



for from his mean opinion of us, as he had been frequently heard to say he did not imagine there was ten thousand men in all Frenghistan, meaning Europe, and had no idea of our attempting to return by force.¹

And M. Jean Law says :

‘Siraj-uddaula had the most extravagant contempt for Europeans ; a pair of slippers, said he, is all that is needed to govern them. Their number, according to him, could not in all Europe come up to more than ten or twelve thousand men. What fear, then, could he have of the English nation, which assuredly could not present to his mind more than a quarter of the whole? He was, therefore, very far from thinking that the English could entertain the idea of re-establishing themselves by force. To humiliate themselves—to offer money with one hand, and receive joyously with the other his permission to re-establish themselves—was the whole project which he could naturally suppose them to have formed. It is to this idea, without doubt, that the tranquillity in which he left them at Fulta is due.’²

Besides, the British found means to have it suggested to the Nawab that they were waiting at Fulta only until favourable weather allowed them to set out for Madras,³ and Manik Chand, whose tenants owned the country round Fulta,⁴ was probably not averse to the harvest which the stay of the British brought into his tenants’ hands, and so encouraged the impression the British wished to produce.

At first the French⁵ and Dutch,⁶ though they were distressed at the disgrace which had fallen upon the European name, were not altogether sorry at the misfortunes of their great commercial rival; and whilst they behaved with great kindness to the refugees, they thought that the expulsion of the British meant increased commercial prosperity for themselves. They were soon to be undeceived.

On the 24th June the Nawab left Calcutta, and arrived at Hugli on the 25th.⁷ He surrounded the town with his forces, and sent word to Mr. Bisdorn, and also to M. Renault at Chandernagore, to pay him a large contribution under penalty of having their flagstaffs cut down and their fortifications destroyed. From the Dutch he demanded 20 *lakhs* of rupees. Rather than pay this exorbitant demand they threatened to leave the country, but after

24th-25th
June, 1756.

¹ ‘Reflections,’ p. 58.

² Vol. III., p. 176.

³ Vol. I., p. 301, and Vol. II., p. 164.

⁴ Vol. I., p. 301.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 55, and Vol. II., p. 79.

⁷ Vol. I., p. 33.



a time, by the intercession of Coja Wājīd, it was reduced to $4\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs,¹ which sum included the *nazarānah*, or complimentary present due on the Nawab's accession, and also a reward to Coja Wājīd for his friendly offices.² This was advanced by the Seths at the extremely moderate rate of 9 per cent. per annum.³

The French, after some rather delicate negotiations, in which the two parties nearly came to blows, were let off with the smaller fine of $3\frac{1}{2}$ lakhs, and the lesser nations had all to pay proportionate fines—the Danes 25,000 rupees, the Portuguese and the Emdeners 5,000 each.⁴ The French had, unluckily for themselves, recently received a supply of money from home for trade purposes by the ship *Saint Contest*, practically the whole of which was taken by the Nawab.⁵ They ascribed the fact that they were let off with a smaller fine than the Dutch to the greater wealth of the latter; the British imputed it to the assistance which they believed the French had given the Nawab.

It was understood that the favour shown them [the French] in comparison with the Dutch after the destruction of our Settlements, when he affected to fine both nations for augmenting the works about their respective Factories, was in consideration of their having secretly furnished artillery when he marched against Calcutta. This was a suspicion in the Indies, and as such only is mentioned; but it is very certain that the letters wrote home to Europe were entirely in Suraja Dowlet's favour, containing a very unfair and, which was much worse, a very plausible, but utterly false, representation of the grounds of the quarrel, which was published to our prejudice in all the foreign gazettes.⁶

Mr. Watts' second accusation has much more semblance of truth than the former, but the considerations which brought about the fall of Chandernagore were rather national than particular, so we need not dwell further upon this question.

It is argued that if the Nawab had really intended to carry out the supposed policy of his grandfather—namely, to reduce the British, French, and Dutch to the position of the Armenians—he

¹ Another account says 5 lakhs (Vol. II., p. 79).

² Vol. I., pp. 28, 304.

³ Vol. I., p. 32.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 79.

⁵ This is Renault's own account (Vol. III., p. 253), and probably more correct than Holwell's statement that Rāi Durlabh stood security for them (Vol. II., p. 17).

