CHAPTER  I

ADVENT OF EUROPEAN ADVENTURERS

The emergence of European military adventures in the 18th century was not sudden. They were in the country with Indian rulers in the previous centuries also. During the Mughal Empire, they attained considerable fame and wealth for showing their abilities in the art of war. Mr. Owen writes,

The military adventurer has, in all ages, been prominent figure in India; and the history of that country derives much of its interest from the remarkable characters and brilliant achievements of such men, and their commanding influence on the fortunes of a community discordant in race, national sentiment, and religion, weak in political institutions and public spirit, and hence peculiarly liable to revolutions wrought out by the sword.  

Here a short account of these European adventurers is attempted.

During the 16th century, the influx of foreign travellers and adventurers increased. The spirit of adventure, either on individual or on party basis, increased in Europe about this time. Moreover the age of merchant capitalism had already begun in the west. Most of the European nations were establishing their warehouses in the East called as Factories. The traders used to go to various

countries for trade. In the ships, along with these foreign traders, the military adventurers were also present. These adventurers belonged to different nationalities and among whom 2/3 adventurers were of French extraction. But, in this period, these military adventurers were less in number than travellers and traders. Nor do they play any significant role.

During the 16th century, Asia and Europe were almost equal in rank in the art of warfare. But thereafter, the European nations rapidly improved their art of warfare by their unwearied efforts, while Indians remained just where they were. The Indians had antiquated weapons and poor tactics as compared to Europeans.

In the 15th and early 16th centuries, a greater part of India was ruled by the Turko-Afghan dynasties. Their gradual decline for a variety of reasons gave an opportunity to Babar (1483-1530) to establish his rule in India in 1526. Babar and his great successors ruled upto 1707. These Mughal rulers established a firm and benevolent administration in India. Their military system though vastly superior to other powers in the country was not based on scientific principles. Based on mansabdar system, it suffered from a series of shortcomings.

The Mughal infantry was ill-paid and it was inferior branch of the army. The troops were not divided into regiments. There was no regimental drill or discipline and no real training. There was no contact between commander-in-chief of the army and the troops. The cavalry and fire-arms were not impressive. The pay of the troops was generally in arrears. During the time of the later Mughals, sometimes their salaries for three or more years was not paid.

The Mughals used to obtain some weapons from Constantinople and from the Turks. The artillery was the most important branch of the army. But the Mughals in the 16th century, did not possess any knowledge about the art and science of gunnery. Thus they had to "depend upon the help of Rumis i.e. Muhammedans from Constantinople, or Farengirs, run-away sailors from Surat." The Mughal rulers employed some foreign military experts in their army. These rulers wanted to strengthen their army upon European fashion.

In the 16th century although the Mughals employed the foreigners but they did not give them higher salary or status. They were given only subordinate positions i.e. "far below the Indians in efficiency and, as such, they could,

Thus, in the 16th century, the European military adventurers did not possess higher status.

But in the 17th century things began to improve as far as the position and employment of European was concerned. In this century, the Mughal empire had extended its deep roots in India. Along with Mughals, the East India Company had also established itself in India. The Company set up their warehouses, which were called Factories in India. In January 1618, there were five English Factories (i.e., Agra, Ahmedabad, Burhanpur, Broach and Surat) in the dominions of

4. Brajendranath Banerji, Begam Samru, (Calcutta, 1925), pp. 2-3. The European Military adventurers actually started their journey towards Asian countries after the middle of the 16th century. According to Wright, Thomas Stevens, of New College, Oxford, who arrived in Goa by way of the Cape in 1579, was probably the first Englishman who ever visited India. Later, in 1583, five Englishmen named as Ralph Fitch, James Newberry, J. Eldred, W. Leedes and J. Story, started out from Tripolis in Syria on a tour to Asia in a ship called Tiger. But they were captured by the Portuguese on Indian coast. Later on, among them Newberry settled in Goa while Leedes took service under the Great Mughals.*


There were also several other British factories at Rajapur, on the Konkan coast to the South; Hariharapur, Balasor, Patna and Cassimbazar. These factories were established from time to time.
the Great Mughals. In the beginning of the 17th century, the number of foreign travellers and military adventurers rapidly increased. Three ships named The Hector, Red Dragon, and Osionder came to India in about 1612. The last two ships were commanded by Thomas Best, containing about 250 men. Similarly, in Oct. 1614, four vessels, The New Year's Gift, The Hector, The Merchant's Hope and The Salemon came to India under the command of Nicholas Downton.6 These European adventurers "after toil and stress, many wanderings and the expenditure of much blood and treasure, found a foothold for their weary feet in India."7 Many of them joined the service of the various rulers in India, and they have mentioned in their accounts the political, social and economic condition of India during the 17th century. Many famous travellers e.g. Bernier(i), Sir Thomas Roe(ii), Finch(iii) etc. joined the


(i) Francois Bernier (1620-1688):
He was a famous traveller of the 17th century. He was born at Joue near GonnoCrd in Anjou on 25th Sept. 1620. His parents were agriculturists. He travelled in Northern Germany, Poland, Switzerland and Italy from 1647 to 1650. He took his degree in Doctor of Medicine in 1652. Afterwards he travelled in many countries and then came in India at Surat in 1658. He visited various cities of India. He has given a very valuable account of Indian condition. In 1668, he left India and after travelling in many countries, he went to Paris in France. He died on September 22, 1688 at Paris.

