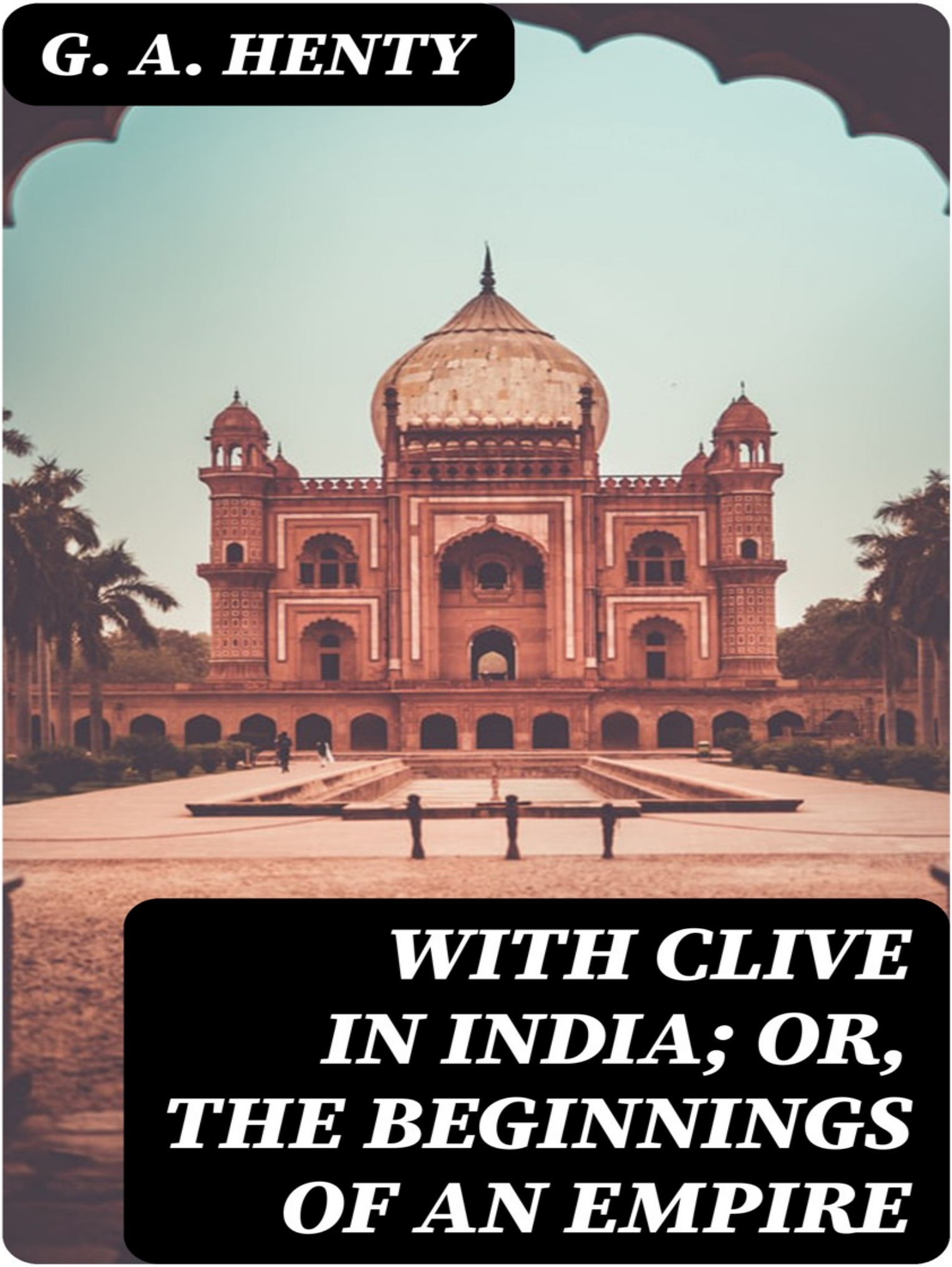
G. A. HENTY



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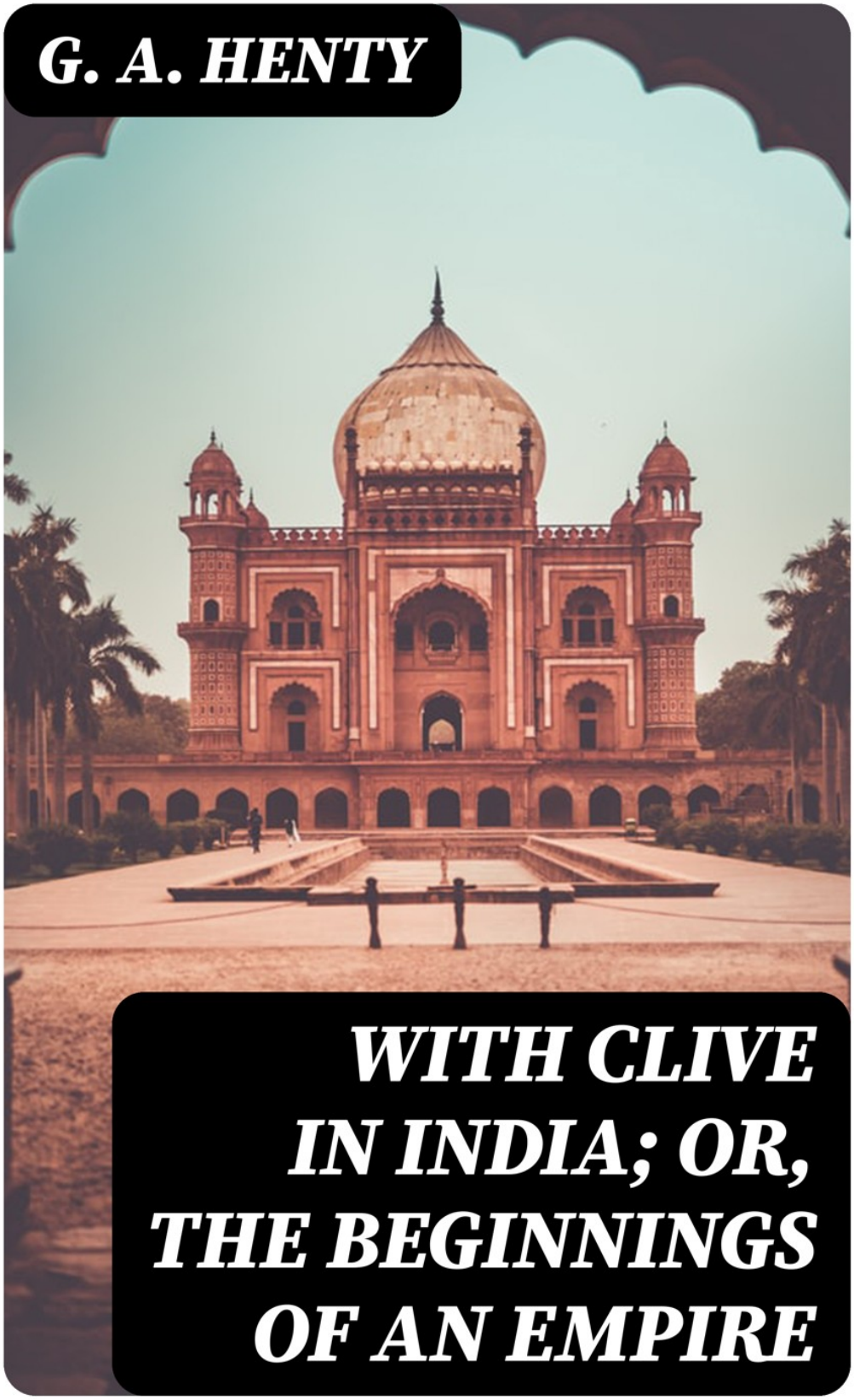

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Preface.

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In the following pages I have endeavoured to give a vivid picture of the wonderful events of the ten years, which at their commencement saw Madras in the hands of the French--Calcutta at the mercy of the Nabob of Bengal--and English influence apparently at the point of extinction in India--and which ended in the final triumph of the English, both in Bengal and Madras. There were yet great battles to be fought, great efforts to be made, before the vast Empire of India fell altogether into British hands; but these were but the sequel of the events I have described.

The historical details are, throughout the story, strictly accurate, and for them I am indebted to the history of these events written by Mr. Orme, who lived at that time, to the "Life of Lord Clive," recently published by Lieutenant Colonel Malleson, and to other standard authorities. In this book I have devoted a somewhat smaller space to the personal adventures of my hero than in my other historical tales, but the events themselves were of such a thrilling and exciting nature that no fiction could surpass them.

A word as to the orthography of the names and places. An entirely new method of spelling Indian words has lately been invented by the Indian authorities. This is no doubt more correct than the rough-and-ready orthography of the early traders, and I have therefore adopted it for all little-known places. But there are Indian names which have become household words in England, and should never be changed; and as it would be considered a gross piece of

pedantry and affectation on the part of a tourist on the Continent, who should, on his return, say he had been to Genova, Firenze, and Wien, instead of Genoa, Florence, and Vienna; it is, I consider, an even worse offence to transform Arcot, Cawnpoor, and Lucknow, into Arkat, Kahnpur, and Laknao. I have tried, therefore, so far as possible, to give the names of well-known personages and places in the spelling familiar to Englishmen, while the new orthography has been elsewhere adopted.

G. A. Henty.

Chapter 1: Leaving Home.