⁶ Watts' 'Memoir of the Revolution,' p. 29. See also 'Translations from Continental Papers,' Vol. III., p. 116 *et seq.*



should now have destroyed the fortifications at Chandernagore and Chinsurah; but either he had never had any intention of carrying out this policy, or, with the instability of character natural to a man of his temperament, he had changed his mind. Probably also he was now convinced that the formidable nature of these fortifications had been exaggerated, and thought that Chandernagore and Chinsurah, lying ready to his hand whenever he chose to take them, he was more likely to benefit his exchequer by putting them to ransom than by expelling their inhabitants, in which latter case the booty was certain to fall into the hands of the native soldiers rather than into his own. Other reasons have been mentioned by various persons for his desire to get back to Murshidabad—e.g., that the *Wazir* of the Emperor was again threatening an attack, and that his presence at the capital was needed to hold the Nawab of Purneah in check. The former was only a rumour, and the latter is improbable, as during the Rains no military operations could be undertaken in Purneah.

Sirāj-uddaula now set free Messrs. Watts and Collet, who arrived in Chandernagore on the 28th June,¹ delighted to exchange the ill-treatment of the Nawab's officers for the hospitality of the French. With them he sent orders to M. Renault to see that they were safely despatched to Madras,² and he wrote a semi-apologetic letter to Mr. Pigot, the Chief of that Settlement.³ After this, having received the Dutch Chief and Second in *Darbar*,⁴ he marched slowly to Murshidabad, where he arrived on the 11th July, declaring pompously that he had punished the British for their insolence, and made the French and Dutch pay the expenses of the expedition.⁵ To the Emperor at Delhi he wrote letters boasting of

the most glorious achievement that had been performed in Indostan since the days of Tamerlane.⁶

The French and Dutch at Cossimbazar now felt the full effects of the misfortune which had befallen the Europeans in the destruction of their leading Settlement. The Nawab called upon them to buy up the goods belonging to the British, but knowing

¹ Vol. I., p. 48.

² *Ibid.*, p. 196.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

⁵ Vol. III., p. 172.

⁶ Orme MSS., India II., p. 79



better than he what might be expected in the not distant future, they refused to do so, and Mr. Bisdom even went so far as to prohibit the private inhabitants of Chinsurah from doing anything which might involve them in a quarrel with the British. He could at that distance act boldly, but the Europeans at Cossimbazar had to show more circumspection when they saw

11th July,
1756.

‘the tyrant reappear in triumph at Murshidabad, little thinking of the punishment which Providence was preparing for his crimes, and to make which still more striking he was yet to have some further successes.’¹

Sirāj-uddaula now gave full vent to his violence and greed, and all the inhabitants of Murshidabad, natives and Europeans alike, were delighted when they heard that his cousin, Shaukat Jang, had resumed his rebellious attitude. Shaukat Jang had been secretly intriguing at Delhi, and had obtained a *farmān* from the *Wazīr* appointing him Nawab of Bengal. Popular opinion was in his favour; but Ghulām Husain Khān, who was at his Court, represents him as a madman, who was accustomed to stupefy himself with drugs, and who boasted that he would not limit himself to the conquest of Bengal, but would place a new Emperor on the throne of Delhi, and then, conquering everything before him, proceed to Candahar and Khorassan, where, he said,

‘I intend to take up my residence, as the climate of Bengal does not suit my state of health.’²

As a preliminary to this magnificent scheme he dismissed the old officers of his army with such indignities that he nearly drove the latter into mutiny, and though this was avoided by the disgrace of his favourite, Habīb Beg, who had instigated his excesses, the Prince and his remaining officers thoroughly distrusted each other. One of his Hindu officers, named Lāla, whom he had with difficulty been restrained from flogging, had taken refuge at Murshidabad, and Sirāj-uddaula, alarmed at what he heard from him and others, now determined to test the exact state of affairs. Accordingly, he sent one of his courtiers, named Rās Bihārī, to take charge of certain *faujdarīs* in Purneah. Shaukat Jang gave him a very rough reception, and sent him back with a verbal message that he

¹ Vol. III., p. 172.