(ii) Sir Thomas Roe (c.1581-1644):
He was an English diplomat, born at Low Leyton, Essex. He was educated at Magdalen College, Oxford. He was knighted in 1605. He was a great traveller, who came in India at Agra on 23rd Dec. 1615 during the reign of Emperor Jehangir. He visited various cities of India
service of Mughal Kings.

These travellers have mentioned that the army of the Mughals was weak in drill and discipline. Bernier tells us that when once troops were thrown into confusion, it was impossible to restore Mughal army's discipline. During the march, they moved without order, with the irregularity of a herd of animals. There was no regimental organization. The army contained a weak transport system. Bernier says that artillery in 1658 was of two sorts i.e. heavy and light. But it was not very superior in quality. Artillery was the most important and effective wing of the Mughal army. The Mughals needed the help of these foreigners to further improve this artillery. So, as early as the 17th century,

and he has written account of Indian condition. Later on, he left Indian soil on 17th Feb. 1619. Then he was appointed an ambassador to the Porte in 1621, and he died in 1644.

(iii) William Finch (1608-1611):
Finch landed in Surat with another traveller William Hawkins (1608-1613) in August 1608. Then he left Surat in January 1610 and arrived in the territory of the Mughal Empire in April. Then he became purchaser of indigo. He travelled via Delhi, Ambala, and Sultanpur and reached Lahore in February 1611. He gave valuable account of the empire of Mughal Emperor, Jehangir. Later on, he travelled by land to England in 1611. But he fell ill at Baghdad and died.

* Mohammad Azhar Ansari, European Travellers Under The Mughals, (1580-1627), (Delhi, 1975), p. 31.

Cosme de Guarda* tells us that every European officer in India was supposed to be an artillery expert and was in great demand by the rulers of India. The Mughal also needed the help of these Europeans to bring about changes and improvement of drill and discipline in the army.

Many writers have given the accounts of these adventurers, who served the Mughal Empire in various departments particularly in the army of Mughals. About 1609, William Finch mentioned that during the period of Jehangir (1605-1627) "preceded by the Red Cross, William Hawkins** led 60 Europeans to a church service at Agra, the occasion being the baptism of two Moghul princes, who, having been promised Portuguese wives, had become Christians. These men

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*Cosme de Guarda: He was a Portuguese traveller who came to India in the 17th century. He was a great admirer and biographer of Shivaji, a great Maratha leader. He was an author of 'VIDA E ACCOENS DO FAMOSO E FELICISSIMO SEVAGY'.

**William Hawkins (1608-1615): He was a merchant and a servant in the East India Company. He came in India at Surat on 24th Aug. 1608. Then he came in the court of Emperor Jehangir. The king was much pleased with him as he spoke the Turkish language. Later on, he was made a Captain of 400 horses. He married an Armenian Christian girl. Then left Agra for Surat via Kambayat in Nov. 1611. On 1st Feb. 1612, he sailed for England via Red Sea. He died somewhere on the British coast. He depicted the Indian condition in the 17th century. Sir Thomas Roe describes him as a 'vain fool'. He was very boastful, blustering and haughty. He also quarrelled with his companions.
were mostly English, and so necessary did Jehangir find their services, that he permitted them to openly distil "strong waters" remarking in extenuation of this breach of Mahommedan law, that 'An Englishman withouten stronge drinke is like a fysshe out of waters'. We shrewdly suspect that there was some personal element behind this permission, for Jehangir himself was a noble toper, and probably desired to share in the delectable produce of these connoisseurs of "strong waters."¹⁰

There were, it appears from the records of English East India Company, Europeans in the service of Indian rulers. Some prominent adventurers, who served the Indian rulers during this century were Ettamon Dowlet, Kinge, Peeter Miller, Daniel Chester, Robert Trully, William Hensell, Richard Steele, Thomas Coryat, William Benton, Mr. Cartwright, Dr. Gabriel, Thomas Pitt and Job Charnock. Most of them were militarymen while others carried on different professions.¹¹ Moreover, these adventurers had "a certain amount of bonhomie and dare-devil salesmanship and could make themselves at home in strong environs. Some of them were drop-outs from the army.


They sold themselves to the readily available bidder to raise commandos and to organise a rabble military crowded into a sort of disciplined force."\textsuperscript{12} Thus, the presence of an European officer in the Indian army gave the Indian ruler a certain amount of courage and prestige.

During this period, for effecting improvement in the army, the Mughal rulers largely depended upon the foreign adventurers. There were many Europeans who were employed by two great Mughal Emperors. Niccolao Manucci*, who was in the service of Prince Dara Shikoh (1615-1659) as a gunner mentioned that "Shah Jahan (1627-1658) and Aurangzeb (1658-1707) had over 100 European gunners in their service and gives the name of their master gunners as Thomas Roach and Reuben Smith. Though bearing good English names, the pair were rascals both, who attempted, though unsuccessfully, to despoil the friendless Venetian lad of his late master's effects."\textsuperscript{13}


* Niccolao Manucci (1639-1717):

He was a native of Venice. He was born in 1639. He reached India in 1656. During the war of succession (1658) between Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb, he obtained a position of Artilleryman in the Army of Dara Shikoh. After Dara's fall, he joined the service of Aurangzeb. He also visited many cities of India. He died in Madras in 1717.