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A lady in deep mourning was sitting, crying bitterly, by a fire in small lodgings in the town of Yarmouth. Beside her stood a tall lad of sixteen. He was slight in build, but his schoolfellows knew that Charlie Marryat's muscles were as firm and hard as those of any boy in the school. In all sports requiring activity and endurance, rather than weight and strength, he was always conspicuous. Not one in the school could compete with him in long-distance running, and when he was one of the hares there was but little chance for the hounds. He was a capital swimmer, and one of the best boxers in the school. He had a reputation for being a leader in every mischievous prank; but he was honorable and manly, would scorn to shelter himself under the semblance of a lie, and was a prime favourite with his masters, as well as his schoolfellows. His mother bewailed the frequency with which he returned home with blackened eyes and bruised face; for between Dr. Willet's school and the fisher lads of Yarmouth there was a standing feud, whose origin dated so far back that none of those now at school could trace it. Consequently, fierce fights often took place in the narrow rows, and sometimes the fisher boys would be driven back on to the broad quay shaded by trees, by the river, and there being reinforced from the craft along the side, would reassume the offensive and drive their opponents back into the main street.

It was but six months since Charlie had lost his father, who was the officer in command at the coast guard station,

and his scanty pension was now all that remained for the support of his widow and children. His mother had talked his future prospects over, many times, with Charlie. The latter was willing to do anything, but could suggest nothing. His father had but little naval interest, and had for years been employed on coast guard service. Charlie agreed that, although he should have liked of all things to go to sea, it was useless to think of it now, for he was past the age at which he could have entered as a midshipman.

The matter had been talked over four years before, with his father; but the latter had pointed out that a life in the navy, without interest, is in most cases a very hard one. If a chance of distinguishing himself happened, promotion would follow; but if not, he might be for years on shore, starving on half pay and waiting in vain for an appointment, while officers with more luck and better interest went over his head.

Other professions had been discussed, but nothing determined upon, when Lieutenant Marryat suddenly died. Charlie, although an only son, was not an only child, as he had two sisters both younger than himself. After a few months of effort, Mrs. Marryat found that the utmost she could hope to do, with her scanty income, was to maintain herself and daughters, and to educate them until they should reach an age when they could earn their own living as governesses; but that Charlie's keep and education were beyond her resources. She had, therefore, very reluctantly written to an uncle, whom she had not seen for many years, her family having objected very strongly to her marriage with a penniless lieutenant in the navy. She informed him of

the loss of her husband, and that, although her income was sufficient to maintain herself and her daughters, she was most anxious to start her son, who was now sixteen, in life; and therefore begged him to use his influence to obtain for him a situation of some sort. The letter which she now held in her hand was the answer to the appeal.

"My dear Niece," it began, "Since you, by your own foolish conduct and opposition to all our wishes, separated yourself from your family, and went your own way in life, I have heard little of you, as the death of your parents so shortly afterwards deprived me of all sources of information. I regret to hear of the loss which you have suffered. I have already taken the necessary steps to carry out your wishes. I yesterday dined with a friend, who is one of the directors of the Honorable East India Company, and at my request he has kindly placed a writership in the Company at your son's service. He will have to come up to London to see the board, next week, and will probably have to embark for India a fortnight later. I shall be glad if he will take up his abode with me, during the intervening time. I shall be glad also if you will favour me with a statement of your income and expenses, with such details as you may think necessary. I inclose four five-pound bank notes, in order that your son may obtain such garments as may be immediately needful for his appearance before the board of directors, and for his journey to London. I remain, my dear niece, yours sincerely,

"Joshua Tufton."

"It is cruel," Mrs. Marryat sobbed, "cruel to take you away from us, and send you to India, where you will most likely

die of fever, or be killed by a tiger, or stabbed by one of those horrid natives, in a fortnight."

"Not so bad as that, Mother, I hope," Charlie said sympathizingly, although he could not repress a smile; "other people have managed to live out there, and have come back safe."

"Yes," Mrs. Marryat said, sobbing; "I know how you will come back. A little, yellow, shrivelled up old man with no liver, and a dreadful temper, and a black servant. I know what it will be."

This time Charlie could not help laughing.

"That's looking too far ahead altogether, Mother. You take the two extremes. If I don't die in a fortnight, I am to live to be a shrivelled old man. I'd rather take a happy medium, and look forward to coming back before my liver is all gone, or my temper all destroyed, with lots of money to make you and the girls comfortable.

"There is only one thing. I wish it had been a cadetship, instead of a writership."

"That is my only comfort," Mrs. Marryat said. "If it had been a cadetship, I should have written to say that I would not let you go. It is bad enough as it is; but if you had had to fight, I could not have borne it."

Charlie did his best to console his mother, by telling her how everyone who went to India made fortunes, and how he should be sure to come back with plenty of money; and that, when the girls grew up, he should be able to find rich husbands for them; and at last he succeeded in getting her to look at matters in a less gloomy light.

