

Major Kilpatrick that, if the enemy made any fresh movement, it was to be immediately reported to him.¹ Great, therefore, was his surprise when he learnt that, without his sanction, a detachment of the force with some field-pieces was marching towards the large tank which the French had abandoned.² He immediately hastened after the detachment and joined it as it was on the point of reaching the tank. He now found that it was commanded by Major Kilpatrick, his old and favourite comrade. In the fire of wrath, "he at first ordered him under arrest for such unmilitary conduct, but was pacified on receiving an apology." He sent Kilpatrick back to the grove and assumed the direct command. As an advance had been made, he knew to fall back would be disastrous, so he resolved with his usual promptness to renew the action and by attacking to make it decisive. He sent to the grove for another detachment, upon which

¹ From the Narrative of an Officer. "Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal." Orme states: "At eleven o'clock Colonel Clive consulted his officers at the drum head; and it was resolved to maintain the cannonade during the day, but at midnight to attack the Nabob's camp."—Orme, Vol. II., p. 175. Eyre Coote enters in his Journal: "In this situation we cannonaded each other till 12 o'clock, when the Colonel came from Plassey House which was close to the river side and called the captains together in order to hold a Council of War, but before his mind returned without holding one."

² Orme was "to give currency to the unfounded statement that Clive was asleep, and to emphasise the statement by a shallow apology. He writes: "Major Kilpatrick, impatient to seize the opportunity, advanced from the grove with two companies of the battalion, and two field-pieces, marching fast towards the tank, and sent information of his intention and the reason of it, to his commander, who chanced at this time to be lying down in the hunting-house. Some say he was asleep; which is not improbable, considering how little rest he had had for so many hours before; but this is no imputation either against his courage or conduct."—Orme, Vol. II., p. 176. Walsh, who "was present at the battle of Plassey and constantly near the person of the Commander-in-Chief during the whole engagement," published a letter in 1763 to the "Proprietors of East India Stock," and forwarded a copy to Orme. He stated: "The English Commander-in-Chief made the disposition of the troops himself, and was at the head of them during the whole of the action until the enemy had retreated back to their entrenched camp, the attack of which he had then determined to defer till night. The field being now clear, he retired into an adjacent building, for no tents were pitched, to shift his cloaths wet with rain, but before he could change them word was brought him that a part of his troops were marching out of the Grove towards a small eminence on which the corps of French in Suraja Dowlet's Army had been posted. Surprized that such a motion should be made without his orders, he instantly hastened to the party, at the head of which he found Major Kilpatrick, whom he reprimanded for his unsoldierlike conduct and ordered him back to the Grove, and then, taking the command of these advanced troops himself, remained at the head of them during the second action which ended with our storming the enemy's camp two hours afterwards."