Bernier also mentioned that Prince Dara Shikoh "employed English, French, German and Portuguese artillerymen in 1658." Besides these adventurers, various other names also occur. There were William Smith, Clement Dowson, James Lyons, James Taylor, Jeremy Rooty and Nathaniel Webb. James Flaintain was a Pirate king in Madagascar before he became a chief gunner to Angria Pequena, the arch pirate of the Malabar coast.

Thus, the European military adventurers introduced some new weapons in the army of the Mughal rulers. They also introduced some new elements of drill and discipline in the Mughal army. They also improved the new matchlocks and the guns. But their greatest work was in the field of artillery. Previously the guns of Mughals were more for show than use. They had high-sounding names for their guns e.g. Ghazi Khan (Lord Champion), Sher Dahan (Tiger-mouth), Dhumdham (The Noisy), Fateh-i-Laskar (Army Conqueror), Garh-bhanjan (Fort Demolisher), Jahan Kusha (World Conqueror), Alam-Sitan (World Seizer), Atash-dahan (Fire mouth) etc. According to Irvine "Alamgir had 70 heavy artillery, most of them brass. There were also camel guns." It is said that heavy guns were drawn by 20 yoke of oxen or elephants. The guns were so heaped with baggage of every description that it could not be ready for use at least before half an hour after firing the first shot.

15. Ibid, p. 119.
So, it was the chief weakness in the field of Mughal artillery. Afterwards, these European military adventurers improved the condition of the artillery. They also introduced the hand-throwers in the army. These were called Deg-andaz or hand-grenades which were thrown at the enemy from close quarters. For their work of introducing improvements and innovations, the demand for the foreign military adventurers increased.

Thus, for the outstanding services these European adventurers, got household facilities and much respect in the courts of the Mughal emperors except during the reign of Aurangzeb. According to Bernier, "the artillerymen receive great pay, particularly all the Farangis, Portuguese, English, Dutch, German and French. The pay of the Europeans was more liberal and there were still (1658) some remaining, who receive 200 rupee a month." But during the latter days of Aurangzeb's life, the Europeans got only limited payment. Most of them received only 32 rupees from the Emperor Alamgir. Aurangzeb was a religious fanatic (Sunni), and he followed his shortsighted policy. That is why he did not like these Europeans. During the period of previous Mughal rulers, "the gunners had often been Europeans, or Indo-Portuguese. But Aurangzeb replaced them by Muslims, thereby introducing it is fair to presume, a new element of decay into his power."

18. H.G. Keene, A Sketch of The History of Hindustan, From The First Muslim Conquest To The Fall of The Mughal Empire, (Delhi, 1972), p. 245.
So, in the 17th century, except in the reign of Alamgir, the European military adventurers enjoyed handsome salaries and privileges in the service of Indian rulers. Their status and respect now rapidly increased. They introduced new weapons and developed field guns of artillery. In European countries, the weapons used in the battles were lances, scimitars, maces, bows, or darts, battle-axes, pikes, grenades and muskets etc. The infantry was of four kinds i.e. pikemen, musketeers, fusiliers and grenadiers. The Indian rulers, particularly the Mughals, showed much interest in European art of warfare and skilled discipline. But during the later days of Aurangzeb, they were not treated well. Aurangzeb replaced Europeans by the Muslims, presumably on religious considerations. The pay of the Europeans was decreased, and also some contemporary officers did not like him. Afterwards these adventurers had to leave the Mughal service during the later days of Aurangzeb.

During the period of 18th century, there were "new characters, new ideals, a fresh and forward out-look". It was "an age of alien conquerors and native usurpers." The 18th century", wrote Mr. Sinha "is mainly a record of anarchy and confusion, selfishness, cowardice and treachery, unpatriotic betrayals and horrible reigns of terror, the

tyranny of the strong, the agony of the weak and the futility of isolated attempts."\(^{21}\) The disintegration of the Mughal Empire, conflicts among small states, foreign invasions in India, rise of new powers, Anglo-French conflict in 1757-1801, Anglo-Maratha conflict in 1774-1818 and coming of foreigners, were the main events of this century. This political disintegration and confusion helped in the rise of European military adventurers who now, in the years to come, was to play a vital role in the history of the country.

The 18th century can rightly be called as 'the golden age of European military adventurers' in India. The large number of European adventurers came to India from various foreign countries. They were a mixed lot, "deserTERS, genuine soldiers of fortune; often illiterate, men of obscure origin escaping from the brutal and degrading slavery of life on the lower deck of an eighteenth-century warship or in the ranks of an eighteenth-century battalion."\(^{22}\) But a majority of them had good knowledge of military affairs. And in their manners they were generally men of education and respect, firm character and kind.\(^{23}\) Hence, these adventurers were heartily welcomed by the various rulers of India. Due to weak and confused political situation in India, these adventurers were in great demand at the courts of various rulers like the Mughals, Marathas, Rajputs, Jats and others.

