

# **DETAILED LETTER**

RELATIVE TO

**THE INSURRECTION AT VELLORE;**

ADDRESSED BY

**LIEUT.-GENERAL SIR JOHN CRADOCK, K. B. AND K. C.**

TO THE HONOURABLE

***THE COURT OF DIRECTORS.***

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# DETAILED LETTER,

&c. &c.

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*London, July 1, 1808.*

GENTLEMEN,

THE order transmitted in your general Letter to your Government of Madras, under date the 15th April, 1807, for my removal from the command of your forces at that Presidency, and the subsequent privation, by the Council, of the command of his Majesty's troops, have brought me to England.

Under the surprize and mortification, which such a measure so conveyed, and so acted upon, was naturally calculated to produce, I have waited until the first tumult of agitated feelings had subsided, before I addressed your Court, in search of the motive on which it was founded. That period is now arrived; I have submitted to my sentence; my feelings have been moderated; and I am now on the spot to solicit, with the respect which is due to your Court, and the regard which I owe to my own reputation, that I may be made acquainted, by authority, with the cause of my disgrace; for as yet I have to learn, that I *have done any thing* to which it can justly be ascribed. I have been sacrificed without inquiry, I solicit to be heard; when I trust it will appear,

that either through defective information, or incorrect examination, I have experienced a severity of treatment, hitherto unexampled in the British dominions. Unconscious of any justifiable ground for the exercise of such severity, *and in the total absence* of all reason assigned, I ought perhaps to confine this Letter to the simple request of the disclosure of your motives for my removal from your service in the manner it was done; but it seems to me more ingenuous, more candid, and to lead with more expedition to the desired effect, to enter at once upon what alone can be urged, and commit the question, without delay, to your justice.

I must assume, Gentlemen, that your Court considered it had sufficient grounds for removing me; and I equally must infer, from the *manner* in which that measure was executed, that it was intended to be expressive of your displeasure at my conduct. This, perhaps, may be traced to the code of regulations, framed for the better management of your native army, which were published in general orders, in the month of March, 1806, and to the subsequent mutiny and massacre that ensued at *Vellore*, on the 10th July of the same year, which were erroneously alledged (when their real cause was less known) to have been occasioned principally by the order inserted in the 10th Paragraph of the 11th Section of those regulations, and which, had it been the fact actually, I *contena*, would not have rendered me justly deserving of censure; for, placing out of view, *principle*, or reasoning, as prevailing against usage and *invariable practice*, the order itself was issued from the sole advice and suggestion of the most experienced and enlightened

officers in your own service. And it is an *extraordinary fact*, in the face of the injurious consequences that have attached to me, that it will be found that I have been the *only officer in India* who expressed objection to the continuance of the regulation.

It is not my intention to enter into the causes and circumstances of that sanguinary transaction, further than as my own conduct, in the capacity of Commander-in-Chief, may appear to have any relation with it, and with a view of establishing, by a sober statement of facts, that misconception and misrepresentation alone could have connected me with it, in any way deserving of censure ; and, consequently, that if my removal was founded in it, that I have unmeritedly been exposed to injustice. In this appeal, Gentlemen, my object is truth. It is not my design to disguise : I have nothing to conceal, as little do I feel that I have any thing to reproach myself with ; my intention is to state my case with fairness, and to support it *alone* by such references as are in evidence on your own records.

In the detail into which I am about to enter, I must unavoidably trespass upon the attention of your Court, beyond the limits I should wish to observe ; but, placed in a situation where my military character, and my feelings, have alike been wounded by the treatment I have experienced, I trust, Gentlemen, your Court will not consider that I invade your indulgence, by soliciting your consideration to a more minute display of facts, than could otherwise, with propriety, be obtruded on your notice. It is the privilege of the injured to complain, and where character especially is at stake, it is the attribute of justice to listen.



I shall not dwell on the manner in which I was appointed to the command of your army at Madras. It is known to your Court that it was not an object of my solicitation; it was tendered to me graciously by his Majesty and the Company, and I accepted it with the ambition, while I held it, of endeavouring to deserve the approbation of both. It was less the object of my choice than the career of my duty. On this principle I received it, sacrificing for it a high and lucrative situation in his Majesty's army in Ireland, as Quartermaster-general, and allowed to indulge the fairest hope of succeeding to the chief command in India.

On my arrival at Madras, in the month of February, 1805, to take charge of the army, I found at the head of its staff, two officers eminently qualified by character for the stations they filled, Colonel Agnew and Major Pierce; both had been raised to them by superior qualifications. Colonel Agnew, the Adjutant-general, was inferior to no officer on any staff, and superior to most: he had been above thirty years in your service, and was distinguished for his general ability, and extensive knowledge of the language, manners, and customs of the native troops, as well as of the rules and usages of the army at large. Major Pierce, the Deputy Adjutant-general, had been twenty-five years in your service, was equally experienced by reputation, and *actually*, at his *introduction to me*, brought me a book of regulations, patronized by the most distinguished officers, who had served in India. Such officers were deservedly entitled to my respect and confidence, and to the light of such minds I naturally trusted in the construction of *native*

*usages and customs*, in preference to resting upon my own inexperience and self-opinion. In this you will feel that I pursued the path of prudence.

On the first explosion of the event, that leads to this address, I might have taken a step which would at once have displayed to the whole world my share in the transaction ; which was, to have placed in arrest, or suspended from office, those officers, till they had pleaded before your Court in justification of the supposed evil effect of the advice they had given ; but as I could not condemn the principle upon which they acted, and could not but acknowledge the force of usage, I scorned to make so easy a road for distinct exculpation of myself, and thereby expose them to an unjust chance, through the weight of local authority, of an aggravated imputation and charge.

In the course of the period, while I was intrusted with the command of your troops, the inconvenience felt throughout the service, from the want of any standing orders for the ordinary routine of regimental duty, had excited the general animadversion of the army. The Deputy Adjutant-general, under the superintendence of the Adjutant-general, undertook by appointment of Government, to revise the existing code of regulations, and to prepare a body of standing orders, by which the whole army should be uniformly guided, founded on former improved systems of this kind, and collected chiefly from the orderly books of the different Sepoy regiments. To the advantage of such a code, judiciously formed and arranged, in every well-regulated army, you cannot be in-

sensible. In the compilation of this work, it was naturally my first wish, that the *religious prejudices* of the native troops should not be disturbed, but that a just regard should be had to whatever related to the *usages* of their casts ; with these I could not be presumed to be deeply acquainted, from the limited period I had been at their head ; but I naturally considered, that the able officers, under whose guidance it was drawn up, intimately conversant with them, from having passed their whole military life in India, would so frame it, as to *avoid* every interference of such a nature.

With the policy of respecting the religious ceremonies of the Hindoos, and Moormen, I was familiar ; I knew that your empire in the East was considerably suspended by the thread of opinion ; I felt that your principle hitherto had been, to secure your conquests by respecting the religion of the people, and preserving to both sects their faith inviolate. My object was, therefore, to do nothing that trenched on so wise a system (by which only can your dominion be preserved), and my directions and subsequent conduct shew, how much *I* was alive to the wisdom of maintaining it. If I have been made the instrument of violating it (which I aver has not been the case), it will not be denied, that it has been effected by minds, the least likely, it will be presumed, to have led me into such an error ; and at this hour, the world will admit, that to have continued to doubt their information and judgment upon points like these, would have demanded a preternatural agency, rather than arise from the operation of a human understanding. What, therefore, was the line of conduct

I pursued with reference to these principles? Aware of the *impolicy* and *danger* of *innovation*, and anxious to guard against the possibility of being ignorantly led into *unintentional violation* of the *native usages*, I directed the Deputy Adjutant-general to note with *red ink* all *matter* in the least different from *former practice* or *usage*, that the attention of Government might be immediately directed to it. This fact will sufficiently satisfy your Court, that I was fully alive to the importance of respecting such general customs; and in *further evidence* of the thorough sense I entertained of the impolicy of any *such innovation*, the letters from Colonel Agnew and Major Pierce, of the 18th and 26th of July, recorded on your proceedings, *distinctly admit* that I broadly stated to them “*my dislike to touch, in any shape, on the customs of Cast.*”

It is not necessary to add more on this head, to prove the attention I gave to the proper policy to be observed in the framing of these regulations. When they were ready for the inspection and revision of Government, I assembled the Adjutant-general, the Quartermaster-general, and Deputy Adjutant-general of your forces, to discuss them, paragraph by paragraph; they were read by myself; and *several successive* days were devoted to a strict investigation of the propriety of each regulation. The following proposed order, immediately on reading it, arrested my notice, and I shall request the attention of your Court to the vigilance I displayed, whilst labouring under the impression that it was an *impolitic interference* with the customs and prejudices of the native soldiery.

Par. 10. Sect. 11. " It is ordered by the Regulations, that a  
 " native soldier shall not mark his face to denote his cast,  
 " or wear ear-rings, when *dressed in his uniform* ; and it is  
 " further directed, that at all parades, and upon all duties,  
 " every soldier of the battalion shall be clean shaved on the  
 " chin. It is directed also, that uniformity shall, as far as  
 " it is practicable, be preserved, in regard to the quantity  
 " and shape of the hair on the upper lip."\*

I instantly objected to this regulation, on the grounds I have stated. What was the reply ? The Adjutant-general assured me that it was founded on *the invariable practice of the service* ; that in no well-regulated corps was it *ever permitted to wear those distinctive marks*, under arms, and appealed to my own personal observation of such regiments as I had reviewed, in support of his declaration. His letter of the 18th of July, to which I have already referred your Court, renews the assertion, and other respectable authorities confirmed its truth. The Deputy Adjutant-general, in his subsequent letter, of the 26th of July, likewise on your records, and already cited, states as follows :

" When the above order was read, it attracted your notice,  
 " and your Excellency asked, whether it would interfere

\* The notion was propagated, that the Sepoy whiskers were ordered to be cut off. This shews their ~~shape~~ only was directed to be uniform.

“ *with the prejudices of the natives ?*” I answered, like the  
 “ Adjutant-general, that *it would not, and that it was not*  
 “ *the custom in any well-regulated corps for native soldiers*  
 “ *to appear in the manner forbid by the regulation.*” “ In  
 “ inserting the abovementioned paragraphs, I considered  
 “ that I was merely recording what had appeared to me a  
 “ ‘ regulation in the well-conducted part of the service.’  
 “ It was my good fortune to act for a series of years as  
 “ Public Staff Officer of a station, under General Brath-  
 “ waite, of the East India Company’s service, who, at the  
 “ same time that he paid the most unremitting attention to  
 “ the comfort and real prejudices of the soldiers, enforced  
 “ discipline throughout every rank under his command,  
 “ in a degree that I have not since seen equalled ; and,  
 “ I declare upon my honour, that I do not recollect to have  
 “ ever seen during that period, a native soldier on duty with  
 “ his face marked, or with large ear-rings in his ears ; and  
 “ further, that I am certain, that if any man had appeared  
 “ so bedecked on parade, he would have been turned off from  
 “ it. I was afterwards stationed as Major of Brigade at  
 “ Vellore, where it never occurred.”

“ The regiments of cavalry have in their ranks men of the  
 “ highest cast, of all sorts and religions, and a reference  
 “ can be made to the old officers of these corps for infor-  
 “ mation, whether it has, at any period, been ever customary  
 “ for their soldiers to appear on duty with marks on their  
 “ faces, or large ear-rings.”

On these assurances, I suffered the insertion of the order, and, yielding to the weight of such respectable authorities, I abandoned the notion that it was contrary to the usage of the service, or partaking of innovation. Thirty years of experience were not to be opposed by opinions formed by books; and, conceiving it only to be consonant with the usual course of a Sepoy battalion, I no longer opposed its adoption; I felt convinced; objection was silenced: was this the fact? By subsequent authorities, the question is additionally established, if other testimonies were wanting, in support of such conclusive evidences. Major-general Dugald Campbell (an officer of forty years experience in your service), in his letter to me, under date September 12, 1806, and which is before your Court, says:

“ Since the *general orders* issued about eight years ago, the  
 “ marks of cast have been *generally discontinued* throughout  
 “ the army; and I am confidently assured, that many in-  
 “ stances have occurred of *native officers*, of their own ac-  
 “ cord, chastising Sepoys for appearing in the ranks so  
 “ distinguished.”

Lieutenant-colonel Chalmers, of the first battalion, second regiment native infantry, says, in his letter of the 28th August, 1806, also recorded:

“ I beg leave to inform your Excellency, that so far back as  
 “ the year 1777, Colonel Edington, one of the best officers

" in our service, to whose battalion (the 4th) I then be-  
 " longed, *prohibited the wearing of ear-rings when on duty,*  
 " *or marks of cast ; it was complied with without a word*  
 " *being said, as it was no degradation to them, they having it*  
 " *at their option to wear both ear-rings and marks, the mo-*  
 " *ment they were off parade.* Ear-rings are not a necessary  
 " mark of cast ; the ears being bored is quite suffi-  
 " cient ; nor is it a crime in an Hindoo being without a  
 " mark any number of days. *The leaving off the large*  
 " *ear-rings, and mark of casts, was such an improvement*  
 " *to the native soldier's appearance, that a well-regulated*  
 " *corps never allowed either.* I have served in seven different  
 " corps, and was *Adjutant to two ;* and I declare, *I never*  
 " *saw either large ear-rings, or conspicuous marks of cast*  
 " *on a Sepoy, when on duty, since the period above-men-*  
 " *tioned ;* nor is it at this moment adopted in the corps I  
 " command. Those officers with whom I have conversed  
 " on the above subject are of my opinion, that the *order*  
 " *respecting the wearing of ear-rings, or marks on the fore-*  
 " *head,* does not militate against the highest cast of the  
 " native soldiers ; it has been the practice so generally for  
 " these twenty-nine years back, that an order has never  
 " been thought necessary to be published on the subject."

Major Bruce, of the 20th regiment of native infantry, in his  
 letter dated the 4th September, 1806, among the papers submitted  
 to you, says :



“ I have to inform your Excellency, that I always considered it as a *standing regulation of the native service*, and to the best of my recollection it was invariably practised in the different battalions I have served in since the year 1783 ; namely, that when Sepoys were paraded for general or regimental duty, they always appeared, *clean shaved on the chin, without the marks of cast on their forehead, or ear-rings.*”

Captain Sydenham, the Resident at Hyderabad, in his public letter to the Madras Government, writes in these terms :

“ Almost all the corps in Bengal, which are composed of Hindoos of the highest casts, never use their distinguishing marks on duty.”

The resolutions thus drawn up, by the most experienced and enlightened officers in your service, who by their immediate functions were the depository of all general rules and ordinances, and scrutinized with such care by myself, were submitted to the corrective eye of Government ; they remained for some weeks before the Board of Council, at the end of which they were returned to the Adjutant-general for publication. Having stood the test of these various checks, they were ultimately issued out in general orders to the army, in the month of March, 1806. I considered, in common with the Board, that I was only giving my sanction to a more

connected and regular digest of the *military rules and usages* of your native army, than had hitherto been collected ; that I was confirming *practice*, not introducing *innovation* ; the precaution pursued relieved me from the apprehension of their being justly exceptionable to the troops, and the subject was dismissed from my mind, as an *ordinary measure of public duty completed*.

Enough has been said to satisfy you, Gentlemen, that not the *slightest innovation* was intended, or took place. I proceed, in the same spirit of candour, to what may be considered as the remaining probable ground of objection to my conduct.

