MEMOIR
of
JOHN MONTAGU.

CHAPTER I.
EARLY LIFE.

DESCENT.—EDUCATION.—ENTERS THE ARMY.—CHARACTERISTIC ANECDOTES.—PROMOTION.—ACCOMPANIES SIR GEORGE ARTHUR TO VAN DIEMEN'S LAND.

To let an honest name shine out with the influence and lustre of the great virtues which adorned it,—to call public gratitude to public worth,—to place on record a striking example of how much may be effected by steady honesty of purpose, beneficial enterprise, and unwearied industry,—to render manifest that, in the course of what some may deem the monotonous and beaten path of official life, there is ample room for active usefulness, watchful public spirit, and the exercise of vigorous talent,—and, above all, to set forth, as a contrast to the spirit of self, which in our age of eagerness too much characterizes our aims and activities, one who forgot self in his labors and sacrifice for the public good—is the simple and acknowledged design of this Memoir.
The name of John Montagu is one which needs no adventitious or borrowed circumstance to make it illustrious: his character was essentially self-formed, and asked no stamp of ancestry to give it worth; and if he bore in honored memory the names and services of those from whom he was descended, it was not to glory in what they did, but as an incitement to himself to add splendor to those names and continuance to those services.

The name of Montagu* has, nevertheless, been for many centuries in honor; and those who have borne it in long succession “have done the state some service:” it can be traced back to the time of the Norman Conquest. From Drogo de Montecuto was descended nearly five centuries after Sir Edward Montagu, Chief Justice of the Court of King’s Bench, in 1539; he was appointed by the king one of the sixteen executors of his last will, who should be Regents of the kingdom and governors of his son Edward VI. Sir Henry Montagu, his descendant, was one of the representatives of the City of London in the Parliament called by James I upon his accession; and acquired great distinction as a parliamentary orator. In 1616, he was appointed Lord Chief Justice of the King’s Bench, and in 1620 constituted Lord Treasurer of England; in 1620 he was also elevated to the peerage as Baron Montagu of Kimbolton and Viscount Mandeville. On the accession of Charles I he was raised to an earldom as Earl of Manchester. His son, Edward, second Earl, was a successful general in the Parliamentary army during the Civil Wars; but he refused to sanction the death of the king, and retired from Par-

* Vide Burke’s Peerage.
liament until 1660, when he assisted at the meeting of the peers for bringing back Charles II, and was chosen to be speaker to congratulate him on his restoration; his address he concluded in these words: "Great King, give me leave to speak the confidence as well as the desires of the peers of England; be you the powerful defender of the true Protestant Faith, the just assertor and maintainer of the laws and liberties of your subjects, so shall judgment run down like a river, and justice like a mighty stream; and God, the God of your Mercy, who hath so miraculously preserved you, will establish your throne in righteousness and peace."

From James, the third son of the first Earl of Manchester, descended John, the grandfather of the late John Montagu: he was an Admiral in the Royal Navy. Among his sons were James, Captain in the same service, killed in action; and Edward Montagu, Lieutenant-Colonel of Artillery in the service of the Honorable East India Company, who fell at Seringapatam 1799: the latter was the father of the subject of the present Memoir.

To Lieutenant-Colonel Montagu's services and high military character, at the siege of Seringapatam and on other occasions, noble testimony is given in Beatson's "Seringapatam," and the "Asiatic General Register" for 1800; from which authorities the following account is extracted:

"During the storming of Seringapatam, 'Lieutenant-Colonel Montagu's arm was shattered near the shoulder, on the 2nd May, while in the battery, and required immediate amputation; for some days he appeared to be going on in a fair way; a contusion, however, on his chest, occasioned by the same shot, produced mortification, which caused his death on the 10th May. In him the regiment lost an
officer of whom they may be deservedly proud. His talents, improved by a regular military education, and his long experience in active service, rendered him invaluable. In the early part of his career, his skill in his profession, his zeal and indefatigable activity, having been displayed on various occasions, he was afterwards selected for every important service. With General Goddard, with Sir Eyre Coote, and at the siege of Cuddalore, he was particularly distinguished; and in the campaigns of Lord Cornwallis, he not only confirmed but increased his established reputation. He was called forth on the projected expedition against the Isle of France and Manila, and finally was chosen to command the Bengal Artillery destined for the glorious enterprise against Seringapatam.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Montagu was the fourth son of Admiral J. Montagu, and brother of the late Captain James Montagu, who commanded the ship Montagu on the glorious 1st of June, in which action he was killed by a cannon shot while closely engaged with two of the enemy's ships, the Impétueux of 74, and Le Républicain of 110 guns."