\(^{23}\) Foreign Deptt.. Missel No. 128, p. 192.
In military matters and in the knowledge of the art of warfare, the European adventurers in the 18th century were superior to their predecessors in the 17th century. They introduced new methods of drill and discipline. These adventurers gave a new shape to the arms and equipment, which were more superior as compared to the previous two centuries. The most significant part played by the 18th century adventurers, was in the field of artillery where they introduced new techniques and better guns. The Indian rulers employed them for casting cannons - an art in which these Europeans were expert.

The 18th century also saw a vast improvement in the status and influence of these foreigners at the courts of Indian rulers. In addition to their military duties, some of the rulers entrusted them with civil responsibility. Quite a few adventurers became provincial governors. All this tended to enhance the political stature of these persons.

The death of Aurangzeb in 1707 marks the beginning of the process of disintegration of the Mughal empire. A succession of weak and incompetent rulers, a nobility sharply divided into cliques and highly jealous of each other, and army whose fighting capacity was decreasing everyday, the sources of revenue fast dwindling on account of loss of trade, and disturbed political situation and finally a series of invasions by the Afghan conqueror, Ahmad Shah Abdali*, all

* Ahmad Shah Abdali (1722-1772): He was a founder of the Durrani dynasty in Afghanistan.
combined to bring about the disruption of the Mughal empire. By the middle of the 18th century bold and adventurous persons succeeded in establishing practically independent rule in Hyderabad, Oudh and Bengal, although they continued to pay lip-homage to the Mughal Emperor.

Advantage was also taken of disturbed political condition by a few native powers of India. In Punjab, the Sikhs who were lying low since the death of Guru Gobind Singh (A) and Banda Bahadur (B) asserted their authority. In course of time, the Sikhs became a formidable political force. In South of Delhi, the Jats who had first fought against the religious persecution of Aurangzeb, rapidly increased their power under the leadership of Badan Singh (C) and

(A). Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708):
Guru Gobind Singh was the last Sikh Guru among the ten Gurus in Punjab.

(B). Banda Bahadur (1670-1716):
Banda was born on 27th October, 1670 at Rajori, a village in Poonch district of Western Kashmir. His father's name was Ram Dev, who was a Dogra Rajput. He had originally many names but afterwards he met Guru Gobind Singh at Nander in Deccan and became 'Banda' Bahadur. He fought many battles against Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. Later on, he was captured in the battle of Gurdas Nangal (1715) and executed by the orders of Emperor on June 19, 1716.

(C). Badan Singh (1721-1755):
Badan Singh was a Jat leader, who possessed territory lying between Agra and Delhi, during the days of later Mughal rulers. He succeeded his uncle Churaman in 1721. Then he brought whole region of Agra and Mathura under his control. He was very popular among the Jats but he always entertained a strong hatred against looting and plundering depredations. In 1722, he became Raja of Dig on condition of paying tribute to Delhi government. And in the same year, Bharatpur was recognised as a separate state. He died in 1755.
Suraj Mal. The Jats controlled Agra, Mathura and Bharatpur region, where they were most numerous. It was Suraj Mal who gave them unity, solidarity and consciousness. He was largely responsible for making the Jats a factor of considerable political importance in middle of 18th century politics. In addition to these the Rajputs in Rajputana, and the Rohillas in Rohilkund also asserted their independence. But the most important power which arose in the 18th century was that of Marathas. Under the inspiring leadership of the first three Peshwas (Balaji Vishwanath (1713-1720), Baji Rao (1720-1740), and Balaji Baji Rao (1740-1761)), the Marathas launched their drive into Northern India. After subjugating Malwa, Bundelkund and Gujarat, they came to Delhi and Punjab. It was Peshwas' dream to establish their control in North India or to revive a Mughal empire run by the Marathas.

This Maratha dream was frustrated by the rise of the Afghans in the middle of the 18th century under the leadership of the dauntless and intrepid leader, Ahmad Shah Abdali, who successfully invaded North India a number of times. He was keen to have Punjab - a claim which was contested by the

(D). Suraj Mal (1755-1763):
Raja Suraj Mal was the adopted son of Badan Singh Jat, who became the leader of the Jats after Badan Singh's death in 1755. Under his leadership, the Jats became a very strong power in India. He extended the Jat jurisdiction to Aligarh, Etawah etc. He made Bharatpur his capital. He was the greatest fighter and a statesman amongst the Jats. After the third battle of Panipat in 1761, Suraj Mal was perhaps the strongest ruler in the whole of Northern India. In 1761, he captured the territories of Agra, Alwar, Gurgaon, and Rohtak. He had a large strong army under him and his treasury was also full. He died on 25th December, 1863.
Marathas. The issue was settled in the fateful field of Panipat in 1761 where Ahmad Shah Abdali inflicted a crushing defeat on the Marathas. These various powers and states were ever engaged in mutual fighting. There were wars of aggression against the weaker neighbour. Peace and security disappeared from the land; trade and agriculture suffered. It was, beyond doubt, a period of political instability, turmoil and disturbances.

