

Charlie, after the siege, in which he had rendered great services, received from the Company, at Colonel Coote's earnest recommendation, his promotion to the step of lieutenant-colonel, while Peters was raised to that of major.

A fortnight after the fall of Pondicherry they returned to Madras and thence took the first ship for England. It was now just ten years since they had sailed, and in that time they had seen Madras and Calcutta rise from the rank of two trading stations, in constant danger of destruction by their powerful neighbours, to that of virtual capitals of great provinces. Not as yet, indeed, had they openly assumed the sovereignty of these territories, but Madras was, in fact, the absolute master of the broad tract of land extending from the foot of the mountains to the sea, from Cape Comorin to Bengal, while Calcutta was master of Bengal and Oressa, and her power already threatened to extend itself as far as Delhi. The conquest of these vast tracts of country had been achieved by mere handfuls of men, and by a display of heroic valour and constancy scarce to be rivalled in the history of the world.

The voyage was a pleasant one, and was, for the times, quick, occupying only five months. But to the young men, longing for home after so long an absence, it seemed tedious in the extreme. Tim and Hossein were well content with their quiet easy life after their long toils. They had nothing whatever to do, except that they insisted upon waiting upon Charlie and Peters at meals. The ship carried a large number of sick and wounded officers and men, and as these gained health and strength the life on board ship became livelier and more jovial. Singing and cards occupied the evenings, while in the daytime they played quoits, rings of rope being used for that purpose, and other games with which passengers usually wile away the monotony of long voyages. It