



Soldier Of The Raj: The Life of Richard Fortescue Purvis 1789-1869

Iain Gordon

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A meticulously researched biography of a young officer in the early part of the 19th Century. The son of an admiral, Richard Purvis went to sea in Nelson's Navy at the age of 11 before being commissioned at the age of 15 into the Bengal Army, part of the great East India Company. He went on to serve 17 years in India before returning to become a country parson. The emphasis of this book is on his Indian military service, with the story told largely through an extensive collection of previously unpublished contemporary letters. These give a unique and intimate insight into the daily lives, difficulties, ethos and humour of young British officers in India during the Napoleonic period. There was, of course, danger and action too and Purvis's role in the Nepal War is described. Patronage was also a feature of a young ambitious man's life during the Georgian period and the workings of this are fascinatingly revealed.

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