"And I'm sure, Mother," he said, "Uncle means most kindly. He sends twenty pounds, you see, and says that that is for immediate necessities; so I have no doubt he means to help to get my outfit, or at any rate to advance money, which I can repay him out of my salary. The letter is rather stiff and businesslike, of course, but I suppose that's his way; and you see he asks about your income, so perhaps he means to help for the girls' education. I should go away very happy, if I knew that you would be able to get on comfortably. Of course it's a long way off, Mother, and I should have liked to stay at home, to be a help to you and the girls; but one can't have all one wishes. As far as I am concerned, myself, I would rather go out as a writer there, where I shall see strange sights and a strange country, than be stuck all my life at a desk in London.

"What is Uncle like?"

"He is a short man, my dear, rather stiff and pompous, with a very stiff cravat. He used to give me his finger to shake, when I was a child, and I was always afraid of him. He married a most disagreeable woman, only a year or two before I married, myself. But I heard she died not very long afterwards;" and so Mrs. Marryat got talking of her early days and relations, and was quite in good spirits again, by the time her daughters returned from school; and she told them what she was now coming to regard as the good fortune which had befallen their brother.

The girls were greatly affected. They adored their brother, and the thought that he was going away for years was terrible to them. Nothing that could be said pacified them in the slightest degree, and they did nothing but cry,

until they retired to bed. Charlie was much affected by their sorrow; but when they had retired, he took his hat and went out to tell the news of his approaching departure to some of his chums.

The next day, Mrs. Marryat wrote thanking her uncle for his kindness, and saying that Charlie would go round to London by the packet which sailed on the following Monday; and would, if the wind were fair and all went well, reach London on the Wednesday.

School was, of course, at once given up, and the girls also had a holiday till their brother's departure. When the necessary clothes were ordered, there was little more to do; and Charlie spent the time, when his boy friends were in school, in walking with the girls along the shore, talking to them of the future, of the presents he would send them home, and of the life he should lead in India; while at other times he went out with his favourite schoolfellows, and joined in one last grand battle with the smack boys.

On Monday morning, after a sad farewell to his family, Charlie embarked on board the Yarmouth Belle, a packet which performed the journey to and from London once a fortnight. She was a roomy lugger, built for stowage rather than speed, and her hold was crammed and her deck piled with packages of salted fish. There were five or six other persons also bound for London, the journey to which was, in those days, regarded as an arduous undertaking.

As soon as the Yarmouth Belle issued from the mouth of the river, she began to pitch heavily; and Charlie, who from frequently going out with his father in the revenue cutter, was a good sailor, busied himself in doing his best for his

afflicted fellow passengers. Towards evening the wind got up, and shifting ahead, the captain dropped anchor off Lowestoft. The next morning was finer, and the Yarmouth Belle continued her way. It was not, however, till Thursday afternoon that she dropped anchor in the Pool.

Charlie was soon on shore, and giving his trunk to a porter, desired him to lead the way to Bread Street, in which his uncle resided; for in the last century, such things as country villas were almost unknown, and the merchants of London for the most part resided in the houses where they carried on their business. Keeping close to the porter, to see that he did not make off with his trunk, for Charlie had received many warnings as to the extreme wickedness of London, he followed him through the busy streets, and arrived safely at his uncle's door.

It was now dusk, and Charlie, on giving his name, was shown upstairs to a large room, which was lighted by a fire blazing in the hearth. Standing with his back to this was a gentleman whom he at once recognized, from his mother's description, as her uncle, although he was a good deal more portly than when she had seen him last.

"So you are my grandnephew," he said, holding out what Charlie considered to be a very limp and flabby hand towards him.

"Yes, Uncle," Charlie said cheerfully; "and we are very much obliged to you, Mamma and I, for your kindness."

"Humph!" the old gentleman grunted.

"And how is it," he asked severely, "that you were not here yesterday? My niece's letter led me to expect that you would arrive yesterday."

"We came as fast as we could, Uncle," Charlie laughed; "but of course the time depends upon the wind. The captain tells me that he has been as much as three weeks coming round."

Mr. Tufton grunted again as if to signify that such unpunctuality was altogether displeasing to him.

"You are tall," he said, looking up at Charlie, who stood half a head above him, "and thin, very thin. You have a loose way of standing, which I don't approve of."

"I'm sorry I'm loose, sir," Charlie said gravely, "if you do not approve of it; but you see, running about and playing games make one lissome. I suppose, now that's all over and I am going to spend my time in writing, I shall get stiffer."

"I hope so, I hope so," Mr. Tufton said encouragingly, and as if stiffness were one of the most desirable things in life. "I like to see young men with a sedate bearing.

"And you left my niece and grandnieces well, I hope?"

