



top of Mr. Lascell's house at the end of the Rope Walk, and as the enemy drew near on all sides in very great numbers Captain Buchannan detached Ensign Scott with a field piece and 20 men to defend the road and breastwork thrown up at the ditch at the end of the burying ground, a serjeant and 16 men to defend a breastwork thrown up at Mrs. Putham's house, and Lieutenant Blagg with ten volunteers to be posted at the top of Captain Minchin's house to flank the forementioned breastwork, where it was judged the enemy would make their attack. At the same time Lieutenant Smyth posted Mr. Sumner with a small party at Mr. Court's house, and likewise another small party at Captain John Coales's house. By the time all this was perfected it was near 10 o'clock when the enemy began to fire upon us exceeding warm from all quarters, but more especially at Monsieur Labaume's, and Captain Clayton's posts; in so much that by 3 o'clock Monsieur Labaume was drove from his post with the loss of his cannon (which were left spiked) and most of his men killed or wounded. About one o'clock the enemy fired so very hot upon us, particularly the attack was so smart at the eastern battery, that Captain Clayton recalled all his out partys and was reinforced with an eighteen pounder to endeavour to demolish the houses round about, but all their efforts proving ineffectual, and the fire of the enemy still growing hotter, about 5 o'clock Captain Clayton quitted his battery with much confusion, leaving his ammunition behind him, and also all his cannon spiked, except one field piece which was carryed off. His battery was within a musket shott of the factory's front gate, and consequently the loss of it of the utmost ill consequence. Upon quitting his battery he was directed to post himself in the church with half of his men, and Lieutenant Bishop and the other half to take possession of Mr. Eyre's house, which being done, orders were sent to Lieutenant Smyth to quit his battery and take post at Mr. Cruttenden's house, which he did with good order without the loss of a gun or ammunition, his out partys having been called in a little time before. Captain Buchannan imagining he should be attacked in front from the great road leading to Sirman's Garden, called in Ensign Scott with his party to his assistance, which he had no sooner done but he received directions to quit the outer battery



(though he had at that time but one man killed) and take charge of the inner one, close by the front park gate, which after he had effected, he received fresh orders to quit immediately though it was within pistol shott of the factory and intirely commanded two of the three grand roads leading to the garrison. While this was transacting Lieutenant Blagg and the volunteers under his command posted at the top of Captain Minchin's house were but in an indifferent situation, for about 3 o'clock in the afternoon Captain Clayton withdrew the serjeant and 16 men who defended the next house to them, and soon after the serjeant and sixteen men, who defended the breastwork at Mrs. Putham's, basely running away (on one of his men's being killed) left them greatly exposed to the enemy, who immediately took possession of all the houses round about, nay even of that house itself, and barricaded the doors up to the very top of the house, which passage to the top being very narrow they did not dare to attempt; in which situation they continued till near seven o'clock, received the fire of the enemy from every part, as likewise were in no small danger from our own guns at the factory, who were at that time playing very smartly on the enemy at that quarter; when, all their ammunition being expended, obliged them to take a resolution to force open the doors, and fight their way through with their bayonets, especially as by that time all the batterys were withdrawn and but one attempt made to relieve them, which party was repulsed by the enemy; so looking upon themselves as a forlorn hope were willing to extricate themselves the best they could. Accordingly the door was burst open, and upon endeavouring to retreat to a lane at the back of the house leading to the Rope Walk in hopes to get under shelter of our own guns, found the enemy so numerous as rendered that passage impracticable, and here Messrs. Smith and Wilkinson, two of the party, having imprudently advanced a little too far, were cut to pieces, though the first killed 4 or 5 of the enemy before he fell; the remainder by making good use of their bayonets (not having a single charge left) gained the front gate of the house. By this time the enemy were possessed of the whole square, so were obliged to pass through all their fire, till they gained a field piece that was placed at the end of the park wall to cover Captain Buchannan's retreat,



which playing upon the enemy drove them to a greater distance. The number of Moors killed by that party is almost incredible. The enemy acknowledge 173 killed, besides wounded, but the number was judged much greater as every shott must have taken place, the enemy being in such swarms, besides what were killed by bayonets in forcing a passage through them. Those of the volunteers who remained were Messrs. Ellis, Tooke, Parker, Knapton, Law, Dodd, Drake, and McPherson, commanded by Lieutenant Blagg. Upon Captain Buchannan's being ordered to quit the inner battery he was directed to post a Lieutenant and 30 men at the Company's House, and to march the rest into the factory, which he did having made a very fine retreat by securing all his ammunition and without the loss of a gun except an 18 pounder which was sent to the inner battery, and upon his being ordered away so abruptly he left it spiked up. Those stationed at the Company's house two or three hours after were ordered into the factory also, not having sufficient there to defend the garrison in case of an attack. The same evening boats were sent to Ensign Piccard at the redoubt at Perrins to come away with his party, and take post at the Company's House. By the time all this was effected and the different posts secured it was about 7 o'clock. At our retreat from the batterys there was a general consternation in the factory, particularly among the women and others, for there could not be less than 3,000 slaves and unnecessary people of no consequence in the garrison; when it was judged proper to put all the ladies on board the shipping. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, our Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel of the militia, preferred entering the list among the number of women rather than defend the Company's and their own property, accordingly went off with them, and, though several messages were sent them to attend Council if they did not choose to fight, still no persuasions could avail. Messrs. Holmes, Sumner and Wedderburn Lieutenants of the militia went on board the shipping also the same night and never returned, as did likewise Ensign Baldrick with a few persons more. Little or nothing was done this night by the enemy, except their throwing a few fire arrows into the factory, which did no damage, they being employed plundering the houses they had gott possession of, and

filling up the trenches and ditches (we had made) in order to bring up their artillery, for as yet they had only fired a few random shotts from a field piece having no battery erected. About 8 o'clock in the evening a council of war was held, whereat were present Mr. Drake and his Council that remained, all the military officers, and some of the principal inhabitants of the town; when it was debated what were the safest steps to be taken in the present exigency of affairs; when the first enquiry made was from the Captain of the Artillery, Lawrence Witherington, for the quantity of ammunition there was in the garrison, who reported that at the rate it had been expended there was sufficient for about two days more at furthest, but if husbanded a little, might be made to serve for three. Thereupon a retreat was considered of, and proposed by Mr. Holwell to be made the next day or next night, and that it might be done in a safe and calm manner, and the interval employed in sending the Company's papers, treasure, &c., on board the different shipping they had taken up, and that the same might in due time also be made publick to every one; but this was rejected at about 1 or 2 o'clock in the morning (owing in some measure to a cannon shott passing through the Consultation room) with the utmost clamour, confusion, tumult and perplexity, according to custom without coming to any determination or resolution, but good naturedly leaving every member to imagine his proposals would be followed and put in execution.

June the 19th by daybreak the enemy begun playing upon the church and factory from two eighteen pounders they had brought to the *buzar*, a little beyond the jail house; as likewise from two small pieces they had placed by the horse stables, and with their wall pieces and small arms from every hole and corner, which made it very dangerous standing on the bastions and curtains, they being but ill contrived; and as all our endeavours to dispossess them of the houses proved ineffectual, and appearing in prodigious swarms all round the factory, struck a panick in many, expecting every moment the place would be stormed; and as no quarter was given, none could be expected; to avoid which the following gentlemen between 9 and 10 o'clock in the morning, took the liberty of going off in such boats as were lying at the *gotts*; Mr. Drake, Captain Commandant Minchin, Captain Grant



Adjutant General, and Mr. O'Hara engineer, as likewise of the militia, Captain Macket, Lieutenant Mapletoft, and Ensign Douglas; with most of the principal inhabitants. Upon the Governour's going off, several musketts were fired at him, but none were lucky enough to take place. Those who were in the way, upon hearing the foregoing gentlemen had quitted the factory, as also of those who quitted it the night before, and seeing every ship dropping down, imagined the retreat to be general; which prompted many to go also that otherwise never intended it; for who could judge a Governour and most of his Council with his two first officers and engineer, as also most of the militia officers, would be the first to desert the garrison. Upon Mr. Drake's ship getting under sail, every ship followed his example, and in less than an hour's time not a boat was to be seen near the factory, nor a vessell in condition to move, but the Company's,¹ which run ashore shortly after, when those who were in the factory's retreat was entirely cut off. Upon which a council of war was called by those who remained, at the head of whom was Mr. Pearkes who yielded up his right to Mr. Holwell, declaring he did not think himself qualified for command in such distracted affairs. Mr. Holwell therefore was unanimously appointed to act in his stead, and Captain Lewis, master attendant, (Captain Graham having carryed away one of the Company's sloops before the attack) and the defence of the place was carryed on briskly, under the new commanderie, but with the loss of several people; among the killed was Lieutenant Smyth and the wounded Ensign Coales of the militia, and Piccard of the military. About noon all those that were posted at Mr. Cruttenden's, Mr. Eyre's, and the Company's houses, as also at the church, were ordered to come into the factory, not being able to defend their posts any longer. The enemy the remaining part of the day and night were tolerable quiet.

June the 20th, early in the morning the enemy attacked the N.E. and N.W. bastions with great fury, but after a dispute of about three hours were obliged to retire. It was then judged proper to write to the Nabob, and propose terms of capitulation. Accordingly about 2 o'clock in the afternoon a person came with

¹ The *Prince George*.



a flag of truce to acquaint Mr. Holwell that the Nabob was very ready to come to terms of accommodation with him; and desired he would cease firing, and that they would do the like, which was assented to, and the troops ordered to take some repose during that interval of time; upon which the enemy took that advantage, and about four o'clock in the afternoon, under cover of a prodigious thick smoke, carried the S.W. bastion by escalade, which made the party stationed there force open the back gate, to endeavour to save their lives by swimming or otherwise, but were most of them either drowned or cut to pieces. A party was sent which secured the gate again, but by the time it was done thousands of the enemy were under the factory walls, ready with bamboes to scale them, when it was thought proper to surrender to a *jemindar* who was already upon the ramparts, the number then remaining not being 200 and many of them wounded. Soon after the Nabob entered the factory attended by Meir Jaffair, and demanded to know what was become of Mr. Drake; being answered he was fled and that Mr. Holwell then governed, he called him and assured him neither he nor any of his people should be hurt, but contrary to all expectation in the evening, all that remained in the factory were thrust into a prison called the Black Hole, to the number of about 147, where they remained till next morning, when those that were alive were let out, about 23 in all, the rest being suffocated in prison. The same day the Nabob issued out orders for every European to quit the place before sun sett under the penalty of cutting off their nose and ears. Most had the good luck to escape except Messrs. Holwell, Court, Burdett and Walcott, who were sent in irons to Muxadavad but soon after released. The same day orders were given out by beat of *tomtom*,¹ that the town should not any longer be called Calcutta, but *Allinagore*.²

In regard to the number of forces the Nabob brought against Calcutta, we have but very uncertain accounts, for being tollerable secure of success, the thoughts of plunder caused his being joined by some thousands that would not otherwise have fought for him. However by the best information I can get, his army consisted of 35,000 foot and 20,000 horse, 400 trained elephants

¹ Native drum.

