George Thomas spent more than five years in southern India, and he served under the Poligars and the Nizam of Hyderabad. During his stay in southern India, he acquired considerable knowledge about the customs and conditions of Indian people. He also increased his knowledge about the art of warfare. Moreover, in the service of Nizam, he had raised his own troops which were called the "Irish Pindaris". In 1786, he resigned the service of the Nizam and crossed Central India along with his Pindaris and came to Northern India.

There were a number of powers and states in Northern India: the Marathas, the Sikhs, the Jats, the Rajputs, Oudh, the Rohillas, the English. These powers had emerged as a result of the fall of the Mughal Empire, and they were constantly at war with each other. There was general disorder in the country. The life of the common people was far from secure. Wars, plundering, raids and disturbances were a common feature. Regarding the condition of Northern India, Mr. Festing wrote,

All Hindustan was the prey of contending factions; the roads were infested by armed bands who robbed and murdered at will, whether in time of war or of normal peace. There was no attempt, scarcely a thought, of establishing order. 1

Thus there was a great anarchy in Northern India at that time.

In the north, the Marathas were endeavouring to revive their influence and power under the able leadership of Machav Rao Sindhia. The English were firmly entrenched in Bengal, Bihar and were keen in extending their territory further north. Stage was set for Anglo-Maratha contest for the supremacy of the country. Moreover, the Sikhs, the Jats and the Rajputs were also busy in increasing their military power. These powers used to employ trained and experienced European military adventurers in their armies.

George Thomas moved from place to place in Northern India. In Delhi, the influence of Ghulam Qadir and Ismail Beg was paramount in the court of puppet Emperor Shah Alam II. Another power in the vicinity of Delhi was that of Begam Samru of Sarthana near Meerut. She had employed trained European soldiers. It was her service that George Thomas joined in 1787 as a commissioned officer (Lieutenant).² Here, Thomas took the command of 'Reinhardt's old Brigade' which consisted of a large number

2. (i) W.F., Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas, (Calcutta, 1803), p. 2.
   (ii) Ross, op.cit., p. 298.
of Europeans on its pay roll.* Earlier, this brigade was organised by Gen. Walter Reinhardt (also known as Gen. Samru), the husband of Begam Samru. The troops of this brigade were mutinous, expensive and useless. They were never famed for their military achievements during war.

While in Begam's service, he served her well and organised her army into the regiments of infantry, corps of artillery and troops of cavalry. The army was trained in strict discipline and was drilled in European fashion which became formidable under the leadership of George Thomas. He introduced new tactics of fighting and weapons in the army. Now the cannon and musket replaced the battering ram and lance of medieval times. He also cast new weapons i.e. cannons, guns and other fighting weapons in the service of Begam.

He also recruited his group of Pindaris in the army of the Begam. The Pindaris had a good knowledge of fighting and had experience of many battles.

Thus Thomas not only trained the army of Begam but also improved and introduced new weapons in her army. He imparted good discipline and introduced new fighting tactics. Very soon he became a favourite of Begam Samru. In the words of his biographer, "It is amazing that Thomas,

* Mr. Hennessy mentions 80 Europeans.†
† M.H., op.cit., p. 49.
though junior in service to many of his colleagues, was able by the sheer force of his personality to implant and implement his own ideas. Thomas's verve and leadership, allied with his refusal never to accept and his remarkable talent for rising phoenix-wise from the ashes of apparent disaster and resparking it into personal victory, gave her some sense of security."\(^3\)

About this time, the Sikhs were creating disturbances and increasing their influence in the region of Punjab and Delhi. They were also plundering the Gangetic Doab and Delhi which were the richest parts of the country. They became a terror to the ruling chiefs i.e. Shah Alam, Mahadji Sindhia, Begam Samru etc. in the northern-western parts. Afterwards, they reached Jumna river where they divided into two groups. Half of them planned to retain in the Doab while others went towards the Kutana Ghat (34 miles west of Meerut) to ravage the crown-lands in Sonepat, Panipat and Delhi regions.\(^4\) So the presence of the Sikhs in the regions of Sonepat-Panipat

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4. (i) C.F.C., vol. VII, (1785-87), (Delhi, 1840), pp. 8, 16, 68.
greatly alarmed Begam Samru. These districts* and several other neighbouring parganahs were the property of the Begam of Sardhana. Thus, in 1787, she was fighting against the Sikhs in these districts particularly at Panipat for saving her jagirs.

Further, she also came to the rescue of the Emperor who was in great distress largely on account of the opposition of his own nobles and the increasing attacks of the Sikhs. Shah Alam II had appointed the Maratha chief, Mahadji Sindhia of Gwalior, as his Regent Flenipotentioary. His task was to restore the fallen fortune of the dynasty in Delhi and around. He had to fight against the Rajputs, the Sikhs and others. The appointment of Sindhia to this exalted position was greatly resented by a section of Mughal nobility led by Qadir and Ismail Beg. Consequently when the Marathas were defeated in 1787 (Lalsot)** they made an effort to wreak vengeance on the Emperor. With the temporary eclipse of Mahadji Sindhia during this period, "the Delhi royal family was laid in the dust and the veil of divinity that hedged them in was torn asunder by the rude hands of

* Sindhia had added several parganahs to the jagir of Begam and some to the west of the Jumna in Sonepat-Panipat districts with a view to use her as a check upon the advancing Sikhs.+
** Lalsot is about 30 miles south-east of Jaipur.
Afghan spoilers. It was a tragedy of even greater poignancy than the downfall of the French monarchy five years later."

Ghulam Qadir*, the Rohilla chief, gained ascendancy in Delhi after the defeat and retreat of Mahadji Sindhia. He began to strengthen his military power. He had increased his army by compelling all his jagirdars to supply him with troops. He opened negotiations with Baghel Singh, chief of Karora Singhia Misl and other Sikh chiefs to join him in his attack against the Imperial territory of Shah Alam II. He also sent a message to Begam Samru for her support in the attack against the King of Delhi. He promised her a reward of the extension of her jagir and a share in the administration of affairs. But the Begam proved loyal to the king, and she turned down the request and offer of Ghulam Qadir.

Some Sikhs along with Baghel Singh accepted the offer of the Rohilla chief and marched towards the imperial capital. Ghulam Qadir seized the towns of Barnawa, Baraut, Budhana and Sikandarabad and advanced upon Delhi. The kingdom of Delhi lay unprotected and there was an opportunity for Ghulam Qadir to obtain the post of Mir Bakshi which was previously held by his father (Zabita Khan) and grand-father (Najib-ud-daullah).


* Ghulam Qadir Rohilla (d.1789): He was a son of Zabita Khan and succeeded his father in 1785. He was murdered by Sindhia's troops in 1789.

The two agents of Sindhia in the court of Delhi lacked men and money. They attacked the forces of Ghulam Qadir as well as the Sikhs at Shahdara, but their resistance proved to be feeble. The Sikhs fought bravely and both agents had to retreat towards the palace. The Sikhs captured the fort of Shahdara and plundered the property they found in the fort. Afterwards the Marathas fled away from Delhi. The Imperial officers left their camp to the mercy of the victor i.e. Ghulam Qadir. Later the Emperor wrote a number of letters to various chiefs for assistance against the Rohilla chief but could not get any timely help.

Ghulam Qadir entered Delhi with a band of two thousand troops on 5th September 1787. He took possession of Delhi, and compelled Shah Alam to confer on him not only the post of Mir Bakshi but the titles of Amir-ul-Umara, Ruknud-daula Bahadur with the customary robes. The Emperor had no choice. He also gave him jagirs. Then Ghulam Qadir set out for securing possession of the fortress of Aligarh in the middle of September.

While Ghulam Qadir was busy in the affairs of Aligarh fort, then Najaf Guli Khan, a rebel courtier of Delhi, with a body of the Rohillas and Sikhs, advanced

towards the regions of Rewari, Narnaul and Kanaund in the middle of September 1787. He even seized the fort of Gokulgarh (near Rewari) in the last week of December, 1787.

Of all his vassals, the Jaipur ruler responded to the appeal of the Mughal emperor and he met the sovereign near Rewari in Feb. 1788. After collecting tributes from the Raja of Jaipur and other various zamindars, the Emperor marched towards Najaf Quli Khan who had usurped Rewari district. The king sent his envoy for collecting the tribute. But Najaf Quli Khan rejected the proposal of the Emperor and prepared himself for a vigorous resistance. So the king decided to fight against this rebel noble.

Najaf Quli Khan lay encamped under the strong walls of Gokulgarh fort. The Emperor had five to seven thousand troops. However, his great support was Begam Samru's private army which consisted of three disciplined battalions of Infantry and a good artillery under the command of Begam Samru. The Emperor was also supported by the troops of Zafaryab Khan, a step-son of the Begam; the Rajput troops along with Ismail Beg's troops under the command of famous Himmat Behadur Gosain; a body of Jats.

Mr. Sardesai writes that the Begam had an efficient part of artillery of 85 pieces. +
and other Mughal Sardars. The Emperor immediately ordered an attack on Najaf Quli Khan (12 March, 1788). Severe fighting took place at night. The Emperor suffered heavily.

By dawn there was complete confusion in the imperial lines except in the camp and brigade of Begam Samru which was resting some distance from the place of attack.

The troops of Begam Samru were commanded by her famous officer, George Thomas. Thomas was commanding about a hundred troops and he had a "six-pounder gun which became almost his personal weapon." Begam Samru who was in her palanquin placed herself at the head of these troops under the command of George Thomas. With this detachment she proceeded to the spot occupied by the rebels.

She made a sudden and unexpected attack. She was helped by Himmat Bahadur at the head of his Gosains (fighting friars who were found useful as mercenaries). The Begam led the attack in her palanquin and between her screams of encouragement for Thomas and her abuse of the enemy, and Thomas cheering on his men and banging the six-pounder, the rebels soon disappeared.

14. B.B., op.cit., p. 27.
The fighting tactics of Thomas in this action were eminently successful. He was "seen trundling up a gun and emptying it at point blank range in his opponent's faces." He covered the imperial abode and "pelted the enemy with grape and musketry." Thus Thomas supported the Begam "with such determination that after a short but desperate struggle, Najaf Guli Khan was beaten back and the Emperor rescued from his critical position."