With this order was combined a regulation introducing a *new turban for the native army*, and, as this change in the SHAPE alone of the usual style of head-dress of the Sepoys, coupled with the 10th Paragraph of the 11th Section, have been erroneously conceived by some to have produced the mutiny and massacre at Vellore, the reasons for adopting it, and the way in which it was first suggested to my notice, demand more of explanation than otherwise would seem to belong to a subject of such little moment. If the mutiny was a consequence of these regulations (which neither reason nor fact can maintain), I have little hesitation in admitting, that the *turban* must be viewed as the primary cause of it. At this alone was discontent directed ; for although the *restriction upon the marks* might naturally be thought to have excited greater objection (by those who ignorantly conceived the measure to be novel), yet, through the long course of examination, it does not appear to have attracted even notice ; it was felt to be in

unison with the common practice of every battalion in the service. The order for enforcing it, is to be found in *direct words* in many orderly-books; and it had, therefore, nothing of novelty in it to awaken resistance.

The *turban* alone was ostensibly the ground of complaint; at this the objections were levelled; and this, by general admission, was the prominent feature of discontent in the very limited, and tainted portion of your army, where alone the language of objection had been heard. Dismissing the supposition, therefore, that the 10th Paragraph of the 11th Section of the code of standing regulations either infringed on the usages of cast, or excited complaint, I come to the measure of the turban, which on better evidence, is admitted to have been the *principal* and only *grievance* alledged.

You are not, Gentlemen, to be informed, that your native troops universally wear turbans, and have ever so done, since first they were employed in your service. The shape of this turban, most dissimilar from a real turban, and its ornaments, have occasionally been varied, as fancy or convenience suggested, both in Bengal (where the Sepoys are generally of much higher cast than on the coast), and at Madras, without its ever having produced, or being considered likely to produce, either complaint or murmur, on the part of the native infantry. Neither the usages of cast, nor the religious ordinances of the Hindoos, prescribe, in this respect, any rule of conduct for the military sect, either in the wearing, or shape of the turban. Both are silent on the subject; and the custom, as far as it relates to *shape* or *pattern* of the different turbans, in use with

your native army, has originated with the Company. I must observe, that the 13th regiment had long worn one in every respect similar ; and I may venture further to affirm, that had the various turbans in use with your army been produced, it would have been impossible for the most experienced officers on your establishment at Madras, to have fixed on the one, against which objection had been raised. It is true, that a similar measure was carried into execution with the native cavalry, and it certainly did, for the moment, produce considerable opposition ; but here, as in my own case, the objection was subsequently proved on the trial of the mutineers, to have been *ostensible*, and not *real*. Your Court will perceive, that I allude to the mutiny which occurred in the native cavalry of the Madras establishment at Connatore, in the year 1790, and at a time when a new description of turban was proposed to be introduced. This turban was at first received by the native troopers with the strongest symptoms of dislike : it occasioned a serious commotion ; was subsequently forced upon them ; and it has since been generally worn in all the cavalry corps. You will perceive an exact similarity between this case, and that, which occurred in the year 1806; but widely different have the consequences been to the officers concerned.

In the one instance, Major Stevenson, who quelled the mutiny by forcible measures, and compelled the Sepoys to wear a head-dress, to which they had evinced such repugnance, was honored with the approbation, and received the thanks of Government for the prompt and able manner in which he supported the military authority ;

while the conduct of your Commander-in-Chief and Adjutant-general, in the latter instance, though founded upon the same principle, but in a milder degree, has been attended with every circumstance of disgrace, and the most marked disapprobation.

If I have proved my reluctance to invade the religious feelings of the native troops, credit I hope will be given to me, for no disposition, on *light* or *frivolous* grounds, to introduce any change in their general style of military dress, founded in fancy, and not originating in *evident utility*. From the already stated diversity in the turban, and the one principally in use being ill-suited to convenience and very heavy, it came into contemplation upon the *representation* of the *Adjutant-general* and the *Deputy Adjutant-general* of your forces, to direct a *common pattern*, on an improved plan, for the whole service, and the general arrangement was left to these officers, of whose experience and ability to conduct it, I, as every other officer in the army, could entertain no doubt. The idea itself was first suggested, and the utility of it strongly urged, to the *Adjutant-general* (as appears by his letter to me of the 10th July, 1806, and which is before your Court), by the officer commanding the 2d battalion of the 14th regiment native infantry, Major Bose, an officer lately at the head of your *military institution*, from his enlarged information, and local acquirements. In consequence of this, turbans made up under their direction, were presented to me for approval, upon the *heads of three Sepoys of the highest cast*, (Seids, and Rajapoots), and they seemed entitled to commendation, as the Adjutant-general has justly stated in the

letter to which I have referred; they were certainly less *heavy*, more *military* in their appearance, *descended* better on the *head*, were less expensive in their cost, and, therefore, more likely to be acceptable to the native troops, who, from the usage of the service, pay for their turbans; although on this occasion, they were to be made up from donation cloth, from the *off-reckoning* fund. On every ground, therefore, they seemed perfectly entitled to approbation. The men themselves declared their preference to them, although these Sepoys so presented to me (singular to say) were afterwards active in the mutiny, in further proof of what has since been established, of its having a *different origin* to any thing connected with the *turban*, which in its nature, could weigh but a straw, either in the scale of murmur or approbation, far less excite to such bloody and atrocious acts, as shock in the recital, and awaken horror at the recollection.

The *new turban* was therefore approved, as a pattern for the army at large, and was exhibited at the *Adjutant-general's office* to the *native officers* and *privates* of all *casts*, without any objection being made against it from any quarter, and the business of making them up generally proceeded.

Before, however, they were made up in sufficient number for general distribution, a dislike to them was manifested by the 2d battalion of the 4th regiment at *Vellore*. Circumstances of extreme insubordination had marked the conduct of that corps, about this period; and a part of it had declared that the turban was offensive, and infringed on their casts, although it was of the same materials,

and varied, but in a slight degree, from the one hitherto worn by that corps. As nothing appeared that could justify such a supposition, and the reverse had been *previously ascertained*, on the best native and European military authorities, the safety of the army demanded, in support of its discipline, that measures should be immediately adopted for punishing the most refractory, and at the same time, for *redressing the grievances* if any, or *further investigating* the measure, should it seem in any degree to be of the nature described. It is sufficiently evident, that the *turban* was not the real cause of the insubordination that appeared in the corps, but solely the ostensible pretext; because, at the period when the above declaration was made, they had neither seen *the turban itself*, nor were they acquainted with *the materials* of which it was to be made up. This is a fact demonstrated in the Court of Inquiry, at Vellore, the 14th May, 1806, before your Court, well deserving of attention, from the inference to which it indisputably leads.

Proceeding, therefore, with the most deliberate caution, and with a just regard to the principles of military subordination, and of general justice, I directed a *Court of Inquiry* to be held at Vellore, for the special purpose of supporting, in the first instance, the due authority of government; and, in the next, of ascertaining whether the turban was really obnoxious in itself to the troops, and whether it actually infringed, as alledged, upon their Casts. Could I, Gentlemen, or you, in my place, do more? Was I to commit my character, and the discipline of your army, by yielding to disobedience, or did it become my duty to assert both, by tempe-

rately, yet firmly, maintaining your authority? If further inquiry established the complaint to be just, both policy and justice would have urged me to redress it, by cancelling the measure; and if the reverse, *both* equally called on me to enforce subordination throughout your army, by maintaining it. *Had there been no mutiny, and acting on this view of the case, if I had shrunk from asserting your authority, by cancelling the order, on the murmur of a few individuals, what would have been your opinion of my conduct? What would have been the general sentiments of your army? In deserting my duty, I should have forfeited your esteem; in bowing to a mutinous spirit, I should have lost their confidence; my character would have sunk, and I could no longer have continued at the head of your army, with credit or effect. On occasions more critical, where mutinies have happened in your armies in Bengal, your officers there have quelled them, and crushed the danger, by meeting it, with its natural remedy, fortitude and temper; concession would have fed the evil, firmness could alone subdue it. It was no longer the measure (insignificant in its nature) that was at issue, the well-being of the army was at stake.*

On these principles, I directed the Court of Inquiry to be held, which met at Vellore, the 14th May, 1806, and to its result I must solicit your particular attention. I selected to preside at it Lieut.-colonels Forbes, M'Kerras, and Marriot, three of the most experienced officers in your service, distinguished for their knowledge of the languages, and native customs; and you have, before your Court, in the result of their proceedings, the clearest evidence to shew'



that the objections were founded on the most *groundless clamour*. The *whole of the native officers* present at the Court of Inquiry, being asked, whether there was *any thing in the turban* that could cause *degradation in the wearer of it*, or affect the prejudice of cast, *unanimously* replied in the *negative*. They affirmed, that the prejudice had been imbibed “ *without consideration, by silly persons ;*” and that no just objection could exist against its adoption. Yet these were the men who, seduced from their allegiance by the conspiracy in which they were engaged, were afterwards secretly foremost in the mutiny and massacre, and the first to blind that experienced officer, Lieut.-colonel Forbes, to the work of death they were preparing, by influencing him to put into confinement the faithful Sepoy, Mustapha Beg, who gave intelligence of their treason, on the ground that he had calumniated their character. No evidence was offered in any shape to shew that the turban was obnoxious ; and the Court *unanimously* reported as its opinion, after mature investigation, on this testimony of the *native officers*, combined with the local intelligence of its members, “ *That there was nothing in the new turban that could really affect the prejudices of cast, and that, from its superior convenience to the one principally in use, it was likely to be attended with beneficial effects.*” And in further confirmation of such being the general sentiment promulgated by the *native officers*, a few days prior to the insurrection at Vellore, the chief conspirator, *Shaik Cassim*, as appears in the evidence of Colonel Forbes (transmitted to England), upon being questioned by his commanding officer, if any dissatisfaction to the

*turban yet existed*, offered, in the presence of all the other native officers, to place the Koran on his head, and *swear that there was none, and that the whole corps were forward to wear it.*

Under these circumstances, will it excite surprize, if suspicion was lulled on the part of your officers; and if, when all objection was silenced, the measure was suffered to proceed? At the close of the Inquiry, the principal insurgents were tried by a general native Court-martial, at Madras; the two ringleaders of the 2d battalion of the 4th regiment were punished, and the rest, upon their apparent contrition, were pardoned.

It will not likewise escape your attention, Gentlemen, in support of the evidence to which I have referred, and in *proof* that the turban could not have occasioned the mutiny from any thing really objectionable in itself, *that the opposition to it was local, and confined to Vellore*; which, connected with the subsequent discoveries, in evidence on the trial of the conspirators, and the investigation on the spot, by order of your government of Madras, sufficiently establish that the objection to the turban was put forward but as a cloak, the better to veil the atrocious designs of the rebels; that not being of a nature to violate any one religious duty of the troops, it never could in itself, at any other moment, have excited even clamour or discontent, far less have conduced to the fatal catastrophe that followed; and that it assumed the appearance of producing this effect only from its *real cause*, at the moment, being *concealed*, and from the ignorance in which your Government remained at that period of the conspiracy, which was then ripening

within the walls of Vellore, and which shortly afterwards exploded with such overwhelming effect.

While these horrors were silently brewing, Musselman intrigue availed itself of this measure, for the purpose of working on the feelings of the Sepoys, of deepening them in treason, and facilitating, through the means of their revolt, the release of the sons of Tippoo, and the restoration of the Mahometan power, as the confession of the principal conspirator, Shaik Cassim, has since established. Had the objection to it been just, the opposition to it would have been *universal*; one religious feeling would have actuated the whole; whereas, with the *exception alone* of this seat of treachery, revolt, and massacre, the *measure was rather acceptable, than the reverse, to the untainted* portion of your army. Any tendency to the contrary, was only in *three corps*, that had a direct connexion with Vellore. The 13th regiment had long worn a similar turban, and Major Bose stated, from Wallajabad, that his regiment was *eager to finish and wear it*. At no other station but Vellore, was any *dissatisfaction or discontent* to be observed. To this hour, throughout the extended quarters of your territories, in the southern division, the northern, the ceded districts, and Mysore, no discontent has been discovered upon this point. From General Macdowall, I had assurances that all was quiet and orderly in his garrison at Seringapatam, and that he considered (as proved to be the fact) the *commotion to be only partial and local*; and Colonel Montresor, at so late a period as the *9th of July*, the day *previous to the event at Vellore*, wrote to state the extreme tranquillity of the large force

at Hyderabad, and did not express a word about the turban, though the same agency (the Musselman poison) had operated so far, by *the 12th of the same month*, as seemed to threaten the same effects as what had happened at Vellore. *To close the question of the turban, many regiments, since the repeal, have petitioned to wear it.*

I trust, Gentlemen, I have sufficiently shewn, in this statement, that there was nothing in the origin of these *two measures*, which ignorance or calumny had designated under the *general term of dress*, from whence the *shade of blame* can justly be imputable to *myself*, and that on the facts of the case, as before me at the moment, when I gave my assent to them, that I acted only with propriety, in permitting their adoption. I saw nothing in *their principle*, on the explanations I had received, that could lead to the apprehension of danger, or that might not have met the concurrence of minds better qualified than my own, from superior local knowledge, to estimate their general expediency. They came recommended to me by the most experienced officers in your service; and I had no where, from other authorities, or any other quarter of your whole *establishment*, discovered them to be liable to objection. Had even the mutiny, and massacre at Vellore resulted from them (which no longer is maintained by any man in India), I yet conceive my conduct would not be liable to just reproach, because it is to the *principle* we are to look, and not to the *result*, when estimating the propriety or impropriety of the order itself.

I now come to a period when, perhaps, less of responsibility may seem to attach to myself, although it is by no means my wish to shrink from the fair proportion of it, which in this transaction I ought justly to bear.

In the course of the investigation to which I have referred, my health, yielding to the climate, gave way, and compelled me, in the month of May, 1806, to retire for a short period to Nundy Droog, in the Mysore country, *as my only chance of recovering it in India.*

That public business should receive as little interruption as possible at the Presidency, the great seat of dispatch, I permitted all the principal Staff to remain at Madras, and [as far as precaution, or prudence could dictate, in the prosecution of this delicate concern, I directed the Adjutant-general to report all the proceedings of the native Court-martial, then sitting upon this subject, to the Governor in Council, and to implicitly follow the directions he received. My letters to Colonel Agnew, upon this point, are before your Court.

I had two inducements to this measure ; first, the impression, that under the retirement, to which the ill state of my health compelled me to submit, I had less means of accurate and unbiassed information ; and next, a laudable desire to co-operate with his Lordship and the Council, and on a question of more than military interest, to be guided by the light of their judgment and advice. This part of the subject, I conceive, requires no further observation ; the measure was no longer under my view ; the partial and local opposition had expired in appearance, and the recovery of my

health was my chief pursuit. Early, however, after I had reached Nundy Droog, and while yet extremely ill, I received a letter from Colonel Brunton, which, with opinions communicated to me by a few other officers (though all equally strangers with Government to the conspiracy at Vellore), led me to believe that the objection to the new turban was spreading in the army. This letter I transmitted to the Governor in Council by the same post, together with these opinions, to shew that *I had no partiality, founded on the obstinacy of self-opinion*, to the measure in question; that the good of the service, and the public interest alone was my object; and with a view that, if his Lordship in Council conceived my intelligence to be correct, he might avail himself of it accordingly.