The Mughal army and also the armies of these various kingdoms and powers suffered from a number of defects. They followed the traditional method of warfare as they were still not aware of the progress and changes made by the people of the West. The Mughal army had inferior weapons and equipment. In the army, there were three kind of weapons i.e. bows and arrows, matchlocks and pistols. But the matchlock, a cumbrous and ineffective weapon, was mainly used by the infantry. And matchlock was also used after the end of the Mughal period. Flick Lock was also used and made at Lahore. Artillery which was most vital part of the army had many cannons. It was also called 'Top' a word introduced by Turkish officers. However, all their artillery was outdated, ill-mounted and ill-served as was the artillery of Europe 300 years ago.

According to Colonel Hector Munro, the victor of Buxar, speaking of the period 1763-1772 that Indian princes got their

artillery from England, Holland and France.* The Mughal cavalry, too, suffered from a series of defects. And infantry was the weakest and most neglected wing of their army.

In South, the Nizam's army also had a number of similar drawbacks. There was hardly any discipline. They encamped at random, without proper pickets in front flank or rear. Little attention was paid to merit. Moreover, there were many vices in the army of Nizam, i.e. luxurious habits, corruption, want of cohesion, bad commissariat, inactivity and cumbrous equipment.

The army of the Marathas, too, was not free from defects. The Marathas were familiar with artillery and ammunition for over a century, but they did not improve or manufacture it. Whatever their guns and ammunition they manufactured, were crude and clumsy. The Marathas generally used to get their military equipment from the Portuguese as the English were reluctant to supply them war material for obvious reasons. These muskets and the guns purchased from the Portuguese and the English, were neither of the best type nor in a very good condition. Mr. Nadkarni writes,

* According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar that "throughout the 17th and 18th centuries we find Indian rulers frantically trying to buy cannon, even very small pieces of European manufacture, secretly by bribing the French and English merchants, who were forbidden by the authorities of the East India Companies at Home to interfere in this way in the internal quarrels of the Indian Princes".

So these foreigners used to kill in this fashion two birds with one shot, they used to make money by disposing off useless and unserviceable war material and at the same time kept their rivals in a false sense of security and satisfaction. 25

Further, the artillery of Marathas proved useless in the battlefield. Their artillery weakness was revealed in the battle of Panipat in 1761. Their firing capacity was limited and slow, and at times proved ineffective.* Lieutenant Moor gives an eye witness account, "A gun is loaded and whole people in the battery sit down, talk and smoke for half an hour when it is fired and if it knocks up a great dust it is thought sufficient. Such were the manners of slow firing." 26 The Maratha army had neither drill nor any discipline. There were no regular regiments in the army. Similar defects and weaknesses could also be seen in the armies of the Sikhs, Jats, Rajputs etc.

The European companies especially the French and the English who had established themselves earlier now began to entertain political ambitions largely because of political instability in the country. Realising India's political disunity, the vision of an European empire began to loom large before them. The French Governor, Dupleix, was perhaps the first to conceive of this possibility though it was left for Robert Clive to make this dream a reality.


* During the 18th century, there were golandazes in the artillery of Indian rulers. These golandazes were mostly transport coolies and proved third class gunners in the battlefield.

The French under Dupleix with the aim of political ambition began to interfere in the internal matters of the native states. To secure concessions and advantages they began to support one claimant to the throne against the other. The British seeing this development could not remain idle and inactive. This is best illustrated in the Carnatic wars fought between the English and French for supremacy in South India.

In 1746, during the first Carnatic war, the Nawab of Carnatic was decisively defeated by the French. The Nawab's commander was Maphuz Khan*, who had an army of ten thousand cavalry, the traditional arm of the Mughals, and forty cannons. As a military commander he was weak and incompetent. The French army was small, but well formed in drill and discipline. Inspite of vast army and good equipment, the Nawab's forces were badly defeated by the French in the famous battle of St. Thome (1746).

The ill-fated plan of attack was the cause of the defeat of Nawab's army. Then, there was lack of collective training and drill in the Indian army. The artillery was defective and it was an excitable, noisy and slow in process. The cavalry tactics were also very inferior in the battle. The army had no discipline.

* Maphuz Khan: He was the eldest son of Anwar-ud-din, the Nawab of Carnatic. During the battle of St. Thome (1746), he commanded 10,000 troops. He was defeated by the French forces in the battle of St. Thome and taken prisoner by Dupleix's forces.
On the other hand, the French army was well trained in European fashion. In the battle, the gunners, as a result of discipline and unceasing drill, could fire a field-piece once every fifteen seconds, or with really good crews even once every twelve seconds. They could fire faster than the men armed with a musket, because they had to perform all the actions singlehanded. The infantry was well-drilled* and their principal weapon was called bayonet. Regarding the disciplined armies, 'James Hill says that two important discoveries for conquering India were, first the weakness of the native armies against European discipline and second the facility of imparting that discipline to natives in the service of the Europeans. He said both these discoveries were made by the French. Dupleix was the first who made an extensive use of disciplined sepoys.'27 Thus, the discipline of the French army brought them glory and victory. The French had also new techniques and use of weapons in the battlefield.