The Emperor took shelter within the square of the well-trained European troops of Begam Samru, "who by their rapid and accurate artillery and small arm fire put Najaf Guli to flight."

However, the Emperor did not want to prolong the fight against Najaf Guli. He did not have sufficient strength of his own to crush the army of rebel. He was lacking in money for supporting his inflated army. The other reason was that he was terrified on account of the dangerous attacks of the Sikhs allies of Najaf Guli. The

16. S.B., op.cit., p. 90. Gen. Samru had taught his men to enter the field from the safest part, to deliver one volley and then to form square. But Thomas introduced a very different system of tacticry which he applied in that battle of Gokulgarh and others.+


provinces of Delhi lay absolutely unprotected. Next, Ghulam Gadir, a dangerous enemy of the Emperor was still active. The Sikhs, in the Doab, were also increasing their power rapidly. The Emperor was worried about the invasions of the Sikhs close to his territories.

After taking these factors into consideration the Emperor was inclined to make peace with Najaf Guli Khan through the mediation of Begam Samru. On the other side, Najaf Guli Khan also opened negotiations for peace with the Emperor. Then on March 19, 1788, under the assurances of safety from Begam Samru, "Najaf Guli was presented to him, by the same lady, with his wrists tied together with a handkerchief, like a penitent captive rebel, in order to soothe imperial dignity." The Emperor untied the silken handkerchief from Najaf Guli Khan's wrists, and his offences were forgiven. He was also given a citation (Khilat) as symbol of his pardon by the Emperor. The Emperor also restored his offices and confirmed him in his estates.*


* A letter to Peshwa indicates that the possessions of Rewari and Gokulgarh remained with Najaf Guli Khan till his death in 1791.+

Najaf Guli was so grateful to Begam Samru.

Later on, the Emperor held a durbar and the Begam was publicly thanked for her brilliant services. She was also proclaimed the Emperor's most beloved daughter, and she received the title of Zeb-un-Nissa - 'Ornament of her sex' or 'Glory of womankind'. The Emperor also praised the gallantry and the brilliant services of George Thomas. It was George Thomas who with his brave and timely action rescued Emperor. He also succeeded in securing the fort of Gokulgarh from the rebel chief. Thus, he could be called the real conqueror of Gokulgarh. For his brave and active service, the Emperor gave him a rich citation (Khilat) and other valuable gifts.

The Emperor also gave some rich jagirs to the Begam for her loyalty and service. Mr. Atkinson writes that the Emperor on this occasion conferred on her a valuable estate called Badshapur - Jhersa situated on the west of Jumna. He asked the Begam 'to take over the responsibility of protecting the area north-west of Delhi from the raids of the Sikh bandits who were terrorising it, and allotted an extra jaghir to cover the cost of the operation.' But the Begam gave both the jagir and the

   (ii) B.B., op.cit., p. 28.
25. (i) C.C., op.cit., p. 38.
   (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 111.
task of protecting the territories from the Sikh raids to George Thomas.

The Expedition of Gokulgarh was no lasting triumph for the Emperor. Dr. Gupta writes,

This expedition brought the Emperor no gains either materially or morally. Najafluli remained as refractory as before, and he paid him no money. No crown-lands were restored to him by the Rajput princes; and for the imperial prestige it received a further set-back.26

There was no influence upon his enemy i.e. Ghulam Gadir.

Ghulam Gadir again returned to Delhi in the first week of July 1788 after successful expeditions over the Marathas, the Jats and the Sikhs in the Doab. This is the beginning of utter destruction of royal dignity and prestige at the hands of this fanatical Afghan. A reign of terror began which lasted till the October, 1788.27 The entire royal family was mercilessly tortured. The servants and other courtiers of the Emperor were badly beaten up and killed. The women of the royal family were insulted, and the children died of starvation.28 Mr. Seton-Kerr wrote, "It was all a scene of horror and a dance of demons which lasted for nine weeks."29 There was a lust for hidden treasure.

27. Ibid., vol. II, p. 214.
28. Ibid.
Ghulam Qadir blinded the Emperor with a sharp-pointed dagger in August, 1788. Women and children were brutally massacred. The supporters of Emperor came to rescue him. Sindhia sent his able general, Bhai Rane Khan, at the head of a large force to Delhi in the end of September. Raja Himmat Bahadur Gosain also came to Delhi for protecting the Emperor. Begam Samru sent her troops from Padishahpur to Delhi under the command of George Thomas to rescue the Emperor. They all occupied Delhi in the first week of October, and Ghulam Qadir had to take shelter within the fort. On 10th October, 1788, Ghulam Qadir took with him the most precious jewellery and other valuable royal treasure, and escaped under the cover of darkness from the fort.

Qadir was captured by the forces of Rane Khan and Begam Samru who were chasing the Rohilla chief. He was taken to Mathura where he was tortured to death on the 4th March, 1789.

32. (i) U.P. District Gazetteers, Meerut District Gazetteer, (Lucknow, 1965), p. 44.
34. (i) Ibid, pp. 163, 167.
Some writers mention his death on 3rd March 1789.+

(b) J.N.S., op.cit., vol. III, p. 329.
George Thomas again exhibited his military skill in Delhi as he had done at Gokulgarh. According to Keene, "the merits of the gallant young Irishman, tall, handsome, intrepid and full of the reckless generosity of his impulsive race, soon raised him to distinction." The Begam was much impressed by his brilliant and successful action for rescuing the Emperor from the forces of Najef Guli Khan and Ghulam Gadir in Gokulgarh and Delhi respectively. These successful missions proved that Thomas had given an excellent training to the troops of Begam Samru.

For his brave and able activities, the Begam promoted Thomas as a military governor and civil administrator of an extensive territory. About the year 1790, he became the highest general of Begam Samru, and "was also her chief adviser and counsellor." Begam Samru, after testing his capacity and courage in various encounters, also made him collector of the sub-division of Tappal (32 miles north-west of Aligarh) in her jagir which had a revenue of £ 70,000.

35. H.G. Keene, The Fall, p. 171.
37. W.F., op.cit., p. 3.

Mr. Lyall mentioned that on this occasion Thomas was commanding 10,000 troops.


(ii) An Authentic Account of George Thomas', (From a correspondent at Lucknow), A.A.K., 1802, p. 56.
Then the Begam married him to one of her adopted daughters named Marie.\(^{39}\)

Thomas took up his quarters along with his trained army at the fort of Tappal where his aim was to protect the regions of Begam Samru from the Sikh raids. Here he took civil and military administration of an extensive tract. He began to check the increasing power of the Sikhs who were rapidly gaining political importance in Punjab in the last quarter of 18th century. Thomas had to fight most of his conflicts against these Sikhs especially the Akalis, the brave and fanatical soldiers.


i. Mr. Grey\(^+\) and Compton\(^++\) mentioned that Thomas married a slave girl.
   \(\text{+ C.G., op.cit., p. 33.}\)
   \(\text{++ H.A.C., op.cit., p. 110.}\)

ii. Some writers like Brajendranath Benerji and Keegan write her name as 'Maria'. Keegan writes that Begam Samru married one of her chief maids of honour to Thomas. This young lady's name was Mari and her parentage was French.\(^\ast\)
   \(\text{** W. Keegan's 'Sardhana and its Begam', pp. 39, 54. (Quoted: B.B., op.cit., p. 67.)}\)

iii. Some writers mention that Thomas married Marie at Sardhana and Father Gregory officiated it. His marriage took place after he rescued the Begam from the revolt of Sardhana in 1795.\(^e\) But it seems incorrect.
   \(\text{(i) A. Saunders Dyer, 'The Begem of Sardhana', The Calcutta Review*, vol. XCVIII, Jan. 1894, p. 323.}\)
   \(\text{(ii) Vera Chatterjee, op.cit., p. 110.}\)
Originally the Sikhs were divided into 65 bands, but later on these bands were organised into 12 main divisions, each with a distinguishing title and banner but varying in strength. These divisions were called Misl* and from 1767 to 1799, the whole of the Punjab was held by these Misl. Each Misl consisted of its chief named as 'Sardar' or 'Hisaldar'. The Sardar acted as a petty sovereign and was supreme in the internal matters of the Misl. George Thomas describes the Sardar's position in his memoirs:

Within his own domain each chief is lord paramount. He exerts an exclusive authority over his vassals, even to the power of life and death and to increase the population of his districts, he proffers a ready and hospitable asylum to fugitives from all parts of India. 42

Leading a simple, almost Spartan life, the Sikhs were brave, war-like, and in the last quarter of the 18th century, the Sikhs became a powerful and independent military force.


41. Ibid, p. 51.

** The word 'Misl' is an Arabic word which means 'equal' or 'alike'. Latif mentions that the word 'Misl' implied similitude.


42. W.P., op. cit., p. 76.
century they were militarily strong. They had more cavalry than artillery and infantry. Forster writes, "A Sicque horseman is armed with a matchlock and sabre of excellent metal, and his horse is strong and well formed." A body of their cavalry used to march for 50 or 60 miles per day. They used their infantry mostly for protecting the forts. They did not depend much upon artillery. That is why, they had to face lot of difficulties in the attacks against various chiefs. However, they captured few heavy field-guns in some raids and were in a position to give a pitched battle to the enemy.

Their army was not trained in drill and discipline. But their religious fervour and single-minded devotion to their Panth generally led them to many victories. In the method of fighting, they generally adopted guerilla tactics against the enemy. They were "accustomed to charge on full gallop, on a sudden they stop, discharge their pieces with a deliberate aim, when suddenly wheeling about after performing 3 or 4 turns, they renew the attack." George Forster, A Journey from Bengal to England, (1782-3), vol. I, (London, 1798), p. 288.