"Quite well, thank you, sir," Charlie said; "but, of course, a good deal upset with parting from me."

"Yes," Mr. Tufton said; "I suppose so. Women are so emotional. Now there's nothing I object to more than emotion."

As Charlie thought that this was probably the case, he was silent, although the idea vaguely occurred to him that he should like to excite a little emotion in his uncle, by the sudden insertion of a pin, or some other such means. The silence continued for some little time, and then Mr. Tufton said:

"I always dine at two o'clock; but as probably you are hungry--I have observed that boys always are hungry--some

food will be served you in the next room. I had already given my housekeeper orders. No doubt you will find it prepared. After that, you may like to take a walk in the streets. I have supper at nine, by which hour you will, of course, have returned."

Charlie, as he ate his meal, thought to himself that his uncle was a pompous old gentleman, and that it would be very hard work getting on with him, for the next three weeks. However, he consoled himself by the thought:

"Kind is as kind does after all, and I expect the old gentleman is not as crusty as he looks."

Charlie had handed to Mr. Tufton a letter which his mother had given him, and when he returned from a ramble through the streets, he found that gentleman sitting by the fire, with lights upon a small table beside him. Upon this Mrs. Marryat's letter lay open.

"So you have soon become tired of the streets of London, Grandnephew!" he said.

"There is not much to see, sir. The lamps do not burn very brightly, and the fog is coming on. I thought that, if it grew thicker, I might lose my way, and in that case I might not have been in at the hour you named for supper."

"Humph!" the other gentleman grunted. "So your mother has taught you to be punctual to meals. But, no; boys' appetites teach them to be punctual then, if never at any other time.

"And why, sir?" he asked severely, "Did my niece not write to me before?"

"I don't know, sir," Charlie said. "I suppose she did not like--that is, she didn't think--that is--"

"Think, sir! Like, sir!" said his uncle. "What right had she either to think or to like? Her duty clearly was to have made me acquainted, at once, with all the circumstances. I suppose I had a right to say whether I approved of my grandnieces going tramping about the world as governesses, or not. It isn't because a woman chooses, by her folly, to separate herself from her family, that they are to be deprived of their rights in a matter of this kind. Eh, sir, what do you say to that?" and Mr. Tufton looked very angry, indeed.

"I don't know, sir," Charlie said. "I have never thought the matter over."

"Why, sir, suppose she had made you a tinker, sir, and you turned out a thief, as likely as not you would have done, and you'd been hung, sir, what then? Am I to have such discredit as this brought upon me, without my having any option in the matter?"

"I suppose not, sir," Charlie said. "I hope I shouldn't have turned out a thief, even if I'd been a tinker; but perhaps it was because my mother feared that this might be the case, that she did give you the option."

His uncle looked at him keenly; but Charlie, though with some difficulty, maintained the gravest face.

"It is well she did so," Mr. Tufton said; "very well. If she had not done so, I should have known the reason why. And you, sir, do you like the thought of going to India?"

"Yes, Uncle, I like the thought very much, though I would rather, if I may say so, have gone as a cadet."

"I thought so," Mr. Tufton said, sarcastically. "I was sure of it. You wanted to wear a red coat and a sword, and to

swagger about the streets of Calcutta, instead of making an honorable living and acquiring a fortune."

"I don't think, sir," Charlie said, "that the idea of the red coat and sword entered into my mind; but it seemed to me the choice of a life of activity and adventure, against one as a mere clerk."

"Had you entered the military service of the Company, even if you didn't get shot, you could only hope to rise to the command of a regiment, ranking with a civilian very low down on the list. The stupidity of boys is unaccountable. It's a splendid career, sir, that I have opened to you; but if I'd known that you had no ambition, I would have put you into my own counting house; though there, that wouldn't have done either, for I know you would have blotted the ledger, and turned all the accounts topsy-turvy.

"And now, sir, supper is ready;" and the old gentleman led the way into the next room.

Upon the following day Charlie was introduced, by his uncle, to the director who had given him his nomination, and was told by him that the board would sit upon the following day, and that he must call at the India House, at eleven o'clock. The ordeal was not a formidable one. He was shown into a room where eight or ten elderly gentlemen were sitting round a large table. Among these was his friend of the day before. He was asked a question or two about his age, his father's profession, and his place of education. Then the gentleman at the head of the table nodded to him, and said he could go, and instructions would be sent to him, and that he was to prepare to sail in the Lizzie Anderson, which

would leave the docks in ten days' time, and that he would be, for the present, stationed at Madras.

Much delighted at having got through the ordeal so easily, Charlie returned to his uncle's. He did not venture to penetrate into the latter's counting house, but awaited his coming upstairs to dinner, to tell him the news.

"Humph!" said his uncle; "it is lucky they did not find out what a fool you were, at once. I was rather afraid that even the two minutes would do it. After dinner, I will send my clerk round with you, to get the few things which are necessary for your voyage.