"Being originally designed for the army, he was placed in the academy at Woolwich, from whence he was sent out as a cadet to Bengal in the year 1770. On his arrival at Calcutta, there being a superabundance of officers, he was placed in a separate corps formed for the cadets of that year, and called the Select Picquet. In this situation he attended chiefly to his improvement in military knowledge and discipline; and, from the gracefulness of his person, as well as an uncommon activity, he was soon distinguished by a superior skill and address in the performance of all military duties.

"After serving twelve months in this corps, he attached himself to the artillery. While he was a lieutenant-fireworker, by the strict attention he paid to his duty, the interest he took in his profession, and the ardour with which he pursued every branch of it, he greatly improved himself in the knowledge of tactics, and his practice was proportion-

* Beatson's Seringapatam.
ably advanced by being on several occasions employed on actual service.

"About the year 1781 he was promoted to the command of a company. He was sent to join General Goddard who was employed to demolish various forts in the Rohilla country, several of which were defended with the most obstinate bravery. In attacking one of them he was wounded by an arrow (while attempting to force the gates) which, entering just below the eye, penetrated obliquely through part of the jaw, and almost reached the opposite cheek. Without a moment’s hesitation, he broke the arrow off close to the iron barb, and continued at the head of his corps till the object of the attack was accomplished. The barb remained in his face several days, and was at length extracted with great skill by Dr. Brinch Harwood. In these active scenes Captain Montagu completely established his military character, gained the confidence and recorded approbation of his commanding officer, and greatly advanced the good opinion and regard which General Goddard had already entertained for him.

"In the year 1782, Captain Montagu was called forth to join Sir Eyre Coote, on the coast of Coromandel. Captain Montagu was in every engagement, and in services where so much real military merit was displayed, it is no common praise to say he was always peculiarly distinguished. He obtained the rank of Major, and at Cuddalore, in 1784, he was appointed to command the artillery of one of the wings of the army, and there manifested his superior judgment by taking post on an eminence which produced the greatest advantages, and it was honourably acknowledged by a French officer of rank who was stationed to oppose him. On his return to Bengal, he was employed in Oude until the memorable expedition of the Marquis Cornwallis to Seringapatam. On this important service Major Montagu was selected to attack the stupendous fortresses of Nunderdroog and Ramah-droog.

"The chief engineer having reported Nunder-droog to be a fortress of uncommon strength, the Marquis ordered Major Montagu to proceed with his best train of artillery
from Bangalore to join the army, encamped about half-way to the place of attack. The expedition with which he performed that duty excited the astonishment, as it called forth the applause, of Lord Cornwallis; and though he was the youngest artillery officer with the army, he was entrusted with the conduct of the artillery employed in the reduction of that important fortress. His skill, courage, and talents, were crowned with complete success, and the thanks of the Commander-in-chief expressed in the strongest terms the sense he entertained of his eminent services. The manner, also, in which he was entrusted with the command of the artillery employed against Severn-droog, manifested the great confidence which the Marquis Cornwallis possessed in his military enthusiasm and professional abilities.

"In the year 1794, Major Montagu was advanced to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and was third on the list of artillery officers when he was chosen to direct the artillery attached to the Bengal army, and was destined to join General Harris, Commander-in-chief, in the late glorious enterprise against Seringapatam, where this gallant and most distinguished officer found an honourable grave.