Gen. Malcolm also gives same view regarding the cavalry of the Sikhs.*  


Thomas described the fighting method of the Sikhs as follows:

after performing the requisite duties of their religion by ablution and prayer, they comb their hair and beards with peculiar care, then mounting their horses, ride forth towards the enemy, with whom they engage in a continued skirmish advancing and retreating, until man and horse become equally fatigued, they then draw off to some distance from the enemy, and, meeting with cultivated ground, they permit their horses to graze of their own accord. 45

Such was the life and character of the people with whom George Thomas came into conflict.

There were several clashes between Thomas and the Sikhs in the territory of Begam Samru. For two years, Thomas became a terror to the Sikhs by his successful actions. According to Grey,

Not only did he repel the Sikhs, but knowing that against such raiders attack was the best defence, pursued them into their own country, where he plundered indiscriminately, as they had done, and levied a heavy toll before withdrawal. 46

His excellent and well trained artillery, cavalry and infantry proved a headache to the Sikh raiders. He adopted both offensive and defensive methods for suppressing the law-breakers in his territories. For tackling the Sikhs, he was of the view that "the correct method of dealing with wasps was to burn the nest." 47

46. C.C., op.cit., p. 38.
47. S.B., op.cit., p. 93.
Thus by his skill, courage and energy he made his rule respected, and for along years after tradition handed down the legendary deeds of the mighty 'Jehezir-Sahib'. By his incessant exertions he made the Sikhs respect the marchers of the great Mughal. 48

During the service of the Begam, he not only fought against the Sikhs but also "doubled the revenues" 49 of Begam's jagir in Tappal regions by his good and efficient management. He also maintained law and order. Cultivation, especially of the waste-lands, improved. He also trained the army of Begam in drill and discipline. During this service he "learned to speak Hindustani and Persian fluently, just as his mistress did." 50 Thomas became a favourite officer of Begam Samru.

Although he controlled the administration of the Begam, won her confidence, increased and trained her troops, became her favourite and married an attractive girl at her instance, yet his fall was sudden and complete. He was a victim of jealousy and intrigues by a fellow French officer, Levassoult.

48 H.A.C., op. cit., p. 112.

49 'An Authentic Account of George Thomas; (Received from a Correspondence at Lucknow), (Probably written by L.F. Smith*), A.A.R., 1802, p. 55.


50 M.H., op. cit., p. 56.
Levassoult, a French Officer, was raised to a high position in the army of Begam and he became commander of artillery. Though he was not a soldier of much intelligence, yet he was an able conspirator. Mr. Keene writes, "he was cruel, rough, stern and bloody minded." Von Orlich, a traveller also writes, "Levasso possessed neither the prudence, talent, or knowledge of mankind." He was "vain and revengeful." The circumstances leading to George Thomas's resignation or dismissal are shrouded in mystery. Different versions are given in regard to Thomas's fall from Begam's service.

Sir J.N. Sarkar writes 'the Begam was forced to drive out George Thomas from her territory on account of his loose morals, batay-baji', i.e. for wenching. Sir Sarkar further adds,

> the Irish youth must have wearied of the faded charms of the old hag and consoled himself among the younger beauties of her large mestizo household. So she dismissed him. 54

The other cause of his dismissal was that Thomas hated the French mercenaries in the service of Begam. So he advised the Begam to throw out all the "useless" French mercenaries from her service. 55 This action of Thomas enraged all the Frenchmen of Begam's service and they conspired against him.

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55. 'An Authentic Account of George Thomas', (From a Correspondent at Lucknow), A.A.R., 1802, p. 55.
When George Thomas was away to the north and involved in his harrying operations against the Sikh raiders, Levassoult hatched a plot against him. He poisoned the ear of Begam that Thomas was a very disloyal and cunning person. He and a group of senior officers told the Begam that Thomas was plotting not only to take over the brigades of her army but also to take possessions of her territories. Levassoult suggested to the Begam that Thomas should be dismissed at once from her territories as well as her service. Begam's suspicious mind took an idea that "Thomas was only awaiting an opportunity to dethrone her." The suspicion against Thomas was so carefully fomented that it overcame all other feelings. She seized, as hostage, the wife and child of Thomas, whilst he was absent in pursuit of the Sikhs.

In the meantime, Thomas's wife sent a message to her husband from the palace of Begam about the terrible incident. She feared that she could be insulted or tortured by the Begam. On receiving the message from his wife, Thomas immediately marched towards Sardhana with a force with him. He knew about the character and reputation of the Begam. He had also heard of certain frightful

56. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
stories in the palace of the Begam. Thus he did not want to leave his wife at her mercy in such horrible atmosphere of the palace. He, therefore, immediately returned first to the palace, rescued his family from the guard of Begam and swiftly returned to his Tappal fort before the conspirators had realised what had happened. His pet goose, however, was cooked.59

Begam Samru with her full force reached Tappal and surrounded the fort. But Thomas refused to yield Tappal, and he proclaimed himself independent. Then the Begam attacked the fort around September 1791.60 Thomas had only a small army with him; he could not face the large army of the Begam. At last he had to surrender to the Begam along-with his family. He was captured but his life was spared, perhaps the Begam was influenced by his earlier honest and loyal service. Secondly, the wife of Thomas was one of her favourite girls. George Thomas alongwith his wife left the service of Begam around the beginning of 1792.61 He had ₹ 500 only with him. But he did not loose his courage.

61. A. The following writers mentioned the year 1792 when Thomas left Begam's service:
   i. W.F., op.cit., p. 3.
   ii. Hutchinson, op.cit., p. 74.
   iii. W. Crooke, op.cit., p. 120.
B. Col. Sleeman writes that Thomas left in 1793*
Gupta writes, "His immense strength, wild energy, daring interpidity, considerable foresight and gigantic form soon attracted to him a band of desperadoes." Soon he formed a group of "needy and desperate rascals" and utilised these as a robber band. He began to plunder the villages. He robbed a large village near Delhi where he received considerable booty. Then he purchased some arms from the collected booty and cast four six-pounder guns from brass utensils obtained from the villages.

Later on, Thomas, with his small force, marched to Anupshahar on the Ganga river where a cantonment of the frontier brigade of the English was located. Here he lived for some time under the protection of Colonel MacGowan, a British agent to imperial House. He began to act "as a private captain of mercenaries on a small scale." In Anupshahar, he increased and trained his small army. He also cast many cannons. Mr. Grey writes, "General Gilbert, of Sobraon fame, cited as a proof of Thomas's ingenuity that he strengthened these guns with small steel bars.

64. C.G., op.cit., p. 39.
65. (i) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 113.
(ii) W.F., op.cit., p. 5.
(Mr. Hennessy writes that Thomas had only 100 men at that time., M.H., op.cit., p. 60).
67. (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 3.
(ii) Gabrielle Festing, op.cit., p. 192.
68. H.G. Keene, Hindustan Under Free Lances, 1770-1820, p. 78.
For increasing their life and lightening the weight."  

For about a year he had to live a banditry life and afterwards he negotiated for service with Ali Bahadur of Banda*  

who was busy in the operation of Bundelkhand. But nothing came of it.

In the beginning of 1793, Appa Khandi Rao was the Maratha governor of Mewat, south-west of Delhi. He was one of Mahadji Sindhia's principal chieftains who played an important role in the conquest of Hindustan. He had heard about Thomas's bravery, daring activities while in the service of Begam Samru. He had also heard about Thomas's successful expeditions against the Afghans and the Sikhs. The rescue of Shah Alam by Thomas from the fort of Gokulgarh was still talked about. His knowledge of weapons and training of troops was well-known. Appa wanted such a man like Thomas in his service who could control not only his administration but also increase and improve the condition of his army.

Around October 1793, Thomas joined the army of Appa Khandi Rao, and served him for about four years.

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*Ali Bahadur of Banda (Nawab of Bundelkhand) (d. 1802): He was a son of Peshwa Baji Rao I. He became Nawab at Banda in 1791.*


Mr. Bidwell writes that Thomas joined in March 1794.++

Thomas got an advance payment of 40,000 rupees\textsuperscript{73} in cash and the right to collect the revenues of three districts in Mewat region, and in return he was to maintain a force of 1,000 regular infantry\textsuperscript{74} and 100 cavalry and sufficient artillery.\textsuperscript{75} Thomas enlarged his own force from 250 men to 500 men.\textsuperscript{76} These troops were well disciplined and trained.

This agreement was beneficial to Appa as well as to Thomas. Appa hoped to re-establish his authority in a region which was almost in a chronic state of rebellion.\textsuperscript{77} For Thomas this proved to be a boon. He not only got a job, but also received enough money from his new master for the maintenance of his personnel army. Thomas had "no misgivings as to his ability to collect revenue, for his methods were as sure as they were summary, and he accepted the proposal, with the single stipulation that accounts should be balanced every six months, and the difference adjusted."\textsuperscript{78}

Mahadji Sindhia, perhaps the ablest ruler among the Maratha confederates, suddenly died near Poona on 12th

\textsuperscript{73} S.B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 103.
\textsuperscript{74} A.A.R., 1804, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{76} C.G., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 39.
\textsuperscript{77} H.A.C., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 115.
\textsuperscript{78} Ibid.
Appa felt helpless to collect money from these Mewattis largely because he himself was now old and ailing. Now he hoped that Thomas would be successful in collecting revenue from this region.

George Thomas was furnished with two guns, a store of some ammunition and a few bullocks. According to Keene, "George departed to kill the bear whose skin had thus been conferred upon him." With great difficulty he recruited 400 men and decided to take possession of his jaidad. Thomas marched towards the reign of Mewat, but scarcely had he marched half way towards Mewat when he was recalled by his master, Appa Khandi Rao, Gen. Perron, a senior officer of Sindhia, announced the death of Mahadij Sindhia to Appa. So Appa marched towards Delhi and also ordered Thomas to accompany him to Delhi. Compton writes, "It was with the greatest difficulty Thomas whipped in his riotous pack, and returned with them to Delhi, where he represented to Appa the impossibility of doing anything without means."

