on the march from Pondicherry to Cuddalore, on the 7th of February 1781.

At the assault of Chilliumbrune, 18th of June 1781.

At the battle of Porto Novo, 1st of July 1781.

At the siege of Trepassore, 22nd of August 1781.

At the battle of Polliloor, 27th of August 1781.

At the battle of Sholingur, 27th of September 1781.

I was with the advanced division of the army, under Colonel Owen, when that officer was attacked and defeated by Hyder Ally, near Chittore, on the 23rd of October 1781; but the 16th battalion of sepoys, to which I belonged, having been detached to the village of Magraul, about five miles distant, to collect grain, and a body of the ememy having thrown itself between this post and the corps under Colonel Owen, and rendered the junction of the battalions impracticable, Captain Cox, who commanded it, made good his retreat to the main army, by a forced march of nearly forty miles over the hills.

I was present at the taking of Chittore, on the 11th of November 1781.

On the —— of November 1781, having been appointed Quarter-master of brigade, I joined the 5th or left brigade of the army.

I was present when the army, on its march to relieve Vellore, was harassed and cannonaded by Hyder Ally, on the 10th and 13th of January 1782.

I was present at the battle of Arnee, on the 2nd of June 1782.

At the attack of the French lines, and battle of Cuddalore, on the 13th June 1783; on which occasion I acted as aid-decamp to Major Cotgrave, field-officer of the day, who commanded the centre attack.

I was present at the siege of Cuddalore, until the 2nd of July 1783, when hostilities ceased, in consequence of accounts having been received of the peace with France. From this period I remained with a division of the army cantoned in the neighbourhood of Madras, until after the definitive treaty with Tippoo Sultan, in March 1784.

In 1786, I was removed to the 11th battalion, and joined it in September, at Cassimcottah, near Vizagapatam. In January 1787, having been appointed to the 21st battalion, I joined it in the following month at Vellore.

In August 1788, having been appointed an assistant in the Intelligence Department, under Captain Read, and attached to the head-quarters of the force destined to take possession of the province of Guntoor, ceded by the Soubah of the Deccan, I joined the force assembled near Ongole for that purpose, and continued with it until, the service having been completed by the occupation of the forts, I proceeded to Ambore, a frontier station, commanded by Captain Read, under whom I was employed in the Intelligence Department until October 1790: in that month I joined the 21st battalion of Native infantry, in the army under Colonel Maxwell, which, in consequence of the war with Tippoo Sultan, invaded the Baramahl.

I was with the detachment sent out to cover the retreat of vol. 1.

the 1st regiment of Native cavalry, which fell into an ambuscade near Caveripatam, on the 11th of November 1790. I served in the field with the main army, or with detachments of it, until the conclusion of the war.

I was present in the pursuit of Tippoo by Lieutenant-General Meadows, through the Tappoor Pass, on the 18th of November 1790.

When the army, under Lord Cornwallis, entered Mysore in February 1791, I was appointed to the command of a small body of two hundred sepoys, called the Prize Guard, to be employed in securing captured property, and in collecting cattle for the army on its march, and various other duties.

I was stationed in the town of Bangalore during the siege of the fort; and was present when it was taken by storm, on the 21st of March 1791.

I was with the army at the battle of Carrighal, near Seringapatam, on the 15th of May 1791.

On the return of the army from Seringapatam to the neighbourhood of Bangalore, I was constantly employed on detachment in escorting military stores and provisions to camp, until December 1791, when the army being ready to advance to the siege of Seringapatam, I was thrown into the fort of Ootradroog, to cover the march of convoys from Bangalore to camp.

In the following month, January 1792, I was appointed assistant to Captain Read, who commanded a detachment at Bangalore, employed in forwarding supplies to the army.

In February 1792, I marched with this officer, and joined the army before Seringapatam, during the negotiations for peace.

On the settlement of the peace, in March 1792, I marched with the detachment in charge of the two sons of Tippoo, who were to be sent as hostages to Madras.

In April 1792, I marched with the force ordered to occupy the Baramahl, ceded by Tippoo to the British Government.

From April 1792, until March 1799, I was employed in the civil administration of that country.

On the breaking out of the war with Tippoo Sultan, I joined the army under Lieutenant-General Harris, intended for the siege of Seringapatam, near Raicottah, on the 5th of March 1799.

Colonel Read, to whom I had been appointed secretary, having been detached on the 11th to bring forward the supplies in the rear of the army, took the hill-fort of Lonlagherry by assault on the 15th, on which occasion I was present.

The detachment, after collecting the convoys, set out for Seringapatam; but, owing to the labour of repairing the Pass of Caveriporam, it did not reach the army until the 10th of May, six days after the fall of the place.