² The City of Ali. Probably in honour of the Nawab's grandfather.



and about 80 pieces of cannon, but most of them light guns, and what were taken in Cossimbuzar factory. His army was divided in three divisions and commanded by as many general officers, who relieved each other every four hours during the whole attack; which made the duty very easy to them, but extremely fatiguing to the garrison, as they were by that means either attacked or kept in constant alarm during the whole siege. He had also 30 Europeans (most French men) in his service, for the management of his artillery, and full 40,000 persons who followed his camp. About 20,000 of his army were armed with muskets, match locks, and wall pieces; the rest, with the arms of the country, such as lances, swords and targets, bows and arrows, &c.; and in order for an encouragement for them to behave well, the Nabob paid them six months pay; indeed they refused marching without it, for it is a customary practice of the princes of the country to keep their military eighteen months in arrears, to prevent desertion. Most accounts agree that the number of his people killed was between 6 and 7,000 besides wounded. Among the former were a great many *jemindars* and principal officers, all of whom behaved with the greatest resolution and good conduct.

The fort of Calcutta called Fort William is situated close by the waterside and the river there judged to be a full mile broad, so little or nothing to apprehend from that quarter from the Moors, as they are not provided with any shipping of force, sufficient to withstand a Line of guns which are well covered by a strong breastwork. The fort itself lies North-North-East and South-South-West, and is an irregular building consisting of four bastions, one to the south-east, one to the north-east, one to the north-west and one to the south-west, calculated to mount guns. The gateway has — guns to defend it, and the curtains to the southward are made to be supplied with — those to the eastward with — those to the northward with — and those to the westward with —, however, the condition the factory was in, with an account of the military stores and ammunition that were in the garrison when the place was attacked, as well as what cannon we had mounted, I will defer mentioning till another occasion, as also a description of the town as well black as white.



Having now given an account of the loss of the principal Settlement the East India Company were possessed of in India, the reason of so extraordinary and sudden a revolution will undoubtedly be enquired into; to know what could induce the Nabob to commit so rash and precipitate an action, more especially to a sett of merchants who were judged to enjoy greater libertys of trade in his country than all the other foreign nations put together; but when the gross abuses of those indulgences are related an impartial person's surprize will in some measure abate. It is well known that the Company's affairs are conducted here, at each of their head Settlements, by a Governour and Council, (to which station their servants formerly succeeded according to seniority) and that each Councillor had the charge of some post or separate branch of the Company's business; accounts of which were delivered into Council monthly or otherwise, as the nature of the post would admit of, and which posts were also regulated according to their servants' standing in the service. This custom the Court of Directors thought proper to break through in the year 1750, by sending out Mr. Holwell, (who formerly served them at Calcutta in quality of surgeon) and appointing him perpetual *Zemindar*, and in Council; which high power of his, according to the custom of the country, extends to life and death, corporal punishment, fines, &c., and that without controul or consulting anyone. Judge then how obnoxious a person invested with such power must be, to a trading people, particularly if he made good his promises to the Company; which was to encrease their revenues double to what former *Zemindars* had done. The revenues of the *zemindary* formerly seldom or ever exceeded 60,000 rupees *per annum*, indeed more frequently were much less, arising from the sales of a few dutys which were farmed out, fines, *etlack*,¹ &c. At this time, as provisions and other necessarys of life, were more reasonable at our Settlement than at the other factorys, as also having little to fear from the *Cutcherry*,² and everyone being admitted to have recourse to our Courts of judicature, then it was that trade

¹ Charges for guards placed upon accused persons so as to ensure their not leaving Calcutta before trial.

² Probably means the *Zemindar's* or *Magistrate's* Court, which dealt with the natives only.



flourished at Calcutta, and was crowded with merchants and inhabitants, not only with the natives, but with all sorts of nations. But upon Mr. Holwell's arrival here, a sudden and quick change of affairs was soon seen. He had agreed with the Company to encrease their revenues, which must be done by some methods or other or he get into disgrace and turned out of his posts; accordingly he set out with converting most bodily punishments into fines, not that a wealthy person by that means had it more in his power than a poor one to commit any crime, for the nature of the misdemeanour was not so much consulted as the circumstances of the aggressor who was to be fined accordingly. The *etlack* was another method made use of to increase the Company's revenues. The more confusion, wrangles and disputes among the natives the higher is the *etlack*, which is levied as follows:—a black fellow shall meet another in the street or elsewhere, whom he shall call by some nickname or otherwise use ill, the offended person has no more to do, than to run to the *Cutcherry*, and demand a *peon* (or soldier of this country) to be put as a guard on him who offended him, till such time as the dispute can be heard and decided by the *Zemindar*. Let what will be the nature of the complaint, a *peon* is not to be refused, for it is to be observed, every *peon* thus employed receives four *punds*¹ of *cowries* a day, one half for his own subsistence, and the other half of the Company's account; which *cowries* are to be paid by the aggressor, or as the *Zemindar* shall pass a decree. I have known upwards of 2,000 complaints standing on the *Cutcherry* books at a time, and scarce ever less than 1,500, most of which could have been decided in a day, had it not been for the encrease of the Company's revenues; whereas if the controversy was ended in six months it was lucky, a year, 18 months, nay 2 years, was no uncommon thing, and what was still a greater hardship, the party's being obliged to attend the *Cutcherry* as often as the *Zemindar* went there himself not knowing when the dispute would be heard. The rice farm was also run up to a most exorbitant price by his emissarys; which made that article more than as dear again as in former years, to the great prejudice of the poor inhabitants. The *Buzars*² also sold in proportion, which made the grievance at last so great

¹ The pund is eighty *cowries*.

² The markets of various commodities.

that several applications were made by different grand juries to the bench of justices for redress; but as it was to encrease the Company's revenues they were always overlooked. One shameful method among others of adding to the revenues was of admitting licenced prostitutes, which were admitted to be under the Company's protection, by paying a monthly tribute. In a word no one method was neglected, that could be thought of, which was not put in execution to make good his promises to the Company. Repeated complaints were all this time made by the merchants, the lower people not daring to do it, and as both rich and poor and of all degrees and denominations found themselves at last entirely deprived of the Company's protection and liable to be daily fleeced or punished according to the caprice of a single person, preferred living under their own Government as well as of that of foreign nations to that of ours. It is incredible to think the number of inhabitants that quitted the Settlement soon after Mr. Holwell's *zemindary* commenced, and many, whose affairs would not admit of it, kept their goods out of our districts. As the natives were not always satisfied with his decrees, application was frequently made to the *Durbar* by them for redress; which caused the Nabob to make continual complaints in behalf of his subjects of the gross abuse of the *Zemindar's* power and of the insults shewed his flagg by stopping boats with his *dusticks*, and obliging many to pay our customs after having paid the Government's duties. The gentlemen of Council could not be ignorant of these repeated complaints, but had their different reasons for not taking notice of them. Some who were jealous of the *Zemindar's* power, were pleased and prompted him on to do everything that would ensnare him; while others, who had little or no interest in Europe, chose to be silent rather than dispute the encreasing the Company's revenues. So good a servant who so heartily studied the Company's interest, they thought could not be invested with too extensive a power; accordingly upon the renewal of our Charter, the black merchants were excluded all manner of benefit of our laws, and an order came out prohibiting their having recourse to any of our courts of judicature, and that all disputes, arising among the natives, should be finished and decided by the *Zemindar* only. This caused great discontent among the



merchants, who, though they lived under the protection of the British flag, were excluded all manner of benefit from it. They now looked upon their fortunes in trade no longer secure, as one black merchant might purchase of another and pay him at his pleasure by keeping fair with the *Zemindar*; which prompted many to leave off business entirely, and many more to quit the Settlement, and all this caused by an imaginary profit of about 80,000 rupees *per annum*. Our Honourable Masters finding the sweets of the aforementioned increase of their revenues by appointing a perpetual *Zemindar*, appointed also a perpetual warehousekeeper, namely Mr. Manningham; who not thinking the colony sufficiently distressed by the daily desertion of its inhabitants, seemed willing to lend the *Zemindar* a helping hand; accordingly, proposes a new method of providing the Company's investment, which was to turn off all the Company's old *dadney*¹ merchants, many of whom had served them full 50 years, and to send their own *gomasters* to the *aurrungs*. It caused some debates in Council but was at last consented to, though I do declare I do not know one single advantage that could accrue to the Company by it, and on the contrary a thousand ill conveniences and disadvantages attended it. It is true indeed it was putting an immense fortune in the warehousekeeper's pocket by making him master of all the *aurrungs*, for as the Company purchased nothing but with ready money, the merchants could never refuse taking the warehousekeeper's cotton, &c. &c. in part payment of their investment and purchases, and that at an advance price; which, to my knowledge was the case, when other people could not sell a rupee's worth of goods; and the amount of his sales invested on the Company's account without any risk of markets, &c. And who was to complain against all this? Indeed severe reflections were made by many, but who dared speak out against a person protected and appointed by the Company? A *Bramin* in particular lodged a formal complaint against one of our *gomasters*, for some fraud committed in the *Cotta*,² which the poor fellow had no sooner done, but he was so severely persecuted by the warehousekeeper,

¹ Native merchants who advanced money to the weavers as agents of the Company.

² The Factory.

as reflecting on his conduct in accusing him of keeping servants guilty of frauds, that, instead of the Council's hearing what he had to alledge, they obliged him to give security of his not quitting the bounds (though he belonged to another country) and that, if he did not make good his assertions, might expect to be very severely chastised for his insolence. This happened about twelve months before the loss of Calcutta, and which dispute ended with the taking the place, though the man made continual applications to be heard, and proved a sufficient check for everyone to hold his tongue afterwards upon that subject. Among the many other disadvantages to the Company by providing their goods at the *aurrangs*, I look upon the risking their money to be none of the least; for upon the least dispute with the Government it was so much cash certainly lost, an instance of which we lately experienced; neither do I think much advantage could accrue to the Company by it, for as every *gomaster* was obliged to give responsible security before he was employed, I leave any one to judge who is acquainted with the nature of the natives here, whether any one among the blacks or Armenians would run such a risk without a profit, or be security for any except their own servants or creatures; so that in fact it was only purchasing our goods at the *aurrangs* of the Calcutta merchants, instead of receiving them at Calcutta, and whether the difference of the price was adiquite to the risk, I leave the Company to judge, for my own part I am fully convinced of the contrary, for when we contracted with the merchants, it was always by muster,¹ and one became answerable for the other for what money was advanced any of them, and a limited time for the delivery of the goods under a penalty of ten *per cent*. Now here was no risk at all, whereas by the present method of collecting their investment, they were obliged to take such goods as were sent them by their *gomasters*, as it must be supposed they were bought on the Company's account and on the best terms they were possible to be bought for; neither any damage to be recovered, from the goods arriving late, or not in time for the dispatch of our shipping; as it was, with regard to our *dadney* merchants, as well as every piece of their cloth, examined by the Company's own servants in their *Cotta*, with the musters contracted for, and they

¹ Sample.