The blind Emperor received them with honour. Appa and other chiefs including George Thomas were honoured with

82. H.G. Keene, The Great Anarchy, p. 65.
83. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 115.
nazzer and valuable Khilats. Similar presents were also given to Daulat Rao Sindhia. Thomas remained for sometime in Delhi where he thought of increasing his army. He took the opportunity of increasing his troops upto 700 men. But Thomas could not get additional money from his master. He, therefore, returned towards his territory of Mewat. For the maintenance of his troops, he began to plunder territories in about March-May 1794. He also collected some revenue by force from the ever-refractory peasantry of Mewat region. Lack of money was the main obstacle in his way. He was unable to pay to his troops who became mutinous. They plundered adjacent regions and Thomas could not tolerate such incidents. He departed for Delhi to meet Appa.

In Delhi, Thomas explained his difficulties to Appa in the matter of revenue collection. Thomas received a sum of Rs 14,000 from his master and an assignment for the rest of his claims, which, however, was never fulfilled by his master. Now Thomas again set out for the third time to take possessions of his jaided in the month of July 1794. He increased his army and spent a large money upon acquiring cannons. Thomas thought that without sufficient artillery, he could not succeed against his enemy. He also employed some European deserters who were expert in artillery.

86. A.A.R., 1804, p. 2 (Mr. Bidwell mentioned the number of troops 800. S.B., op.cit., p. 101).
Afterwards he marched towards a town called Tijara, largest in the Mewat region which was allotted to him by his master. It was situated 30 miles north-east of Alwar. His route lay through the jagir of Begam Samru on Jumna which he had previously administered for a long time. He marched through the regions of Begam and freely plundered it.\textsuperscript{89} Thomas did not forget the insulting behaviour of Begam Samru towards him while he was in her service. He plundered Gurgaon district\textsuperscript{90} and two other villages in Begam Samru's jagir of Padishahpur taluka.\textsuperscript{91} Later on he arrived at Goorah (also called Gorath or Ghoorah)\textsuperscript{92}, a large and richly populous village in the region of Begam. He plundered it mercilessly and imposed heavy contributions upon its inhabitants. The method of collecting the revenue from the village was brutal. Here, he also found an ample supply of bullocks and forage.\textsuperscript{93}

After plundering and collecting booty from Goorah village, Thomas encamped near the town of Tijara. It was pitch dark and it had rained heavily. The inhabitants of Tijara were alert when they heard the news about Thomas's

\begin{itemize}
\item 91. J.N.S., \textit{op.cit.}, vol. IV, p. 233.
\item 92. (i) \textit{W.F.}, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 15.
(ii) \textit{A.A.R.}, 1804, p. 2.
\item 93. \textit{W.F.}, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 15.
\end{itemize}
coming. They took their arms such as swords, bows, spears and matchlocks etc. and were ready to face any situation. They fortified the town by scrub jungle.

On the night when Thomas arrived at Tijara, some inhabitants made a sudden and swift attack on the camp of Thomas. They stole away some prized horses of Thomas. For Thomas, "such an outrage was intolerable, so, justly indignant at these dogs robbing a wolf, he set out to show them that he could bite harder."\(^{94}\)

Thomas attacked the Mewattis into a well-laid ambuscade. But he miscalculated the power of the Mewatty soldiers and he was forced to retreat. The Mewattis fought with such bravery that his line of defence was broken. His troops fled away to save their lives and most of them he never saw again. Thomas himself had to flee away to save his life. He was chased by the enemy. One of his cannons was stuck in the bottom of a nallah (ditch). But his cavalry kept the Mewattis at bay with swords-strokes for some time while their commander succeeded in dragging out the cannon into action. It was a nine-pounder cannon\(^{95}\) from which blasted off some rounds of grape at a point-blank range. In this action Mewattis suffered much and they were killed in large number. At last, they had to retreat behind their

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   (ii) W.E., *op.cit.*, p. 16.
house walls or into their thick forests. Thomas returned to his camp after this action in which he lost about 300 men.96

After resting for one or two days he brought some 300 of his trained stragglers 97 and again advanced to Tijara town. This move of Thomas was unexpected and took the inhabitants of Tijara by surprise. The Mewattis could not resist for long against Thomas and they had to surrender very soon. In this battle, Thomas captured 14 chieftains of Tijara whom he afterwards released at General Perron's request.98

He also collected revenues and improved the condition of his army. After this victory Thomas got a strong base as well as a source of income to pay his troops. He was also much impressed by the war-like qualities and bravery of the Mewattis. He now recruited sufficient number of brave Mewattis to replace the soldiers who had previously deserted him.99 Such a policy was adopted by the British rulers also when these territories were conquered by them. Later he began to subjugate the rest of the regions of Mewat.

Thus, George Thomas secured successfully the possession of Tijara as well as other regions from the Mewattis. Here

96. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 117.
he was able to collect his own force of about "2 battalions of infantry, a park of field artillery, and a regiment of cavalry." Besides, the Mewattis agreed "to pay up one year's land revenue." The news of bravery and victories of Thomas soon spread in the regions of North India.

Then Thomas marched towards a village named Kishnagar and collected revenue from its inhabitants. Afterwards he surrounded Jhajjar town in Rohtak district and also looted Bahadurgarh, a town 18 miles west of Delhi region. He collected revenues from these towns to pay for his army. He had now increased the number of irregular troops. Later on, he arrived at Mundaka and had to fight against the zamindars of this village. He defeated them and collected about 4,000 rupees from this village. He had also defeated Bakhta, a rebel zamindar of Rewari, and collected some money from him. Later on, he made a number of raids near Delhi territory in about September 1794.

100. Ross, op.cit., p. 299.
103. (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 18.
104. (i) A.A.R., 1804, p. 4.
   (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 118.
105. (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 19.
   (ii) A.A.R., 1804, p. 4.
106. (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 19.
   (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 118.
107. Dillyathil RajKarenen, vol. II, p. 120.
(Quoted: J.N.S., op.cit., vol. IV, p. 233).
Begam Samru, on the other side, was planning to attack George Thomas. When Thomas left the service of Begam in about 1792, Levassoult, a French enemy of Thomas, increased his influence and status in Begam's service. Levassoult not only became the commander-in-chief of the army of Begam Samru but also married her after the dismissal of Begam Samru. Now he was all in all in the dominions of Begam Samru. The increasing power and influence of Thomas in Appa's service could not be tolerated by the Begam. She was feeling jealous of Thomas's victories.

She was also anxious about the growing power of Appa who, at that time, was busy in enlarging his territories with the help of George Thomas. She feared that her territories would soon be acquired by Appa. For saving her territories and to obstruct the activities of Appa and Thomas, she sent Fr. Gregorio on a mission to Governor-General at Calcutta. But nothing came of it as the British refused to interfere. 107A

The Begam, after the failure of her diplomatic mission, decided to attack the forces of Appa. But Thomas defeated this attack of the Begam. He collected money, increased his army and extended his territories rapidly.

107A. F & P., 30th June, 1794, Cons. No. 24; Begam Samru to G.G., Sardhana, 6th March, 1794.
Thus, after various expeditions and collecting sufficient revenues and increasing the number of troops, Thomas returned to the town of Tijara in about Sept. 1794. His success, however, alarmed the Maratha authorities at Delhi. Moreover, "their antagonism towards him increased and was fanned by the Begam's determination to humble him."\footnote{108} Meanwhile, in the middle of 1794, Gen. de Boigne, a Maratha Commander-in-chief had appointed Lakwa Dada as his deputy governor of Hindustan.

Scarcely had Thomas reached Tijara when he received an urgent message from his master, Appa Khandi Rao, who was trapped by his mutinous troops in the fort of Koteputli\footnote{109} about 40 miles south-west of Tijara. The cause of the revolt of troops was the non-payment of their salaries. Other cause was a conspiracy of Lakwa Dada against Appa who (Lakwa) encouraged the troops of Appa to revolt.

After receiving the news of this incident, Thomas marched rapidly all day and night, covered about 40 miles, and arrived at Koteputli to save the life of his master.\footnote{110} The monsoon were in full blast and the region was flooded. The roads were full of mud and deep ditches of filthy water.

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{108} M.H., \opcity, p. 64.
\bibitem{109} (i) H.A.C., \opcity, p. 118.
\hfill (ii) James Burgess, \opcity, p. 268.
\bibitem{110} (i) W.F., \opcity, p. 20
\hfill (ii) H.A.C., \opcity, p. 119.
\end{thebibliography}
After reaching Koteputli, Thomas not only rescued Appa but also made terms with the mutineers. He paid their salaries and the revolt was crushed.

Appa ordered Thomas to capture the fort of Kanaund from the rebels. It is bounded in the north by Dadri and in south-west by Jaipur. It was rainy season and marching was not easy. With great difficulty Thomas advanced towards Kanaund. They reached Kanaund after a long journey. After some resistance, the rebel troops were scattered and they fled away. Thus the fort of Kanaund was occupied without much fight. 111

This conquest of Kanaund and other success of Thomas pleased Appa. He presented Thomas with a Khilat of Rs 3,000 in cash, an elephant and a palanquin suitable to his dignity. 112 He also adopted Thomas as his son 113 and conferred upon him a title of Jowruj Jung ('George the Victorious') 114 as he was usually called by his contemporaries 'Jehazi Sahib' or 'Sahib Bahadur'. The palanquin represented the privilege of an Amir and Thomas now could keep up "his position of the Sahib Bahadur." 115

111. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 119; (ii) Hutchinson, op.cit., p. 79.
112. (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 22; (ii) C.G., op.cit., p. 40; (iii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 119.
Appa Khandi Rao also presented Thomas a large jagir as a gift which was more valuable than the jagir of Tijara. He assigned to Thomas in perpetuity the four districts of Jhajjar, Beri, Mamdot and Phatoda (also called Patauda)\(^{116}\) which were situated on the westward of Delhi region and yielded an annual income of one lakh and a half rupees.\(^{117}\) He also ordered Thomas to increase his force "2000 infantry, 200 cavalry and 16 guns."\(^{118}\) Afterwards Thomas made Jhajjar his headquarter. He held it throughout rest of his career as a base for his numerous expeditions and other activities. He also built his own fort at Hussainganj, on the border of Jhajjar district.\(^{119}\) Later on, a small town grew up about it which is now called Jehazgarh or Georgegarh or 'Sailor Castle'.\(^{120}\)


\(^{117}\) (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 22, (ii) Hutchinson, op.cit., p. 79.