* The most important part of the infantry is drill. It makes a soldier, punctual, active and disciplined to carry out the military duties. Col. Lloyd wrote, "It is one object of drill to make certain motions become second nature to the soldier, so that he will execute them instinctively in the excitement of action. Lloyd further writes that he must be something more than a self-reliance with self-surrender".+


27. Ibid., p. 327.
Thus, the defeat in the Carnatic war indicated the real weakness of the Indian armies.* From this defeat, many rulers were alerted in India. Every chief of any importance decided to maintain a good standing army. And they began to employ Sikhs, Rohillas, Rajputs, Arabs along with a large number of European military adventurers into their armies. Thus, Nizam of Hyderabad** and Haider Ali of Mysore (1722-1782) were the first to realise the importance of Western military superiority. Very soon the Maratha leaders also began to reorganise their armies on the new model.

* Regarding defects in the army of Indian Princes, Comte de Modave, the French soldier - politician, gave his clear evidence that, "The army of an Indian prince does not form a regular whole as among us. The different bodies which compose them have no connection with one another. No staff officer, particular or general, is seen among them. Nor is there any subordination of the Chief to the Supreme Chief of the army, or any connection or dependence of one to the other .... Every individual body of soldiers provides itself as it can and as it pleases, with provisions and munitions." +


** Nizam of Hyderbad (1761-1803):
Nizam Ali II was a son of Asaf Jah, Nizam-ul-Mulk. He was a ruler of vast territory of Hyderbad region. During his period, he had to fight against the Marathas, Haider Ali of Mysore and other powers. He was almost a permanent ally of the English.
So, the Carnatic War impressed upon the native rulers of India the importance of adopting the new methods and arms in their armies. They also knew that only European military adventurers could mould their army into new form. These rulers now wanted to remove all the old, useless and defective weapons from their army. They wanted that their army should be very strong and well drilled and disciplined upon European pattern.

The second half of the 18th century till the establishment of British supremacy is considered to be the age of foreign adventurers. On account of their military skill and knowledge, courage and boldness, they were in great demand at the courts of Indian powers. The various rulers of India were increasing their armies by taking these European military adventurers in their services. In such a political condition, "where there was no patriotic policy and no national army, a European-led regiment could raise a petty native chieftain to a royal throne or open to him the gates of a treasure-laden imperial fort. Naturally, in such a world all the wealth of the grateful Prince, all the treasure-hoard of the sacked fortress would be the reward of the triumphant European Captain." 28

So, the employment of the European adventurers rapidly increased in this period. Although, they were mercenaries but, on the whole, they served their masters with devotion,

28. B.B., op.cit., p. VIII.
faithfulness and honesty. But among them, some military adventurers

with no fixed loyalties, were mere slaves of fortune and changed their masters as often as their interest dictated, one day serving Haider Ali, another day Nizam Ali and the next day the Nawab of Arcot, or the Jat Raja, or the Emperor. 29

The Imperial army and the other native states "which were carved out of its ruins, all raised corps of regular troops commanded by Europeans of varying military ability: French, Dutch, Swiss, Armenian, German, Italian, English, Scot, Irish, American and Eurasian." 30

The Portuguese were the first Europeans to seek service in the Indian states. But from the middle of the 18th century, the prominent mercenary officers were the French, who came in India from time to time and became contemporary to the British. There were also some French deserters in English service and some English in French. Malleson wrote, "The foremost amongst them, levying contingents of their own countrymen, took service in the Courts which showed the greatest inclination to resist the progress of the increasing power of the English." 31 These men i.e. the French and the English were always hostile with each other. Bidwell writes, "The French perhaps with the lessons of the American wars in the mind, sought to

strength, their Indian allies in their war against the British by training them in European warfare as they had
the Canadians."\(^{32}\)

The deserters who came to India did not possess intelligence or character. About them, "the victorian writers tended to purse their lips at their military pretentions, their 'low' birth, their dissolute habits and their deplorable practice of co-habiting with low-caste native women."\(^{33}\) Moreover Banerji writes "Their private character was stained by unscrupulous selfishness, greed of gold, and lack of fidelity to any master or any noble ideal."\(^{34}\) We can say that these European military adventurers "were not men of outstanding ability or heroic character, though they possessed indefatigable energy, an iron will, and

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\(^{32}\) S.B., *op.cit.*, p. 11.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., p. 14.

\(^{34}\) B.B., *op.cit.*, p. 1.

Mr. Modave also writes that 'the majority of them (adventurers) are villians capable of every crime, or vile and stupid drunks. I have seen in the camp of Sompre, a German who calmly boasted of the most atrocious and the most unnatural action that one can imagine'. Modave further writes that 'the French are extremely debased and brutalised by the use of arak. Most of them are in great poverty'.

unfailing resourcefulness." Bidwell wrote, "Adventurous, romantic, perilous and sometimes disgraceful or squalid as lives of these men were, individually they amounted to nothing. The Indians did not find in them the answer to the British, and British did not attach much importance to them, except perhaps for one or two good French regular officers in the service of Haider Ali, and they were only auxiliaries." 

The earliest adventurers, who came to India, were known to be French-trained.* They served in the imperial


* (i) Balaji Baji Rao for the first time began the practice of these adventurers in the artillery field. Later on, these adventurers became famous in the time of Mahadji Sindhia. Sindhia writes, "With the appointment by Peshwa in the fifties of the 18th century, of Muzaffar Khan and Ibrahim Khan who had been trained by Bussy, began the history of the trained battalions under the Indian chieftains."