obliged to make good any deficiency in the quality of their goods, as well as of short measure, a head of which was always kept on their books, and came to a very considerable sum of money annually. And as the *gomasters* were frequently obliged to advance sums of money to forward their investment, making now and then bad debts was unavoidable, as we experienced on closing some of their accounts; however this last year the gentlemen of Council took it under consideration to remedy all these things, and it was proposed by some of them, to send a Company's servant to each *aurrung*, as a check on the *gomasters*, but this was most furiously opposed by the warehousekeeper, though finding a majority against him, was at last obliged to give it up; however he succeeded so far, that none should be sent above the station of a writer, and they not to interfere with the *gomasters*, or the *gomasters* with them, but to be there ready to hear any complaints against the *gomasters* to the Company's prejudice. Sending those who so lately arrived in India, was in reality doing nothing at all, for it is not to be supposed they could be either acquainted with the language or the sortments of goods. He also requested, that Malda *aurrung* should be exempted having any one sent there, knowing it to be the principal *aurrung* where business was to be transacted, either for sales or purchases, which was granted him also. At the same time Mr. Frankland, sub-export warehousekeeper¹ (and his co-partner) being obliged to take charge of the Buxey's post, instead of the next person to Council being appointed sub-export-warehouse keeper according to custom, as it is a post of the utmost consequence to the Company, the warehousekeeper insisted on appointing his own deputy or laying down his post; which the gentlemen could not dispute with him or at least did not chose to do it, having indulged him with it before in regard to Mr. Frankland who he persisted on making his deputy, and who would have continued in that station without doubt, had not a better and more profitable one offered itself to him, that of being Buxey, and his former post, of full four thousand rupees a year, was given to one of the youngest writers in the service; who though ever so deserving a young fellow could not be any ways qualified for the post; however his being ignorant of it was what

¹ Paymaster.



the other required. But the article wherein the Company were the greatest sufferers was in the sales of their broad-cloth, &c. for when I arrived here, auroras sold from 80 to 85 rupees *per* piece on an average, lead at 10 rupees *per maund* and fine copper at 63 rupees, and everything else in proportion. The merchants at that time purchased freely, being sure of disposing of their goods to the Company in return, so that if they only got prime cost at the *aurrungs* for what goods they bought, it answered their purpose the same as sending all money, though a great advantage to the Company. At that time our annual investment, was generally about 60 or 70 *laacks* of rupees, which was always collected in without the least difficulty, whether they had money or not, Companies' bonds never being refused; nor do I believe they paid the least trifle more for their cloth by buying it on credit, than they would otherwise have done, with ready money. But upon turning off the merchants the price of cloth, &c. fell greatly. Auroras sold at about 61 rupees *per* piece and the other articles sent out sold in proportion, for few of them purchased afterwards but such as were creditors of the Company's, and then would give but ready money price; neither would they have bought any at all, could their demands have been discharged with cash. The Company's debt in 1751 was full 60 *laacks* of rupees, and still they had as much credit among the merchants as if they did not owe them a shilling; whereas they were no sooner discarded, but they immediately begun drawing their money out of the Company's hands, and as they were all partys concerned took measures among themselves to regulate their purchases accordingly, and not to run up the price of goods as usual, so that by the difference of the Company's sales in India they must have been great sufferers, and having reduced their debt to about seventeen *laacks* (and that money being mostly deposits for orphans, widows, &c.) am satisfied that in a very few years their broad cloth, &c. would not have sold at any rate. As an instance, they sent last year six hundred bales of cloth to Bombay which they could not get the merchants to purchase; a thing never before known. Another ill convenience of purchasing our goods at the *aurrungs* was we could get no more than we had ready money to pay for; whereas before the merchants' credit



was added to the Company's to set the weavers to work, who work from hand to mouth only. The Company having reduced their investment of Bengall goods so considerably of late years shews they could not find vent for a greater quantity of them in Europe, though the same tonnage was sent out as usual, which must be attended with a considerable expence to them, 40,000 rupees *per annum* for every ship that is not dispatched according to charter-party. The foreign nations supplying themselves with India goods on their own bottoms, must certainly be one reason of the defects in our sales in Europe. And their ships meeting with such success here I must in some measure attribute also to the turning off our merchants; for when they found themselves neglected by us they took all measures of encouraging the Danes (who have now a factory here) as well as the Portuguese and Prussians; and these settled but within these 3 or 4 years, our merchants supplying them plentifully with whatever they want, whereas formerly, when they were in our service, were always ready to distress them what laid in their power. The French and Dutch also have almost doubled their investment of late years; for they now each dispatch to Europe four ships, and I think we have reduced ours, from 5 and 6 ships to $2\frac{1}{2}$, which is what we dispatched last year, and as much as we could have contrived to have done this, had no misfortune happened to us, butt a very small investment to support so great a charge as they are obliged to be at in maintaining so large a garrison.¹ Having accounted for the decay of the Company's affairs here, it will in some measure make appear the cause of the late revolution in these parts, the merchants, the support of all nations, turned off and discarded, the natives in general discontented by the *Zemindar's* oppression, the Councillors divided among themselves, added to a total stagnation of trade, caused continual cabals and disputes, when a grand contest arose between the *Zemindar*, the Council, and Mayor's Court in regard to power. The former not being satisfied with the unlimited power he was already invested with, but aimed to bring every Portuguese, Armenian, and others not born of European parents but in the country, (here vulgarly called *Fringes*,

¹ Compare these reckless statements with the Dutch account of the state of trade in Bengal, *e.g.* on pages 306, 307.



and are Christians) also under his *zemindary*. The Mayor's Court endeavoured to maintain their rights and privileges, and to prove that only such as were born, and looked on, as *Mogul's* subjects, was understood by the Company's Charter should be excluded having recourse to our Courts, and not such who were deemed Christians, let them be of whatsoever denomination. The dispute became extremely hott, and the *Zemindar* engaged the Council in his quarrell, as judges of the power the Company had thought proper to invest him with, for the encrease of their revenues, which caused many severe and reflecting letters to be wrote on both sides, and as no one could judge after that how far the *Zemindar* would stretch to extend his power, it alarmed everyone; and Mr. Plaisted, a member of the Court, by being a little more plain and vigorous, in standing up for the privileges of his country, was aimed at by the Board as an example to the rest, and was accordingly (though appointed Master-attendant by the Court of Directors the year before) ordered to Europe by the first ship. The affair was soon after compromised by referring the whole to the Company. The dispute arose from a Portugeze woman thinking she had great injustice done her by a decree from the *Cutcherry*, and applying to the Mayor's Court for redress. If there was a general discontent among the inhabitants, Europeans as well as others, it subsisted no less among the members of the Council Board. Scurrilous language when they ought to have been transacting the most serious affairs of the Company's was no uncommon thing among them. Judge then how they must have been looked upon by the rest of the world when they entertained so very indifferent an opinion of one another. I have endeavoured to make appear how very instrumental the *Zemindar* and warehousekeeper both were in reducing one of the most flourishing settlements in the world, to a perfect fishing town.¹ The one under pretence of a trifling encrease of revenues was lucky enough to blind his Masters, as the other was by saving them a few trifling charges in their *Cotta*, with a promise of doing miracles; and so, good and certain foundations laid for making their own private fortunes, though on so severe terms as the ruin of the Company, (that, had not the

¹ It is said Dupleix threatened that he would reduce Calcutta to this condition.



Nabob frustrated their schemes by giving a finishing stroke to what they seemed to so heartily labour at), they would have been both in Europe, and deemed the best of servants, and left such as were behind them to be blamed of ill conduct for not being able to perform impossibilities in carrying on their schemes any longer. The method these two gentlemen also took, in trifling with each other's character, is most extraordinary and diverting, by appearing professed enemys to one another, that, by that means they might divide the Council and know the reigning sentiments entertained of them by every one as well Council as inhabitants, and as by that means they became perfectly well acquainted of what they were accused off, omitted no opportunity of giving each other all manner of advantages to justify their characters. Manningham embraced every occasion of taxing the *Zemindar* with his extra judicial proceedings in the *Cutcherry*, and that in the most severe terms possible, by which means the rest of Council lay dormant, thinking one to accuse sufficient at a time; but in this was their error; for his accusations were no more than to give the other an opportunity of vindicating himself of whatever he might be accused; for upon answering such accusation the other was certain to drop the dispute, as looking upon himself confuted and in the wrong; so never attempted to make good his accusation any further. This compliment was reciprocally paid each other, and many folios of their letters transmitted to Europe, when at last their writings became so voluminous as obliged the Company to order them to desist troubling them any more and to direct Mr. Manningham not to concern himself with the *Zemindar's* business, and Mr. Holwell not to interfere with the warehousekeeper's affairs. Thus they succeeded at last, in what they so heartily struggled to bring about. After having spoke so largely of the gross abuses of two of our principal posts, it will probably be asked what the rest of our Council were doing all this time. I am very sorry to say that they were not blessed with such happy talents as could be wished and the Company's affairs to be supposed required. However as there was not any among them over ambitious, they were quiet and contented with such posts as came to their lott, and if they made a little more than ordinary by it it could not be of any great consequence to the Company, and



the Governour in such a case is more to be blamed than they, as he has the monthly inspection and regulating of the whole. Indeed men of some genius are greatly required at our subordinate factorys, as well as their being men of some resolution, to keep up the dignity of their Masters; which had we had at Cossimbuzar at this juncture, affairs would in all probability have turned out much different to what they did. I must confess there are two material posts here that concern the Company very nearly and want to be regulated; which is the storekeepers, the general and military, as also the *Buxays*. The two former has the care and charge of providing all military and naval stores, and the other the care of repairing and making all buildings as well as the paying away all money and providing such articles as are wanted at our different Settlements in India. As for the import-warehousekeeper, it does not lay in his power to prejudice the Company in the least, or the accomptant either, who is second in Council, and as for the collector of the consulage, the revenues of that article has been so trivial of late years that that post is almost sunk to nothing at all, for what with a general decay of trade in Calcutta owing to the reasons before mentioned not a twentyeth part of the goods were now exported as in former years, so that they nearly decreased one revenue almost as much as they encreased the other. As to the register of the *dusticks*, as the abuse of them is what is strongly alledged against us by the Nabob, and partly what induced him to carry things to the extremitys he did, I shall leave it, till I mention his complaints against us, with the provocations given him; but before that I would wish to mention a few words in regard to Mr. Drake our Governour, or more properly of our Chief in Council, for the Company never thought proper to confirm him,¹ a thing I believe that never was practized before

¹ In the India Office, Home Series, Misc. 24, under date February 11, 1756, there is a copy of Mr. Drake's commission, beginning as follows: 'The United Company of Merchants of England, trading to the East Indies. To all to whom these presents shall come, send greeting. Know ye that we, the said United Company, reposing especial trust and confidence in the fidelity, prudence, justice, and circumspection of Roger Drake, junior, Esq., have made, constituted, and ordained . . . the said Roger Drake to be President and Governor of and for all the said Company's affairs in the Bay of Bengal and other the places and provinces thereunto belonging in the East Indies, and also to be our Governor and Commander-in-Chief of our Fort



at any of their Settlements in India, that a person should be thought capable to govern four years running and not to be deemed worthy of being invested with his usual titles and dignities; though in reality had he been a man of conduct and spirit, he had it full as much in his power to have acted at his own discretion the same as if he had been appointed; but as affairs stood, his Council certainly made no small handle of it, which made him also appear very cheap among the natives. Mr. Drake's conduct of late years has without doubt been very blameable. That indiscreet (not to say worse) affair with his sister,¹ is a circumstance can never be forgiven him, for the crime was not only itself bad but after that every man of character and sense shunned and avoided him, and was the means of his running after and keeping very indifferent company, and of committing a thousand little meanesses and low actions, far unbecoming any man much more a Governour. However, I will say no more on so disagreeable a subject, for though I have so extensive a scene before me even by writing of facts concerning his ill conduct, they are so numerous, that by a stranger I should undoubtedly be judged guilty of partiality, but refer his character to a letter here annexed, in answer to one he wrote the Prussian chief,² judged a man of very good understanding, wherein he requested to know the sentiments of the different nations concerning the character he bore among them; and particularly in regard to his conduct during the late troubles. The letter in my opinion contains some truths, though interspersed with some vile aspersions. The Dutch and French finding such discord and animosities among us, were no ways backwards in fomenting them, it was rather diversion to them, as likewise to the natives and many others.