"I suppose you will want to, what you call amuse yourself, to see the beasts at Exeter Change, and the playhouses. Here are two sovereigns. Don't get into loose company, and don't get drinking, sir, or out of the house you go."

Charlie attempted to express his thanks, but his uncle stopped him abruptly.

"Hold your tongue, sir. I am doing what is right; a thing, sir, Joshua Tufton always has done, and doesn't expect to be thanked for it. All I ask you is, that if you rob the Company's till and are hung, don't mention that you are related to me."

After dinner was over, Charlie went out under the charge of an old clerk, and visited tailors' and outfitters' shops, and found that his uncle's idea of the few necessaries for a voyage differed very widely from his own. The clerk, in each case, inquired from the tradesmen what was the outfit which gentlemen going to India generally took with them, and Charlie was absolutely appalled at the magnitude of the orders. Four dozen shirts, ten dozen pairs of stockings, two

dozen suits of white cotton cloth, and everything else in proportion. Charlie in vain remonstrated, and even implored the clerk to abstain from ordering what appeared to him such a fabulous amount of things; and begged him, at any rate, to wait until he had spoken to his uncle. The clerk, however, replied that he had received instructions that the full usual outfit was to be obtained, and that Mr. Tufton never permitted his orders to be questioned. Charlie was forced to submit, but he was absolutely oppressed with the magnitude of his outfit, to carry which six huge trunks were required.

"It is awful," Charlie said to himself, "positively awful. How much it will all come to, goodness only knows; three or four hundred pounds, at least."

In those days, before steam was thought of, and the journey to India was often of six months' duration, men never came home more than once in seven years, and often remained in India from the day of their arrival until they finally retired, without once revisiting England. The outfits taken out were, therefore, necessarily much larger than at the present time, when a run home to England can be accomplished in three weeks, and there are plenty of shops, in every town in India, where all European articles of necessity or luxury can be purchased.

After separating from the clerk, Charlie felt altogether unable to start out in search of amusement. He wandered about vaguely till supper time, and then attempted to address his uncle on the subject.

"My dear Uncle," he began, "you've been so awfully kind to me, that I really do not like to trespass upon you. I am

positively frightened at the outfit your clerk has ordered. It is enormous. I'm sure I can't want so many things, possibly, and I would really rather take a much smaller outfit; and then, as I want them, I can have more things out from England, and pay for them myself."

"You don't suppose," Mr. Tufton said sternly, "that I'm going to have my nephew go out to India with the outfit of a cabin boy. I ordered that you were to have the proper outfit of a gentleman, and I requested my clerk to order a considerable portion of the things to be made of a size which will allow for your growing, for you look to me as if you were likely enough to run up into a lanky giant, of six feet high. I suppose he has done as I ordered him. Don't let me hear another word on the subject."

Chapter 2: The Young Writer.

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For the next four days, Charlie followed his uncle's instructions and amused himself. He visited Exeter Change, took a boat and rowed down the river to Greenwich, and a coach and visited the palace of Hampton Court. He went to see the coaches make their start, in the morning, for all places in England, and marvelled at the perfection of the turnouts. He went to the playhouses twice, in the evening, and saw Mr. Garrick in his performance as Richard the Third.

On the fifth day, a great surprise awaited him. His uncle, at breakfast, had told him briefly that he did not wish him to go out before dinner, as someone might want to see him; and Charlie, supposing that a messenger might be coming down from the India House, waited indoors; and an hour later he was astonished, when the door of the room opened and his mother and sisters entered.

With a shout of gladness and surprise, Charlie rushed into their arms.

"My dear mother, my dear girls, this is an unexpected pleasure, indeed! Why, what has brought you here?"

"Didn't you know we were coming, Charlie? Didn't Uncle tell you?" they exclaimed.

"Not a word," Charlie said. "I never dreamt of such a thing. What, has he called you up here to stay till I go?"

"Oh, my dear, he has been so kind," his mother said; "and so funny! He wrote me such a scolding letter, just as if I had been a very naughty little girl. He said he wasn't going to allow me to bring disgrace upon him, by living in

wretched lodgings at Yarmouth, nor by his grandnieces being sent out as governesses. So he ordered me at once--ordered me Charlie, as if I had no will of my own--to give up the lodgings, and to take our places in the coach, yesterday morning. He said we were not to shame him by appearing here in rags, and he sent me a hundred pounds, every penny of which, he said, was to be laid out in clothes. As to the future, he said it would be his duty to see that I brought no further disgrace upon the family."

"Yes, and he's been just as kind to me, Mother. As I told you when I wrote, he had ordered an enormous outfit, which will, I am sure, cost hundreds of pounds. He makes me go to the playhouses, and all sorts of amusements; and all the time he has been so kind he scolds, and grumbles, and predicts that I shall be hanged."