Having been appointed by the Governor-General, Lord Mornington, one of the secretaries to the Commission for the settlement of Mysore, I acted in that capacity until the conclusion of the Partition-Treaty, and the installation of the Rajah, on the —— of July 1799.

As I had been appointed to the charge of the civil administration of Canara, I entered that province in the end of July, and joined the force which had been previously sent to expel the enemy's garrisons.

From July 1799, till the end of October 1800, I remained in charge of Canara.

In the beginning of November 1800, I proceeded to the Ceded Districts, to the civil administration of which I had been appointed in the preceding month.

I continued in charge of the Ceded Districts until the 23rd of October 1807, when I sailed for England, having then been employed, without interruption, during a period of nearly twenty-eight years in India.

I remained in England from April 1808, till May 1814, when I embarked for India, and reached Madras on the 16th of September 1814.

From September 1814, till July 1817, I was employed as Principal Commissioner for the revision of the Internal Administration in the Madras territories.

When preparations were made for taking the field against the Pindarries, I was appointed to the command of the reserve of the army, under Lieutenant-General Sir Thomas Hislop. The reserve was, in July 1817, ordered to advance and take possession of Dharwar, which the Peishwah had ceded to the British Government by the treaty of Poonah. I reached Dharwar on the 10th of August, three days after it had been given up to the advanced battalion of the reserve. I remained at Dharwar until the 11th of October, engaged in arranging, with Mahratta commissioners, the limits of the districts which had been ceded by the Peishwah. On the 12th of October, I commenced my march for Sondoor, a district held by a refractory Mahratta chief, whom I was ordered to dispossess, and to deliver it up to the officers of the Peishwah.

On the —— of October, I arrived at Sondoor, which the chief surrendered without opposition. On the 7th of November 1817, having repassed the Toombuddra, I directed the reserve, in pursuance of orders from head-quarters, to take up a position beyond the Kistna, under Brigadier-General Pritzler, and proceeded myself to Dharwar to finish the political arrangements with the Mahratta commissioners.

On the 14th of November, arrive at Dharwar; learn that the Peishwah has commenced hostilities, and finding that my rejoining the reserve was rendered impracticable by the interposition of the enemy's troops, determine to endeavour to subdue the neighbouring districts, by the influence of a party among the leading inhabitants, and by the aid of a detachment from the garrison of Dharwar, assisted by a body of irregulars collected from the country.

On the — of December 1817, disperse a body of the enemy's horse, joined by the garrison of Nawlgoond, and

take possession of the forts evacuated by the enemy on our approach.

On the —— of January 1818, having been joined by a small battering train from Bellari, lay siege to Guddur, which surrenders on the —— of January.

On the --- of January, take the fort of Dumbull.

On the —— of January, the fort of Hoobley, and on the day following, its dependent fort of Misriekottah is given up to a detachment sent to occupy it.

On the —— of February 1818, pass the Malpurbah; and, after routing a body of the enemy's horse and foot near the village of ———, encamped near Badami.

On the 17th of February, a practicable breach having been made, storm and carry the place. On the 21st of February take Bagricottah.

On the 10th of February, take Padshapoor.

On the 21st of March, encamp before Belgamee; and, after a siege of twenty days, take the place by capitulation on the 10th of April.

On the 16th of April, Kalla Nundilghur is given up to a detachment of irregulars which I sent to invest it.

On the 22nd of April, rejoin the reserve.

On the 10th of May, take the pettah of Sholapoor by assault. Defeat the Peishwah's infantry under Gunput Row, at the battle of Sholapoor.

15th of May, take the fort of Sholapoor by capitulation, after a practicable breach had been made.

31st of May, encamp before Nepauni, and compel Appah Dessay to give orders for the delivery of Ookarah and other places to the Rajah of Bolapoor.

On the 8th of August 1818, having received the surrender of Paurghur, the last fort held for the Peishwah, resign my command, after having, in the course of the campaign, reduced all the Peishwah's territories between the Toombuddra and Kistna; and from the Kistna northward to Akloos, on the Neemah, and eastward to the Nizam's frontier.

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The following contains a general view of his Civil and Military promotions.

CADET	1779.
Ensign	. October 1780.
LIEUTENANT	11 February 1786.
BREVET-CAPTAIN .	. 7 February 1796.
CAPTAIN	15 June 1796.
Major	. 7 May 1800.
LIEUTENANT-COLONEL .	24 April 1804.
COLONEL	. 15 June 1815.
Brigadier-General .	December 1817.
COMPANION OF THE BATH	. October 1818.
Major-General .	August 1819.
K.C.B.	. November 1819.
GOVERNOR OF MADRAS .	1819.
BARONET	. June 1826.

Ash, near Wingham, Kent, Nov. 9, 1829.

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