\(^{118}\) Michael Edwardes, op.cit., p. 242 (Franclkin writes 200 troops only, W.F., op.cit., p. 22).

\(^{119}\) Gazetteer of the Rohtak District, 1883-1884, p. 20.

Thus Appa established his position firmly at Kanaund. Thomas secured the territory of Jhajjar, and was about to take possession of other territories when a serious disturbance broke out in one of his master's border districts. It was a revolt by Ganga Bishen, a zamindar, who possessed a border territory of Appa. Ganga Bishen belonged to Ahir tribe and had about 14,000 fighting men. Appa at once sent orders to Thomas to tackle this rebel. Thomas reached the fort of Ganga Bishen after a swift and sudden march at night. But Bishen on the approach of Thomas fled away to the mountainous part of the Mewatty country. Then Thomas secretly marched to the hill fort of Ganga Bishen and by a clever stratagem captured Bishen and sent him to his master, Appa Khandi Rao.* The fort could not be taken by Thomas. The nephew of Ganga Bishen was still commanding a garrison of 1,000 men in the fort.122

However, the enemy made a surprise night attack on Thomas's camp. The rebels also attacked one of his supply camp which possessed all of his reserve arms and ammunition. His troops fled away and some of them were killed and wounded.

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121. W.F., op. cit., p. 22.
* Mr. Hennessy writes that 'Ganga Bishen did not surrender to Thomas. Thomas sent his messenger to Bishen but the later refused to surrender and the scheme of Thomas had failed'.+ M.H., op. cit., p. 66, (ii) A.A.R., 1804, p. 4.
122. Ibid, p. 23.
by the raiders. While he was taking a safe position for
fight some enemy soldiers saw him. They immediately
rushed towards him. He did not have any weapon with him.
Fortunately one of his faithful servants saw the advancing
raiders towards him. The servant gave his sword to Thomas
before the attackers could do any harm.

Thomas was surrounded by a half a dozen persons.
He turned into a one-man fighter as he rushed to the raiders.
They discharged heavily their match-locks and had threw
their several spears at him without any success. Thomas
'spotted the colours of the soldiers who had fled lying
on the ground and had stooped to pick them up.'123 From
this motion of his body, the enemy thought that he was
badly wounded by a stray bullet. They came forward to
overpower him by force of numbers. As they came forward
they confronted a "yelling, taunting demon-like warrior
who promptly killed three of them, put the others to
flight."124 He succeeded in beating his rebels and drove
them back into the fort.

In this encounter Thomas suffered considerable
loss of blood. He was brought to his camp by his troops
where his wounds were dressed. Meanwhile, Bishen's nephew
further strengthened his fort and the seige of Thomas could

123. M.H., op.cit., p. 66.
124. Ibid.
not be successful. Now his troops were suffering from hardships. The supplies ran short, and sickness had broken out in his camp. The rainy season further increased their problems. His troops did not have sufficient warm clothing. Thomas now sold his horses for getting urgent supplies for his troops. He won the devotion of his troops by such sacrifice. Compton writes, "In the piping times of peace his liberality was prodigal, and in seasons of adversity, when there was no pay in the treasure chest, and no grain in the camp bazaar, he never failed to identify himself with his followers, sharing with them their trials, their discomforts, and their dangers."125

Finally the fort of Ganga Bishen's nephew was blasted with mines.126 The walls of the fort were shattered, and Thomas along with his force immediately attacked the rebels inside the fort. The whole garrison was captured.127

Later on, Thomas returned to Jhajjar where he collected sufficient revenue, and he paid arrears to his troops. He also suppressed the revolt of zamindars who had revolted

125. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 121.
     (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 121.
     (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 121.
     On this occasion, the fort of Belji was taken by Thomas.*
during his absence. Now he allowed his troops to take the much needed rest after long exertion.

In the meanwhile, Gopal Rao Bhao who was Sindhia's viceroy in Hindustan was turned out from his post by Gen. de Boigne at the end of year 1794. This post was given to Lakwa Dada by the general of Sindhia. Lakwa demanded from Appa the arrears of tribute which was about 2 lakh rupees.* But Appa was short of money at that time. He decided to surrender three districts to Bapu Farnevese (1742-1800) who had been recently appointed a regent in northern India by the orders of the Poona Government.

Appa tried to get two lakh rupees from Thomas but the latter was unable to pay it. Now Appa thought that he was free to act. He was also obliged "to make over his districts in mortgage to a Maratha chief, name Bapu Fernevese, and furthermore to enter into an agreement to the troops Bapu proposed to keep to collect the revenue." Thomas in his memoirs mentioned "It was plainly to be seen, that whoever might hereafter, by chance of war, obtain possession of the districts in question, it was evident, that by these concessions, Appa, had for ever done away his own right." The surrendered parganahs i.e. Tijara,

*Lakwa demanded the tribute of those districts which were earlier given to Thomas.
Topokara and Ferozepur\textsuperscript{131} to Marathas by Appa were situated in the Mewatby region which belonged to Thomas. From this loss, Thomas remarked in his memoirs that "I had no cause for complaint when my principal was ruined."\textsuperscript{132} Afterwards, Thomas sent Appa's deputy for collecting the revenues of the remaining part of his territories.

In the meantime, on hearing the detention of Appa in the Maratha camp, the zamindars of Appa's territories revolted against his authority. Thomas again marched against the rebels with a force of 800\textsuperscript{133} troops and suppressed the revolt immediately. In this action many rebels were captured and killed. Thomas also captured several principal places and collected sufficient revenues from his territories. Compton writes, "His promptitude in planning, and vigour in executing punitive expeditions of this description were remarkable."\textsuperscript{134} Then he came to Beri, 15 miles south of Rohtak, where he had to tackle strong resistance put up by his enemy. This is brilliantly described in his own words:

\begin{quote}
In the fort (says Thomas) exclusive of the garrison, were 300 Rajputs and Jats. These had been hired for the express purpose of defending the place, and it was here I was in the most imminent danger of losing
\end{quote}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{131} (i) Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{132} W.F., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 26.
\item \textsuperscript{133} H.A.C., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 122.
\item \textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
the whole of my party. We had stormed the fort and were beaten back with loss, one of my Sirdars wounded, and from the confusion that occurred, left behind in the hands of the enemy; the danger was every moment increasing, the town was on fire in several parts, and our retreat nearly cut off by the flames that surrounded us.

In this situation, we had the additional mortification to perceive the merciless enemy seize on the wounded officer, and with savage barbarity, precipitate him into the fire; Equally animated, as enraged, by this spectacle, my troops now rushed forward to the attack, with an ardour that was irresistible. Having gained entire possession of the fort, the soldiers with clamourous expressions of revenge, insisted on the death of every one of the garrison that remained, and I was not inclined to refuse; but it cost us dear, the enemy to a man made of brave resistance. This contest was continued so long, as to afford time to those who had retreated, to return, by this means, we were again engaged and at once time almost overpowered; but receiving a reinforcement of our own party, the enemy, by slow degrees, began again to retreat; which they effected. I pursued with the cavalry; the enemy, once more made a stand in the jungles, adjoining the town; when, after a second desperate conflict, they gave way on all sides, and most of them were cut to pieces. 135

So, the fort of Beri was taken from the rebel garrison of Jats and Rajputs 136 by remarkable bravery and tenacity of Thomas.

Thus, after the victory of Beri, Thomas received a communication from Agha that he should reduce the number of troops and improve the condition of his territories. But Thomas thought that it was impossible to disband the troops who were in arrears of pay. Thomas marched to the camp of

Appa near Alwar and talked to him regarding the difficulties of the troops. Thomas was unable to secure money from his master. The Maratha commanders noticed Thomas's influence and his energetic conduct; they began to consider him a dangerous personage. They advised Appa to discharge him. The relations between Appa and Thomas became strained. But, for several reasons, he did not leave Appa's army. According to Compton "Mercenary soldier and adventurer though he was, no truer or more faithful servant that this wandering Irishman ever pledged his word." He did not like to be considered as treacherous or disloyal to the master. Appa also changed his mind. He begged forgiveness and gave Thomas considerable satisfaction. Appa also asked him to subjugate a revolt in Sohwalgarh which was under the possession of Lakwa Dada. The latter had asked for Appa's help.

Thomas prepared for his march towards Sohwalgarh and was to be accompanied by Appa's battalion to help Lakwa. But his troops refused to advance because they had not been paid for six months. They were creating trouble. Thomas did not receive money from his master and ultimately he had to sell a part of his property to satisfy their demands. When his troops received their payments they returned to their duty.

137. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 123. It was also a conspiracy of Begam Semru to dismiss Thomas. She gave bribe to Maratha officers who advised Appa for the dismissal of Thomas (B.B., op.cit., p. 46).
138. Ibid., p. 124
139. M.H., op.cit., p. 70.
140. (i) Ibid. (ii) S.B., op.cit., p. 111.
In Sohwalgarh, there were already General de Boigne's four battalions\(^{141}\) which were commanded by Maj. Gardner. The enemy had taken possession of the ravines in the neighbourhood of Sohwalgarh fort. There were also several skirmishes between the Marathas and the inhabitants of the fort resulting in heavy losses on both sides.

Thomas took the decision of a sudden assault upon the enemy. The next morning\(^*\) he formed the columns of his troops and attacked the enemy. He was also helped by the Maratha troops. He established himself firmly in the trenches and attacked the enemy pickets. So, the enemy at once evacuated the place and retreated from there. The fort commandant had to surrender the fort. He had to pay a tribute of about two lakhs.\(^{142}\) So Thomas took his share from the Marathas and returned to his region. Then, for keeping good control over his region, he divided his force into two battalions. One battalion, he stationed at Jhajjar and other was used for collecting revenue in his region.