² ‘Seir Mutaqherin,’ vol. ii., p. 197.



intended to assume the *Sūbahdārī* of Bengal, but would spare his cousin's life on account of their relationship, and would permit him to retire to Dacca and there live as a private person.¹ Sirāj-uddaula immediately resolved on war, and collected his army towards the beginning of October. His own violence, however, made matters difficult for him. It is said that he slapped Jagat Seth in the face in open *Darbār*, and then imprisoned him.² Mir Jafar and other officers refused to march until this wrong had been redressed, and Jagat Seth was set free; but the army was in a dangerous temper.³ To protect himself against a possible outbreak Sirāj-uddaula had summoned his deputy at Patna, the Hindu Rāmnaṛaīn, to his assistance. The malcontents hoped that Rāmnaṛaīn would not come, but he obeyed the Nawab's summons, and all they could now hope for was that some accident might happen to the Nawab during the course of the campaign. It was short and decisive. The rival armies met not very far from Rajmahal.⁴ The fighting began on the 16th October, and Shaukat Jang charging a body of troops, in the midst of which he thought he saw his cousin, was shot dead on the spot.⁵ His army immediately gave way, and the whole Province of Purneah submitted without further resistance.⁶ Two officers, Dīn Muhammad and Ghulām Shāh, who claimed rewards on the ground that it was their men who had killed Shaukat Jang, were banished by Sirāj-uddaula. The latter asserted that he had ordered his cousin to be taken alive, that he might pardon him and make him his friend.⁷

Sirāj-uddaula had obtained some inkling of the ill-feeling against him, and so remained a few miles in the rear of his army, to which he sent various of his friends, including his cousin Mīrān, son of Mir Jafar, dressed like himself. It was this precaution which caused Shaukat Jang's wild charge and death,

¹ It was probably the recollection of this offer which made Sirāj-uddaula, after his capture, hope that Mir Jafar would treat him in the same manner.

² Secret Committee Consultations at Fulta, 5 September, 1756.

³ Vol. III., p. 174.

⁴ Mr. Long says at Baldiabari, near Nawabganj, in Pargana Kankjol.

⁵ 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 213. Vol. II., p. 53, and Scrafton, p. 51.

⁶ For an absolutely incorrect account of the fighting in Purneah, see Vol. II.,

P. 55.

⁷ Vol., II. p. 69.



and the Nawab thought that the success of his device proved that he was the favourite child of Fortune. He returned to Murshidabad in triumph, and there received the Emperor's *farman* confirming him as Nawab of Bengal. This cost him, it is said, 2 *kror*, 2 *lakhs*, and 50,000 rupees,¹ but its arrival at this moment confirmed him in his erroneous belief.

At Murshidabad, Mr. Surgeon Forth tells us, Sirāj-uddaula now took an account of his wealth, which amounted to 68 *krors* of rupees exclusive of his jewels.² This, according to the exchange of the time, which was 2s. 6d. to the rupee, would be £85,000,000. Other accounts put his wealth at the somewhat more modest sum of £40,000,000.

Nothing further of importance happened at Murshidabad until news arrived of the reinforcements which the British had received from Madras, and the Europeans had to submit with what equanimity they could to the insults they received daily.

'It can be guessed what we had to suffer, we and the Dutch, at Cossimbazar. There were continual demands on demands, insults on insults, on the part of the officers and soldiers of the country, who, forming their behaviour on that of their master, thought they could not sufficiently show their contempt for everything which was European. We could not even go out of our grounds without being exposed to some annoyance.'³

Yet in the midst of all this triumph Sirāj-uddaula did not know that Shaukat Jang had more than avenged his own death.

'The rash valour of the young Nawab of Purneah, in delivering Siraj-uddaula from the only enemy he had to fear in the country, made it clear to all Bengal that the English were the only Power which could bring about the change that everyone was longing for.'⁴

¹ Vol. II., p. 53, and 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 197.

² Vol. II., p. 53.

³ Vol. III., p. 175.

⁴ Vol. III., p. 174.



CHAPTER IX.

THE STAY AT FULTA.

The climate was more fatal in India than the enemy.¹

WE have no connected account of the life of the refugees at Fulta, and the following disconnected fragments of information are all that I have been able to collect on the subject:

Mr. Drake and the fleet arrived at Fulta on the 26th June.^{26th June, 1756.} They had written the previous day to the Dutch for assistance in provisions and marine stores, but though a certain amount was given them secretly, help was at first formally refused, and it was not until the 20th July that the Dutch Council decided to supply the British, on the ground

'that the French were the inveterate enemies of the English.'²

The artist William Hodges tells us that Mr. Robert Gregory (afterwards a person of wealth and distinction in England) was the messenger chosen to be sent up to the French and Dutch. Under cover of a storm he succeeded in passing Tanna and Calcutta unnoticed by the Moors. The French politely refused any assistance, but Mr. Bisdom sent down a Dutch vessel under Captain Van Staten laden with all kinds of provisions. At that very time Mr. Bisdom's own house was so filled with refugees from Calcutta that he and his wife were compelled to sleep on board a *bajra*³ on the river.⁴

Meanwhile, the condition of the British at Fulta was most miserable.