Having now mentioned the situation of the Company's affairs at this Settlement during the present administration, I cannot help thinking but that they were in a very declining unfortunate

William in the Bay of Bengal and all the towns and territories thereunto belonging, &c., &c.' It would seem, therefore, that he was appointed not only Governor, but also Commander-in-Chief. The *Chesterfield*, which brought out this Commission, did not arrive at Calcutta until January, 1757.

¹ Apparently Drake, on the death of his wife Mary, married her sister Martha Coales or Coates. These ladies were daughters of Thomas Coales, Factor.

² Mr. Young. See letter No. 48.

condition before the troubles commenced, and impossible to have supported themselves long had there not soon happened some sudden and happy change of affairs, by the Company's having sent out better heads and persons more zealous for their service. I have also annexed a list of what forces the place was able to muster, both military and militia, and have before mentioned the situation of our garrison and what defence it was capable of making had not the works, &c., been grossly neglected of late years.

It now rests to give some account of our late disturbances with the Government, which, without doubt will amaze all Europe, as well as the proprietors of India Stock and Court of Directors. I have already observed by what means Seir Raja Doulet came to the Nabobship, upon which occasion it is usual according to an old Eastern custom on being appointed Prince of the country to be visited by the different foreign nations and proper presents made him. This in the first place we neglected doing, and being a man of an infinite deal of pride and ostentation (although abandoned to all manner of vice) gave him no small vexation, not only by our slighting of him as we did but as there was very strong parties against him in the country which made him apprehensive we favoured some one of them. As soon as he had settled affairs at his capitol called Muxadavad, he marched towards Rajumull to subdue Sucajunk, Nabob of Purnea, as before related. He had not proceeded farr on his march when his conjectures in regard to the English he had further reasons to think were just by our having given protection to Kissendasseat son to Radabullub *duan* of Dacca, both father and son had served under Alliverdi Khawn for many years, and as there was great reasons to apprehend they had been guilty of many frauds and amassed immense treasures by oppression and other unjust ways, an account of their administration was demanded by Seir Raja Doulet, to know what was become of the King's revenues collected by them for some years past. Radabullub no sooner got intelligence of what was going forwards but makes interest with Mr. Watts to get protection for his son and treasure in Calcutta, which was granted him and also for his whole family. By the time everything was secured the Nabob became more pressing with Radabullub, and positive orders given him to immediately obey, and deliver him



the accounts he demanded, when he acquainted the Nabob that his son was fled and taken protection with the English with everything appertaining to him, which rendered it impossible for him to comply with his demands, and as it was currently affirmed that he had carried off with him full fifty three *laacks* of rupees, the Nabob to outward appearance made a point in having him delivered up, which the Council were made acquainted with, both by messages from the Nabob as well as from many of the principal people at the *Durbars*. However they had promised Kissendasseat protection, and protect him they would let what would be the consequences of it, under pretence that it would be a reflection to the nations to deliver up a man to the hands of his enemy that had once taken protection of the English flag, especially as nothing criminal had been proved against him that demanded it; for that the Nabob knowing he was extremely rich only wanted to plunder him, besides might be a precedent that might prove hereafter very prejudicial to the Company, as the Nabob by the same rules might send for any other person whenever he pleased. All this time the Private Committee was extremely busy in taking measures to frustrate the Nabob's schemes, thinking (I presume) all would end with a sum of money, according to the custom of accommodating all former disputes, neither were they certain but he might get routed by the Purnea Nabob, who by this time had received a *phirmand* from the *Mogul*, appointing him Nabob of Muxadavad, and should their expectation answer did not doubt but they would be amply rewarded for their trouble, and of getting from him also a restitution for whatever expences the Company should be obliged to be at on account of *Durbar* charges. However all their sanguine hopes miscarried, for Seir Raja Doulet soon reduced Sucajunk to subjection and marched back towards Muxadavad with great haste, where he arrived about the middle of May. At this time the Nabob's intentions were publickly known, that he would either drive the English out of their Settlements or know if they proposed acknowledging him Prince of the country and intended obeying him as such. For my part, so far from thinking that Kissendasseat, or Radabullub his father, had anything to fear or apprehend from the Nabob, that on the contrary they were on extreme good terms, and that his flight at that time was a pre-



meditated affair in order to ensnare some of our gentlemen, who they imagined would take the bait on account of lucre; which scheme, God knows, too well succeeded and answered their purpose; for it is to be observed, that had the Nabob an intention of having Kissendasseat in his custody, or really judged him and his father guilty of frauds, would not the father have been apprehended, or have fled also as he had the same opportunity as the son? whereas on the contrary he remained at Muxadavad, and, though to outward appearance was greatly threatned and in disgrace, was found at last much in favour with the Nabob, at least allowing him to have been in the wrong had actually settled matters with him. But what is still more apparent, Kissendasseat had no sooner heard of Seir Raja Doulet's intention but he secretly raised a body of men with arms and ammunition in his service, and when things came to an open rupture immediately threw off the mask, refused coming when sent for by the Governor and stood upon his defence, having packed up his effects and put everything in a readiness to join the enemy. Some may imagine that by this conduct he endeavoured to ingratiate himself and get into favour again. It may have been the case, but even then one would think some notice would have been taken of his past conduct had he been really culpable of what he had been so strongly accused, but on the contrary as soon as the Moors were in possession of the fort (where he was confined as before mentioned) he was instantly released and shown even by the Nabob himself the greatest honour and favour. Another affair which also caused some disputes, was sequestering the effects of Pramjeeboom Coberage, *gomaster* to Raja Tillekchund of Burraduan, on account of a debt said to be owing by the latter to one Mr. Wood (though a disputed account). Upon the complaint being filed in court, Pramjeeboom Coberage refused giving an answer as it was not a debt contracted by his master but a bond endorsed over to Mr. Wood by a person with whom his master had large accounts and had credited him for the amount of it some time before, besides his master was no subject of Great Britain, but held a very considerable post under the Nabob, to whose Courts of judicature he was willing the affair should be carried and promised to abide by such decree as should be given. Besides



the person with whom he was in dispute was also a *Mogul's* subject, so he did not think our Court had anything to do with the dispute. The usual forms of Court being over, and the time elapsed for his or his constituent's appearance, in default whereof a warrant of execution was issued out to seize his *gomaster's*, Pramjeeboom Coberage's, house and effects. Upon the sheriff's officers going there, the fellow immediately quitted his house and went to inform his master of what had passed. In his house were found a quantity of money, jewels, and goods, and also a great many bonds and papers, some for very considerable sums, both from Europeans as well as blacks. Tillekchund no sooner heard of the seizure of his house and effects to answer a demand of 7,000 rupees, but he applied to the Nabob for redress. The prodigious troubles in the country at that time (being about the time that the old Nabob died) prevented his complaint being heard, or it would certainly have been attended with a stoppage of our business at the *aurrungs*; however it still helped to inflame the natives against us, as well as to add one, to many other complaints made to the Nabob against the English. The Council it is true, did take so much notice of it, as to inform Mr. Wood that he was wrong and might, if he persisted on his demand, involve the Company's affairs, but never once forbad him doing it, and offer to take the affair in hand themselves as they ought to have done.

As I have already mentioned sufficient in regard to the *Zemindar's* transactions in the *Cutcherry*, I need say no more relating to the Nabob's perpetual complaints against that Court, and as to the affair of the *dusticks*, there is certainly a great deal to be said in favour of both partys, the Company by their *phirmaund* granted them many years ago by the *Mogul*, were exempted paying any duties to the Government, for which reason it was an article at their sales of broad cloth, &c., that the purchasers should be indulged with a *dustick* for the transportation of such goods, as should be bought at their sales, to any *aurrung* they thought proper to send them to. Undoubtedly the goods were no longer the Company's property after they were sold, whereas on the contrary, could not they have found vent for them in Calcutta, they must have been sent to the *aurrungs* on their own accounts, and that the *dusticks* were a great help to our sales is beyond dispute.

Dusticks were also granted to the merchants for bringing to Calcutta from the different *aurrungs* such goods as they contracted for. Now they alledge also that the goods were not properly the Company's property till such time as they were prized, and that the merchants made that a plea for importing their whole investment to the great prejudice of the Nabob's revenues; the Company never taking a fourth part of what was imported in Calcutta by their merchants. If I am not mistaken the Company also indulged their covenanted servants with *dusticks* for their private goods too, and from the different *aurrungs* also, at least it was what was practised here, and none allowed any except the Company's covenanted servants (and to those before mentioned) which was certainly no small benefit to us as it gave us a considerable advantage over all other merchants, especially when goods were wanted proper for the *aurrungs*, for it is to be observed every servant acted for himself, the same as the Council acted for the Company; namely, not only demanded *dusticks* for what goods we sent on our accounts, but also gave *dusticks* to those to whom we sold goods, and the like for what goods we had occasion for from the *aurrungs*; so that certainly what with the Company and their servants *dusticks* together, the merchants did contrive to get their goods to and from Calcutta, without ever paying the Government's dutys. The gentlemen in Europe cannot pretend to accuse us in that article, because one of their Council was always appointed Register of the *dusticks* which were always given in the Company's name, and passed for their property, let the goods belong to whom they would; as indeed by their *phirmaund* I believe they were no ways entitled to a *dustick* themselves; only for what was really their own property, and on their own account. Their granting *dusticks* also brought them in a small revenue, as they were rated at three rupees each. How far the Company were culpable in endeavouring to make the most they could of the indulgence granted them by the King I will not undertake to say; as also letting their servants abroad partake of it, but then it is to be considered it was the only particular in which they could favour them; passes and indeed every other circumstance in trade being common to every inhabitant whether free merchants or otherwise. As the Company received



so much benefit in not being obliged to pay Customs to the Government, their Council ought to have been extremely tender in not giving umbrage in that article. It not only saved them five *per cent.* on all their exports and imports, but kept them clear of the Nabob's Custom House officers and others belonging to him, who are eternally tormenting the other nations and stopping their business upon the most trifling occasion; as likewise their being obliged to put up with a thousand insolencys from every dirty fellow that thinks proper to insult them, and but seldom redress to be had, except a sum of money paves the way. However of late years they have paid no more regard to our flagg, or hardly so much as to the Dutch and French, our boats being perpetually stopt at every *chokey*, and no other method of getting clear but by paying a few rupees whenever they were stopt. Both Company's boats and others were obliged to do the same at many places, for it was not worth while to complain, to be obliged to wait two or three months to get the boats cleared, being liable all that time to pilferage. Things were carried at last to that pass that many preferred paying the Government's Customs and taking their *dusticks* to the Company's, particularly Messrs. Manningham and Frankland who employed Coja Solomon, an Armenian, to do it in his name for them, though very contrary to the Company's standing and positive orders, and undoubtedly ought to have been very strictly kept up for it was giving up to the Moors the very point they aimed at, to bring us to the same terms with other foreign nations, and have us as much under their subjection.