\(^{141}\) (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 30.  
(ii) Grey writes that there were two of Sindhia's own Brigades, one under Allan Gardner and other commanded by Col. Sutherland (C.G., op.cit., pp. 40,41).  
(iii) Mr. Edwardes mentioned that Gen. Perron sent the army under the command of two ex-British officers who believed that they were more experienced and better soldiers than Thomas\(^*\)  
\(^*\) Mr. Hennessy writes that Thomas attacked Sohwalgarh fort at night (M.H., op.cit., p. 70).  
\(^{142}\) W.F., op.cit., p. 30.
Thus, we can say that the Maratha chief, Lakwa Dada, could not suppress the increasing power of Appa. Lakwa Dada was also jealous of the brilliant successes of George Thomas who was in the service of Appa. In heart Lakwa wanted to crush the power of Appa and bring about the fall of Thomas. He had indulged in many intrigues against Appa as well as Thomas. He had fomented many rebellions in Appa's territories. But Appa with the help of his able officer, Thomas, was successful in suppressing those revolts.

There were several reasons for this. During this period there was a "general anarchy" in Northern India which had occurred due to decay of the Imperial system. Moreover, the Marathas were incapable of maintaining their administrative system. Gen. de Boigne, who was governor of Hindustan, had lost interest in his work. Disgusted with the activities of other officers he was keen to go home. Further, the Marathas were also involved in the affairs of southern India where they were busy in the campaigns against the Nizam. The forces of Gen. de Boigne were employed at various places.

After the battle of Sohwalgarh, Thomas was busy in collecting revenues from his territories. Soon he faced another danger. Begam Samru took the opportunity of Thomas's absence, and on the advice of her officer, Levassoult, whom she had already married, advanced with her large force towards...
the regions of George Thomas. She was not only "trying every means in her power to effect his ruin" but also wanted "to capture his dominion during his absence." For obtaining her old possessions i.e. Tijara and Jhajjar, the Begam marched from Sardhana in the beginning of 1795.

The army of Begam came at a place called Tharu around 25 miles south-east of Jhajjar. After three marches, the troops of Begam encamped about 7 miles south-east of Jhajjar.

Both sides possessed sufficient and well-trained troops for the coming action. The Begam had "4 battalions of Infantry, 20 pieces of artillery and about 400 cavalry (or 4 squadrons of horses)" commanded by well-trained and able officers. On the other side, Thomas had 2000 regular infantry, 200 cavalry, 10 pieces of artillery and

143. Ibid., p. 31.
144. C.G., op.cit., p. 41.
145. Ross, op.cit., p. 29.
146. R.C.C., op.cit., p. 125.
   (ii) W.F., op.cit., p. 32.
   (iii) Mr. Hennessy writes that Begam's cavalry was 500 men.*

* H.H., op.cit., p. 75.
also 500 irregulars'.\textsuperscript{(i)} Both sides made preparations for the attack. But Begum's camp was full of intrigues and dissensions. Suddenly "the dissensions however that arose among the Begam's officers, not only induced her to relinquish her intention of attacking Mr. Thomas but ended in her imprisonment, and total subversion of her authority."\textsuperscript{(ii)} So due to sudden revolt in Begam's army, she had to return to Sardhana without attacking the forces of Thomas.

In the meantime, Appa Khandi Rao came from the camp of Lakwa Dada and Bapu Fernevese, and went into the fort of Kanaund which he fortified very strongly for his safety. Appa was not on good terms with the Maratha generals i.e. Lakwa and Fernevese. From Kanaund, Appa sent orders to Thomas to dismiss all the Maratha collectors and officials which had been employed by Lakwa and Fernevese,\textsuperscript{(iii)} and to reinstate his own officials in his territories. Thomas obeyed the orders of his master and consolidated his position.

From Kanaund, Appa marched out to Narnaul, a large and populous town, which was 16 miles south of Kanaund and about

\textsuperscript{(i)} A.A.R., 1804, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{(ii)} B.B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{(iii)} W.F., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 32.
\textsuperscript{(iv)} Mr. Hennessy mention that Thomas had 12 pieces of artillery*. (M.H., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 75.)

\textsuperscript{150} B.B., \textit{op.cit.}, p. 47.
\textsuperscript{151} A.A.R., 1804, p. 7.
37 miles from Rewari. Appa laid seige to this town, and here Thomas joined his master. Appa was pleased with Thomas's services and he gave him an elephant, a palanquin, shawls and other presents. 152

Appa was running short of money, and he wanted to collect tribute from Narnaul. The town of Narnaul was stoutly defended by a Brahmin* officer, a man of considerable wealth. Appa threatened to kill this Brahmin if he did not pay the tribute to him. Appa sent Thomas not only to collect money from this Brahmin but to capture him also. When Thomas arrived in Narnaul, the Brahmin secretly surrendered himself alongwith the fort and his whole territory to George Thomas on the understanding that his life and prosperity would be saved. In this way, without any bloodshed Thomas got possessions of Narnaul in the year 1795. 153

152. (i) Ibid.
(ii) W.F., op.cit., p. 35.

* Mr. Hennessy writes that the name of Brahmin was Bishen. This name resembles with Ganga Bishen of Rewatty region. It appears that the Marathas appointed Bishen as a chief of Narnaul city. In 'Annual Register' mentioned that this Brahmin was an officer of Bapu Fernevse** while Mr. Bidwell writes that he was an officer of Lakwa Dada***

** A.A.R., 1804, p. 7.
*** S.B., op.cit., p. 112.

153. (i) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 126.
Thomas took fort of Nurnaul from the Brahmin on some condition, but Appa was not consulted by Thomas in this matter. When the news of the capture of Brahmin as well as fort reached Appa, he immediately summoned Thomas to his camp. Appa, therefore, demanded that the Brahmin should be handed over to him because the prisoner was his, not Thomas's. But Thomas refused the demand of Appa Khandi Rao. Thomas thought that

he and his troops had faced great dangers and suffered many casualties to establish their reputations, and were now reaping the benefits. They were men terrible in battle, but those offers of quarter could be trusted. If now he was seen to play false, then no one would ever rely upon his word again. 154

The relations between them became worse. 155 Appa felt insulted and became furious at this disobedience of his command.

Appa at first tried to secure the Brahmin with the help of his personal guard and 200 Rohillas whose "profession was war and slaughter." 156 Afterwards he sent his troops to bring the Brahmin by force from Thomas. But Thomas drove them off from the fort. After a few days, Appa again demanded the Brahmin from Thomas but the latter again rejected his demand. Appa made a plan to arrest and murder Thomas. He established his court in a large house of Nurnaul and sent for Thomas who was living in a camp.

154. S.B., op.cit., p. 112.
156. C.G., op.cit., p. 43.
When Thomas arrived in the house where Appa was staying, he was told that Rao Sahib (Appa) was well, and that he was to go up to his room. Thus Thomas left his troops in the courtyard of house and went upstairs. In the room he found Rao Sahib well-dressed and in perfect health. Now Appa again reopened the question of the Brahmin before Thomas and the latter once more refused to hand over the prisoner. Then Appa left by one door for his inner apartment while through the other door a party of armed men marched in the room. Thomas felt that he was trapped, but he had courage and presence of mind. He remained seated, making no move and absolutely calm before the aggressive party.

Then Appa sent another letter to Thomas demanding this prisoner. But, Thomas again refused Appa's offer and then, rising to his feet, he demanded, in an imperious tone, to be conducted to Appa's presence. His audacity saved him, and before any one could interpose he strode out of the room and into the adjoining chamber, where his chief had retired. 157

Now Appa was completely taken aback, as the tall, angry and resolute Irishman with loud and disrespectful tone strode out into the room with his hand on the hilt of his sword 158 and "made it clear that if there was to be any violence the first victim would be the Rao Sahib himself." 159 Thus,

157. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 127 (Grey writes that at this time Thomas had a pistol into his back to save himself from the attackers, C.G., op.cit., p. 43).
158. M.H., op.cit., p. 72.
due to his courage and bold action, Thomas safely returned to his camp. From the camp Thomas sent one of his senior officers with a message of resignation to Appa Khandi Rao.

Appa was upset at the resignation of his faithful and honest officer, Thomas. He knew very well that without Thomas he would lose his army as well as revenues. Appa personally visited the camp of Thomas and apologised, abandoned his claim to the prisoner i.e. the Brahmin, and by honeyed tones, Appa begged Thomas not to resign from his service. Appa succeeded in his efforts. Thomas accepted the request of Appa, and he not only forgave Appa's past behaviour but also became his right hand man again. But this rapprochement proved short-lived. Soon another event brought the two men against each other.

Thomas marched towards the region of Mewat and plundered it. He also collected revenue and in small operations he captured some cannons and other articles of booty from the Mewattis. On hearing this success of Thomas, Appa claimed this booty as his own and also demanded the looted cannons from Thomas. But Thomas refused his demand, and told Appa that the booty was by custom the property of the soldiers who had actually captured it. Also, he wanted to sell the booty for the payment of the troops. Appa now thought that Thomas was becoming a menace to him. He wanted to get rid of him.

(ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 128.
Then Appa hatched a plot to eliminate Thomas. A band of Gosains, who were on their annual pilgrimage, were passing through Appa's territory to go to Hardwar and Benaras. Then Appa made an alliance with the leader of Gosains against George Thomas. Appa fixed the price of Rs 10,000 with Gosain leader for the head of Thomas. These Gosains were sadhus who had adopted religious life. They were expert in robbery and murder. They were also very dangerous and fearless, and were hated by the peaceful villagers.

In the meantime, some of Thomas's friends in the camp of Appa gave him warning about the plot. Thomas set out from the camp of Appa towards Gosains without Appa's suspicion. Thus, "as soon as he was clear of the camp, he doubled his marches, and falling upon the Gosains the night before they expected him" and slaughtered a large number of them. Mr. Grey wrote, "Two of the wounded he sent back to Appa with the news of what he had done, and that he was fully aware of his employer's treachery, and

   (iii) Mr. Grey writes that the number of Gosains were 500.
       (C.G., *op.cit.*, p. 41.)
     (ii) H.A.C., *op.cit.*, p. 129.
then marched off towards home."  