These opinions, had been excited by a correspondence carried on between the corps at Vellore and the corps to which these gentlemen belonged, with the real object of which they were unacquainted; and they were therefore (without impeaching their vigilance) easily surprized into a belief, that the ferment which appeared, and the opposition which displayed itself against *the turban*, at Vellore, was the *real*, and not the *ostensible*, ground only of that discontent which had been manifested, and seemed to be spreading against its introduction, and under the notion of which, these opinions were formed, and communicated to me; so artfully were the views and objects of the conspirators concealed,

and so generally, even in the garrison of Vellore, were they able to deceive those enlightened officers, who commanded the two regiments that afterwards perpetrated the massacre, that the *one*, Lieutenant-colonel M'Kerras fell an unsuspecting victim ; and the other, Lieutenant-colonel Forbes, placed in confinement, (as already stated) as *insane*, the faithful Sepoy, who, upon the night before, came to give him intelligence of the intended massacre.

Yielding myself to the impression, after the receipt of Colonel Brunton's letter, I stated to the Governor in Council, in the letter under date 27th June, 1806, that I had reason to believe that the measure was obnoxious to the army, and submitted to the Council to weigh the policy, *if it could be done with propriety, of departing from the measure altogether, if they thought it advisable so to do.* I added in justification of so thinking :

“ I am as aware as the human mind can possess the sentiment,  
 “ that opposition to military and just authority cannot be  
 “ yielded to, and that the attempt must be crushed in its  
 “ earliest stage. This is the sole reasoning towards a  
 “ British soldier ; and if it were purely a British case, I  
 “ should neither feel embarrassment, nor should I trouble  
 “ your Lordship in Council ; *but upon the prejudices of*  
 “ *India, the force of cast, which, in its various shapes, no*  
 “ *European may perfectly comprehend, it is allowable, even*

*“ in a soldier’s mind, to pause, and solicit the advice of the  
“ Head, and his companions in the Government.”*

In these sentiments, Gentlemen, can you trace any thing of pertinacity, imprudence, or want of foresight? You see me feeling alike for *your army and your authority, and anxious alone to uphold the one and protect the other.* What was the reply? The Council on the spot, with the means of superior information, and surrounded by the Staff, and your most enlightened servants, were of opinion that I might have been misled by these representations, and that under their influence I had, perhaps, attached more of importance to them than they deserved; and in the public letter, dated July 4, 1806 (six days prior to the massacre), it was proposed to issue *an order to the army, signifying the determination to enforce the turban, as the opposition to it arose “ from ignorant clamour, unfounded on any principle ;”* but at the same time to respect the usages and customs of the native troops. His Lordship and the Board further stated to me, in the same public letter of the 4th July, 1806, as follows :

*“ If there had been any reason to suppose that the late change  
“ of dress was liable to the objections of militating against the  
“ religious principles of the inhabitants of this country, we  
“ should have had no hesitation in immediately recom-  
“ mending to your Excellency the relinquishment of the*



“intention to establish the proposed change; but as it  
 “appears, from the evidence taken in the late *Inquiry at*  
*Vellore*, that no objections of the natives exist, we certainly  
 “deem it advisable that the alternative of yielding to the  
 “clamour, arising from an unfounded prejudice, should, if  
 “possible, be avoided.”

Under these sentiments, the Government proposed the issue of an order to the army, expressive of its determination to enforce the turban, as the opposition to it rested on *no just principle whatever*; and the following order was transmitted to me at Nundy Droog, for publication, in the event of its meeting with my concurrence.

“GENERAL ORDERS by GOVERNMENT, July 4, 1806.

“The Right Honourable the Governor in Council, having  
 “been informed by his Excellency the Commander-in-  
 “Chief, of the opposition which has, in some instances,  
 “been experienced in establishing an alteration, which it  
 “was deemed expedient to adopt, in the form of the turban  
 “in use among the native corps of this establishment, his  
 “Lordship in Council is led to express his extreme regret,  
 “that any part of the native army, whose merits have been  
 “so frequently extolled and rewarded by Government,  
 “could have suffered itself to be *deluded* by an unfounded  
 “clamour.”

“ It will be, in every instance, the wish of the Right Hon. the  
 “ Governor in Council to evince a sacred regard for the reli-  
 “ gious principles of the native troops, as well as of all other  
 “ inhabitants of this country ; but in the *present case* it  
 “ appears, after the *strictest inquiry*, and according to the  
 “ testimony of natives of the highest cast, that the opposi-  
 “ tion which has been experienced in the late change of  
 “ turban, is *destitute of any foundation in either the law or*  
 “ *usage of the Mahomedan or Hindoo religion* ; and every  
 “ person who may persevere in that opposition cannot, in  
 “ consequence, fail to be subjected to the severest penalties  
 “ of military discipline !”

A Proclamation so expressed it was impossible not to approve,  
 and in my reply to the Board of Council, on the 7th of July, after  
 expressing my approbation of it, I added :

“ Since I last had the honour to address your Lordship in  
 “ Council, I have heard nothing more ; which silence leads  
 “ me to hope, that the disinclination to the turban has  
 “ become more feeble, or, perhaps, that reports have been  
 “ exaggerated. Under this view, it may be judicious to  
 “ postpone the publication of the order, either to let it fall  
 “ to the ground, as no longer the interposition of govern-  
 “ ment is required, or to re-assume the issue, as your Lord-  
 “ ship in Council may determine by future events.”

These facts, Gentlemen, will sufficiently establish, that I withheld no information from Government, on the subject of the turban, that could warrant the supposition that I was in any shape disposed blindly to persevere in the measure, from any partiality I might have felt for the change, from its improvement in the native troops ; on the contrary, with just caution, I rather yielded to the impression, that the dislike to it was gaining ground ; and under that sentiment, I candidly stated to your Government the increasing discontent which it seemed to excite. At the moment, however, when its progress appeared to me so far arrested, as to induce me to delay the issue of the order I have quoted, I received from the Adjutant-general a letter, dated 5th July, 1806, which likewise confirmed me in the opinion that the reports had been exaggerated, and that the opposition was daily declining : in this letter he says, *from Madras :*

“ Lord William Bentinck told me yesterday that you had a  
 “ doubt about persevering in the turban—*The oaths of*  
 “ *persons of high cast have appeared before you ; that no-*  
 “ *thing in the turban is against the Hindoo or Mussulman*  
 “ *cast. If any concession is made, I expect the worst con-*  
 “ *sequences. If the matter is allowed to take its course, I*  
 “ *am convinced that nothing but encouragement from their*  
 “ *superior European officers will ever move the troops even*  
 “ *to momentary discontent. It derives consequence from*  
 “ *discussion, but in itself, the subject has none. The turbans*

“ here are getting on very well, and at Wallajabad. The Governor has ordered them for his fencibles.”

And in two days afterwards, in his letter of the 7th July, from Madras, the supposed scene of all information, and the general military sentiment, he again says :

“ I deem it essential to insist on *implicit obedience* ; and I am certain the worst consequences would result from any concession on this point.”

Such were the sentiments of your army, previous to the massacre, and of your Adjutant-general ; of whom I may justly say, in concurrence with the public voice, that your establishment can scarcely boast an authority of equal weight and respectability, and that his talents and acquirements are not exceeded by any officer in your service. When Colonel Agnew asserts, that *active discontent* can never be excited by such a cause, his reasoning is correct, and must receive the sanction of every candid mind of military experience. He dreamed no more than Colonel Brunton, or a single person of your whole establishment, civil or military, of the government or in the entire army, of the horrors that were meditating from a different source at Vellore, where concealment and secrecy could prevail, from the unfortunate division of the command. The turban alone was in Colonel Agnew's view, and from this he was justly entitled to infer, no such misery would flow. Persuaded

I am, as of my existence, that the same result would have broken out in some other shape, and even in a worse degree, with perhaps not the delay of many days, had every concession been made to those two rebel regiments at Vellore. At *this hour*, when all past circumstances can be placed in review against the *opinion* of the *government*, the army, and that enlightened officer the Adjutant-general, whom I considered to be their organ, I would not, I repeat, at this moment, Gentlemen, for any consideration whatsoever, have yielded to so pusillanimous a feeling, void of all just reasoning and military judgment.

I have now, Gentlemen, stated my case; it is unnecessary to enter into the painful recital of the atrocious revolt and massacre on the 10th July, at Vellore. Its causes (long since established) and circumstances are sufficiently before you, for your own information, and, I trust, for my vindication.

In conclusion, suffer me, Gentlemen, to say, I have served the Company with zeal, fidelity, and honour. On different occasions my arrangements received the thanks of your government in India, and the approbation of your Court. The reductions I planned in your military expenses, without impairing the strength and efficiency of your army; the security of your possessions, or your general measures of defence (if maintained and pursued by your servants at Madras), will amount to no less a sum annually than five lacs of pagodas; and the various admitted improvements which I introduced into your military department sufficiently attest the anxious solicitude with which I sought to advance your interest,

and repay your confidence. I can aver with truth, that at the moment I left your service, your army was in the highest order, that not a single regiment failed in its complete establishment, its cloathing, appointments, or discipline ; which the report from the reviewing generals, that I took measures to place on your records before I left Madras, will amply establish ; and that nothing might be wanting for the advantage of your service, my last act, *concluded* after expulsion from command, was to lay before you a general and detailed view of the state of your fortifications throughout every part of the Madras Presidency, (upon which the most erroneous notions had been entertained) a subject of the highest importance, both as to expense and security which information, if attended to, and acted upon, with the judgment and activity it requires, an annual useless expenditure to a great amount may be immediately saved, and much juster objects of defence accomplished. My zeal has been to serve you ; my hope was in your justice. In return, what have I received ? *Humiliation and disgrace*. If I have deserved it, it is due to me to establish it ; and if it has been unmerited, it can never be your intention to deny me the redress, which justice may feel to be my claim. I should not be alive to that, which is dearer to me than my existence, the approbation and favours I have received from my sovereign and my country, and the good opinion of the army, in which I have been bred, if I could silently acquiesce in an act, which, operating virtually as a sentence of *military censure*, stamps me in the estima-

tion of the world with reproach, and unjustly dooms me to the reputation of having unworthily filled the situation to which I had been called.

Under the impression, therefore, of the most injured feelings, but with every sentiment of just respect for your Court, I claim from its justice and candour that I may not be driven, in defence of my honour, as a victim to temporary clamour and oppression, to lay my case at the foot of the Throne, and the bar of my country ; but that I may receive from yourselves that redress, to which I conceive I have the justest pretension. I have been driven from your service in a manner the most harsh. *The command of his majesty's troops was torn from me, in a manner the most galling, without the royal sanction.* I was placed in the sight of your army, and his majesty's service, as an humbled, and degraded man. I was reduced to the rank of a private individual by your government at Madras, and in this reversed, and humiliated situation, I was compelled to remain *there for many weeks to the detriment alike of my fortune and feelings,* (to seek my return to England in any manner I could, at a most enormous expense,) before I could obtain a relief for both, by leaving a service and a country embittered to me by the impression of such injustice, and this without *a reason assigned to me,* or even the shadow of a *cause alledged,* whereon to vindicate such harsh, such unprecedented treatment. No other person, who has ever been in your employment, has ever undergone a measure so painful in its va-

rious consequences, for no man can estimate what I suffered at Madras, after the operation of your removal, and the *subsequent act of the Council*, and I am persuaded, that on a future day, (or at this instant, after the perusal of this address) if attention be directed to the case, credit will be refused to an oppression, not, I am willing to believe, under contemplation, and never intended to the extent it reached. Gentlemen, I did not embark in your service with such an apprehension, I entered it with the feelings of a soldier; I looked to honour, I looked to justice; I felt if I served you *faithfully*, I should be treated liberally. No act of mine has warranted this humiliation of my professional feelings, right, and character; and could I submit to it in silence, the blow would be *merited*; but it is my duty to repel it, because it is my pride to feel that it is not deserved.

Far be it from me to resist the *right* of your Court, to suspend, or remove your officers at will; but it is for me to contend, that the exercise of this right in the *manner* it has been applied against myself, has carried with it unavoidably the imputation of *marked displeasure*, and that you would not have condemned me to the injury and mortification of so *peremptory* a removal from the command of your army, or wrung from me that of his majesty's forces, to the *depreciation* of my *former character*, in the view of that body, but under the impression that I had forfeited your confidence by an act, which justified your withdrawing it.



With you Gentlemen, therefore, the motive yet remains, until, in your justice, you shall please to disclose it; and it is for the purpose of relieving my mind, by aiming at the knowledge of it, that I have felt it to be my duty to address you, thus in detail, upon my arrival in England. I do not solicit a restoration to your service; I do not court a compensation for my losses; but I ask *what I better value*, that boon of justice, which alone can heal the wounded feelings under which I labour. I ask that I may know the *cause of my disgrace*, that I may meet the charge in defence of my character; that my case may be heard. I ask, in the confidence of a mind void of reproach, *that if there is a single act of my public conduct as Commander-in-Chief, that has either excited your displeasure, or requires explanation*, beyond what your records afford, that I may have the opportunity, now, that I am on the spot, of *giving the fullest explanation in my power, on every part of it*.

On the other hand, *if this is not the case, if under fuller evidence from maturer inquiry*, you see nothing in my conduct, in respect of these *two measures*, or of any others in which I may have participated, that can have demanded so *abrupt a dismissal from your service*, without the slightest consideration for my claims, or my feelings, I then solicit from the justice of your Court, that its opinion may be pronounced in such a way, as shall efface, both in the estimation of the British Public, and your armies in India, the dishonourable impression excited by the *manner* in which I was removed, and heal the wound it has inflicted on my feelings.

This is what I ask. I claim it by the sufferings of my mind, by the integrity of my intentions, by the devotion to your interest which actuated my conduct, by *the defiance it gives to accusation* and by the sentiments which belong to my profession.

I have the honour to be,

GENTLEMEN,

With respect,

Your very obedient humble servant,

J. F. CRADOCK, *Lieutenant-General.*

*To the Honourable the Court of Directors,*

*&c. &c. &c.*

SKETCH  
OF  
*THE SITUATION*  
OF  
SIR JOHN CRADOCK, K.B. AND K.C.  
RESULTING FROM HIS HAVING ACCEPTED  
*THE APPOINTMENT*  
OF  
COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF THE EAST INDIA  
COMPANY'S FORCES AT MADRAS,  
IN 1804.

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T. GILLET, Printer,  
{ Crown-court, Fleet-street, London.



# S K E T C H,

&c. &c.

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**AT** the latter end of the year 1803, Sir John Cradock received the communication of his Majesty's pleasure, that he was placed on the Staff in the East Indies, and at the same time it was signified to him, that the Court of Directors had appointed him to succeed Lieutenant-General Stewart, as Commander-in-chief of the East India Company's forces at the Presidency of Madras. However honorable and distinguished the situation might appear to be, yet it had not been solicited by Sir John Cradock, and the offer was accepted, because it appeared consonant to opinions he always maintained, that every officer should embrace whatever service (if foreign, the more urgent the principle) it was the pleasure of his Majesty to tender. At the period this communication was made, Sir John Cradock was Quarter-master-General of his Majesty's army in Ireland, than which no situation at home can be more desirable, as possessing very considerable distinction, and in emolument, from local circumstances, more than equal to its correspon-

dent appointment in England, to be still augmented by his approaching promotion to the rank of Lieutenant-general. Sir John Cradock did not suffer any cold calculations of prudence to operate, but at once abandoned his enviable station, and entered upon the career to which he was called. *All* of foresight or reflection that escaped from him, was simply to mark the circumstance in letters, which he took the liberty to address to his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief, and Lord Castlereagh, the President of the Board of Controul. It was natural, however, that Sir John Cradock should inquire, upon his arrival in London, whether the road to the succession to Lord Lake, as Commander-in-chief in India, lay open to him, and if he might consider it, when the vacancy might arise, as the object of fair pretensions, and just reward of good conduct. He has to acknowledge, with the most lively gratitude, the gracious sentiments of his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief upon the subject, and the most kind and positive assurances of support from Lord Castlereagh.

