

**THE ADVENTURES OF
NEVIL BROOKE;
OR, HOW INDIA
WAS WON FOR ENGLAND**

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The Adventures of Nevil Brooke; Or, How India Was Won for England by Christopher James Riethmüller

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CHRISTOPHER JAMES RIETHMÜLLER

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OF
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HOW INDIA WAS WON FOR ENGLAND.

BY
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THE
ADVENTURES OF NEVIL BROOKE.

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BOOK IX.—CALCUTTA.
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CHAPTER I.

INTRIGUES.


As Nevil entered Pondicherry, he met a company of soldiers, with crape on their colours, and other signs of mourning. They were returning from the Chevalier's funeral, a ceremony never long delayed in those climates, and the sound of a martial air had already succeeded the dead-march. Sorry and sick at heart, Nevil hastened to the hospitable mansion, which in former days had given him rest and shelter.

An old Hindoo servant informed him, that Mademoiselle de Ste. Croix could see nobody.

Madame Dupleix was with her, and strict orders had been issued that no one was to be admitted to the house. He sent in his name, but was told that the young lady was too ill to receive visitors. He left a message that he would return on the following morning, and went in a desponding mood to transact his business with the Governor.

Monsieur Godeheu welcomed him with punctilious politeness, and Nevil soon saw that there would be no great difficulty in agreeing on the terms of a truce. The fact was, that on both sides the instructions from home were imperative to come to an arrangement, and the desire for conciliation was clearly visible in the interviews and correspondence which followed. It will be sufficient here to say, that these negotiations soon led to a suspension of arms, to be followed shortly after by a provisional treaty, which confirmed the two nations in possession of their several settlements, but pledged them to withdraw from participation in the native quarrels. By this compromise, Salabut Jung remained Soubahdar of the Deccan, but Mahomed Ali was left undisturbed as Nabob of the Carnatic.

To return to Nevil's private affairs, when



he again called at the house of the Chevalier, he met with the same reception as before, and this was repeated on several subsequent occasions. He was told that Mademoiselle de Ste. Croix was too much absorbed in grief to be seen by any guest. He asked for the Ayah, but was informed that she could not leave her mistress. He had recourse to letters and messages, but no answer was vouchsafed him. Even a bribe to the servants failed to procure him any definite intelligence. At last, he posted himself resolutely in the doorway, and declared that nothing but force should remove him without a more satisfactory explanation. He was then admitted to the court-yard, and there, beneath the well-remembered arcades where he had spent so many pleasant hours, Madame Dupleix came forth to meet him.

She was still very handsome, but Nevil saw a marked change in her countenance. Traces of care and disappointment were visible in her features, and her fine eyes gleamed with a baleful and angry fire. She saluted her visitor with formal ceremony, and spoke to him with a forced calmness that seemed to cover a flood of suppressed passion.