¹ Vol. III., p. 94.

³ Indian house-boat.

² Vol. I., pp. 25, 37, 306.

⁴ 'Travels in India, 1780-1783,' p. 19 note.



¹ For some time no provisions could be procured, but as soon as the Nabob's army left Calcutta the country people ventured to supply them.

² The want of convenient shelter, as well as the dread of being surprized, obliged them all to sleep on board the vessels, which were so crowded that all lay promiscuously on the decks, without shelter from the rains of the season, and for some time without a change of raiment, for none had brought any store away, and these hardships, inconsiderable as they may seem, were grievous to persons of whom the greatest part had lived many years in the gentle ease of India.¹ Sickness likewise increased their sufferings, for the lower part of Bengal between the two arms of the Ganges² is the most unhealthy country in the world, and many died of a malignant fever which infected all the vessels.³ But instead of alleviating their distresses by that spirit of mutual goodwill which is supposed to prevail amongst companions in misery, everyone turned his mind to invidious discussions of the causes which had produced their misfortune. All seemed to expect a day when they should be restored to Calcutta. The younger men in the Company's service, who had not held any post in the Government, endeavoured to fix every kind of blame on their superiors, whom they wished to see removed from their stations, to which they expected to succeed. At the same time the Members of Council accused one another, and these examples gave rise to the same spirit of invective amongst those who could derive no benefit from such declamations.⁴

As the fugitives seemed at first to think of nothing but quarrelling with each other, it is difficult to understand why they stayed at Fulta. Holwell asserted that they thought it advisable to wait until one of their number had been sent forward to Madras to explain their conduct in a favourable light,⁵ but Drake explains that they had no provisions for the voyage at first, and when with great difficulty they were at last procured, Major Killpatrick arrived with a small reinforcement and promises of further assistance, which, if it had come a little earlier, would have enabled them to recapture Calcutta. The news of their restoration would then have arrived as early as the news of the disaster, and so have obviated any chance of a commercial panic in London.⁶

Whatever their reasons may have been, they determined to stay

¹ The condition of the rest may be judged by that of the Governor himself (Vol. II., p. 144).

² The branches known as the rivers Hugli and Ganges.

³ 'About two-thirds of the men died of fluxes and fevers. The European ladies held out best of all, for few or none of them died, which was surprising, as they scarce had cloathes to wear' (Vol. III., p. 87).

⁴ Orme MSS., O.V., 66, p. 96.

⁵ Vol. II., p. 44.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 155.



at Fulta, and took a number of ships into the Company's service, amongst which were the *Doddalay*, *Speedwell*, *Lively*, *Nancy*, and *Fort William*. On the last mentioned Mr. Drake, with an almost impudent lack of humour, took up his abode. The natives¹ in the neighbourhood soon began to send in provisions, and the Council at first provided the Europeans with food, but later on made them a diet allowance of 50 rupees a month.²

Within the first week in July the refugees from Jagdea and July, 1756. Balasore safely rejoined the fleet at Fulta,³ and the members of Council then present determined to open negotiations with the Nawab for their restoration, so as to conceal their real reasons for staying at Fulta. Accordingly, they wrote to Messrs. Watts and Collet at Chandernagore, forwarding copies of a letter which was to be translated and delivered to Mānik Chand, Rāi Durlabh, Ghulām Husain Khān, Coja Wājīd, the Seths, and any other men of influence at the *Darbār* who might be likely to be useful.⁴ Messrs. Watts and Collet replied on the 8th, refusing to acknowledge the authority of Mr. Drake and the other Members of Council as still in office, and declining to deliver the letter which had been sent them. Ultimately, however, they consented to do the latter.⁵ The letters were shown by Mr. Bisdorn to Coja Wājīd, who replied that it was useless for the British to expect permission from the Nawab to trade on any conditions better than those allowed to the Portuguese and Armenians, and that the only way to recover Calcutta was by force.⁶

The protest of Messrs. Watts and Collet had compelled Mr. Drake and his companions to reconsider their position. It seemed impossible to style themselves the Council of Fort William, though with Messrs. Amyatt and Boddam they formed the majority of that body. Accordingly, they reorganized themselves under the title of 'The Agents for the Honourable Company's Affairs,' and under that denomination they issued a notification to all the Com-

¹ Vol. I., p. 171. The descendants of Raja Naba Krishna say that he had relatives near Fulta, whom he persuaded to assist the British (see Verelst's 'View of the Rise, Fall, and Present State of the English Government in Bengal,' p. 28 note).