Under these satisfactory impressions, Sir John Cradock proceeded to India, and disregarded the loss attendant upon a rapid dispossession of every article of establishment and comfort at home, the heavy expense of an equipment correspondent to his rank and expectations, which can only be justly estimated by those who have traversed the Indian seas, in similar situations, and a charge of above 2,000*l.* for his passage. Upon his arrival, he found that a Commander-in-chief at Madras was wholly unprovided as to house, furniture, accommodation, or convenience of any kind, (totally dif-

ferent from any relative situation in his Majesty's service, and from most in the Company's) and that upon the moment, and exposed to every exaction, at an exorbitant expense he was to find a habitation, and create an establishment.\*

He also learned, that the Commander-in-chief had a considerably less income than the officer commanding the forces at Bombay many years ago, and that, exclusive of his seat in council, his military pay was less than many officers of both the civil and military service, of very inferior situations. In addition to such a comparison, it will scarcely be credited, that through the means of a Bazar fund, (a term well known in India) and the exclusion *alone* of the Commander-in-chief by an arrangement of the Council, but not ratified by the Court of Directors, the income of every subordinate General Officer upon the establishment was made superior to the Commander-in-chief.†

Sir John Cradock represented the case to the Council at Madras,

\* The Governor has a house furnished, and establishment. The Admiral of the station has the same; and the Major-generals, though they receive the same allowance for a residence as the Commander-in-chief, live in houses that belong to the government.

† Major-generals Campbell and Wellesley received, the year that Sir John Cradock came to India, 10,725 p. or about 4,300*l*. The arrangement of the Council loses all foundation when it is known, that though the rightful Commander-in-chief has been singly excluded, yet Major-general Campbell preferred a claim, while he commanded the army in chief, and the Council granted it to him.

and claimed, what he conceived to be an undeniable right, that he should receive the pay of a General Officer upon the Staff; but, not to exceed the strictest moderation, he waved the pretension of his superior rank as Lieutenant-general, and only asked to be on an equality with the other Generals, though his subordinate officers. His request appeared so reasonable, that the Council at Madras complied, but the Court of Directors have not been pleased to confirm their decision, upon the plea that their Commander-in-chief was as well paid as others of any service; not reflecting on the established fact, that the nominal amount can bear no analogy to any other command, for the expenses of India *are uncontrollable*, and far exceed those of every other part of the world.

It is necessary also at this moment to state, that Sir John Cradock was informed, on his arrival at Madras, that his predecessor, General Stewart, claimed, and received, upon the terms of his indenture (or instrument entered into with the East India Company), an arrear of salary as Councillor, from the time of his being sworn in, in London; and Sir John Cradock, in exactly the same situation, his *indenture being precisely expressed to the same effect*, preferred his equal right. The Council at Madras referred the memorial to their Advocate-general, who gave his judgment, that Sir John Cradock *was clearly intitled to it*, and upon this legal adjudication he received and applied it to the expenses of his situation; the Court of Directors, however, have not been pleased to confirm the decision of their own Law-officer, nor allow to Sir John



Cradock, *where there is not the shade of difference*, what his predecessor received, and enjoys.

The subject of pecuniary severity is nearly dismissed, and Sir John Cradock has now to unfold a series of injurious conduct exercised against him, he is assured without a parallel in the dominions subject to royal authority, of which he knows the world is generally unacquainted; and he will also believe, that the persons more immediately concerned in the oppressive proceedings are not aware, till the whole be placed in view before them (which has been done in an address to the Court of Directors) of the extent of the wrong and oppression Sir John Cradock has sustained, and of the imperious demand upon their justice and honorable feelings for redress.

To appreciate fairly the case, it is requisite to enter into some remote detail, and preserve a chain of connecting circumstances, from the earliest moment of Sir John Cradock's arrival in India. After a year's constant indisposition, and his recovery almost despaired of, from five repeated attacks of the disorder incident to the climate, he thought it a duty to the public to send home his resignation, and he communicated his situation to his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief, and to the President of the Board of Control; adding, at the <sup>\*</sup>time, that he should not quit his station with-

\* The Governor and Council of Madras felt the peculiar severity of the circumstance, and as they could not deviate from the orders of the Court of Directors, they recommended for alleviation the case in their dispatches, in the strongest manner.

out being relieved, except in case of the last extremity of danger. From this declaration Sir John Cradock felt he was bound to remain, and for two years he did not receive an answer from any authority whatsoever; and the only reply *ever* made by the Court of Directors was an abrupt dismissal from their service, the particulars of which, and its extraordinary consequences, will form the essential part of this statement.

After the resignation of Sir John Cradock was transmitted to England, his health amended very much, and he constantly imparted the progress of his recovery, with the view, that if his resignation was not acted upon, he should be permitted to resume all the favorable expectations of advancement to the chief command, that attended the acceptance of his present appointment, and the unaccountable silence that prevailed, could not fail to confirm the notion.

During this period Lord Lake resigned the command of the army in India, and he actually left the country on his passage home; and Lieutenant-general Nicolls, commanding the forces at Bombay, senior to Sir John Cradock, also quitted India by the same fleet. Their departure left Sir John Cradock the senior officer of either his Majesty's, or the East India Company's service, throughout the whole territory of India. Sir John Cradock had expected with so much confidence a notification of his leave to proceed to Europe, that he had already engaged, at a very considerable *certain* expense, the passage for himself and family on board the *Asia*, but at the moment of the fleet sailing, he was still without permission

from his Majesty, or the East India Company, and placed in the situation described, *the actual Commander in Chief in India*, according to every military usage; for the command in India, over at least his Majesty's troops at the three Presidencies, must be held by the senior officer in his Majesty's service, and is not capable of division; and the position has been maintained since, in subsequent events at Madras, by the Advocate-general, on the construction of the act of parliament (when the result was injury to Sir John Cradock and removal from his Majesty's command), that the authority over his Majesty's troops, and the Company's, cannot be divided, but must be exercised by the same person.

Under these novel circumstances (an officer of the East India Company's service commanding at each presidency, Madras and Bombay, and one of the youngest Major-generals in the King's service commanding the Bengal establishment, the impossibility of reporting to his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief, as the Major-generals of the Company's service at the other presidencies were senior to Major-general Dowdeswell at Calcutta), a sense, and the knowledge of his duty, compelled Sir John Cradock to abandon his intention; and, little aware of the turn that the military arrangements would take, and the degrading events that were to follow, he gave up, at the known loss of forfeit, his passage. These circumstances he detailed in a minute to the Council at Madras (a copy of which he submitted to his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief) and in a letter to the Supreme Government at Calcutta, he stated his situation, his pretensions, and claimed the command of his Majesty's forces.

Military knowledge, the usage of the service, and every propriety, might have pointed out the road to be pursued, and Sir John Cradock would have been called to the seat of authority at Calcutta, where he had the right to take his station, if he pleased, if best suited to the general command of his Majesty's troops, and repel the disorders then prevailing in two of his Majesty's regiments, to the disgrace of the British service in India. But *all* that was done was a reluctant avowal, that he actually did command all his Majesty's forces, but the real control, and the emoluments of office, were given to one of the youngest Major-generals in the service, under the title of Provincial Commander-in-Chief; and when Major-general Dowdeswell went away, the same distinctions and advantages were granted to a Major-general in the Company's service, still junior in rank, and the claims and representations of the actual Commander-in-Chief in India were disregarded, and totally set aside for seven months, till the arrival of Lieutenant-general Hewitt. The whole proceeding was not only contrary to every usage in his Majesty's army, but is directly against the practice of the civil and military establishment of the East India Company, where, *without an instance to the contrary*, the officer who acts for a principal, through absence or any other cause, receives the emoluments of the superior employment.

With General Hewitt came out the order from the Court of Directors to remove Sir John Cradock from his seat in council, and the command of the Company's forces, unaccompanied with the expression of any reason; no correspondent communication was issued from his Majesty to relieve him from the staff in India, on

which he was placed by the King; but, on the contrary, his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief graciously signified, that Lieutenant-general Macdowall was to succeed Sir John Cradock, upon the *event* of his leaving India. These communications, the one of abrupt dismissal on the part of the Court of Directors from the command of their troops, and the other of a gracious and indulgent permission to retire from that over his Majesty's forces in the Presidency of Madras, on the event of his own option, form the whole reply received to the resignation of Sir John Cradock, sent to England more than two years before, upon the pressure of indisposition.

It is not to be imagined, that after the arrival of such an order from the Court of Directors Sir John Cradock could wish to remain an hour longer in the service of the East India Company; but still his actual situation was to be considered, for the period of the departure of the regular fleet was distant, and he could not accelerate his return to Europe by a journey over land, as the Turkish war prevented any attempt of that nature. The prospect that awaited Sir John Cradock for the ensuing two months, after the order of instant removal from the Company's service, was that (after an exalted station) of a private person, without rank or salary, left in a remote and expensive country, to seek his return to Europe as he might find the means, degraded in the eyes of the civil and military world, exposed to all the injuries that flow from the bad feelings of human nature, as he experienced in the person of men whom his zeal for the public interest had obliged him either to correct, or

sanction their exclusion from the East India Company's service, and who were now enabled to act, upon the dismissal of Sir John Cradock, (conveyed as it was) by the Court of Directors, with security and triumph. The picture is not too highly colored ; the records transmitted to the East India House can testify the truth.

*It has already been stated that no intimation whatsoever arrived of any change in Sir John Cradock's situation in his Majesty's service in India ; and therefore, though dismissed from his command over the Company's troops, his authority and commission as fixed by his Majesty over the King's forces remained the same, and it behoved him, from every consideration of character and common feeling, to draw the line, and abide by his situation on his Majesty's staff, till he could effect his liberation from the country.*

The Council at Madras felt the embarrassment of the situation, and officially expressed the request, that Sir John Cradock should resign his authority over his Majesty's army ; but at the same time they had not the consideration to enter upon the subject of his passage to England, the only point that could relieve him from the most distressing circumstances.

Without a dereliction of every feeling that supports the human mind, it was not possible, that Sir John Cradock could abandon the station in which he was placed by his Majesty ; but still his paramount principle was not to interrupt the public service, and his reply was solely to this effect : " Give me the means, which  
" depend upon yourselves, not upon me, to go, and I will not em-  
" barrass your proceedings by the delay of one hour. And what

“ is more, I will not cause any disunion between the two services,  
 “ by exerting an authority that the King’s army must and will  
 “ obey. All I wish to mark is, that I do not voluntarily resign, and by  
 “ my own act sanction the injustice of the proceedings against me,  
 “ to my further degradation in the view of his Majesty’s army.”

The Council at Madras thought it a duty connected with their situation, to pursue the orders of the Court of Directors, even to the extent of excluding him from his Majesty’s service in India ; and a resolution, though accompanied with every expression of respect and affection, to this effect took place, and what appears incredible to whoever has heard the story in England, Sir John Cradock, without the assignment of any cause, was dismissed from the Staff of his Majesty in India, not only without the command, or concurrence of his Majesty, but in direct opposition to the gracious communication from his Royal Highness the Commander-in-chief.

The Council at Madras ventured to proceed to this length, from the opinion of their Law-officer, that it was required that the officer who commanded the King’s forces, should also have the authority over the Company’s, and so *vice versa* ; but it will scarcely be credited (such has been the series of unaccountable oppression) that the benefit of this position was denied to Sir John Cradock, when he claimed the command of the forces in India, upon the departure of Lord Lake, as being precisely in the situation his Lordship was, (a fact not capable of disproof) upon the unexpected death of Lord Cornwallis, when the command over the whole of the forces in India was resumed by Lord Lake, without new

powers, and solely upon the ground that he was the senior officer ; but the equally rightful claims of Sir John Cradock have been disregarded, and the difference of salary during the time he exercised the chief command till the arrival of Général Hewitt, has been withheld from him, amounting to above 7,000*l*.

The act of Council at Madras (it is unknown whether the Court of Directors have sanctioned the deed of their servants) took its full course, and Sir John Cradock remained near two months at Madras, deprived of his station and all emolument, with no other support but that of his own character, till at length, at the charge of 3,500*l*. for himself and family, he embarked for Europe.

This statement would not be complete (although a circumstantial address upon the subject to the Court of Directors is lying before them, unless Sir John Cradock adverted to the clamor that prevailed for a while “ about orders introduced into the army at Madras relative to a turban, and abolition of marks of cast, while the Sepoys were under arms.” Sir John Cradock does not believe, that there is any person in the East India Company’s service, abroad or at home, who has taken the trouble to read papers or examine facts, that is longer swayed by the unfounded notion that obtained belief at the time ; and *he knows* that the true causes of the Vellore Insurrection, whether acknowledged, or through policy denied or disguised, are perfectly understood. But let the details of argument or defence be entered into at large, and those persons be called upon personally, who are to prove facts, and it will appear that the regulations were harmless, and that they have subsisted for years coeval with their



military establishment in the Company's service, not only in the army of Bengal without exception, but even in those of the native princes (as the officers of the East India Company's staff, chiefly interested, he believes can maintain): all that Sir John Cradock has to say is, without the possibility of disproof or contradiction, that the whole concern, however it may operate upon the mind of any man, "derived its imagination and birth" from the officers of the Company's service "alone," and was more immediately produced by the Staff of the East India Company's army, officers distinguished for their talents and lengthened experience: that no officer in his Majesty's service was consulted, or had any share in the suggestions or regulations (how widely different the conception, while clamor and ignorance prevailed) and that they will be found in the ancient orderly books of the Sepoy regiments. That Sir John Cradock, upon their first appearance, when submitted to him by the principal officers of the Company's staff, objected to them, though a stranger, upon common principles, and only yielded to positive declarations, that he would, by opposition, innovate and disturb the course of the Sepoy regiments. Upon a future day, it will be esteemed a very singular fact, that Sir John Cradock, in the face of all the injury he has sustained, and the sacrifice that has been made of him by the Court of Directors, and the Council at Madras, has been the only person throughout a prevailing practice from the earliest times, *that ever expressed objection against its continuance*; and the records at Madras and the India House will shew, at the same view, his sentiment of opposition at the be-

ginning of the transaction, an unvaried principle of prudence and precaution in its course, and his injurious dismissal in its termination.

All that remains now is a conclusion that it is feared may look like presumption, and the unseemly attempt to praise his own conduct ; but the extent of injury Sir John Cradock has received, it may be hoped, will plead his excuse. Sir John Cradock defies accusation of every kind. Let any person come forward with a complaint, and he is prepared to answer it, and assign his motive. It has been his anxious wish to act with impartiality, upon that unceasing point of difficulty, the jarring interests of the King's and Company's service ; and he will ever maintain, that to overthrow every prospect of advantage or employment upon the staff to the King's officer in India, (as regulations since his departure have established) and fix in his mind the notion of injurious banishment, who, while he does his duty, *and remains in India*, is the same functionary in his country's cause, as the officer in the Company's service, is not the way to produce co-operation or harmony, and that it will not be long before the discord now so deeply sown will too plainly appear.