As to the new fortifications we were building the Nabob's other complaint against us; it is a very trifling one and shewed he only wanted to, search a quarrell; for the only additions we made was begun full two years ago, and consisted of a small redoubt with four guns built at Perrins for the conveniency of a small guard we always kept there, being the termination of our bounds; and could be of no manner of service to the garrison of Calcutta on account of its great distance from it, a full league at least. As for the other building near it which he pretended also to take for a fortification, it was only an octagon summer house, and all the other alterations and ammendments we made at



Calcutta was repairing the Line of guns towards the waterside, which was of no very material consequence considering the ill condition of the garrison in general, and was only an amusement for the *Buxey*.

I have now mentioned all the Nabob's complaints, the abuse of the *dusticks*, building fortifications without his consent and approbation, giving protection and preventing his bringing his own subjects to justice, and of the *Zemindar's* extensive power and authority. How farr he had reason to complain against our gentlemen, or which of them were in the wrong, I will leave the reader to judge; however before I mention the particulars of the Council's conduct during the siege and afterwards, I will relate what is privately talked of and thought to have prompted the Nabob to do what he did. I have recited how Seir Raja Doulet came to the Nabobship and the pretenders to it, which as the European nations imagined would cause some disturbances in the country, reinforced their forts at Cossimbuzar, as we did also, and it is thought at the same time underhand promised to aid and assist the *Beggum*; and as Seir Raja Doulet was a person universally hated and despised by his people, as well by the courtiers as commonality for his great cruelties and debauchery, it was surmized by our Private Committee that he would never be able to carry his point, for which reason it is thought they gave orders to Mr. Watts at Cossimbuzar to give assurances of friendship and assistance to the *Beggum*, in behalf of Morada Doulet an infant under her tuition, if she chose to dispute the affair with Seir Raja Doulet, but Alliverdi Khawn, who was a very prudent man, was sensible of what might happen after his death, and took the necessary measures to prevent it by reconciling Seir Raja Doulet with his Ministry, at the same time obliging him to give up the administration of affairs for some time to them, and be governed by their council and advice. He also took some pains in getting over to his party some of the principal officers of his military that had served him in all his warrs very faithfully and valiantly, but had retired from Court to avoid the troubles it was judged were coming on, had not he taken all these necessary precautions to prevent it. He likewise sounded the Dutch and French, and found they were more inclined to peace and quietness than for



war and troubles, noways consistant with the interest of a sett of merchants. The English were the only warlike people that were willing to have a Nabob of their own if possible, or carry on the same farce which has been carried on so many years on the Coast, so much to the Company's prejudice, and have been both attended with the fatal loss of their factorys and that in an equal shamefull manner. I cannot help thinking but that the old Nabob as well as Seir Raja Doulet were both of them extremely well acquainted with what we were about, and that Kissendasseat's affair was only a plot laid to be more certain of what our intentions were, and when he found we were determined to oppose his authority, took a resolution of putting it out of our power to do him a prejudice which is what made him so expeditious in attacking the place before the Rains set in, and at a season of the year when it was impossible for either Fort Saint George or Bombay to succour us. To me it is very surprizing Mr. Watts should have been so ignorant of what was going on at the *Durbar*, for he very particularly recommended this Kissendasseat to Mr. Drake's and Mr. Holwell's protection, requesting they would shew him all the civilitys in their power, which they certainly did; for even when it was publickly known that he was raising forces for the Nabob and stood upon his defence against a parcell of *peons* who were ordered to bring him to the factory, a party of Europeans were ordered to surround his house, but to use no violence or seize his effects. The man of course kept his house and the party obliged to stay there from 10 o'clock at night till 8 the next morning, when upon application of the officer on command to know how to proceed, directions were given to force him out of his house and to bring him and his brother with their arms and ammunition to the factory, but to be very cautious of not touching anything else. However, just as the party had reached the town, they received a further order from Mr. Wood, whereby they were directed by Mr. Drake and Mr. Holwell to seize all his effects, and that he (Mr. Wood) was to shew where they had been concealed, but the party having a great number of prisoners and a large quantity of arms and ammunition and fatigued with duty, having marched a considerable distance, were obliged to leave the plunder of the house to others, concerning which there are



various reports, but as they are not as yet confirmed will avoid mentioning them, not doubting of so great a piece of villanny soon coming to light. If true that our Private Committee have been guilty of what they are accused in interfering with the Government, they have certainly brought upon the Company and others all these disturbances. For my part I am satisfied the Nabob must have had further provocation than what he complained about. Mr. Watts leaving his factory in so simple a manner can never be forgiven him, for had he made a small defence of a few days only the gentlemen of Calcutta would have had more time to have made preparations for the Nabob's reception. Indeed there is this to be said in favour of Mr. Watts, that after the loss of Cossimbuzar he laboured what laid in his power to accommodate matters, nay even declares he could have done it by paying a sum of money, but that the Governour, &c., would not hearken to any proposals he made. Coja Wazeed and many other considerable black merchants also laboured very strongly to settle affairs between us, but all would not do; they always imagining the Nabob would never carry things to the extremitys he did, but would be contented with stopping our business and bring us to terms that way. All this time, though the Governour and Council were in high spirits most other people were dejected and uneasy, knowing the ill condition of the garrison, want of ammunition and all warlike stores, as well as people to defend the place, which they never thought on or gave themselves any trouble about, in so much that many inhabitants endeavoured to prevail with the leading powers to settle affairs on the best terms they possibly could for the present, and that they would willingly contribute paying their proportion of the necessary expences for so doing. However they were deaf to all these proposals, and defy the Nabob's forces they were bent upon, let the consequences be what they would. The Nabob all this time was making great preparations, and finding neither the loss of Cossimbuzar or anything else could intimidate us, made the best of his way towards Calcutta; then it was they began to open their eyes and see their folly for having carryed things too far to retract. The Nabob's forces flushed with the easy conquest of Cossimbuzar and elevated with the thoughts of plunder, made them march with double



expedition, and, as they approached the town the consternation became the greater, particularly among those who had been most active in carrying things to the extremity they did. The enemy had even attacked us before we knew for a certainty that they were upon their march, so little care was taken for intelligence; whereas on the contrary the enemy were perfectly well acquainted with the situation of our affairs, for having already mentioned the reasons the merchants as well as the rest of the inhabitants had to be disgusted with the late treatment they had received, were no ways backward in giving the enemy such intelligence as they wanted in regard to the defence we were capable of making; as likewise knew as well as the Council themselves, everything that passed at the Council Board; a most shameful affair, for the unhappy divisions among themselves not only prompted one to disapprove what the other proposed and did but made a merit of informing everyone he met of it. But what is worse, and what I am very sorry to say, that some of them either owing to a general stagnation of trade or want of credit, were drove, or otherwise were mean enough to throw themselves on the merchants to that degree, that they had as much the command and direction of their words and actions as they had of their own servants; and all this by keeping up some of their sinking credits.

When we had intelligence of the Nabob being greatly advanced on his march, upon a survey of the garrison there were found only 30 pieces of cannon mounted, 26 of whose carriages were obliged to be condemned they were so bad and rotten. As no time was to be lost every carpenter, both white and black, was pressed, and I think did contrive to put about 49 carriages together which were mounted, some towards the waterside, the rest upon the Points; for as to the curtains, upon their being surveyed they were found in so bad a condition that it was not judged prudent to mount any there. Before the batteries were erected without the factory, the military officers and everyone were very urgent for demolishing all the houses round about the factory within gun shot, knowing that if once the Moors got possession of the white houses there would be no such thing as standing on the factory walls, for not only the embrasures were extremely large and ill contrived, but two or three of the houses as well as the



church were within pistoll shott of the factory walls and commanded the whole garrison. However the pulling down the houses was a thing they would not think of, not knowing whether the Company would reimburse them the money they cost, or at least no other reason was ever given for it, as if that was a time in such imminent danger to consider of private property and to prefer running a certain risk of loosing the whole, rather than to sacrifice a small part, is to me something very astonishing.

What could induce the gentlemen to attempt carrying on a war with the Government so ill prepared as they were, I cannot comprehend; and how shamefull has their conduct been could they have compromised matters, as every one admitts they might have done it. The French and Dutch acted in a quite different manner, for when the Nabob passed their factorys, in his way to Calcutta, and demanded the delivery up of their garrisons, they immediately made him a tender of the keys, at the same time gave him to understand, that as they were only a sett of merchants that were indulged a liberty of trade and had been for many years, by former Princes of the country, hoped he would not think of ruining them as well as the Company they represented, and that if they had been guilty of any mismanagement that gave him offence, they were ready to make atonement for it by paying him such a sum of money as he required. Accordingly things were settled by the French promising payment of 350,000 rupees, and 450,000 the Dutch agreed for, part of which was paid down, the rest to be paid on the arrival of their shipping, but they took care to inform their other settlements of what they had been compelled to do, and shortly after got sufficiently reinforced to pay him his ballance with powder and shott.¹ What was the reason we could not have acted as politically as they, I cannot conjecture. There is certainly some reason to think we acted upon some other scheme, and had not quite so much the Company's interest at heart as they had, or at least that we had not quite so much wisdom. Indeed could we have resisted the Nabob's forces till succours arrived to us from the Cormandel coast and Bombay, there must have been glorious plunder for some of our Gentlemen in Council, for those in particular of the natives who had received protection of our flag would

¹ This statement seems to have no foundation in fact.



have been made to pay for it, as also no small contributions raised round about the country; besides the plunder of the river would have been very sufficient to have made a few persons' fortunes as nothing could have passed and repassed but must have fallen into their hands; nay so sure were some of them of success against the Nabob (or at least appeared to be so) that vessells were fitted out to make prizes of the enemys ships homeward bound, two of which were taken, besides a considerable sum of money freighted on our vessells, from Surat and other places, was stopt; and though the Company had then in the river several small vessells that might have been sent on that expedition they were all put aside, and a vessell sent (which Mr. Drake purchased a very considerable part of) upon the expedition, that the whole plunder might be their own.

