

NOTES
TO
"CLIVE, BARON PLASSEY"

Verse XI.—"*Ladder of Wealth*," etc. Clive's progenitors, although from a period as early as the 14th century in the possession of landed property (Styche, near Market Drayton, in Shropshire, was the estate occupied by them nearly the whole time) enjoyed comparatively little wealth or influence; while none of them, since the close of the 16th century, when a representative of the family was Chancellor of the Exchequer in Ireland, and had been created a Knight, was the holder of any personal dignity.

Verses xxxvi and xxxvii.—The author, seeking a prototype, might no less appropriately have turned to Cincinnatus, but an expression of the subject of the verse himself, introduced in one of those powerful speeches—a speech the elder Pitt declared the best he at any time heard in the House—which forms the justification for his course in India, prevailed with him to adopt the scriptural analogy: "In this critical situation it pleased God to make me the instrument of their" [the Company's] "delivery."

Verse xxxviii.—When the affair of Pondicherry—the first military operation in which Clive shared—took place, he was between 22 and 23 years of age, unversed in the most perfunctory way even, in the science of war. Devicota, where he greatly distinguished himself, was a few months later.

Verses xxxix and xl.—It is not speaking by the book to represent Clive as having terminated, either at this juncture, or subsequently, the well-nigh continuous hostilities between Great Britain and France in the Presidency (to use the East India Company's designation) of Madras. Contests, more or less desultory in character—Trichinopoly, the single fortress