(ii) Dr. Halim writes that the largest contingent of such soldiers of fortune was supplied by France, partly because Dupleix had raised the reputation of French soldier-ship to a very high pitch in this country. Many French soldiers joined the army of the Indian princes either as trainers of their army, or engineers to run their cannon foundries. These adventurers came after the battle of Wandewash in 1760, and then again the French Revolution had compelled them to seek refuge in foreign countries.++

Even some of these French military adventurers did not bring their families and sufficient money in this country.

armies and various native rulers** e.g. Haider Ali of Mysore, Nawab-Wazir of Oudh, Jaswant Rao Holkar, Mahadji Sindhia, the Nizam of Hyderabad, the Jats, Mughal Viceroy, Rajput chieftains, and of statesmen like Nana Phadnis and Najaf Khan. Afterwards in early nineteenth century,

(iii) Col. Biddulph writes that no doubt Hyder Ali of Mysore first recognised the importance of these adventurers but it was Mahadji Sindhia who first developed disciplined his troops in European fashion under General De Boigne. Second was Jaswant Rao Holker's battalions on European model.+ 


(iv) Mr. Chatterji writes that 'Mir Gasim (1760-1777) was one of the first among the Indian princes who had realised the importance of organising their troops on the western model. Gurgin Khan (Khajah Gregory), an Armenian, was a commander-in-Chief and war minister of Mir Qasim. It was under his superintendence that the army of Qasim was reformed and remodelled upon European pattern. Muhammed Taqi Khan, a native of Persia, was expert in Musketry in Qasim's army. Qasim recruited mainly Persians, Tartars, Afghans, Armenians, Frenchmen, Germans, Portuguese, Topasses, and even English deserters'. ++


(v) F.S. Bajwa writes that Nizam of Hyderabad was first ruler to have troops organised on European system under Gen. Bussy later carried by Gen. Raymond.*


++(i) In 1722, there were 70 European military adventurers in the personal guard of the Emperor of Delhi. According to Clement Dowson, they were 'well paid and considered'. Similarly other rulers employed these adventurers in their services. But the number of the European adventurers in the service of various rulers in India used to increase and decrease from time to time. Hence the exact number of these adventurers could not be traced in the armies of the Indian rulers. $

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) the Sikh ruler, employed some French military adventurers*, not to command his wild irregulars, but to convert them into a formidable army and for creating a new era in his Government. 37

At that time, there were three important arms in India, i.e. artillery, cavalry and infantry. The Mughals were great artillerymen. Their artillery had long train of cannon of every size. These cannons were of various types.

(i) After middle of 18th century in India, "there were about 4,000 to 5,000 such swaggering adventurers who held sway till 1803." 

*** (i) Mr. Grey and Mr. Khushwant Singh mention over 100 European adventurers in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army.++

(ii) Mr. Steinbach mentioned 12 Europeans at the close of Maharaja's reign. 

(iii) Maj. Sayth mentioned 39 Europeans in Maharaja's service. $$$

(iv) Maj. Gardner* and Mr. Seetal£ mentioned 42 Europeans in Maharaja's service.

37. Foreign Dept., Missel, No. 128, p. 190.
types, but the heavier and bigger were always preferred. These moved slowly drawn by the main draught animal— the bullock. It was well entrenched in a formidable arm and these were planted wheel to wheel in long rows. These guns generally were made of iron in a very crude shape which consisted of iron cylinders of iron rings with brass cast round them. These guns were clumsy and inaccurate.

The next important wing of army was cavalry. It was also the main force of the Rajput States. The Mughals delighted to fight on horseback.

The third wing was the infantry. It was the most despised wing of the army of Indian rulers. The infantry was generally employed for the protection of women or forts. Their weapons included cross-bows, pikes, bows, little jungle-axes, spears, swords, round shields and matchlocks etc. The armies of Indian rulers also included a battalion of rocket men. They had bundles of iron rockets with sticks.*

The military adventurers changed the condition of the army of the Indian rulers. They introduced new weapons, drill, foot-musketeers with mobile artillery. They introduced drill and discipline upon the European pattern. The Indian armies learnt about the art of artillery warfare because these Europeans were expert in art of artillery.

* F.S. Bajwa writes, "Rockets called 'bans' or 'fire-arrows' were an invaluable part of Mughal light artillery." +

They taught the Indians the art of casting guns, shots and cannons. Thus, iron guns, brass screw-guns*, mortars, brass guns, and howitzers were now cast in India. The Indians learnt surveying methods from these European officers. On the whole these military adventurers proved a boon to the Indian armies.

In this period, the Marathas were now changing their old pattern of army by employing these military adventurers. Mahadji Sindhia, a great leader of Marathas, employed brilliant French military adventurers for laying the foundations of a mercenary regular army. It was supplement to his large army of Marathas. This army consisted of non-Marathas, especially men of northern India. In 1803, when this "Army of Hindustan was fighting with the armies of Wellesley and Lake, then these 'trained brigades', as the British often called them were not 'Marathas' anymore than the Swiss or the German lanzknechts of the sixteenth-century French army were French."38

We can trace the careers of early French military adventurers in the memoirs of Skinner, Thomas and L.F. Smith's book on the European officers who served Sindhia and Holkar. Their references could be traced in the history

* Regarding the brass screw-guns, the British general, Duke of Wellington, wrote after his victory at Assaye, "We have got more than 90 guns, seventy of which are the finest brass ordinance I have ever seen".*
+ J.N.S., Fall, vol. IV, p. 119.
38 S.B., op.cit., p. 2.
of wars in Mysore, Madras, Deccan, Bengal and the northern regions of India.