The ill condition the factory was in, is not to be expressed; the embrasures both upon the Points and curtains, many of them quite broke, no guns mounted, or carriages to mount them on; and as for granades, bombs, &c., none except a few cohorn shells, which had been filled so long that they were good for nothing. Small arms a very few, and powder only 350 barrells, many of which were so bad and damp that it was not fit for use even for the cannon. Though the Company allow six companys here, including one of artillery, consisting each of 120 effective men, when they came to be mustered turned out only 190 blacks and 60 Europeans, a very sensible deficiency instead of 600 men which we ought to have had, and all the subordinates also very well supplied. The deficiency of military is an article of which Mr. Drake cannot excuse himself; for they are mustered before him from time to time, and stood the Company one month with another 10,000 rupees *per mensem* pay only. Mr. Drake to my knowledge was not ignorant of the gross abuse in the muster rolls, and I suppose had his reasons for passing it over in silence. What will anyone think of our gentlemen's conduct in acting as they did. Considering the situation of their affairs it was very great neglect also of theirs, not taking more care than they did of the subordinate factorys; for had they been advised in time to withdraw their effects instead of leaving it to the last moment great part of their investment might have been saved, whereas they



neglected it so long, that there was no time to save much ; indeed a trifle was saved at Jugdea, as also at Ballasore, but at Dacca everything was lost, and Mr. Becher our chief was wise enough, upon being asked by the Government's people to give a general discharge for the whole Company's investment, to do it the same as if he had been in actual possession of the whole. Great care was taken to secure a sufficient quantity of provisions for the garrison for full six months, but cooks were never thought of or cookroom furniture, and instead of having the factory as clear as possible, there was at least 3,000 unnecessary people there, so that there was no such thing as moving in the night without tumbling over some of them, besides being lumbered with chests, bales, and the like, that it rather looked like a fair, (except the dejected looks and countenances of the people) than a garrison put in a posture of defence against fifty thousand men at least.

The enemy had no sooner attacked the outer batterys, but they carryed them, for having at once taken possession of all the out houses, flanked the batterys in such a manner that it was impossible for men to stand to the guns. Then it was that every one was in an uproar and exclaiming against the gentlemen of Council for not permitting the houses to be knocked down. The shipping all this time were not idle, many people instead of minding the defence of the garrison being busy in saving their valuable effects and shipping them off. And I cannot help thinking but that the second expedition against Tanna Fort was not so much to annoy the enemy as to cover the *Neptune* snow, while she passed, otherwise what could be the reason of not landing the men or the ships attacking the fort, neither of which was done. However, if that was the intention, it had not the desired effect, for the redoubt at Perrins being attacked about the same time the party sent down the river was recalled, and also the ships, to defend the avenues of Calcutta leading to the river, and prevent the enemy's landing in the heart of the town. The Moors had no sooner drove us from the eastern battery, but those at the other outer batterys were immediately ordered to retire to the factory, though there was no manner of occasion for it in the least, for the front of the garrison defended all that part of the town, and the northerly part of it was so thick of houses and those large and so



strongly built that they were not easily to be demolished, and of consequence ought not to have been quitted to the enemy at any rate, for by their being possessed of those houses they at once commanded the whole factory. Besides, had the enemy drove them by force from their guns, they could always have secured their retreat by water, the river not being above 20 yards from their battery. The Company's House to the southward of the factory was also of full as much consequence, being a very large strong building of itself, and a new addition of a close veranda quite round it, and extremely near to the garrison walls, so, that battery should also have been maintained as long as possible; and as they had the same advantage of the river as the other battery had, there could be nothing to apprehend of being cutt off. However upon the eastern battery giving way on Friday the 18th June in the afternoon, every thing was in confusion, and how to retreat and save effects was only thought of. And as the women were sent on board that evening Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel of the militia and in Council, went off also, and could by no means be perswaded to return. All our outposts being quitted and our strength being too well known not to be sufficient to resist so powerfull an enemy already in possession of the whole town, one would imagine that in such extremity of affairs they would have sent to the Nabob, and endeavoured to have adjusted matters with him on the best terms they could; but though they knew the factory could not hold out above two days more at the furthest no flagg of truce was shewn, or any methods taken to accommodate and settle matters. Indeed a council of war was held about 9 in the evening, and contrary to the usuall system of holding all councils of war with privacy and secrecy, it was held in the most publick manner that it possibly could be, and a number of people admitted to it that were no ways intitled to be there. The officers unanimously gave it for their opinon that the garrison was not tenable, both for want of men and ammunition, though the Captain of artillery gave in his report at the same time that there was about two days of the latter left and no more, at the rate it had been expended that day. As the gentlemen did not think proper to propose terms to the Nabob, a retreat was proposed to be made the next day in the

afternoon, which was certainly time enough as there was no fear of the factory's being taken by storm, and Mr. Drake undertook in the meantime (or at least was desired by his Council) to secure the Company's books, money, plate and effects, which might have been done with the greatest ease imaginable, at least all that was valuable, as there was no want of shipping, many having been taken up by them on the Company's account, or people to carry them off, as may be judged by the many unnecessary people that were in the factory. However all this was neglected, though it is shrewdly suspected the Company's books were saved, which caused many disputes in the fleet afterwards, as also many severe reflections against some at the head of affairs. Mr. Manningham and Mr. Frankland had no sooner embarked, but early on Saturday morning the 19th June, dropt down with his ship, and was soon after followed by the rest of the shipping as farr as Govindpoor's Reach. This alarmed everyone, seeing their retreat going to be entirely cut off, and much more so, when intelligence was given that Mr. Drake was also on board the shipping (having from the beginning kept a boat in readiness, and his footman to defend it with a drawn scimitar) with Captain Grant the Adjutant General and many others. Those who first heard of it took the advantage of such boats as were lying then at the factory's back gates, and so made their escape also, leaving full 200 behind in the garrison, blacks and whites, a sacrifice to cover their retreat, not a single boat being left to carry them off. Proposals were made by several both to Mr. Drake and Mr. Manningham to consider of those unhappy sufferers that were left behind, and endeavoured to perswade them to send boats or vessells to bring them away, and not let them fall into the hands of a barbarous enraged enemy, from whom no quarter could be expected; however they were safe themselves, and were perfectly indifferent of what became of everyone else; so sent them no manner of assistance at all, although within sight of the town, not a league from it; which is something so scandalous and inhuman that it is a reflection upon the nation; nay, what is still worse, when they were informed that the Company's ship was run ashore, but might be gott off with the assistance of an anchor and cable, and might also be the preservation of the lives of those who were left in the garrison, even that



was refused being sent, though they had sufficient belonging to their ship to have done it, and not distressed themselves in the least; but gave for an excuse that the bad season of the year was coming on, and they did not know but they might be in want of them themselves; but how easy was that objection to be obviated, the outward bound shipping were daily expected, both Europe ships and country ones, that could have easily supplied their wants; however could not they have been easily supplied from Chandernagore or Chinsura. I know upon our applying for some soon after as well as many other necessarys, they were ready enough to assist us with everything they could with safety to themselves, and more was not to be expected. However, let the worst have happened, was it not their duty to run some little risk for the preservation of so many lives, such an unprecedented affair surely is not to be paralleled among the greatest barbarians, much more among Christians.

On Sunday the 20th June about 4 o'clock in the afternoon the factory was taken, when many lost their lives, some by the sword, and some drowned who thought to swim and save themselves; the remainder who bore arms about 147 were crammed at night in prison, and remained there till next morning, when the prison doors were opened to lett what remained alive out, whose number I think did not exceed 23. Those unhappy gentlemen's deaths, as well as those who dyed after Mr. Drake's and Mr. Manningham's departure, may be as much laid to their charge as if they had cut their throats; because they not only acted basely in quitting the garrison, and carrying away the shipping, but actually had it in their power to have saved every man's life afterwards, whereas most perished that were left after their departure, except those who gott intelligence first of their being gone and seized the boats. And thus was Calcutta lost by ill conduct, not to make use of harsher terms.

In what a situation affairs were in before the attack of the place, I have already mentioned; so that it now only rests I should ascertain the Company's losses, which by the nearest calculation is about ninety-five *laacks* of rupees, including the subordinates and *aurrungs*, cash, plate, goods, &c. (each *laack* is 100,000 rupees, and each rupee 2s. 3d.) besides the loss of a



year's investment, a ship's cargoe lying ready in the *godown*, packed and ready to send off, there were also 600 bales of broad cloth not cleared out, as likewise a quantity of copper, lead and iron, as for the ballance of cash it did not surpass 80,000 rupees, having been at a monstrous expence in making preparations for the siege. The enemy were no sooner in possession of the fort, than they begun to demolish the fortifications and carry away the useless guns, of which we had a very great quantity, though never gave ourselves any thoughts of mounting them, or ever repairing the garrison till such time as the enemy was marching to attack it. The plunder the enemy got from the inhabitants must have been immense and cannot fall short of 200 *laacks* of rupees. The White Town run almost in a line with the river, close to the north and south parts of the factory, and I believe might be about a mile in length, but of no great breadth (except a parcell of scatered houses are included) many of which were noble large buildings; and as for the Black Town which adjoined to the White, it could not be less than four miles in circumference, that part to the northward of the factory where most of the natives dwelled, it not being anything so considerable to the southward.

There is one thing I have omitted mentioning, the terrases of the curtains were in such a bad condition as would not admit of cannon being mounted there, particularly to the southward, owing to the beams being entirely decayed and rotten, which they could not be ignorant of, no cannon having been mounted there for some years; and upon endeavouring to mount some on this occasion one of the carriages almost broke through the terrass, so that the 49 guns we had mounted, for which new carriages had been made for the whole (except four) after the troubles commenced, were mostly placed on the bastions, and over the front gateway; for as we had little or nothing to fear by water, only 12 were placed on the Line of guns, and as the factory would not admit of mounting heavy cannon, neither would the time allow, or had we materials to make carriages, so were obliged to make use mostly of 9 and 6 pounders. It is true there were 3 or 4 eighteens, but were lost at the out batterys; not that there was any want of large cannon, having a great quantity of them in the garrison,



and that the gun carriages were one and all condemned two years ago the Governour and Council cannot dispute, for when Captain Jones¹ pressed them to make new ones, and get the old ones repaired; and represented to them the ill consequences of their not doing it, in case of a sudden attack (which he did by several letters to the Board) instead of their ordering it to be done, was desired not to trouble them with his nonsense, for they knew what was necessary to be done as well as he did. Colonel Scott² upon a survey of the factory, as well as Mr. Robbins³ also, recommended its being done; as likewise, that they would think of the necessary repairs of the fort, and represented the necessity of its being done to the Company.