He said that he was ill, in fact a dying man, and he pleaded that the plot against him (Thomas) had been made without his knowledge, and he blamed his servants. Appa Khandi Rao who called Thomas as his son, twice attempted to take his life by the hired assassins, but failed in his mission. Thomas remained loyal to Appa in his service. He also seems to have been of a noble and forgiving disposition, as although quite aware of the treachery around, he did not resent it, and was always ready to carry into effect with the utmost fidelity every order received from his superior.  

Meanwhile, in the middle of 1795, many serious political events took place in northern India, particularly in the region of Punjab. These political changes created a lot of confusion and disturbance for the Maratha chiefs. In 1795, Shah Zaman, the ruler of Afghanistan, had already twice raided the territory of Punjab. The Sikhs were creating disturbances in the region around Delhi and Jumna. Both Lakwa and Bapu Sindhia, the governor of Saharanpur, who were responsible for protecting the frontier felt alarmed at these developments. The growing power of Sikhs and Afghans created terror in the Maratha camp.

164. C.G., op.cit., p. 42.
165. Ross, op.cit., p. 299.
In October 1795, a body of 5,000 Sikhs poured into the Gangetic Doab (Upper Doab) and it was their 14th invasion in the region. They raided the territory of Saharanpur in United Provinces and the Maratha garrison failed to face the Sikh attack. The region of Saharanpur was earlier taken by the Marathas from the Rohillas in about 1790. Though the Sikh force was small in number, yet the Maratha garrison in Saharanpur "were scattered like chaff before wind." The Sikhs began to plunder the villages and collected a lot of booty.

Towards the end of October 1795, "the districts of Saharanpur and Muzaffarnagar lay entirely at their mercy as there was no opposition from local officers." About this time, the Maratha chief, Daulat Rao Sindhia with eight disciplined battalions was at Poona. The great French general of the Marathas, Perron, was at Aligarh. Appa, whose health was declining, was busy along with Thomas in

the affairs of Mewat. Begam Samru was also busy in her mutinous army affairs at Sardhana. Lakwa Dada, the Maratha commander of Saharanpur, was also confined to his head- quarters on account of the Sikh raids.

At this critical juncture, Lakwa decided that George Thomas should be asked to face the Sikh raiders. Lakwa thought that he would not only get success in repulsing the Sikhs with the help of Thomas but also he would completely detach Thomas from Appa Khandi Rao. Lakwa informed Appa that he should immediately send his brave general, George Thomas, against the Sikhs.

In November 1795, Appa who was himself apprehensive of an attack, ordered Thomas to help Lakwa against the Sikh raiders. Thomas accepted the orders gladly because "such orders were eminently congenial to Thomas's temperament nor did he lose much time in putting them into execution." Soon he came towards Jhajjar and began preparing for fight against the Sikhs. He had looted some territories of Begam Samru before his departure against the Sikhs. Then he had


expanded his force upto 2,000 men for the protection of the Maratha provinces from the Sikhs.

Thomas crossed the Jumna a little north of Delhi to win a bloodless victory over the enemy. He hurriedly advanced towards a horde of 5,000 Sikhs who were investigating the fort of Jalalabad in the Saharanpur district. The approach of Thomas in the district of Saharanpur frightened the Sikhs and then they ran pell-mell. In Thomas's own words, "he had on more than one occasion given the samples of his method of fighting." The Sikhs who were already familiar with the ruthlessness and intrepidity of George Thomas precipitately fled away at his approach to their homes.

Thus, Thomas not only saved the Maratha garrison from complete destruction but also won the battle without bloodshed. He also got additional booty. Grey writes, "Not only did he drive them off, but he followed them up into Patiala from which he extracted a substantial indemnity before returning home."  

172. A.A.R., 1804, p. 8 (Mr. Bidwell mentioned that Thomas had increased 3 battalions. S.B., op.cit., p. 117).
175. C.G., op.cit., p. 42.
Now Lakwa Dada was so deeply impressed with the achievement of George Thomas that he borrowed his services from Appa to look after Saharanpur. Appa agreed to give Thomas. So in the end of year 1795, Lakwa offered Thomas the control of large and important territories of Sonepat, Panipat and Karnal as jaïdâd and from whose revenues he was to maintain his force in a proper way. Lakwa also gave him a fixed army about "2000 infantry, 200 cavalry and 16 pieces of flying artillery" with the task of guarding the whole Sikh frontier under the general direction of Bapuji Malhar (also called Bapu Sindhia). Thus, Thomas became the "Warden of the Marches" for Sindhia to guard the Jumna frontier of the Upper Doab. Thomas also got the regions of Tijara, Topokara etc. from the Marathas.

176. (i) Hira Singh 'Dard', op.cit., p. 128.
(ii) W.F., op.cit., p. 48.
(iv) Mr. Griffin writes that Thomas got only Karnal district. He at that time also won Bharapur from its jagirdar, Bhara Singh. (Griffin, op.cit., pp. 292, 307);
(v) Punjab District Gazeteers, vol. VI-A, Karnal District, 1918, (Lahore, 1919), p. 28 (The Gazetteer mentioned the city of Karnal only);

177. (i) A.A.R., 1804, p. 81.
(ii) Hira Singh 'Dard', op.cit., p. 128.
(iii) Maj. Thorn writes only 2,000 infantry and 16 pieces of artillery but has not mentioned cavalry. (Maj. William Thorn, op.cit., p. 481.)

Thus Thomas increased his status and territories. With Jhajjar and Jehazgarh already secured, he now obtained Sonepat, Karnal and Panipat. He collected revenue of 10 lakhs from these territories. The Marathas "not only stemmed Sikh onslaughts but even pushed them back into their Malwa homeland" during 1795. But in the beginning of 1796, the Sikhs again bursted into the Doab particularly in the region of Marathas. Throughout 1796, he had to fight against the Sikh sardars on the both banks of the Jumna and he was always successful in his mission. He was also instructed to co-operate with the forces of Bapuji Malhar who was at this time the officer in charge of Saharanpur.

Bapuji had been transferred to Saharanpur from the districts of Panipat and Sonepat. He was hard pressed due to the Sikh attacks. According to Sarkar, "throughout the winter of 1796-97, Bapu Malhar, the governor of Saharanpur, exerted himself to restore some appearance of order, but the Sikh sardars associated with him as allies,


* Bapuji was commanding 1,000 infantry and 10 pieces of artillery at the time. (W.F., op.cit., p. 267.)
were found to be intriguing with their brethren in the Punjab and stirring up rebellion against the Maratha Government." It seems that the Sikhs wanted to make an alliance with Bapuji Malhar against the Marathas but they could not get success in their mission.

Meanwhile, Begam Samru had been imprisoned at Sardhana by her rebel troops under the command of her step-son, Zafaryab Khan, who had risen to power in October 1795. The condition of the Begam became very pitiable. In July 1796, she sent one of her faithful officers, Col. M. Saleur, with a message to George Thomas requesting for immediate help.

The rebel soldiers placed the step-son of Begam, Zafaryab Khan, on the throne of Sardhana. The Begam and her husband, Levassoult, fled away from Sardhana. But two battalions pursued them under the orders of Zafaryab Khan. They overtook them near Sardhana. Levassoult committed suicide by shooting a pistol and the Begam too attempted to end her life but failed. The Begam was imprisoned by the rebel troops in Sardhana.

Now she thought of getting help from George Thomas. She was hopeful that he would respond to her call. Banerji writes,

she supposed that not only did he still love her but that he might also be grateful to his former mistress for the many favours received at her hands. 183

She informed him about her apprehensions of being poisoned or otherwise put to death. She implored him to come to her assistance. 184

Thomas resolved to come to her help, and he also brushed away his earlier grudges from his mind. Then he, on 9th July 1796 185 marched on his beautiful black horse 186 with his Khas Risala of Pathan cavalry, and he arrived at the village of Khatauli 187, 12 miles to north-east of Sardhana. Here, he began to bribe Begam's rival troops with money. Thomas marched secretly to Sardhana where he surprised the Nawab.* 188 Thomas arrested Zafaryab Khan**

184. W.F., op.cit., p. 54.
186. Vera Chatterjee, op.cit., p. 102.
(ii) B.B., op.cit., p. 63.
* On this occasion, Thomas was escorted by only 50 horses and 400 infantrymen.+
+ (i) B.B., op.cit., p.64, (ii) W.F., op.cit., p.55.
188. H.G. Keene, The Fall, p. 130.
** After restoring the throne of Sardhana to the Begam, Zafaryab Khan was sent to Delhi where he died in 1802.
with the help of his troops whom he had won over by lavish bribes and placed the Begam on the throne. Thomas was successful in his mission, and the Begam was restored to the throne of Sardhana. Thus, for this brilliant service, Thomas only received immediate thanks of the Begam but could not get her friendship. It indicates the nobility of his character. About this incident, William Palmer, the British Resident with Sindhia indicated in a letter that

Be so good as to inform Sir John Shore that I have received authentic intelligence from my agent at Delhi that the Begam Zeb-un-nisa has recovered her authority in her jagir and has put her son-in-law Zafar Yab Khan in confinement. This revolution in favour of the Begam has been principally effected by an Englishman named George Thomas, who was formerly in her service and high in her confidence, but left her employ a few years since in consequence of some misunderstanding and engaged in the Maratha service. At this time he is command of a battalion of Sepoys under the orders of the Subahdar of Delhi. It seems that he marched with his corps secretly to Sardhana where he was joined by some troops in the Begam's intert and with whom the plan for her restoration had been previously concerted and to which it is supposed that the Maratha Sardars were privy and gave encouragement. 190

After reinstating the Begam in the middle of 1796, George Thomas advanced towards his territories. He also

189. C.G., op.cit., p. 43.

most of his troops were cut to pieces. Thomas was victorious in the attack of Shamli*. Then he was appointed civil governor of the region of Shamli.

In 1797, immediately after the victory of Shamli, Thomas had to march towards the town of Lakhnauti to the north of Shamli where Beharmand Ali Khan, the chief of Turkoman colony, had revolted against Bapu Sindhia. Thomas was called to help Bapuji Sindhia who had already laid siege to this place.