So, in this period, these European adventurers had high place in the courts of the Indian princes. They were much respected in the army of the Indian rulers, and they were given high posts in the army. Some of them were hard-hitting and hard-fighting colourful personalities. The European officers like de Boigne, Ferron, Raymond etc. became the Commanders-in-Chief in the armies of Indian rulers. Many of them became governors of various provinces in India. And some of these European adventurers also raised their own trained corps in the service of Indian rulers.* Some of these adventurers have left their memoirs in India which reveal their activities. One of them, George Thomas, became an independent ruler in Haryana. These remarkable adventurers created armies, conquered kingdoms, overturned princes and ruled provinces, winning such distinctions and wielding such personal power as are not within the reach of modern endeavour. 39

* The corps they trained for them were mercenary, and these trained corps could not be called national. Some famous adventurers, serving under Indian rulers, had their own corps which were called upon their names e.g. Gen.de Boigne had its own corps called Boigne's corps. Similarly there were many other corps i.e. Sombre's corps, Ferron's Corps, Raymond's Corps, Madoc's Corps, Hessine's Corps, Filoze's Corps, Pinglass's Corps, Shepherd's Corps, Dufrenac's Corps and Sutherland's Corps etc. These corps were independently commanded by the adventurers who raised them. It was a custom, whenever any adventurer left the service of a ruler, then he sometimes sold his corps to his master, sometimes took it with him and joined the other master, sometimes he disbanded the corps. In many cases, these corps were taken by the successor officers or by the relative of the adventurer. In some cases, these corps were taken by the widow of adventurer.

In military history, the European adventurers of 18th century introduced a new era in India. From the 16th century up to 18th century, a large number of military adventurers came to India from various countries such as England, Ireland, France and even America etc. But the 18th century proved to be a boon to them, for the fall of Mughal Empire and the spread of disorder and anarchy in India afforded them many opportunities.

These adventurers got good status, high salaries in the service of Indian rulers. They used to live by their wits, guts, hard labour and bold swords in the service of Indian chiefs. They organised armies of these chiefs into European pattern. They introduced drill, strict discipline, new weapons, art of making guns, armours and cannons etc. Artillery, a main factor in the army, was improved very much. The Indians not only took the knowledge of making new military weapons but also learnt the art of making powerful gunpowder as well as the mapping system. Some Indians also learnt foreign languages from these adventurers. Similarly many of these adventurers adopted Indian customs, languages and food etc. They became the brilliant brain and strong nerves of the native Indian soldiers of that time.

Many of them scaled to a high rank and attained the highest posts in the service of Indian rulers. Gen. de Boigne, Gen. Raymond, Gen. Ferron, Col. James Skinner, Col. Hessing etc. enjoyed high status and were respected by the Indian chiefs.
Gen. de Boigne also acted as a viceroy of Mahadji Sindia and became a successful civil administrator; Maj. Gen. Claude Martin became adviser to Nawab of Lucknow; Maj. Hearsey was a ADC to Nawab-Wazir of Oudh as well as to Gen. Perron, and Col. Francklin became deputy paymaster and Regulating officer in Chunar and Bhagalpur respectively.

They were also builders in India. The memorials which remind us their memories are dotted almost all over India - at Delhi, Agra, Gwalior, Sardhana, Poona, Lucknow, Ferozepur, Hyderabad and some other cities. There are a number of graves of many European military adventurers in the various churches and other places in India. They built churches at Patna, Bhopal, Gwalior and Narwar. Maj. Francisco Pinto, during the service of Peshwa, built a church at Poona. The church at Sardhana was designed by an Italian officer, Anthony Reghelin, who was in Begum Samru's service. Gen. Samru built an old Roman Catholic church in Agra, and similarly Col. James Skinner also built a St. James Church at Delhi. A number of cities, towns and villages were named after their names. Many of them built forts and buildings in India. Maj. Gen. Claude Martin built the La Martiniere School at Lucknow and Calcutta. Moreover, Capt. Fanthome built a market, called 'Faltunganj market' at Bareilly. They are, in fact, an intimate part and parcel of modern India.
In India, many of them lived and dressed like Nawabs with daggers, swords and scimitars. They used 'Hookah', 
Palki and Indian wine. They had also the Zenana within 
their bungalows. A number of servants were always ready 
to serve them. They were fond of jokes, cultural 
activities, games and hunting etc. They spent their lives 
like Indian chiefs of that period in India. Marriages 
also took place among them. For example, Gen. Perron was 
moved to a sister of Maj. Derridon. Similarly Col. 
Robert Sutherland had married in the family of Maj. 
Derridon. Some Europeans married Indian women.

They, on the whole, served Indian rulers faithfully, 
although there were cases of desertions also. Many of them 
died in India while others went to their native places.

With the defeat of the Maratha Confederacy and the 
establishment of British paramountancy in the first quarter 
of the 19th century the age of European military adventurers 
associated with heroism, romance, desertion and perfidy came 
to an end. However, its imprint is deep and indelible.