Likewise another article which I have neglected to mention is their having applied to the Dutch and French for assistance as soon as they heard of the loss of Cossimbuzar, and were answered by the former, that as they belonged to a trading nation must beg to be excused interfering with any of our disputes with the Government, more particularly as their instructions forbid it, for by their doing it they might involve themselves in the same troubles hereafter; but advised us to accommodate matters as soon as possible, and that they were willing to assist us in that, and use their utmost efforts to bring things to a happy conclusion, whereas our acting to the contrary might prove very prejudicial to the rest of the trading nations. The French on the contrary in their letter thought we were most bitterly ill-used, and offered to enter on an offensive and defensive alliance with us, but that as they judged their factory to be much more capable of making a defence than ours, recommended our quitting ours and joining them, by which means we might prevent the Nabob's marching down to Calcutta; their flattering, insinuating, deceitfull stile, pleased some of our gentlemen abundantly better than the other's blunt way of writing, as it answered their purposes better; accordingly served the first with a formal protest, and wrote the

¹ See letter from Captain Jasper Leigh Jones to the Council, Fort William, dated August 4, 1755.

² Colonel Scot died in 1754.

³ In Letter to Court of January 4, 1754, paragraph 13, it is stated that Mr. O'Hara was sent to Calcutta with Mr. Robins.



latter a very genteel letter, thanking them for their offers of assistance, and as we were in very great want of ammunition, requested they would spare us a quantity of powder and shott. To this we had no reply till the Nabob was near Calcutta, when the Frenchmen put off their grimace, assuring us of the impossibility of their complying with our demand as they might provoke the Nabob by it; and considering his large army on foot, might take it into his head upon giving him the least umbrage to attack their factory also, as it was reported he was going to do ours; and in such a case they should be in great want of stores themselves; so wishing the gentlemen success in their undertakings, assured them how much they were their humble servants. That they should expect the French would assist us, and be dupes to that fantastical nation, is most intollerable; a sett of people whose breach of faith we have so often experienced, not only in Europe, but at all our foreign Settlements likewise. However when the Nabob demanded supplys of powder from them soon after, they could then find sufficient to spare him 150 barrells, and could connive also at the desertion of near 30 men which joined the Nabob's army before the taking of Calcutta, and commanded the artillery under Monsieur Saint Jacque.

The fleet remained in Govindpoor Reach till the 21st June when they were joined with 2 or 3 country ships just arrived from different ports and in the evening dropt down for Fulta; but their apprehensions and fright was such in passing Tanna Fort which fired a few random shott at them as they passed, that many ran foul of each other and were lost; a list of which I have hereunto annexed, and among the rest was the *Neptune* snow with near 3 *laacks* of rupees in cash on board her, besides a great quantity of valuable effects. And this happened within gun shott of the whole fleet, and might have been easily saved, as many others likewise, by any of the large ships dropping an anchor near them, to have covered and prevented their being plundered, till the flood came in; for as they run ashore upon the ebb, they in all probability would have gott off then, whereas they were lost for want of a little assistance which indeed was as soon to be expected from the enemy as from Mr. Drake and many others. Everyone was greatly discontented at this conduct



of theirs and complained greatly; it was a most mellancholly sight to see such a number of men, women and children, without a change of cloths, victuals or drink, and many obliged to be exposed to the inclemency of the weather day and night, the shipping were so much crouded. The 25th and 26th the fleet arrived at Fulta, and in their passage down were joined by many of our inhabitants that had made their escape from Chander-nagore and Hughly; as likewise the begining of July with those that were at Luckypoor and Ballasore; and at the end of the month with those from Dacca. The ship *Delawar* also arrived from Madrass with Major Killpatrick and a reinforcement of 226 men. During this time several letters were sent to our Settlements at Madrass and Bombay, to demand succours from them and to forward letters to Europe, that the Company might be informed of the unhappy situation of their affairs in Bengall, and for fear the *patamars* should miscarry it was proposed one of the Company's sloops should be dispatched to Madrass, and a servant sent to represent our distressed condition; to hurry them as much as possible to send us sufficient forces and ammunition to re-establish ourselves. Mr. Manningham had interest enough among the Council to get himself appointed for that embassy, which caused great disgust in the fleet; it was remonstrated to Mr. Drake that he was a very improper man to send of such an errand, both on account of his scandalous conduct at Calcutta, which he would be more employed in endeavouring to vindicate than minding the Company's affairs; besides the advantage it would give him of writing to Europe, and representing circumstances just as he pleased in regard to the loss of the place; of which he could be no judge, having kept out of the way from the beginning of the troubles. Mr. Drake promised fair that he should not go, however as every one knew him to be a man of no manner of resolution, a kind of a written remonstrance was sent him, signed by many Company's servants and others in the fleet requesting Mr. Manningham might not be sent; as may be seen by the accompanying copy of it;¹ upon which Mr. Drake gave his word he should not go, however, that only made people who were acquainted with his character more apt to think that he

¹ See No. 49.



would, as Mr. Drake was unhappily a little given to deceive by fair promises, and as many expected so it turned out. Mr. Manningham was sent, and as it was necessary that some one should accompany him, he requested it might be Monsieur Labaume and Mr. Nixon, the latter his own writer, and the former a French officer at Chandernagore, who was confined there for taking a drubbing from another officer, and made his escape in disguise to Calcutta; a very proper deputy to represent the Honourable Company's affairs. However, they went to Vizagapatnam and there landed; and Mr. Manningham after trifling away near a month, found the fatigue too great for him to proceed overland to Madrass, so sent Monsieur Labaume there; but how he was received, I don't know, or what success he met with; however, upon his return they bestowed a captain's commission on him, as a reward for the trouble he had taken, though directly contrary to the Company's positive orders that a Roman Catholick should be employed in their service; and so severe particularly in regard to the military, that they are not even allowed to marry a Roman Catholick. The Company's servants being one and all set aside and the preference given to a foreigner caused much uneasiness; however Mr. Drake and his Council were extremely indifferent about that, they knew the one could make no discoveries to their prejudice, and the others might have represented them in their proper colours. The junior servants' antipathy at last grew so great against some of the Council's ill conduct, as made many use all possible means to get clear of them, and as they refused any one's quitting the place, except they chose to throw up the Company's service (which no one could do in the situation affairs stood without being severely reflected on) begun scrutinizing a little to know by what authority they acted, and whether or not by the loss of Calcutta and the evacuation of its dependancys they had not forfeited their stations, particularly those of them who run away and behaved so shamefully afterwards in obliging the captains (as owners) of the vessels, to drop down the river and leave so many unhappy persons behind; as likewise refusing the least aid and assistance to the ships that unfortunately run ashore, either by sending their boats to help save the people that were in them and their effects, or to help get the vessels off. In answer



to which Mr. Drake directed the Secretary to write to the junior servants and inform them that he did not any longer look upon themselves as Governour and Council, but as agents for the Company.¹ A copy of which note I have taken for the reader's perusal; however a short time afterwards they thought to continue their titles would do them no prejudice, so took that of Governour and Council of Bulramgurry, a little factory we had near Ballasore, and were obliged to evacuate, but the Marattoes, professed enemys to the Government, (and are little better than robbers) undertook to protect us if we were inclined to hoist our flagg there again, and as it was a long way from Muxadavad, and little to be feared from the Nabob in case we did it it was agreed upon that it should be done, and Mr. Boddam sent there as chief, to provide provisions and necessarys for the fleet of men-of-war, which were daily expected, but the gentlemen at the Coast were not so expeditious as might be expected on such an occasion, for it was the middle of October before the ships were dispatched, a time of year when it could not be expected they would arrive in less than six weeks or two months, whereas had they been dispatched when they first heard of the loss of Calcutta, they might have run it with ease in 6 or 8 days. His Majesty's sloop the *Kingfisher* at last arrived and brought us the agreeable news that the gentlemen at Madrass finding no appearance of a war in Europe between France and England, were making preparations to send us 750 Europeans and 3,000 *topazes*,² with a proper Train of artillery, by Admiral Watson's squadron, part of which forces arrived the beginning of December in the *Kent*, and may be imagined raised every one's spirits to the highest degree.

As for what was done after the King's ships and Colonel Clive arrived, I shall leave till another opportunity, and shall only mention that on the arrival of the sloop-of-war we hoisted English colours just without the Dutch bounds at Fulta, when Mr. Drake seemed to wake from his lethargy and affixed an advertisement at every publick place, wherein he desired to be accused in writing, and know in what he had been culpable and

¹ This paper, which must not be confused with No. 58, appears to be missing.

² Portuguese or half-caste gunners.



guilty, during the late troubles. Everyone endeavoured to dissuade him from it by proving the inconsistency of his request; the Council in particular told him that the Consultations would make appear how far they judged him blameable, besides as they could not be judges in their own cause did not think they had any authority to oblige people to deliver their sentiments to them, and that the Company only had power to do it. As the advertisement is an original of its kind, I have taken the pains to copy it,¹ to entertain the reader, and as I thought it was taking a shamefull advantage of the junior servants, who he wanted to intimidate, thinking that if they neglected taxing him according to his request, they would not be able to do it afterwards or any credit given to what they might write to their friends in Europe, I took the liberty of answering it, wherein I acquainted the Council Board of the ill consequences attending a junior servant's taxing a member of the Board of ill conduct without a sanction from the Company for their so doing, and that they must not conclude from no one's doing it at present that they should not, whenever the Company thought proper to demand it. One thing I have omitted to observe is the great mortality among the military in particular, during the time we remained at Fulta, whether owing to the badness of the water and diet or to the unwholesomeness of the place I know not, but a great many continued dying daily from the fleet's first arrival till October, though I must confess no manner of care was neglected, both in administering medicines to the sick and providing them with proper places to live during their sickness, a vessell having been taken up for the occasion, as also many others for the conveniency of the Company's servants and other inhabitants, and a table found them at first at the Company's expence, but when that was found to be rather too extravagant an allowance of 50 rupees per month extraordinary was allowed every European inhabitant; however in spite of all their care when the King's ships arrived we could not muster above 90 men, including Major Killpatrick's detachment and all that had joined us, who made their escape from the Moors. I have also forgott to mention that though the Council did not any ways think themselves secure till the Madrass detach-

¹ See Drake's letter to Council dated 17-25 January, 1757.



ment arrived, still they had the same itching after plunder as ever, and upon hearing two Moors' vessels were arrived in the river sent down three armed vessells to take them, one of which was taken loaded with salt and Masulipatam bale goods; the other proved Dutch property. And in regard to intelligence we were as ignorant about what the enemy were doing as we were while in Calcutta; they did not attempt to molest us so the Council gave themselves very little trouble. In regard to their other transactions, it was reported Seir Raja Dowlett went against the Purnea Nabob as soon as he returned to Muxadavad from his conquest of Calcutta, and marched beyond Rajamull, in order to cross the great Pudda, and enter the Nabob of Purnea's territories. Some say in doing which he was routed, others again that he gott the better of the Purnea Nabob, who died soon after; the truth of which I shall mention when I can do it with a certainty. Upon our first arrival at Fulta we found provisions and necessarys very scarce, though soon after, upon the Nabob's hearing (as is reported) that the ships intended leaving the river, ordered the *buzars* or markets to be opened, that he might prevent our plundering and get rid of us the sooner, and as the country was farmed by Monickchund the Nabob's *duan* (who was appointed President at Calcutta after it was taken) he directed the *buzars* to be continued, as long as we stayed at Fulta, when we had plenty of everything; indeed the *buzars* were stopped once or twice, owing to the gentlemen's stopping a parcell of salt boats, but upon their being cleared, again, we got provisions as usual.