Thomas came to Lakhnauti to help his master but the Turkoman chief who had already heard the victory of Thomas at Shamli submitted. Thus Thomas was successful in suppressing the revolt of Lakhnauti in the beginning of March 1797. Thomas was again involved in struggle against the Sikhs. In March 1797, he recrossed the Jumna and defeated the Sikhs in four successive actions near Karnal. In these actions, both sides suffered heavy losses. But the artillery of Thomas proved to be superior. Although Thomas lost his 500

* Burgess writes that Thomas captured Shamli in March 1797. James Burgess, op.cit., p. 272.
196. (i) Ibid., p. 60. (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 132.
197 (i) Muzaffarnagar District Gazetteer, p. 181.
(ii) Hira Singh 'Bard', op.cit., p. 133.
198 (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 60.
(ii) James Burgess, op.cit., p. 272.
199 (i) Muzaffarnagar District Gazetteer, p. 181.
(iii) Humbley, op.cit., p. 61.
men but the Sikhs double that number. Afterwards both sides made peace and a treaty was concluded between them by which the Sikhs agreed to evacuate the province of Thomas.

In the middle of 1797, Thomas had to face a number of troubles in Maratha service. Gen. Perron had already taken responsibilities of northern India from Daulat Rao Sindhia. Being ambitious and overbearing he could not tolerate the successful career of George Thomas. The Irish adventurer had also to face resistances of the various neighbouring tribes in his territory.

Appa Khandi Rao, his employer, suddenly died in June 1797. Now Thomas had to serve under Vaman Rao who was the successor of Appa Khandi Rao.* Vaman Rao was a nephew of Appa Khandi Rao. Vaman was "a vain, inexperienced youth better fitted for the calling of an account than the career of a soldier." He did not like Thomas at all.

George Thomas remained in the service of Vaman Rao for a short time only. Soon their relations deteriorated. The reason was that Vaman Rao wanted to take possessions of


* Dr. Rao writes that Thomas remained for two years (Oct. 1793 to 1795) in the service of Appa (S.N.Rao, op.cit., p. 25).

201 Dr. S., op.cit., p.136
all the jagirs of Thomas. But Thomas refused to surrender all his jagirs to Vaman Rao. It resulted in a quarrel between them. Mr. Francklin wrote, "These remonstrances, however founded on reason or justice, were of no avail; Vaman Rao would listen to no terms but the implicit cession of the whole. The matter could therefore only be decided by an appeal to the sword." 202

Later on, Vaman Rao collected his undisciplined troops and without notice or warning he marched towards a large village called Kasli 203 which was a part of Thomas's jagir. When Thomas learned about the occupation of his village by Vaman Rao, he immediately advanced towards the fort of this village and surrounded it. On this occasion the zamindars of the neighbouring villages also turned against Thomas. Thomas erected his batteries and "he fired so successfully with red hot shot, that he quickly compelled them to surrender at discretion." 204 Now Vaman Rao attempted to negotiate with Thomas, and it was settled that the negotiations would take place at Kanaund. 205 But nothing came of these talks.

203. (i) W.F., op.cit., p. 62.
   (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 135.
   (iii) Mr. Hennessy writes it Hassollee, (M.H., op.cit., p. 89).
204. W.F., op.cit., p. 63.
205. Ibid.,
   (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 135.
George Thomas was called by Bapuji Sindhia, the Governor of Saharanpur, against a body of Rohilla rebels. These Rohillas, under the leadership of a Sikh chief, Nihal Singh, had crossed over the Ganges and created troubles in the region of Marathas. But before Thomas's arrival, Bapuji had not only defeated the raiders but also "followed up his blow by laying siege to the enemy's capital." Later on, a body of Sikhs appeared there to assist the raiders, but on reaching near the force of Thomas they retired without any resistance. So Bapuji captured this fort, and returned to Saharanpur. But Thomas remained with his force at Sonepat.

On account of the fear of Shah Zaman's attack, Bapuji Sindhia immediately summoned George Thomas for help. The latter demanded money from him for giving pay to his troops. Thomas was able to get money from Bapuji Sindhia. But, in the meantime, the danger of the attack of Shah Zaman disappeared. Bapuji demanded back his money from Thomas but the latter refused to do so. Thus the differences arose between them. Dr. Gupta writes,

206. H.A.C., op.cit., pp. 135, 136. (On this occasion, perhaps there was a clash between Vaman Rao and Bapuji in which the former defeated Bapuji in two actions near Saharanpur. (David Ross, op.cit., p. 300).
209. W.F., op.cit., p. 80 (The capital was Sonepat city).
in order to counterpoise Thomas's energy and activity he enlisted a body of Sikhs in his service. These Sikhs worked upon his fears against his formidable subordinate, and widened the gulf between the two. 211

Moreover, Thomas wanted a fund-raising expedition in Karnal and Panipat, but Bapuji did not allow him to do so. Thomas became angry and declined to serve under Bapuji any further.

Bapuji Sindhia ordered his troops to stop the return of Thomas's brigade, and if necessary fire on them. But, the result was that Sindhia's troops had to flee away and their commander was wounded in the clash with Thomas's brigade. 212 The troops of Bapuji Sindhia were not well-disciplined. After this incident, Bapuji Sindhia himself marched against the troops of Thomas and cut it ahead of them, but Thomas immediately shot his way through.

On this occasion, the country people joined Bapuji Sindhia against George Thomas. 213 Bapuji was further reinforced by the infantry troops which were sent out by Ragoji, a Maratha general at Delhi. He even managed to induce some Begam Samru's troops to join him. Thomas felt shocked, when he learnt that the Begam had sent her troops against him. There "seemed to be no limit to her venom" 215 against him, Thomas thought.

212. W.F., op.cit., p. 82.
214. (i) Ibid. (ii) W.F., op.cit., p. 83.
With this strong force, Bapuji Sindhia crossed Jumna and by a rapid march he took up position between Thomas and Jhajjar region, with the intention of cutting off his retreat. Thomas had to face this critical position. There was a fierce battle between them. In this battle, the tactics of Bapuji Sindhia were "old fashioned". He "put his infantry in the centre so as to force Thomas to deploy in line and then used his cavalry to attack both the vulnerable flanks so exposed." But Thomas's forces attacked with bravery and succeeded in driving away Sindhia's flank battalions back. The accurate artillery fire of Thomas broke down the columns of the Maratha cavalry as well as infantry from the centre of the battlefield. Thomas was victorious in this battle, and he came back to Jhajjar. On the other side, Bapuji Sindhia "disheartened by his heavy loss, made no attempt to pursue, but contented himself with reoccupying the districts of Panipat, Sonepat and Karnal, which George Thomas of necessity, had to abandon." Thomas now lost the territories of Panipat, Sonepat and Karnal which he had earlier got from Appa Khandi Rao.

216. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 137.
217. S.B., op.cit., p. 120.
218. Ibid. (Francklin* & Hennessy** write that he first went to Panipat; i.W.P., op.cit., p. 83. ii. M.H., op.cit., p. 95.
After losing these territories, Thomas no frankly became a robber chief, "hiring out his men for any enterprising promising plunder, and justifying such proceedings by remarking, perhaps truly, that if he did not rob others, they would him. It was merely wolf eating wolf, and the strongest must survive." He had now some 3000 veteran troops who were still unpaid. Neither his own fortune nor his territory of Jhajjar were enough to pay them. But he did not want to disband them because they were his only security against the large number of his enemies like Vaman Rao, Lakwa Dada, Bapuji Sindhia and Begam Samru etc. For keeping this army, Mr. Bidwell writes,

Thomas required 15,000 rupees a month at the very least; this figure is exclusive of the cost of powder, shot, new equipment, gratuities to the wounded and widows, remounts and forage; and also excludes the expenses of his own household and personal bodyguard, which were high.

In the end of 1797, Thomas decided to pay his troops by contributions and plundering of the neighbouring territories. He attacked Uricha, a town of Raja of Jaipur, 35 miles of north of Jhunjhunu, and demanded a ransom of 220. C.G., op.cit., p. 44.

221. (i) Ibid. (ii) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 137. (iii) Bidwell writes 2,000 or 2,500 troops, S.B., op.cit., p. 120.

222. S.B., op.cit., p. 120.

one lakh²²⁴ from the governor of this town. But he got only 52,000²²⁵ rupees and was thus able to meet his immediate financial needs which was enough to keep his brigade going for some time. However, this town was destroyed by an accidental fire* during the negotiations between Thomas and the governor.

After receiving tribute from Uricha town, Thomas returned to Jhajjar. However, he again entered into the Jaipur region. Here, he attacked the Weenas, a thievish tribe inhabiting a part of Jaipur region.²²⁶ He also plundered many villages and collected lot of booty. For these activities, he was called "a nest of banditti."²²⁷

In early 1798, Thomas realised that the career of a "private robber captain" could not satisfy him for a long time. He knew that due to his meagre resources his army would be dissolved, and the enemies would eventually combine against him. Moreover, he was now an ordinary adventurer like other many European adventurers. He could have also offered his services to any country chief like...

²²⁴. (i) H.A.C., op.cit., p. 138.  
(ii) H.G. Keene, The Great Anarchy, p. 70.
²²⁵. (i) Ibid.  
(ii) W.F., op.cit., p. 83.
²²⁶. V.F., op.cit., p. 84.  
²²⁷. H.A.C., op.cit., p. 139.

* Many writers mention that the town was burnt by the troops of George Thomas.
Jaswant Rao Holkar or Raja Partap Singh of Jaipur or Daulat Rao Sindhia. But he was dreaming of conquest and kingship. He had lot of experience of life.

George Thomas came to conclusion that the best solution to all his problems would be the establishment of an independent state of his own. Political situation of the time favoured such an attempt. The region chosen by Thomas was neither under the efficient control of the Marathas nor of the Sikhs. He had qualities of head and heart, grit, energy, boldness and experience to achieve success in his aim. Consequently early in the year 1798, Thomas "first formed the eccentric and arduous design of erecting an independent principality for himself."\(^\text{228}\)

This independent state was to be in the no man's land of Haryana.

\[^{228} W.F., \text{op.\textit{cit.}, p. 84.}\]