Sir John Cradock appeals to the Court of Directors, who have acted towards him in the manner described, and demands, if he has neglected their interests in any one particular? He refers to their records and expressed sentiments of their government abroad, if he has not advanced the discipline and efficiency of their army, through every branch of its establishment, and if the reports from

the reviewing Generals, which he received upon quitting Madras, do not exhibit, as far as some inherent imperfections and defects will admit, the whole of the coast army "well disciplined, well clothed, well appointed, and fit for service." And if the plans of a necessary retrenchment, which he submitted to Council, be carried into effect, the reduction of expense will be most considerable, and the efficiency not materially affected.

Sir John Cradock has already laid his case before the Court of Directors, and the question of justice is still depending. He is unwilling to believe that it will be denied; and as an eminent statesman lately deceased has expressed, "That the first of moral duties, that is binding upon men, at all times, places, and circumstances, and from which no supposed views of policy can excuse them, that of granting full justification to the innocent," will be disregarded in this instance; and he must expect, that reparation in some manner will be made in their orders to their armies in India, where have been the scenes of Sir John Cradock's injury and mortification. The measure of justice now lies with the East India Company, and it will not be before redress is hopeless from themselves, that Sir John Cradock can be induced to lay his wrongs before his Majesty, who has never yet withheld protection from the oppressed officer, deprived as he has been, through the violence of a foreign authority, of the station in which he was placed by his Majesty, without the assignment of a reason to this hour.

The gracious and most indulgent reception of his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, and the immediate nomination to

the staff by his Majesty, may have rendered less necessary Sir John Cradock's appeal to a military tribunal, to efface the stain of removal from his Majesty's command in India by the Council of Madras; but it is required still, for the character of Sir John Cradock, and his feelings as a soldier, that the Court of Directors should act with the liberality due from a great body in the state, either by acknowledging the error of a hasty decision, or by giving to Sir John Cradock the reason of their dismissal, allow him to make a fair appeal to the public, and establish *the act of right or wrong*.

Perhaps Sir John Cradock exemplifies the singular instance of a Commander-in-Chief's return from India, with permitted hopes and promises of advancement in that country set aside, without a fortune, having sustained the loss of his valuable appointment in Ireland, worth 2,500*l.* per annum; and that "no accuser of any description is to be found to *raise his voice*."

J. F. CRADOCK, *Lieutenant-General*.

London, Sept. 25, 1800

RESOLUTION  
OF  
THE COURT OF DIRECTORS  
RELATIVE TO THE  
*INSURRECTION AT VELLORE*  
AND  
LIEUTENANT-GENERAL SIR JOHN CRADOCK'S  
*LETTER*  
TO  
THE HONORABLE COURT.

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T. GILLET, Printer,  
Crown-court, Fleet-street, London.



## RESOLUTION.

*At a COURT of DIRECTORS, held on TUESDAY,  
25th JULY, 1809,*

RESOLVED,

THAT Sir John Cradock, who was chiefly, both in India and in Europe, represented as having wantonly innovated upon the religious usages of the Sepoys, by needless and fanciful changes in their dress, stands, by a *great mass of evidence, acquitted of having, in the least degree, intended such a violation ; or of having, with rashness, adopted those changes in the Sepoy-dress, which, on good authority, he had reason to believe were consonant both to the laws of Caste, and to past practice.* The measures which Sir John Cradock afterwards pursued to enforce obedience to the regulation prescribing the use of a new turban, though dictated, as the Court believe, by a nice sense of the honor of military authority, and the importance of subduing insubordination, appear nevertheless to have been unsuitable to the nature of the people with whom he had to deal, whose real opinions and prejudices touching the new turban, and not merely the legal judgment of their doctors, ought to have been consulted ; for, not-

withstanding their decision, it is too plain that the bulk of the Sepoys came at length, no doubt through the wicked machinations of enemies to the British power, really to regard the use of the new turban with strong aversion, as incompatible with their Caste ; and had a *proper inquiry* been instituted, before enforcing the use of the turban, the truth would have been ascertained, and the discovery of it would have rendered it consistent with the honor of Government, and of the Commander-in-Chief, to have repeated the order ; and thus might have been removed the immediate occasion of the evils that followed. The Court, however, have no hesitation in stating, that in making those changes in the Government of Fort St. George, which removed Sir John Cradock from the command, they were guided by the advices sent from Fort St. George and Bengal, soon after the mutiny, by the universal impression, both in India and in England, of the extreme rashness and imprudence of the innovating measures, assigned as the principal cause of the disastrous, unexampled event at Vellore ; and that, in the general opinion, as well as their own, the safety of the public interests, the reparation due to the violated rights of the natives, and to the British Administration, which had always respected the prejudices of the natives, dictated that change. It was, therefore, to the singular misfortune of the situation in which Sir John Cradock was placed, that he owed his recal ; and, although the events which are passed cannot be altered, the Court are happy to declare, that Sir John Cradock was not chargeable with that wanton and imprudent violation of Caste which was generally imputed to him,



nor with any real violation, or the intention of it ; and the Court hope, that no false or unfounded imputation of this, or any other nature, may affect the honorable character he has borne in his profession.

W. RAMSAY, Secy.

EAST INDIA HOUSE,  
31st July, 1809.

TO THE HONORABLE  
THE COURT OF DIRECTORS.

*London, Oct. 31, 1809.*

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE had the honor to receive, through your Secretary, Mr. Ramsay, the Resolution of the Court of Directors, of the 30th July, 1809, passed upon the detailed letter I laid before the Court on the 1st July, 1808, relative to the Insurrection at Vellore.

I avail myself of the first moment, after my return to England from foreign service, to return my acknowledgments for the favor the honorable Court has conferred, by their kind and honorable expressions towards me; and it is with real concern that I am compelled, through the force of injured feelings I can never conquer, to enter the most solemn protest against a very considerable part of that Resolution.

Branded as I have been in the public opinion, as the author of the Vellore Insurrection, and so considered, in consequence of the wicked misrepresentations which brought upon me, through the orders of your Court, the most severe and degrading injuries a

British General Officer ever experienced ; I am compelled to pursue whatever means I can resort to for correcting those misrepresentations, as the object most essential to my reputation and comfort. I wish to speak and act with the utmost respect and due submission to your honorable Court ; but I owe it to my character, to my family, to the British public, and to the honor of his Majesty's army, wounded in my person in India, to seek some public mark of justice and redress, in a degree proportioned to the wrong and disgrace I sustained in my profession in India, through your orders, and the subsequent act of council, by which I was expelled from all command in his Majesty's service in that country ; and which orders, you have had the candor to declare, upon full consideration, were produced by an erroneous view of the case.

It is useless to take up the time of your honorable Court by any retrospect upon the Vellore Insurrection ; your late resolution upon the conduct of all the persons concerned, announce the misconception under which it was attributed to the turban, and the regulations upon the marks of Caste. The terms of your resolutions respecting the Adjutant-general, and Deputy Adjutant-general, render the further discussion of that subject totally unnecessary. You are satisfied the regulations in question did not originate with me, and that no officer in the King's service had any concern whatever in their introduction : the late Resolution of your Court, acknowledging that the regulations (from whence my injuries and removal are admitted to have arisen) were according to the pre-

vailing practice of the best native regiments, and to the usage of Caste ; a circumstance at the moment disbelieved by your Court, when the measure was adopted, of thus dismissing me from your service.

Here, I presume, all this view of the case and the question might end for ever.

But I am compelled to make some remarks upon the following paragraph of the Resolution of the 31st July, 1809, which imputes to me the want of a due investigation and inquiry from persons who might have better informed me ; and, by the timely discovery of the truth, have prevented the mischief that ensued.

*“ The measures which Sir John Cradock afterwards pursued  
 “ to enforce obedience to the regulations prescribing the use  
 “ of a new turban, though dictated, as the Court believe, by a  
 “ nice sense of the honor of military authority, and the im-  
 “ portance of subduing insubordination, appear, nevertheless,  
 “ to have been unsuitable to the nature of the people with whom  
 “ he had to deal, whose real opinions and prejudices touching  
 “ the new turban, and not merely the legal judgment of their  
 “ doctors, ought to have been consulted ; for, notwithstand-  
 “ ing their decision, it is too plain that the bulk of the Sepoys  
 “ came at length, no doubt through the wicked machinations  
 “ of enemies to the British power, really to regard the use  
 “ of the new turban with strong aversion, as incompatible  
 “ with their Caste ; and had a proper inquiry been instituted,*

“ before enforcing the use of the turban, the truth would have  
 “ been ascertained, and the discovery of it would have rendered  
 “ it consistent with the honor of Government, and of the  
 “ Commander-in-Chief, to have repealed the order ; and thus  
 “ might have been removed the immediate occasion of the evils  
 “ that followed.”

Thus, having acquitted me, in all other respects, of the graver part of the original charge, you narrow, in this passage, all that remains of disapprobation in your minds, in respect of any share I had in the Vellore business, to the *precise ground* of my not having made *proper inquiry*, before enforcing the use of the turban, whether or not it was repugnant to the prejudices (for you admit it was not so to the religious tenets) of the native troops. In this all difference now consists. I rest the issue upon facts, and if I am as successful in removing from your minds this unfounded impression, as I have been fortunate in effacing from it the former groundless imputation, the same spirit that led you to do me justice in the one instance, will no doubt impel you to accord it to me in the other.

What will your honorable Court, and the world in general, admit to be proof of a diligent and *proper inquiry* on my part? It may be asked, Did you personally inquire from Sepoys of high Caste themselves, whether they had any repugnance to the turban, or whether the wearing of it would expose them to forfeiture of Caste?

Did you examine the native officers? Did you ask the opinion of the most experienced of the Company's European officers? Did you go beyond this? Before resolving on the measure, did you summon a Military Board of the most enlightened officers, for the special purpose of investigating into the matter? Did you inquire, from the Pundits and the Mufties, versed in the precepts of the Shaster and the Koran, whether there was any thing in the measure repugnant to Caste? Did you instruct our Adjutant-general, deeply conversant with the native usages, to ascertain, on his part, whether the measure of substituting one turban for another, composed of similar materials, was fraught with violation of their popular prejudices, or religious tenets? Had you ascertained if the turban had been previously worn by any native regiment, with the approbation of the officer and Sepoys? Did you, by such means, endeavour to arrive at an accurate knowledge of the subject, and to guard against the possibility of being misled by ignorance, or of acting with rashness or precipitancy? I answer, *Every one of these precautions I adopted*; and if this is the fact (I appeal to the records before your Court, and the Council at Madras) what will become of this charge, in this passage of your Resolution, *that I neglected to make a proper inquiry*, before I finally consented to its adoption.

I will not fatigue your Court by a minute enumeration of the proofs before you, and which I must presume, under the pressure of public business, have escaped your attention. If they be care-

fully perused, it will be found, that never was inquiry more accurate, nor investigation more patient ; officers and men were before me, and declared their approbation of the turban, which they wore in my presence : your own European officers sanctioned their testimony ; their Pundits did the same ; your Adjutant-general fortified all their declarations ; and, if the documents in my possession have reached you, they must show, that on the 9th of *May*, two months previous to the mutiny, upon the first indication of discontent, I repaired to Vellore, and summoned a board of *three* officers of the native service, Lieutenant-colonel Forbes, Lieutenant-colonel Mac Kerras, and Lieutenant-colonel Marriott, distinguished for their knowledge of the language and customs ; and I required from them a private, as well as public opinion, upon the turban, that the truth, however latent, might be reached. Their opinion, both private and public, ought to be before your Court, and both equally express, that the turban was free from all objection ; and the evidence that accompanies the proceedings of this Board, prove, that the opposition to wearing the turban was resolved upon, before the Sepoys had ever seen it.

With proof thus adduced, of the anxious and *rigid inquiry* I pursued, I will, with confidence, ask your honorable Court, was it possible any officer could do more to learn the truth ? Will any member of your Court lay his hand upon his breast, and declare, that he would, or could have done more ?

What, however, have been the consequences of your orders to me? The recital, I have no doubt, upon due reflection, will strike your Court as a series of injury and disadvantage, such as no British officer ever suffered in his Majesty's service : it has not, nor could have, from its nature, a parallel.

The orders of your Court to remove me instantly from my seat in Council, and from the command of your forces, found me the senior officer in India, and in the undisputed right of commanding the whole of his Majesty's force in every presidency. I was in the full exercise, by the rules of our service, of every pretension and prerogative of a British Commander-in-Chief. In obedience to the spirit of your orders, the Council at Madras proceeded to my immediate separation from all military connexion with the King's army; and the whole world in India had to view, in the operation of a short moment, his Majesty's Commander-in-Chief expelled from his service in the most degrading manner. " Treason itself " could not have produced a more rapid sentence and precipitate downfall. No reason whatever was assigned by your Court, or the Council ; and to make the case more extraordinary, so completely unprecedented, no communication whatsoever was made to me from his Majesty, or any other royal, or ministerial authority.

Will an Englishman believe that I was left in this fallen and degraded state in Madras, without the slightest consideration of my case, or alleviation of my expenses ; and had to seek, as I could



effect, a passage for myself and family to England, at the charge of nearly four thousand pounds.

My mind recoils from the recollection of the scenes I was compelled, without alternative, to endure, during the two painful months to which I allude. I cannot bring myself to state the detail of vexatious treatment, and petty attack, I had daily to encounter from some worthless, low-minded characters I had endeavoured to correct, in the former discharge of my duty. Had I less consulted your interest (as far as my judgment reached); had I not pursued economy, and the fair and just reform of many imperfections; had I not supported the civil authority of your government equally with the military; I conceive I might have passed the two months in Madras with less mortification;—but the orders of your Court placed me in a situation where human nature could show itself in its worst form with impunity. This view is not ideal; the particulars may be confirmed by several documents in India, and before your Court.

I have been advised to lay before his Majesty a memorial of my case, and to claim a court-martial, as the sole and proper vindication of my honour and military reputation, stained by your orders, and the expulsion from his Majesty's service in India; and other measures for redress and indemnity have been recommended; but I shall still pursue the unfeigned language and proceedings of respect and submission to your Court; and, until the direct appeal to

yourselves, Gentlemen, to your justice, to your liberality, and to every other consideration, that forms the honourable compact between employers and their servants, shall fail (but from the spirit of justice that has lately prevailed in your Court, I feel assurance to the contrary), I abandon every other course and confine myself, with confidence, to your tribunal.

I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,

With the greatest respect,

Your humble servant,

J. F. CRADOCK, *Lieutenant-General.*

## MADRAS, SEPTEMBER 21, 1806.

THE late unhappy event, at Vellore, has led to wide diversity of opinion, and arguments may have been so conducted as, perhaps, rather to disguise truth, than convey information.

The object of the following statement is therefore to recur to original circumstances, to fix a date prior to the fatal catastrophe on the 10th July, and to give a plain Narrative of transaction, each step of which is accompanied by official documents.

The explanation so much involves the acts of the Commander in Chief at Madras, that it is necessary a great part of the detail should proceed in his name.

It is stated, and to a certain degree believed, that the introduction of a new Turband in the Native army, an order to prohibit the marks of Casts, on the foreheads of the Sepoys, on parade, with innovations upon their former dress, in the obligation to wear Stocks, white Waistcoats, Feathers, Pantaloon, &c. had created so much dissatisfaction in their minds, as produced the massacre at Vellore.—But the question chiefly rests on the Turban, the other circumstances are only accounted auxiliaries, for though the restriction, upon the marks, might naturally be thought the prevailing point, yet through the long course of examination, it scarcely appears in operation.