"I'm sure you won't," Kate, his youngest sister, said indignantly. "How can he say such a thing?"

"He doesn't mean it," Charlie laughed. "It's only his way. He will go on just the same way with you, I have no doubt; but you mustn't mind, you know, and mustn't laugh, but must look quite grave and serious.

"Ah! Here he is.

"Oh, Uncle, this is kind of you!"

"Hold your tongue, sir," said his uncle, "and try and learn not to speak to your elders, unless you are addressed.

"Niece Mary," he said, kissing her upon the forehead, "I am glad to see you again. You are not so much changed as I expected.

"And these are my grandnieces, Elizabeth and Kate, though why Kate I don't know. It is a fanciful name, and new

to the family, and I am surprised that you didn't call her Susanna, after your grandmother."

Kate made a little face at the thought of being called Susanna. However, a warning glance from Charlie closed her lips, just as she was about to express her decided preference for her own name. Mr. Tufton kissed them both, muttering to himself:

"I suppose I ought to kiss them. Girls always expect to be kissed at every opportunity.

"What are you laughing at, grandniece?"

"I don't think girls expect to be kissed, except by people they like," Kate said; "but we do like kissing you, Uncle," throwing her arms round his neck, and kissing him heartily; "because you have been so kind to Charlie, and have brought us up to see him again."

"You have disarranged my white tie, Niece," Mr. Tufton said, extricating himself from Kate's embrace.

"Niece Mary, I fear that you have not taught your daughters to restrain their emotions, and there is nothing so dreadful as emotional women."

"Perhaps I have not taken so much pains with their education, in that way, as in some others," Mrs. Marryat said, smiling. "But of course, Uncle, if you object to be kissed, the girls will abstain from doing so."

"No," Mr. Tufton said, thoughtfully. "It is the duty of nieces to kiss their uncles, in moderation--in moderation, mind--and it is the duty of the uncles to receive those salutations, and I do not know that the duty is altogether an unpleasant one. I am, myself, unaccustomed to be kissed, but it is an operation to which I may accustom myself, in time."

"I never heard it called an operation, Uncle," Lizzie said demurely; "but I now understand the meaning of the phrase of a man's undergoing a painful operation. I used to think it meant cutting off a leg, or something of that sort, but I see it's much worse."

Her uncle looked at her steadily.

"I am afraid, Grandniece, that you intend to be sarcastic. This is a hateful habit in a man, worse in a woman. Cure yourself of it as speedily as possible, or Heaven help the unhappy man who may some day be your husband.

"And now," he said, "ring the bell. The housekeeper will show you to your rooms. My nephew will tell you what are the hours for meals. Of course, you will want to be gadding about with him. You will understand that there is no occasion to be in to meals; but if you are not present when they are upon the table, you will have to wait for the next. I cannot have my house turned upside down, by meals being brought up at all sorts of hours.

"You must not expect me, Niece, to be at your beck and call during the day, as I have my business to attend to; but of an evening I shall, of course, feel it my duty to accompany you to the playhouse. It will not do for you to be going about with only the protection of a hare-brained boy."

The remainder of Charlie's stay in London passed most pleasantly. They visited all the sights of town, Mr. Tufton performing what he called his duty with an air of protest, but showing a general thoughtfulness and desire to please his visitors, which was very apparent even when he grunted and grumbled the most.

On the evening before he started, he called Charlie down into his counting house.

"Tomorrow you are going to sail," he said, "and to start in life on your own account, and I trust that you will, as far as possible, be steady, and do your duty to your employers. You will understand that, although the pay of a writer is not high, there are opportunities for advancement. The Company have the monopoly of the trade of India, and in addition to their great factories at Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras, they have many other trading stations. Those who, by their good conduct, attract the attention of their superiors, rise to positions of trust and emolument. There are many who think that the Company will, in time, enlarge its operations; and as they do so, superior opportunities will offer themselves; and since the subject of India has been prominently brought before my notice, I have examined the question, and am determined to invest somewhat largely in the stock of the Company, a step which will naturally give me some influence with the board. That influence I shall, always supposing that your conduct warrants it, exercise on your behalf.

"As we are now at war with France, and it is possible that the vessel in which you are proceeding may be attacked by the way, I have thought it proper that you should be armed. You will, therefore, find in your cabin a brace of pistols, a rifle, and a double-barrel shotgun: which last, I am informed, is a useful weapon at close quarters. Should your avocations in India permit your doing so, you will find them useful in the pursuit of game. I hope that you will not be extravagant; but as a matter of business I find that it is useful to be able

to give entertainments, to persons who may be in a position to benefit or advance you. I have, therefore, arranged that you will draw from the factor at Madras the sum of two hundred pounds, annually, in addition to your pay. It is clearly my duty to see that my nephew has every fair opportunity for making his way.

