

THE CLERK WHO WON INDIA FOR BRITAIN



To avenge the tortures inflicted by Suraj-ud-Dowlah, the Nawab of Bengal, on 146 prisoners whom he had placed in a tiny chamber, afterwards called the Black Hole of Calcutta, Clive set out with an army of 1,000 Europeans, 2,000 natives, and eight pieces of cannon. On June 23, 1757, the "heaven-born general," as Chatham had called Clive, completely defeated the cruel tyrant at Plassey. The old 39th Regiment particularly distinguished itself in helping to rout 34,000 natives equipped with 40 guns and 50 elephants. The battle marked the turning-point in British fortunes in India, thanks to the skill of a man who had started life as a writer in the service of the East India Company.