"If it is true, as has been asserted, that the commander of the artillery, Colonel Smith, a brave and deserving officer, had, from a long succession of illness, become too infirm to be continually in the trenches, the executive duty must have necessarily devolved upon Lieutenant-Colonel Montagu, who was next in command. But be that as it may, it is certain that three days previous to the capture of Seringapatam, a cannon ball shattered his arm while he was in the trenches, in such a manner as to require immediate amputation, and it was taken off within an inch of the shoulder. In this state, however, such was his zealous, active, and unconquerable spirit, he insisted upon being carried into the trenches, where he continued to the last to encourage, by his presence, the troops who adored him. During three or four days, it was hoped and believed that he was in a fair way of recovery; but having by the same shot received a contusion in his chest, it turned to a mortification, and carried him off on the eighth day after he had received his wound.
"Thus fell Lieutenant-Colonel Edward Montagu, in the forty-fifth year of his age, lamented as he was beloved by the whole army, leaving a widow* and three orphans. He served the Honourable East India Company with zeal, fidelity, and superior military talents, during an honourable course of twenty-nine years; had been in more engagements than usually happens even to an active soldier, and had been noticed with the most flattering distinction by every commanding officer under whom he had served.

"In private life he was not less distinguished than in his public services. He was benevolent and generous, possessing at the same time the most frank and candid disposition. He was an affectionate husband, a tender father, and a dutiful son. He loved his country with a patriotic ardor; and he died in the contest to extend its dominion and its glory.

"He will live long in the remembrance of all who knew him; and it remains for the nation whom he served so well, and for whom he died too soon, to transmit his name to the times that are to come."

The above account of the public services of Lieutenant-Colonel Montagu is quoted in full, that it may be seen in how many respects the subject of the present Memoir sustained the character of his illustrious and patriotic father; and how in several touching points of resemblance their lives were assimilated, especially in premature death from a devotion to their duties, and in each leaving behind a widow and orphan children to lament a loss, which sympathy and generous acknowledgment may alleviate but cannot repair. At the time of his father's death John Montagu was not two years old; he was sent early to school at Cheam, in Surrey, and, though then very young, quickly took a good position in the highest class, and obtained several first

* He married a Miss Fleetwood at Musulipatam in 1792, when on his return to Bengal from the first Campaign against Tippoo.
prizes. On leaving Cheam, he was sent to a school of higher stamp, at Parson’s Green, near Knightsbridge, at which he continued until the circumstance of one of his brothers being articled to a Solicitor at Devizes, occasioned his mother to remove with her three sons to that town, where John was placed under the charge of a private tutor. Edward, the eldest son, subsequently practised as a Solicitor in London; George, afterwards a Major in the Army, has for some years been resident in America, and John, the youngest, fulfilled the career to be recorded in this biography.

One who knew him intimately in his early years, speaking from lively recollection of him, says:—“as a youth John Montagu showed no indications of talent;” if so, his standing in his classes at school must have been attained by that perseverance which through life always attended him in the pursuit of any object he undertook: the same authority also testifies “that his astonishment was great when he first read some of Montagu’s state papers, bearing the evidence of being the production of an intellect of the highest order:” and expresses it as his conviction “that to a great degree he was self-cultivated after he left school.”

It is probable that the change from a school, where there were many scholars, to the closer supervision of a private tutor, was at this time thought necessary for the better forming and restraining of his character, which from its impulsiveness required judgment, decision, and firmness, to direct it into steady growth, and to guide it to some worthy object. It is the acknowledgment of one who watched his boyhood, that until the time he entered the army he
was "a restless, high-spirited, troublesome, daring boy;" but when it was decided that he should serve his country in arms, and he had an object set before him, and his young spirit was attracted to

"The royal banner; and the quality,

Pride, pomp, and circumstance, of glorious war,"

then his restlessness became energy, his daring ripened into the eager heroism of the young soldier, and a disregard for truthfulness, which had for some time rendered his mother extremely anxious on his behalf, gave place to an honesty of purpose, and a decided straightforwardness of action which through the subsequent years of his public life were the marked features of his character.