"Now, go upstairs at once to your mother. I have letters to write, and am too busy for talking."

So saying, with a peremptory wave of his hand he dismissed his nephew.

"Well, Mother," Charlie said, after telling her of his uncle's generosity, "thank goodness you will be all right now, anyhow. No doubt Uncle intends to do something for you and the girls, though he has said nothing at present, beyond the fact that you are not to be in wretched lodgings, and they are not to go out as governesses. But even if he should change his mind, and I don't think he ever does that, I shall be able to help you.

"Oh, he is kind, isn't he?"

The parting was far less sad than that which had taken place at Yarmouth. Charlie was now assured that his mother and sisters would be comfortable, and well cared for in his absence; while his mother, happy in the lightening of her anxiety as to the future of her daughters, and as to the prospects of her son, was able to bear with better heart the thought of their long separation.

Mrs. Marryat and the girls accompanied him on board ship. Mr. Tufton declined to join the party, under the plea that, in the first place, he was busy; and in the second, that he feared there would be an emotional display. He sent,

however, his head clerk with them, to escort the ladies on their return from the docks.

The Lizzie Anderson was a fine ship, of the largest size, and she was almost as clean and trim as a man of war. She carried twelve cannon, two of them thirty-two pounders, which were in those days considered large pieces of ordnance. All the ships of the Company, and, indeed, all ocean-going merchantmen of the day, were armed, as the sea swarmed with privateers, and the black flag of the pirates was still occasionally to be seen.

The girls were delighted with all they saw, as, indeed, was Charlie; for accustomed, as they were, only to the coasting vessels which frequented the port of Yarmouth, this floating castle appeared to them a vessel of stupendous size and power.

This was Charlie's first visit, also, to the ship, for his uncle had told him that all directions had been given, that the trunks with the things necessary for the voyage would be found in his cabin, at the time of starting, and the rest of the luggage in the hold. Everything was in order, and Charlie found that his cabin companion was a doctor in the service, returning to Madras. He was a pleasant man, of some five or six and thirty, and assured Mrs. Marryat that he would soon make her son at home on board ship, and would, moreover, put him up to the ways of things upon his arrival in India. There were many visitors on board, saying goodbye to their friends, and all sat down to lunch, served in the saloon.

When this was over, the bell rang for visitors to go ashore. There was a short scene of parting, in which Charlie

was not ashamed to use his handkerchief as freely as did his mother and sisters. Five minutes later, the great vessel passed through the dock gates. Charlie stood at the stern, waving his handkerchief as long as he could catch a glimpse of the figures of his family; and then as, with her sails spread and the tide gaining strength every minute beneath her, the vessel made her way down the river, he turned round to examine his fellow passengers.

These were some twenty in number, and for the most part men. Almost all were, in some capacity or other, civil or military, in the service of the Company; for at that time their monopoly was a rigid one, and none outside its boundary were allowed to trade in India. The Company was, indeed, solely a great mercantile house of business. They had their own ships, their own establishments, and bought and sold goods like other traders. They owned a small extent of country, round their three great trading towns; and kept up a little army, composed of two or three white regiments; and as many composed of natives, trained and disciplined like Europeans, and known as Sepoys. Hence the clergyman, the doctor, a member of the council of Madras, four or five military officers, twice as many civilians, and three young writers, besides Charlie, were all in the employment of the Company.

"Well, youngster," a cheery voice said beside him, "take your last look at the smoke of London, for it will be a good many years before you see it again, my lad. You've blue skies and clear ones where you're going, except when it rains, and when it does there is no mistake about it."

The speaker was the captain of the Lizzie Anderson, a fine sailor-like man of some fifty years, of which near forty had been spent in the service of the Company.

"I'm not a Londoner," Charlie said, smiling, "and have no regret for leaving its smoke. Do you think we shall make a quick voyage?"

"I hope so," the captain said, "but it all depends upon the wind. A finer ship never floated than the Lizzie Anderson; but the Company don't build their vessels for speed, and it's no use trying to run, when you meet a Frenchman. Those fellows understand how to build ships, and if they could fight them as well as they build them, we should not long be mistress of the sea."

Most of the people on board appeared to know each other, and Charlie felt rather lonely, till the doctor came up and began to chat with him. He told him who most of his fellow passengers were:

"That gentleman there, walking on the other side of the deck, as if not only the ship but the river and banks on both sides belonged to him, is one of the council. That is his wife over there, with a companion holding her shawl for her. That pretty little woman, next to her, is the wife of Captain Tibbets, the tall man leaning against the bulwarks. Those two sisters are going out to keep house for their uncle, one of the leading men in Madras; and, I suppose, to get husbands, which they will most likely do before they have been there many weeks. They look very nice girls.

"But you soon get acquainted with them all. It is surprising how soon people get friendly on board ship,