From great variety in the Turban of the Army, and the one generally in use being ill-suited to convenience and very heavy, upon the representation of the Adjutant General and the Deputy, it came into contemplation to direct a common pattern for the whole service, and the arrangement was left to these Officers, of whose experience and local knowledge the Commander in Chief could entertain no doubt. At length Turbans, made up under their direction, (1) were presented to him, upon the heads of Sepoys, (2) introduced for the purpose, and they seemed entitled to commendation.

The business of making them up proceeded universally, and without remark, till attention was excited by a spirit of opposition in the 2d Battalion of the 4th Regiment at Vellore, who declared, that the Turbans were offensive and infringed upon their Casts, &c.

As circumstances of extreme insubordination marked the conduct of the Corps at that period, and there appeared nothing, that could justify the supposition, that any real objection did exist, it seemed required, that measures to support discipline should be immediately adopted, and some of the ringleaders were confined and sent to Madras, for trial.

At that moment, "too fully illustrated by subsequent acts," the conduct of the Native Commissioned Officers was most suspicious; not one appeared active in his duty; they all seemed to enjoy the rising discontent, and at the same time to strengthen evil circumstance, and ignorance, they all declared the Turban free from objection and persisted in the same avowal, upon the subsequent Court of Inquiry at Vellore. (3)

(4) It is in evidence, that the first opposition, to the introduction of the Turban, by the 2d Battalion of the 4th Regiment, at Vellore, (5) was manifested, before they had ever seen it, and that an agreement had been made between the 1st Battalion of the 1st Regiment, quartered also in "Vellore," and the 2d Battalion of the same Corps, marching Post, not to wear it, though in equal ignorance of its appearance, formation or materials.

To perfect the view; that the revolt was not a resistance to an article of Dress, that, in the wound, it gave to Casts or prejudices, might in this Country, give birth to acts the most extravagant. That it was not an explosion of injured feelings, that might destroy every principle of allegiance or humanity, but that silent, secret treason was the object, the chief Conspirator, Shaik Cassim, Jemadar in the 1st Regiment, a few days previous to the insurrection, upon being questioned by his commanding Officer, if any dissatisfaction existed, offered, in the presence of the other native Officers, to place the Koran on his head (6) (the most solemn appeal to truth) and swear, that there was none, and that the whole Corps were forward to wear the Turban.

The Court of Inquiry, established by the Commander in Chief at Vellore as he proceeded to Mysore, consisted of Lieutenant Colonel McKerras, Lieutenant Colonel Forbes, and Lieutenant Colonel Marriot, the two former, Commanding Battalions, and the latter, the Paymaster to Tipoo's Family. Officers distinguished for their knowledge of the language, and the native customs; and the proceedings will fully evince, that no objection to the Turban was then discoverable, and in the private opinion, those Officers were requested to give upon the subject to the Commander in Chief, a preference to the former Turban in many particulars appears; a declaration, that in no shape, it interfered with cast or prejudice, (7) and attention is only directed to the alteration of some Tape or Trifles of that nature.

The Commander in Chief then proceeded to Mysore, and gave directions for the Trial of the Prisoners before a native General Court Martial at the Presidency.

At each Trial evidence was produced from persons of the highest Casts (8)—that the Turban was free from any objection whatever.—The prisoners were found Guilty and Sentenced Corporal Punishment.

(1) Vide Colonel Agnew's and Major Pierce's Letter.

(3) Court of Inquiry, 14th May, 1806.—Vellore.

(6) Lieut. Col. Forbes's Evidence.

(4) A Syed and a Rajahpoot.

(7) Court of Inquiry.

(5) Shaik Cassim's Confession.

(8) Vide the Trials.

The Commander in Chief being anxious, that Government, should be acquainted with every circumstance, and feeling that his absence, from the Presidency, might lead to ignorance of the real state of the case, directed the Adjutant General (9) to lay all the proceedings of the Trials before the Right Honorable the Governor, and follow such measures as the Council might please to direct—The result was, that two of the Ringleaders of the 2d Battalion of the 4th Regiment were punished, and the rest, upon their appeal, were Pardonned.

No further intelligence reached the Commander in Chief at Nundy Droog till the latter end of June, when he received a very impressive representation from an experienced and able Officer, that the Turban had occasioned great discontent in the Army, and earnestly recommended a repeal of the Order.

The Commander in Chief at once adopted the resolution of confiding his embarrassment to the Government and submitted the following secret reference to the Right Honorable the Governor in Council.

NUNDYDROOG, JUNE 29, 1806.

SECRET.

MY LORD.

"I must have recourse to your Lordships Judgment, and that of the Council, to relieve me from great anxiety and embarrassment upon the subject of the Turbans, the full particulars, of which case, are so well known to your Lordship, and upon the proceedings, from my absence, I have already requested your Lordships personal Direction."

"The introduction of this Turban originated from the advice, and under the Superintendence of Colonel Agnew, the Adjutant General, and Major Pierce, the Deputy Adjutant General, and, as an alteration from the former one appeared wanting, I thought I could not confide so simple a matter to better hands, or Officers of more local experience."

"I have the strongest reasons to suppose, that almost universal objection a life against the Turban, and though force and punishment may overcome individual opposition, yet the firm dislike does not abate, and the frequent recurrence of severity may produce, though it may be remote, bad consequence."

"I am, as aware, as the human mind can possess the sentiment, that opposition to military and just authority cannot be yielded to, and that the attempt must be crushed in its earliest stage—This is the sole reasoning towards a British Soldier, and were it purely a British case, I should neither feel embarrassment, or should I thus trouble your Lordship in Council."

"But upon the prejudices of India, the force of Casts, which in its various shape, no European may perfectly comprehend, it is allowable, even in a soldier's mind, to pause, and solicit the advice of the head, and his companions in the Government."

"The question is not confined to the ignorant soldiery; it is the subject of conversation among the best informed officers, and my intelligence from Seringapatam, where there is a numerous garrison, is, that it is the common cry "that the next attempt will be to make the Sepoys Christians."

"I lay before your Lordship in confidence, a private letter from Colonel Brunton, and the same sentiment prevails with many other moderate and discreet Officers."

"Still it is my wish, and the best judgement I can apply to the untoward subject, to persevere, and conquer prejudice, as perhaps the least evil; but where consequence may ensue of a disadvantageous nature, and even the source of our recruiting at stake, so difficult at all times, with due selection or effect, I am not satisfied in my own mind to persevere to the full extent—without recurrence to your Lordship's advice, and the sanction of Government."

(Signed) J. F. CRADOCK, LIEUT. GENERAL.

The Commander in Chief thus endeavoured to unite military principles with the strictest caution, and was prepared to follow such steps, as the best information, and the sanction of the highest authority should dictate.

The Government honored him with an answer, and proposed the issue of an order to the Army—The determination was expressed to enforce the Turban, as the opposition arose from "ignorant clamour," unfounded on any principle," but at the same time to respect the usage and customs of the native troops, on all occasions.

Both appeared to the Commander in Chief highly proper, and calculated to produce the best remedy in a case of extreme embarrassment—The order was not issued, as Government with whom the decision remained on account of the Commander in Chief's absence from Madras, did not deem it necessary—The following are the most material extracts from this correspondence.

(10) "If there had been reason to suppose that the late change of dress was liable to the objection of militating against the religious principles of the inhabitant of this country, we should have had no hesitation, in immediately recommending to your Excellency the relinquishment of the intention to establish the proposed change—but as it appears from the evidence taken in the late inquiry at Vellore, (11) that no objection of this nature exists, we certainly deem it advisable, that the alternative of yielding to the "clamour," arising from an unfounded prejudice, should if possible be avoided."

(Signed) W. BENTINCK.

(9) Letters to the Adjutant General, 18th and 20th June, 1806.  
4th July, 1806. Secret Department.

(10) Public Letter to the Commander in Chief,  
(11) 4th July.

(12) "The Right Honorable the Governor in Council having been informed by his Excellency the Commander in Chief of the opposition, which has been in some instances experienced in establishing an alteration, which it was deemed expedient to adopt in the form of the Turban in use among the Native Corps of this Establishment, His Lordship in Council is led to express his extreme regret, that any part of the native army whose merits have been so frequently extolled, and rewarded by this Government, could have suffered itself to be deluded by an unfounded clamor."

"It will be in every instance the wish of the Right Honorable the Governor in Council to evince a sacred regard for the religious principles of the native troops, as well as of all other inhabitants of this country; But in the present case it appears after the strictest inquiry, and according to the testimony of natives of the highest cast," that the opposition, which has been experienced in the late change of Turban, is "destitute of any foundation," in either the Law, or usage of the Mahomedan or Hindoo Religions, and any person who may persevere in that opposition, cannot in consequence fail to be subjected to the severest penalties of military discipline."

SECRET.

NUNDYDROOG, JULY 9, 1806.

MY LORD,

"I have been much honored this morning by the receipt of the letter from your Lordship in Council, upon the subject of the Turbans, and feel myself peculiarly gratified by the transmission of the proposed order by Government, previous to its circulation."

"I take the liberty to express my entire concurrence with the spirit and terms of the order, as every way calculated to preserve just authority, and still to allay any prejudices, that may exist upon the imputed disregard to the rights, attached to cast, or ancient custom—The point was of infinite embarrassment, and if any act was to be resorted to, beyond the immediate and constant vindication of violated discipline, as it might arise, I conceive, that an order from Government of this nature, would seem to promise the best effect."

"I will confess, that by the present communication with Government, I have gained the object, I had in view, which was to receive from them an unreserved opinion, as to the propriety of such coercion, should it prove necessary, but which, situated as this country is, hurried in the absurdities of casts, or prejudices, dear to them as existence, I was fearful to take a step of any doubt, without explicit knowledge and the sanction of Government."

"Since I last had the honor to address your Lordship in Council, I have heard nothing more, which silence leads me to hope, that the disinclination to the Turban, has become more feeble, or perhaps that reports have been exaggerated—Under this view it may be judicious to postpone the publication of the order either to let the subject fall to the ground, as no longer the interposition of the Government is required, or to re-assume the issue, as your Lordship in Council may determine by future event."

(Signed) J. F. CRADOCK, Lieut. GENERAL.

The Commander in Chief has thus explicitly detailed all circumstances, relative to the Turban, anterior to the 10th July, that the public mind may form its judgement according to first principles, and not suffer undue impression from any course of event—The appellation of "obnoxious order" may now be attached to the measure, but the public acts of the Council, that declared the Turban free from objection, that imputed the opposition to *unfounded clamour*, "and groundless discontent," and the private act of the Right Honorable the Governor, who after deliberate inquiry and at a late period, expressed his desire, that his Corps of Fencibles should wear it, will surely have weight to recall the "unmerited Epithet" and reinstate original sentiment.

It is unnecessary to go through the painful recital of the atrocious revolt and massacre on the 10th July at Vellore—The fatal occurrences are within universal information—They comprehend every case of disloyalty, treachery and horror—The whole was planned with unequalled secrecy and concealment—The object was to destroy every European and place a Son of Tippoo at the head of a Moorish Government (13)—With this view Letters were ready or even were dispatched to the Marhattas and to disaffected Chieftains at Cuddapah in the Ceded Districts, and Vencatagerry in the Carnatic, to excite a general hostility—Ludicrous fury and slaughter raged for many hours, and wretches were seen tottering from the high post to partake in the bloody scene—While the British soldiers were dragged from the same asylum and devoted to a deliberate death—Fatal instruction extended so far, that even the Sepoy Boys armed themselves with their Carbines of exercise and lent their aid to the general destruction. (14)

To what extent the calamity might have reached, it is impossible to say, most happily a body of Cavalry arrived from Arcot, under the intrepid Colonel Gellispie, performed a military wonder, and regained possession of the fortresses, rescued the brave survivors of the 69th Regiment, reduced to the last extremity, and closed this scene of cruelty and cowardice.

Upon the arrival of the Commander in Chief at Vellore on the 3d morning after the dreadful event, it appeared to be the leading principle, to conciliate and restore confidence, to banish apprehension, or suspicion of every nature, and pursue the paths of justice and spirit—While innocence was to be discovered from the mists of apparent crime and protected with ardent zeal, the firm punishment of the guilty seemed equally necessary, and this unparalleled outrage, against the British name and existence, was to be vindicated in the signal chastisement of the savage perpetrators—Against them alone was punishment to direct its just reprisal, (15) towards all others policy, good principles and judgement seemed to dictate the full exertion of every former feeling of confidence and cordiality—The Indian character would understand this distinction, and not confound the operation of generosity with apprehension.

The whole dispensation seemed to require the earliest practicable termination, that the progress of oblivion might commence.

These principles actuated the Commander in Chief from the beginning, while at Vellore, and still direct his conduct.

Before the active causes of the insurrection at "Vellore" are entered upon, it appears necessary, that the order to prohibit the marks of cast, on parade, and the wearing earrings &c. should be adverted to, and explanation given on this subject.—The Commander in Chief has already delivered his opinion on this subject, and what belongs to a statement of this nature, is only to mark circumstances, as they really are, and not to condemn or extenuate the alleged usage of the service, which does prevail on the Madras Establishment, and it is stated, the Bengal also.—Captain Sydenham the Resident at Hyderabad writes in these terms.

"Many Corps on the Madras Establishment, and almost all the Corps in Bengal, which are composed of Hindoos of the highest cast, never use their distinguishing marks, on duty.—The orders did not apply to the Mussulmans, who certainly were the most active, both in receiving and exciting the unfavorable impression, which led to discontent."

It had been found necessary to collect into one code the several Regulations of the Military Service, and the work was allotted by the order of Government to the Deputy Adjutant General of the army, Major Pierce, an Officer of 25 years experience in India, and who seemed in every respect most qualified for the task.

As a general instruction the Commander in Chief directed Major Pierce to note, with red ink, all matter, in the least different from former practice or usage, that when the book was submitted to Government for their sanction, attention might be attracted to any alteration.

When the Deputy Adjutant General reported the work prepared, the Commander in Chief assembled the Adjutant General, Colonel Agnew, the Quarter Master General, Lieutenant Colonel Orr, and the Deputy Adjutant General, Major Pierce, and the regulations were read by himself on many successive days, and discussed, paragraph by paragraph—when the order in question, to prohibit the marks of cast, &c. under arms, appeared in its turn. It immediately attracted the Commander in Chief's attention, as impolitic interference with the customs and prejudices of the inhabitants.

The Adjutant General and the Deputy (on this day the quarter-master-general happened to be absent) assured the Commander in Chief, that it was the invariable practice of the service, that in no well regulated corps was it ever permitted, and appealed to the Commander in Chief's personal observation, among the battalions, he had inspected, whether he had remarked such distinction.—The Commander in Chief, as a stranger, and with an opinion only formed from books, could not oppose such arguments, and anxious to leave undisturbed the usual course of a sepoy battalion, (instead of introducing, to resist innovation.) He suffered the inference of the order.

A few extracts of the correspondence, that has taken place on the part of the subject, will place the question in the true point of view.