On the 10th of February, 1814, young Montagu, then seventeen years of age, was appointed to an ensigncy without purchase, in the 52nd regiment; and was present at the battle of Waterloo in 1815, with the same regiment, which distinguished itself so nobly at that engagement.

Two circumstances quite characteristic of him, which are still in the remembrance of some of his friends, will serve to show the bent and promptness of his disposition, at this time; and his firmness in following up any course which he conceived to be both honorable and necessary. When he joined his regiment at Brussels, he was ordered to the rear with a detachment of invalids. He had gone back a day's march when he met a party proceeding to join his own regiment; as an engagement was daily expected he was extremely anxious to be present, and with this view asked to see the date of the commission of a young man of the party he met: finding he was junior to himself he commanded him to take charge of the
invalids, and next morning astonished his commanding officer by making his appearance before him, as his regiment was marching from Brussels to Waterloo. The officer was much amused at his story and told him he hoped he would not suffer for having played the senior officer. The other circumstance occurred shortly after the battle: when the army was quartered near Paris, young Montagu, for the first time in his life, was tempted to the gaming table, and, after some playing, lost what to him was a considerable sum of money; this he felt he was bound in honor to discharge, and thus found himself in serious pecuniary difficulties: but his was neither a mind to despair, nor a heart to shrink under embarrassments,—and difficulty to him was but an occasion of contriving how he should overcome it. Nor was he long in determining how to repair his losses,—for he formed at once the resolution to withdraw from the mess of his regiment until his debt should be defrayed. With this determination he went to his commanding officer, Sir John Colborn, acquainted him with his position, and requested that he might be allowed three months' advance of pay, and to live by himself, on his rations, until he had paid off his losses. His request being acceded to, he lived alone in his tent, for six months, during the whole of that time refusing all invitations to parties; and nothing could induce him to break through his purpose of living upon the smallest possible allowance, until his debts were honorably liquidated; or of ever again being drawn into the excitement and ruin of the gaming-table.

This early disciplining of himself, and this self-denying firmness in retrenchment, immediately occasion rendered it necessary, were alike very discernible in the conduct of Mr. Montagu in subsequent years,
when heavier losses and sacrifices called upon him to live on less than one-half of his income, in order to meet difficulties which he foresaw, but to which he yielded from his devotedness to the public good.

After the battle of Waterloo, Ensign Montagu was promoted to a lieutenancy by purchase, on the 9th November, 1815; he also purchased his company in the 64th foot, Nov. 1822; after which he exchanged into the 40th regiment.

In 1823, Captain Montagu married Jessy, daughter of Major General Edward Vaughan Worseley, R.A., and proceeded to Van Diemen's Land, with Colonel, afterwards Sir George, Arthur, and on arrival there was nominated private secretary, which office he retained until 1827, still holding his captaincy in His Majesty's army, on half-pay; but three years after he retired from the service, under circumstances which will be elsewhere stated, and with the impression that he could then be more actively employed in the civil department of government.

We may indulge the speculation what the career of John Montagu might have been had he continued in military service. He possessed all the qualities requisite for a soldier. Of strict discipline, cool intrepidity, steady perseverance and great physical energy, a path of glory lay open before him; in this he might have fallen, as his father did, in the dangerous and bloody trench; or he might have been decked with medals, and rewarded by titles and honors as many of those who were his fellows in his youthful campaign survived to be; but other services were then more congenial to his mind; a long prospect of peace lay before the eye of the young soldier, and his active thought and persevering spirit preferred labor to ease, and the employment of public life to the mere
parade which occupies the young officer during a lengthened peace. He may have seen that colonial life had incitements for his adventurous spirit; that the formation of new societies and new centres of civilization opened out opportunities for those public improvements, and for the development of those powers for taming the savage waste, and of turning rugged mountain-passes into highroads of commerce which were stirring within him. At least, we may conclude that his energies were not easily to be restrained, since the first opening of his official career was in a settlement, which at that time could attract few, and which would have raised up insuperable obstacles to a resolution less bold, and a heart more readily discouraged than his own.