110. *Extracts from a letter from the Select Committee, Fort Saint George, to Admiral Watson, dated 13 November, 1756.*¹

We received late last night by the way of Bombay His Majesty's Declaration of War against France, which was enclosed to Mr. Bouchier in a letter from the Secret Committee of the East India Company, and was proclaimed on the 17th May in England.

* * * * *

If you judge the taking of Chandernagore practicable without much loss it would certainly be a step of great utility to the

¹ Received at Calcutta, January 13, 1757.



Company's affairs and take off in great measure the bad effects of the loss of Calcutta by putting the French in a position equally disadvantageous.

We hope that this enterprise should you think it proper to be proceeded on, may be effected, as well as the operations for the re-establishment of the Company's own Settlements, so speedily that Colonel Clive with the troops he carried with him may return to this coast early in the next year.

III. *Extracts from a letter from Select Committee, Fort Saint George, to Select Committee, Fort William, dated 14 November, 1756.*¹

GENTLEMEN,—Last night we received news from Bombay that war was declared against France on the 17th May.

* * * * *

Mr. Bouchier writes that he is sending the *Royal Duke* with troops to your assistance and we learn by private advices that the *Revenge* and *Orixa* were also to be despatched to you and that the number of men intended to be embarked was about 500.

We hope that this reinforcement added to the men you had before will be sufficient for the protection of Calcutta, and therefore we have directed Colonel Clive to return here early in the year with the troops he carried or as many as can be possibly spared.

We have desired Mr. Watson if he thinks it practicable to dispossess the French of Chandernagore, not doubting but it will be of infinite service in your affairs. Should you be of this opinion we desire that you will enforce our recommendation.

We are, &c. &c.

III.2. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Council at Hoogley to the Supreme Council at Batavia, dated Fort Gustavus, 24 November, 1756.*²

Under the impression that the expulsion of the English would have had some kind of influence on the obtaining of silk, we had communicated our ideas on the subject to your servants [of

¹ A letter to the same effect was sent to Colonel Clive, but Colonel Adlerson was requested to delay the public declaration of war until all the British garrisons could be first informed.

² State Archives at the Hague.



Cossimbazar] in our letter of the 7th July, but by their reply of the 19th of that month they gave us plausible reasons to the contrary, *viz.* that the English before the present rupture had negotiated for a portion of their investment in advance, and that this as well as a portion of the money advanced by the English brokers had been stolen by the Nawab's people and had disappeared.

This plundered silk has drawn your Honourable Company into this delightful trouble, and from this necessarily results most of the misfortune which we have so far suffered in the course of our affairs, although your servants at Cossimbazar seem to assert in their letter of the 26th ultimo that our before-mentioned distribution of money to the mediators [i.e., between the Dutch and the Nawab]¹ was the probable cause. We hope that your Excellencies will see the groundlessness and folly of this accusation, when we, to continue the story of the silk, tell you that the principal nobles have tried to force both us and the French to take it over, and, on the refusal of your servants at Cossimbazar to do so, have uttered the threats and made the exactions mentioned in the Cossimbazar letters of the 15th, 18th, 20th and 30th August, 5th, 17th and 24th September and especially in that of the 26th October, whilst, the matter having not yet been concluded, we entreat your Excellencies for an opinion as promptly as possible.

* * * * *

The most important of the up-country matters having been dealt with in our respectful letter of the 5th July last, we request permission to act in accordance therewith. At the same time we mention in this letter a few further particulars, which were passed over in silence in our last letter for the sake of brevity, or which came to our knowledge or occurred only after despatch of the same.

According to the news from Cossimbazar by the 7th April of this year, before the Nawab Aliverdi Khan laid down his head, the aunt of Siraj-uddaula, the widow of the very wealthy Nawajis Mahomet Khan, was known to her nephew the young Nawab, to have put herself in a position to hold her own against him, but he, not troubling himself about trifles, forced her with her head servants, according to the Cossimbazar letters of the 10th and 20th

¹ See below.



April, to put her head in his lap, and immediately after, before the body of his before-mentioned grandfather had been interred, caused himself to be proclaimed Nawab of Bengal, Behar and Orissa.

Thereupon followed the persecution of the English mentioned in our respectful letters—the first news thereof having reached us by Cossimbazar advices of the 3rd, 4th and 6th June, and amongst other matters that the officer of the before-mentioned fort there had in desperation put an end to himself, that the private soldiers had been put in irons, and the writers locked up in their rooms on rice and water. The book-keeper¹ at Dacca writes under date of 7th June and 1st July that the British were surrounded by 4,000 cavalry and musketeers. Subsequently, that only the military were taken to the Moorish fort but our other friends had obtained permission to transfer themselves with their women folk to the French factory, from whence later on they got away to their fugitive fellow countrymen at Fulta. In the same manner also those of Balasore who had retreated thence in good time. The rest who were taken prisoners at Calcutta have had, in the first fury, a dreadful time of it, about 160 prisoners being sent into the so-called Black Hole or *Donkergat* [Dark or Black Hole] in which there was not room for 40 prisoners, and there shut up. Thus they were trampled underfoot or suffocated, all but 15 or 16 who were brought out half dead next morning and being fettered were led by the Nawab in his suite in triumph to Muxadavad. However on their arrival they were at once liberated as well as the ex-chief of Cossimbazar with his Second and the others who had had the misfortune to fall into the hands of the Moors.

* * * * *

From the above-mentioned letters written by the Nawab to the Director your Excellencies will see that the Nawab had employed the Moor merchant Coja Wazid as his agent, that he sent him to us to communicate his wishes both in respect of what he required in the attack on the English and also afterwards concerning the contribution we were to pay, letting no one else interfere in the matter but allowing him to act alone. Thus we were unable to pay the promised remuneration of 40,000 florins [rupees] to any

¹ Daniel Aukema.



one but him, as he made use of no other of the proposed mediators. Coja Wazid restored us the balance after keeping 14,500 florins as his share by the order of the Nawab, as appears by our Minutes of the 16th July. As the others might be able to do us much service or dis-service we afterwards divided it as below :—

Rupees 10,000 to Raja Durlabh Ram,
4,000 to Rayrayan,
4,000 to Mohan Lal,
5,000 to Hugli Naib Faujdar,¹

and the remaining 2,500 to Coja Wazid as a present to his broker and other servants, as appears by our Minutes of the 17th August and 12th October. Consequently as far as we know it has been distributed to the satisfaction of all who participated therein, for though by our letter of the 26th October your servants at Cossimbazar received full privileges for the purchase of silk, they ascribed the unfavourable course of our affairs to this very distribution. We take the liberty to leave it to your consideration whether we had any part or share therein, for supposing the above-named agent had wanted to keep the whole sum for himself and to further reduce the portions originally allotted to his proposed partners what could we have done to prevent it? We allowed him the amount and had nothing to do with anyone else. If the division is not now exactly as it should be, it is the fault of the Agent or rather of the Nawab who employed him.

Although the Nawab verbally promised the Director, in the presence of M. Armenault, the Head Administrator, at the time when they paid him their respects, to give us a general *parwana* confirming our privileges on his arrival at Muxadavad, still we have not yet been able to obtain it, and according to the reports of the Cossimbazar officials, their solicitations dated the 19th and 20th July have been so far fruitless.

* * * * *

The remaining nations carrying on business here have, as well as the French, had to make a free offering according to the degree of each one's ability :

¹ Probably Nand Kumar.

The Danes	Rupees 25,000
The Portuguese	5,000
The Emdeners	5,000.

After the English who had been expelled from the country had arrived at Fulta, they wrote us several letters for assistance in the shape of anchors and ropes, provisions, clothes, &c. We determined unanimously in our Secret Consultations of the 28th June and the 12th July not to yield to our compassion for them in their misfortune at present. Still since then having remembered that the French are inveterate enemies of the English we assisted the latter as much as we could, and on the 20th of the last-mentioned month we came to a secret resolution, in consideration of the close alliances between their nation and ours, to provide them with some food and clothes, intending to charge it to the English Company and also the anchors, 17 in number, which they took from Fulta for their use.

Before we leave this subject we request your Excellencies for orders for our guidance in case the English come to make reprisals and the Nawab should then order us, as he probably will, to bar their passage on his account by water and by land. For how are we to manage if he again comes and imposes a fine in cash for contravention of his, or as he calls them, the King's orders?

* * * * *

Concerning the foreign nations we may add, with reference to the English, that they still stay in the environs of Fulta, where owing to the unaccustomed manner of living and the bad drinking water they have had much sickness and death amongst their people. Still in the course of last month they have received a reinforcement of 250 men from Coromandel, but it is not sufficient to undertake successfully the recovery of the town of Calcutta, seeing that the Moors have had the same considerably strengthened and have garrisoned it with a formidable force of about 13,000 men. Therefore there would seem to be no better course for them than to try to come to some amicable arrangement with the Nawab, of which certainly there has been some talk, but the



news which arrives here is so untrustworthy that we are not able to give any information about this at present.

The Council at Pondicherry and the French at Chandernagore not having approved, during this last year, the renewed and amplified cartel for the restoration of deserters on both sides mentioned in our respectful letter to your Excellencies of the 10th January last, we have been forced, in conformity with our resolutions of the 20th and 30th April last, to cancel it, and, at the request of that nation, to leave in full power and force the old one concluded in the year 1732 and the treaty renewed in the year 1750, since there was nothing else to be done.

The said nation has had its factory at Chandernagore considerably fortified during the troubles between the Nawab and the English, and has completed its fourth regular bastion, the foundation of which had been laid as early as 1750. Also all the houses which were standing somewhat near to the fort were pulled down in order to have them out of the way in case of necessity, and to make themselves as safe as possible not only against the Nawab but also the English, who supposing they make reprisals against the Moors, may, in consequence of the present disturbances in Europe, pay them also a visit as they pass.

We have this year received only two ships from Europe, but as a set-off we have received several from Pondicherry which left here again last September.

The *Gloire* and *Indien* [are at Chandernagore] and also the *Favorite* and the *Saint Contest*, of which the first and last are standing ready to depart for Europe, even if they should not carry any other cargo than that which the French themselves may have loaded them with, though they [the French] have done no business these last few years.

The Danes have received only one ship, named the *King of Denmark* from Tranquebar, which is to return before long, consequently this nation is getting on very badly, and the Emdeners still worse, for they have lost their vessel the *Prince Henry of Prussia*, (which they, disregarding our letter of the 10th January last, had hired out), whilst it was coming up the river, in such a way that scarcely any of the cargo could be saved.

The Portuguese trading here have not received a vessel for three



CSL

BENGAL IN 1756-57

years, possibly owing to the troubles which have taken place in their capital of Lisbon. Finally it is not improbable that all the lately arrived competitors [for the trade of the country] will be getting very tired of Bengal.

Signed, A Bisdrom, &c.

CSL-AS-5447-1(R)
AS004635

954.4708 BEN

END OF VOL. I.

19759
7