*Letter from Sir John Cradock, to Colonel Agnew, 16th July, 1806, Vellore.*

"But upon the other points, the abolition of the marks of cast, from the foreheads of the sepoys, and the measurement of the moustache to a military pattern, &c. as expressed in the order, as the rumour now stands, and I may say accredited by Government and others, I do feel the greatest inquietude.—"That it is in the power of possibility, that infringement of the rights and prejudices of the natives," dear to them as life, should originate with me, who, I will say, as much as any man in India respects those immemorial usages.—I therefore, my dear Sir, must call upon you and Major Pierce, who compiled the orders to give every explanation on this particular point, "whether any innovation has been introduced," or is it only a continuance of the long practice in the army."

"As such I understood it from you, when the orders to be published were read, by me, in the presence of yourself, Major Pierce, and Colonel Orr, expressly, that I might derive information from such lengthened experience, as those Officers possessed, upon local points, and I recollect adverting to the order in question, when I was assured, that it was the established military custom, and had I not sanctioned its common course, I must have conceived, I was induced, by self Sentiment, to overthrow the usual Established Rule of a Sepoy Regiment.

(Signed)

J. F. CRADOCK.

*The Adjutant General Colonel Agnew's Reply to Sir John Cradock, Vellore, 18th July, 1806.*

"I now reply to the second part of your Excellency's inquiry, and trust this statement will fully shew, that nothing was further from your Excellency's intention than any interference with the customs of Cast.

"The total want in many of the Native Corps, of any standing orders for the ordinary Routine of Regimental duty and interior arrangement, and the glaring deficiencies in those which existed in other Corps, had been brought to public notice, in the course of the inspection of Corps. The Deputy Adjutant General, then employed by appointment of Government in revising the existing Code of regulation, undertook to prepare a body of standing orders for a Battalion of Native Infantry, by which the whole army should in future be guided, and he referred to former approved systems of this kind, while preparing that, which was submitted to your Excellency for approval,



The 10th Paragraph of the 11th Section of these orders, is as follows.—

"It is ordered by the regulation, that a Native Soldier shall not mark his Face to denote his cast, or wear Earrings, when dressed in his uniform, and it is further directed, that at all parades, and upon all duties, every Soldier of the Battalion shall be clean shaved, on the Chin. It is directed also, that uniformity shall, as far as it is practicable, be preferred, in regard to the quantity, and shape of the Hair, upon the upper Lip.

"This Paragraph when read by Major Pierce, I considered as the mere recital of what had been long practised in well regulated Corps, under the received custom of the service, although like many other customs, not especially directed by any formal order, or always rigidly enforced, as a custom, I joined in, excusing, when your Excellency stated your dislike to touch in any shape, on the customs of Cast, certainly not conceiving it to be a Novel Innovation, but, what custom, if not remote regulation had long Established."

(Signed)

P. A. AGNEW.

*Sir John Cradock, to Major Pierce, Deputy Adjutant General to the Army, July 24th, 1806.*

"But I view the clause to abolish the distinctions of casts &c. in the gravest light, and such both as to sent and national interest in India, as to call for unreserved proceeding and to fix the error if not to be done away, where it should lie."

"You will recollect, that previous to the submission to Government, of the body of standing orders, I employed many days in reading over all the orders, that you had taken the trouble to collate, and which work was entrusted to you by Government, not only as the Deputy Adjutant General, but an Officer of long Military experience in this country. To prevent, as far as the most reflective precaution could reach, the possibility of local error, in respect to the usage of the Indian Army, I summoned the Adjutant General, the Quarter Master General, and you self, and each Paragraph was discussed. — The one in question caused my notice, and I was assured, it was not only unobjectionable, but the invariable course of every Regiment. — As a stranger, and in the hands of the principal Staff Officers of the Honorable Company's Army, could I oppose to their experience my single sentiment, and direct the overthrow of an established custom.

"It may appear, that I have too much sensibility on the point, but that is impossible—when the character of discretion, and even common sense is at stake.

(Signed)

J. F. CRADOCK.

*The Deputy Adjutant General Major Pierce, to Sir John Cradock, 26th July, 1806.*

"This compilation was principally founded upon standing Orders, established by the late Sir John Braithwaite, as Colonel of the 2d Battalion of European Infantry; for that Corps with the requisite deviations to render it applicable to native Troops, and in reference to some of the most approved regulations formerly in force in native Battalions."

"It was read aloud by your Excellency, and when the 10th Paragraph of the 11th Section particularly attracted your notice, and your Excellency asked, whether it would interfere with the prejudices of the natives, I answered, under the same impression, that had induced me to insert it, as did the Adjutant General to the same effect, that it would not, and that it was not the custom in well regulated Corps for native Soldiers to appear in the manner forbid by that Paragraph."

"In inserting the above mentioned Paragraph, I considered, that I was merely recording what had always appeared to me to be a regulation in the well conducted part of the service &c. &c."

"It was my good fortune to act for a series of years as public Staff Officer of a Station, under an Officer (General Braithwaite) who, at the same time, that he paid the most unremitted attention to the comforts and real prejudices of the Soldier; enforced discipline throughout every rank under his Command, in a degree, that I have not since seen equalled and I declare upon my honor, that I do not recollect to have ever seen during that period a native Soldier, on duty, with his face marked, or with large rings in his ears, and further, that I am certain, if any man had appeared so bedecked on any Parade, he would have been turned off from it—I was afterwards stationed, as Major of Brigade at Vellore, where it never occurred &c."

"The regiments of Cavalry have in their ranks men of the highest cast, of all sects, and religions, and a reference can be made to the old Officers of those Corps for information; whether it has, at any period, been customary for their Soldiers to appear, on duty, with marks on their faces or with large Earrings."

"The proof adduced with respect to the Turbans, added to what I have had the honor to state in regard to the prohibition of marks &c. will I hope enable your Excellency "to fix the error, where it should lie," and that it will be traced to that implacable hostile spirit against European dominion, that could transform a *Soldiers Turnscrow* into the *Holy Cross*, that could excite the artificers at Wallajahbad to refuse to work after the arrival, there, of the news, that Tippon's Sons were in possession of the Fort of Vellore, and that could occasion the sticking up of Placards in the Mosques about Madras, calling upon the People to rally in defence of the true Faith, a spirit, which from Reports, appears to have been very generally diffused, and to have been particularly instilled into the minds of the Native Troops at Vellore."

(Signed)

FRED. PIERCE, DEPUTY ADJT. GEN.

The Commander in Chief cannot be surprised, that the Public mind should receive a strong impression upon these orders, when he recollects his own emotion, upon the perusal before mentioned, but on examination it will be found, that such has been the silent common course of practice in almost every Battalion of the Service—that the Orders (16) in direct words, exist in many a daily Book and are understood to prevail, though not expressed, in nearly all.—The Commander in Chief does not, say, universally, because there may be an exception, but he is not aware of the instance.—It is the strangers ear, which receives alarm on the subject, the officer of long standing, and years experience in the country knows the real case, and views it with indifference.

Is it possible, that an Officer of the long experience of Colonel Agnew, the Adjutant General, inferior to no Officer on any Staff, and superior to most, in ability and intelligence, could propose such an order, were it contrary to the usage of the service, was it an innovation?

The Commander in Chief abstains from present remark on the policy or injury of the Principle, but Justice to individuals, as well as the cause of Truth, demands the statement.

The following Extracts of Letters will assure its foundation.

*From Major General Dugald Campbell, Bellary, September 12, 1806.*

"Since the General Orders issued about eight years ago, the marks of Cast have been generally discontinued throughout the Army, and I am confidentially assured, that many instances have occurred of native Officers of their own accord, chastising Sepoys for appearing in the ranks so distinguished."

*From Lieutenant Colonel Chalmers, 1st Bat. 2d Regt. 28th August, 1806.*

SIR,  
"I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your Letter of the 20th Instant, in reply to which I beg leave to inform your Excellency, that so far back as the year 1777, Colonel Edington, one of the best Officers in the service, to whose Battalion (the 4th) I then belonged, prohibited the wearing of Earings, when on duty, or marks of Cast.—It was complied with, without a word being said, as it was no degradation to them, in regard to the Casts, they having it in their option to wear both Earings and marks the moment, they were off Parade—large Earings is not a necessary mark of Cast—the Ears being bored is quite sufficient, nor is it a crime in a Hindoo being without a mark, for any number of days.—The leaving off the large Earings and marks, was such an improvement to the native Soldiers appearance, that a well regulated Corps never allowed either."

"I have served in seven different Corps and was Adjutant to two, and I declare, that I never saw either large Earings or conspicuous marks of Cast on a Sepoy, when on duty, since the period above mentioned, nor is it, at this moment adopted in the Corps I command.—Those Officers with whom I have had any conversation on the above subject are of my opinion, that the order respecting the wearing of the Earings or Marks on the forehead, does not militate against the highest cast of the Native Soldiers.—It has been the practice so generally for these 29 years back, that an order had never been thought necessary to be published on the subject."

(Signed)

J. F. CHALMERS.

*Major Bruce, 20th Regiment, Madras, 4th September, 1806.*

SIR,  
"I have had the honor to receive your letter of yesterday, and have to inform your Excellency, that I have always considered it as a standing Regulation of the Native Service, and to the best of my recollection, it was invariably practised in the different battalions, I served in, since the year 1783, namely:  
"That when Sepoys were paraded for General or Regimental duty, they always appeared clean shaved on the Chin, without the marks of cast on the forehead or earings."  
"At exercise of a morning and at evening parades, I have not unfrequently seen Sepoys permitted to fall in with the different marks to denote their cast, on the supposition, that they had in the course of the day, attended some religious ceremony; but I have ever had the idea, that in the majority of Native Corps, this indulgence was not permitted."

(Signed)

D. BRUCE.

The terms, "Innovations" "Obnoxious Orders," have still further extent.—They may reach the entire dress of the Sepoy, for the whole is alteration or innovation. Twenty years ago the Sepoy was not better dressed, or equipped than the present Lascar; at this day the Native Soldier, except in a Turban (which in nothing, is like a real Turban,) and as any other, "the production of fancy," and may be called a Hat with equal aptitude, as the objected one) and the black complexion, which cannot be altered, is scarcely to be distinguished from the European. It is the prevailing wish in the Coast Army to assimilate the appearance in every thing practicable, and each successive Corps raised, goes beyond the former in further

(16) Vide Order 11th January 1805.

1st Bat. 1st Regt. Major General Campbell Commanding the Army.

"Agreeably to Instructions received from the Adjutant General's Office, the Commanding Officer of the Army directs, that Officers in Command and in Charge of Companies, will be particular in explaining to their Men, that it is the Commander and Chief's orders, that no Man whatever is to appear with a Mark of any description on his Face, or to distinguish his Cast, or to wear Earings of any kind."



similitude, and the last formed, the Madras Fencibles, are distinguished by Feathers and Pantaloon. In this ardor of introduction the Commander in Chief found this Army, and "Nothing has been added to it." He is anxious as any person for the fair inquiry, if the practice is judicious? if, in improved appearance or supposed foundations of discipline, the affection of the Army may not have suffered injury, and while gaining a shadow, we may not have weakened a real substance.

The Commander in Chief can easily account for the feeling of the Officers mind in India upon the inconvenience of Casts, and the anxiety to discard their appearance, under arms, while they prevail, Military rank and subordination almost cease their influence; the private of high cast will not permit his Officer of inferior, to sit down before him. In the Coast Army all orders and casts are admitted, and the Pariah or Chukker stands in the ranks close to the Syed or Rajahpoot.

The functions of duty are also impeded, and the Native Soldier, though under arms, if Casts have all their force, must refuse numerous orders. It is alleged, that the Marhatta's (Hindoos too) are the best Native Soldiers in India, because, in the field, they are prevailed upon to abandon the more injurious effect of Cast. (17)

The event at Vellore may now stand examination, and the question fairly resolved, whether the insurrection of the two Native Corps, that composed the Garrison, arose from a mind, alienated from the service by the introduction of a Turban, and other orders, "termed obnoxious, or whether the act, with all its horrors, was not the fruit of deep laid artifice, perhaps of foreign, as well as domestic growth, to destroy the British Power, and raise up that Moorish Government, which in hereditary hatred pursued the overthrow of the English Dominion and existence.

To appreciate fairly the case; it is necessary to examine all the evidence, that has been collected from different quarters—What has been produced goes far beyond the information admitted by the commission at Vellore and when considered must establish stronger and different conclusion, than result from their defective report.—If the testimony has wanted the formality of an oath, every man, who knows India will disregard that point, for the oath, in no view, is to be depended upon, but truth is alone to be sought, through variety of evidence and circumstance and the exercise of sagacity and judgement. The nature and extent of the oath of the Conspirators, with the most important facts, that have come to knowledge, and admitted, as the best foundation to rest the truth upon, will be found in the confession of the chief conspirator Shaik Cassim; evidence not received by the commission.

It will be admitted, that opposition to the Turban first appeared at "Vellore" that at no other station of the army, where it was preparing, was any dissatisfaction, or any discontent to be observed.—To this hour, throughout the extended quarters of India, the Southern Division—the Northern, the Ceded Districts and Mysore, no discontent has been discovered, and many Regiments since the repeal, have petitioned to wear this Turban.—Whenever agitation has shown itself, it was among the few Corps, who had connection, with Vellore, from late residence, or "it was in a situation," (at Hyderabad) where the same spirit, though under different agency, was calculated to produce similar effect.

It was necessary to remove the mutinous Battalion (the 2d of the 4th) from Vellore, and another from the south was marched to its relief. This Corps (the 2d of the 23d) fatally composed of Polygars and the relations of those, who had fallen by the sword, or civil power in late contests, in those provinces, were the chief perpetrators of the bloody acts, that ensued, and proved, that Vellore early matured their hostile sentiment.

(18) It is in evidence, from Lieutenant Colonel Forbes, Commanding the 1st Battalion of the 1st Regiment, the other Corps in garrison, that for a length of time, the dependants of Tippoo's Family had incessantly laboured to instill into the minds of the Sepoys, that every part of their dress was objectionable, and that many articles were direct attempts to introduce Christianity.—No circumstance escaped their remark, the Turnsolew at the Soldier's breast was converted into the cross.

More decided means had been adopted to secure the minds of the Native Commissioned Officers, and thus all chance was removed to enlighten the Ignorant Sepoy, or avert the evil effect of this destructive machination.

(19) At this period, "when so much is known," upon the painful subject of the Native Officers, the truth of their total disaffection and disloyalty, in the two Corps, that composed the Garrison of Vellore, cannot be doubted.—It may be traced from the earliest period, connected with the event, and their active obduracy in assertion, that the Turban was free from objection; or created no dissatisfaction, was in the truest spirit of conspiracy, and its only object the dire event, they had long meditated.

No common pains can have produced such a change in the minds of persons, bred and elevated to distinction in the service, and the "enlightened or patriotic inquirer" will not rest satisfied with the "indolent answer," that it was a Turban, against which not one was found to express disapprobation, or orders, that had existed for years in effect, that could in so short a period, (20) drive these men to the complicated charge of guilt and treachery, in which they now stand.—They were the Native Officers (21) of the two Battalions of the 1st Regt. that met on the glaciers of Vellore, and determined on the opposition to the Turban (22) before they had seen it, and it was a Subidar of the 4th Regiment, that incited the Grenadier of the same subordination, (23) under the same ignorance, and the whole, with similar evil spirit, as appeared in the 1st Regiment to the latest moment, declared the Corps free from discontent on the subject of the Turban, and thus kept their Officers, without information or suspicion.

It appears unnecessary to detail the extensive evidence, that the Family of Tippoo took an open and active part in the fatal scene—that the most confidential persons in the Palace had been employed in (24) Negotia-

(17) Vide Major Smith's Book an Officer in the Marhatta Service. (18) Vide Examination before the Commission

(19) Colonel Monrofor and Captain Sydenham's communication from Hyderabad.

(20) Vide communication from Hyderabad. (21) Shaik Cassim's Confession. (22) Court of Inquiry, 14th May 1806;

(23) Lieut. Colonel Forbes's Evidence. (24) Evidence of Jummul-O-Deen, Foster Brother of Prince Moiz-ud-Deen;

tion, and dire hostility.—The guilt of two Sons is established, and their murderous intentions left without a doubt.—The plot had nearly succeeded to its full extent, and it appears, in a species of wild Asiatic arrogance, that only the Body of (25) Lieutenant Colonel Marriott, the Pay-master to the Family, who, in unaccountable mystery, was to be suffered to exist the last European, was wanting, to be produced to Moiz U.D. Deen, before he was to issue from the Palace, and display his person.

The concealment of all this plot may be deemed wonderful.—An Oath was administered to hundreds—the terms were singular in their nature—"Secrecy" "a determination not to wear the Turban,"—and "to destroy all Europeans," and re-establish the Mussulman Government.—The first and last articles are perfectly understood in fatal connection—but the introduction of the other, only proves the wicked ingenuity of the priors—for while secrecy prevailed, and objection to the Turban lay dormant, how could its adoption be contemplated?

It will scarcely be credited at a future time, that but one person, the faithful Sepoy, Mustapha Beg, whom the Native Officers represented to the Commanding Officer, as false, should be found to give information and that none of the authorities, that ruled over Vellore, or its Pottah, "the Commandant," "the Pay-master of Stipends," or "the Collector," (for, by late Regulation, all had joint, where, for security, there should have been but one for a ), had a single faithful adherent to watch the design, or Report the meetings of the conspirators—it is even stated in evidence, (26) amid the numerous Bands of the Family of Tippoo, collected from all parts of the Country and resident in the Pottah, there were 500 persons in regular pay.—Thus the extraordinary liberality and munificence of the British Government, with indulgence to the same extent, became instruments towards their own destruction.

An agitation, that arose at Wallajahbad subsequent to the mutiny at Vellore demands the next attention—accounts of a very alarming, but still general nature were received from Lieutenant Colonel Long, who commanded a Force of three Battalions assembled at that station for exercise—the Commander-in-Chief thought it necessary to repair to that quarter, that the promptest measures might be effected or the requisite investigation pursued.

It would only encrease unnecessarily the length of this account to describe the detail of a transaction, (27) or inquiry, that took place—it appeared to the Commander-in-Chief, that real cause of alarm had never existed, that under the unfavourable impression, that prevailed, apprehension was very natural, but that representation had been much exaggerated, and that casual expression from individuals of the Corps, of a seditious tendency, or suspicious import might have been overheard, but could not be substantiated, by any proof.

Justice, and the spirit of conciliation and confidence required, that some irregular proceedings in one of the Battalions (28) should be passed over, and beyond the separations of the Corps, it did not seem necessary, or indeed practicable to extend punishment. The occurrence at Wallajahbad is no further remarkable, than that the three Corps, that composed the Force had direct connection with Vellore—the 2d Battalion of the 14th Regiment were raised principally at Vellore, and the other two, the 1st Battalion of the 23d, and the 2d Battalion of the 1st, were Battalions of the same Regiment, that formed the late unhappy Garrison. It cannot be omitted, that upon the investigation, which were pursued at Wallajahbad, the same indifference, inaction and the same silence prevailed on the part of the Native Officers; and, that if no information could be obtained, (29) it arose from their apparent and decided resolution to withhold all intelligence.

Information was given here by an old Subadar of Cavalry, that dissension had crept into the Cavalry and he named some Regiments as liable to great suspicion (30) those that had been quartered at Arco, and near the scene of general sedition at Vellore were chiefly mentioned—such communication appeared to the Commander-in-Chief of the highest interest, and he laid the account before Government in a minute (31) (to which he begs to refer) in the secret manner, so delicate a concern demanded. An extraordinary embarrassment attends the evidence—at the time the Subadar, Secunder Khan, a man of the most respectable appearance and precision gave the intelligence, information was transmitted from Colonel Montreuil, at Hyderabad, that he was a man of the most dangerous character and known dissoluity and that all his actions should be watched.—His information respecting the Cavalry has by no means been confirmed, but still there were alarming points in his intelligence, that are known to be the truth and correspond entirely with the confession of the Chief Conspirator at Vellore Shark Cassim—it is possible, that this man, conscious of his guilt, and even apprehending the information against his own character, became informer to screen himself, since that period, he has become reserved and silent, and seems to wish to weaken even his own intelligence.

Whatever related to the Cavalry or the general name of Moormen, from the earliest moment, gave the Commander-in-Chief the greatest inquietude—for while it was the common conversation, that it was a Moormen plot to restore the Mussulman Government, (32) it could not escape reflection, that the Regiments of Cavalry are nearly all of that description, and the apprehension of imprudence, on this point became so strong, that the Commander-in-Chief privately addressed the General and Commanding Officers, to suppress as much as possible such dangerous language.

Uneasy sensations were experienced at the Presidency, and suspicion entertained upon the conduct and disposition of the two Corps, that formed the Garrison of Fort St. George.—The Commander-in-Chief cannot determine, whether the apprehensions, which proceeded to great extent, were founded or otherwise, as he was absent, but if just, they must be imputed to the poison of Vellore, for the two Battalions, 2d of the 4th Regiment, and 1st of the 22d, had been stationed in that quarter within the last six months and

(25) Military Court of Inquiry.

(26) Military Court of Inquiry.

(27) Vide Proceedings before Government.

(28) 1st Battalion 23d Regiment.

(29) Proceedings before Government.

(30) Vide Examination before Lieut. Col. Munro.

(31) 2d August.

(32) Letter to General Officers—Vellore, July 19th, 1806.

without doubt exposed to all the Artifices of that place, except *Vellore, Wallajahbad* and the *Presidency*, universal good order and satisfaction prevailed throughout the whole of the Territory of *Fort St. George*, in the *Army*, and the *Turban* and "obnoxious orders," never were mentioned.

The remaining instance is the imputed design of the *Subsidiary Force*, at *Hyderabad*, in *Foreign Domi- nion*, to have acted the same dreadful scene, as took place at *Vellore*.

To the latest period the *Commander-in-Chief* received the most favorable reports from *Col. Montresor*, (33) the *Commanding Officer*, of the discipline, the subordination, the harmony, that prevailed, nothing led to the most distant suspicion, that any dissatisfaction existed, at once, as subsequent reports confirm, the most mutinous spirit broke forth, and accident, or judicious measures seem to have averted the calamity of *Vellore*.—Proof may yet be wanting to establish the connection that subsisted, but co-incidences are too strong in dates, and circumstances, in every fair reasoning upon the subject, to admit the doubt, but that similar Artifices had been practised, and though the exact object might be different from *Vellore*, yet the general end was the same, to overturn the *British*, and restore the *Mussulman Government*, details of cir- cumstances are not required, they must be pursued through all the documents, that again run over all the case of *Turban*, orders, &c. but, at *Hyderabad*, as at *Vellore*, the same machinations appear, the same in- flamation, the same attempts (the ground work of delusion) to persuade, that *Christianity* was at hand, and the *Sepoys* to be made the first converts.—The extraordinary appearance of the *Chief Sirdars* from the *City* every where in the camp, unusual intercourse of the most dangerous characters with the *battalion* attempt- ed, all prove, that some general object was in agitation, and at this moment, the extent of design or danger, then frustrated, is not known, but still requires the active, and cautious investigation.

At *Hyderabad* the painful points of the native officers comes forward in a shape and with a force, that truly demands the most interesting attention (34). The *Commanding Officer Col. Montresor*, has invariably stated his opinion, that the alarms and agitation that have so recently distracted the *subsidiary force*, have been investi- gated by these persons, and though he failed to obtain required proofs, in conjunction with the opinion of the resident, he had been obliged to send away to *Masulipatam*, in confinement three native officers of whose complicated guilt no doubt existed, and that their influence and disloyalty was so great, that their immediate removal was necessary to the security and tranquillity of the force.

The *Commander in Chief* has lately laid before *Government* a letter transmitted to him by *Col. Montre- sor*, (35) the authenticity of which he does not seem to doubt, from the principal of those native officers, addressed to the *Nizam*, which if true, communicates disaffection and the most sanguinary design on the part of the na- tive officers of that force, to an extent most alarming, and carries with it other reflections, that excite appre- hension in a different quarter.

In several minutes the *Commander in Chief* has expressed his persuasion that in the late commotion the object of our enemies has been to corrupt the native officers, and by securing their co-operation, they well knew, that the ignorant multitude would be deluded into any belief.

It remains yet to be discovered, what have been the exact sources of the general misrepresentation, that is abroad, whether they are of domestic or foreign origin, or perhaps an united effort, but a revival of *Mussul- man power* seems to be the object, and with this in view, it has been a wise, but fatal policy to seduce the native officers, the majority of whom, it has long been the practice of this army to select from that faith, and their seduction on that account, the easier to be accomplished.

Since the event at *Vellore*, the subject of the punishment of the guilty persons has often come under confi- deration and the *Commander in Chief* has recorded his sentiments in several minutes, to which he requests attention (36).

It will be found, that his first object was to discover and protect innocence, but that he never lost sight of the necessary vindication of crimes, that equally outraged humanity and violated every principle of fidelity and discipline—such is the undistinguished mass of guilt, (37) that were an amnesty to take effect, it will bring back into the ranks wretches, covered with blood, who must look those surviving officers in the face, they attempted but could not destroy.

Innocency has not been discoverable, except in a few solitary instances, the prisoners are chiefly those, who only ceased their murder and plunder at the moment of flight, and the *Native General Court Martial* now engaged upon the *Trials*, (38) are the most forward to express their sense of the general guilt and to press for banishment, such was the general sentiment at first, and from the hour the intention was altered, difficulty has increased upon every deliberation.

To the proposed confinement the *Commander-in-Chief* dissents in the most solemn manner—even impu- nity with all its risk, is preferable.—While it continues mutual malevolence will never cease; The *European* and the *Sepoy* never can be friends.—It will supply a perpetual theme of fatal consideration, and "termi- nation and oblivion," "terms so highly prized," and in the front of all proceedings, can never have existence.

The *Commander-in-Chief* has now detailed with as much brevity, as the case would permit the several circumstances, that contribute the object of the present dispatch to *England*.—It appears to a life out of the subject, that some general opinions should be annexed upon the *State of the Country*, that our *Rulers at Home* may know how far real improvement has taken place, and whether the order of things, in this part of *India*, is amended by the variety of late Regulations.

As a stranger, the *Commander-in-Chief* cannot feel himself competent, to deliver opinion, but in zeal for the public advantage, he may be permitted to state the prevailing sentiments of others, the most moderate, and most experienced in the *Society of this Presidency*.

(33) 9th July (34) Colonel Montresor's Letter 14th September, 1806. (35) September 20th, 1806.  
(36) 9th, 14th, Sept. &c. &c. (37) Lieutenant Colonel Forbes's Report.  
(38) Letter from the Deputy Judge Advocate to Colonel Halcourt, September, 1806.

The general belief is (it may not yet have reached the Government) that the condition of the people is not as happy, as it was; that their own arrangements, their own institutions, pleased them better, than our Regulations.—It is reasoned with apparent Force, that slaves, as they are, to their own customs and habits, in every trifle of their lives, the introduction of all our systems (which it is in vain to make them comprehend) alarms and annoys them; and they view them only as preparatory to greater innovations, which may extend to every circumstance, that surrounds them.—It is said, while the treasures of the state are expended on judicial establishments, throughout countries without distinction, where even military force at times, is unable to preserve subjection, it would be better to enquire into the state of the Inhabitants, and regulate the means of subsistence, that the numerous dependants, on former power, and ancient establishment, the crowds of Moormen, in the different provinces, unemployed, may not remain in distress and continue to excite discontent.

The inhabitants of this country do not comprehend the convulsion at present before their eyes—within their shortest remembrance, military establishment and controul attracted all their attention; they understood and felt its origin, as congenial to their own notion of authority, at present they view a different order of things, and in the place of the old and experienced officer, to whom they have long looked up with respect, they see his power and ascendancy passed away, and the youthful inexperienced judge, or Boyish Collector, occupy all, and more than his former place.—In England such institutions are right, are suited to the civilization and felicity of that incomparable land, but in India, where nothing is alike, it seems visionary to order all things to be the same, and it is feared will only prove the goodness of the intention.

The people of India must be left to find happiness in their own way, and our attention directed to the security of our own “singular situation,” and the general advantage of the state.

In the range of desired improvement, philanthropy, religion cannot fail to make a person wish to see Christianity extended, but what danger will not follow from this ardour? Apprehension of the design universally prevails, however difficult to account for it, and if the pursuit be continued, or the suspicion suffered to gain further ground, our existence, in the country, is at stake.

A paper of this nature cannot well close without some general remark on the situation of the Army (39) on this establishment.—In the minutes the Commander in Chief has occasionally laid before the Government, in different shapes, he has given opinion on defects, that appeared, and proposed measures of improvement—before his departure it will be his duty to enlarge upon the subject to the utmost of his ability.

What seems to require immediate attention is the augmentation of the Number of European Officers to the Native Corps.—To establish by more powerful incentive, than the doubtful effect of a common order, a better communication, and more intercourse between the European Officer, and the Native Soldier.—To promote attainments of the Native Languages by every encouragement and reward—and to consider “well” the situation of the Native officer in our service, whether, placed as he is, certainly not in his own Corps in the enjoyment of that respect and confidence due to the appellation or rank of Officer, (40) and without hope of further elevation or emolument, his mind may not naturally become discontented, try to secure an undue influence over the Seyoys, and rest his thoughts on other objects, than fidelity, or the advantage of our cause.

These considerations or rather their Execution, may require time, but the Augmentation of the Establishment of Officers (“in effect,” not one third of his Majesty’s Service,) and the full supply of Vacancies (for there has not been an Ensign for some years) can be no question, and press for immediate adoption.

The last and most important point is the loss of the Regimental Officers of Rank and experience, called away from their Corps, to fill the numerous Staff situation and other employments—every Officer of talent or consideration bends his mind to this attainment, and generally succeeds—his place cannot be supplied either in ability or real efficiency (for he cannot be placed on half pay, as would be the case in his Majesty’s service) and the Regiment, and all the conduct of it, must suffer in proportion.

J. F. CRADOCK, LIEUTENANT GENERAL.

SEPTEMBER 21, 1806

(39) 30th November, 1805, 2d January, 1806.

(40) Vide Commander-in-Chief’s Letter to the Adjutant-General, June 16th, 1806.

“I cannot close this subject without giving vent to an opinion, I have long formed, that it is the prevailing practice of this service to withhold that respect and intercourse from the Native Commissioned Officers to which their situation and common opinion, as attached to the appellation of Officer entitles them, and thus oust from confidence, or even friendly communication, it will in vain be expected, that at moments of difficulty or pressure, these men will proffer that rapid aid, and energetic assistance, which affection or identity of feeling or interest will alone inspire.”

“I am so impressed with this sentiment from concurring proofs every day, that I shall lose no time in communicating it to the heads of the army, in the manner most likely to alter the present system, and produce an opposite effect of the highest importance to the service.”

(Signed) J. F. CRADOCK.