² Vol. I., p. 300.

³ See letter signed by Amyatt and Boddam (Vol. I., p. 58).

⁴ Vol. I., p. 57.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 118.



pany's servants at Fulta that they were still in the Company's service, and might draw diet money and salary as usual.¹

Meanwhile, though they had despatched *pattamārs*, or native messengers, by land to Fort St. George, they had not been able to send any persons of rank to explain their position to the Madras Council. The envoys first chosen were Captain Grant and the Rev. Robert Mapletoft,² but the latter died. The former also had been ill, and, presumably, it was considered on second thoughts that Captain Grant, as senior military officer and a man of ability and courage, though at present under a cloud owing to his desertion of the Fort, could not well be spared. Gradually a rumour spread that the Council now intended to send either Mr. Manningham or Mr. Frankland, and on the 10th July a protest signed by almost all the Europeans at Fulta was presented to Mr. Drake against either of these gentlemen being sent to give an account of matters

'which, as they absented themselves, they must know very little of.'³

Mr. Drake promised that neither of them should be sent, but on the 13th July Council decided to depute Mr. Manningham and the French officer, M. Lebeaume, to give an account of the loss of Calcutta, to ask for reinforcements, and to request that information of the loss of Calcutta should not be sent to England until the Madras authorities could at the same time inform the Directors of the probability of its speedy recapture.⁴ This would, of course, be calculated to soften the view taken by the Directors of the behaviour of Mr. Drake and his companions, but the suggestion was fully justified by the commercial advantages it would secure to the Company.

His being intrusted with this mission suggested to Mr. Manningham an excellent means of extracting from the other members of Council a condonation of his questionable behaviour at Calcutta. Accordingly, on the 14th July he and Mr. Frankland presented to Council a justification of their action in going on board the ships on the night of the 18th June, and staying there in spite of all orders to return to the fort. As a matter of course, the other members accepted the explanation unanimously.⁵

¹ Vol. I., pp. 98, 186.

² Vol. III., p. 383.

³ Vol. I., p. 66.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 244

13th July,
1756.

14th July,
1756.



Having thus secured himself, Mr. Manningham embarked with Lieutenant Lebeaume on board the *Syren*. She arrived at Vizagapatam on the 12th August, and the letter they brought from the Council was taken on by Lieutenant Lebeaume by land next day.¹

Meanwhile the Council's first letters regarding the outbreak of hostilities in Bengal had arrived at Madras on the 13th July, and on the 14th it was hurriedly determined to send up Major Killpatrick with 200 troops.² This officer was about to return to England on account of ill-health,³ but gave up his intention at the sudden call to active service. On the afternoon of the 21st he embarked on the *Delaware* (Captain Winter), and arrived at Culpee on the 28th July.⁴ On the 30th or 31st he went up to Fulta with a few men, the rest following shortly after. He was immediately requested to take his seat in Council. Between the 30th July and the 13th August all the other members of Council who remained alive—viz., Messrs. Watts, Collet, Pearkes, and Holwell—had also arrived at Fulta.⁵

The smallness of the reinforcement sent with Killpatrick, and the want of guns and ammunition, made any offensive action impossible, but it rendered the position of the British more secure for the moment. On the 5th August Major Killpatrick wrote to Madras very dolefully of the situation in which he found himself, laying special stress upon the probability of sickness amongst the troops. His fears were soon realized, for on the 7th the sickness was so great that it was determined to fit out one of the ships as a hospital; but so powerful was the spirit of procrastination that it was not until the 23rd September that the *Success* galley was fixed on for this purpose.⁶

On the 12th August Mr. Holwell arrived from Hugli, and immediately entered a strong protest in Council against the pretensions of Messrs. Drake, Frankland, Manningham, and Macket to retain their authority, but he met with no support from his

¹ Vol. I., pp. 195, 213.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 99.

³ His health broke down after Plassey, and he died on the 10th October, 1757 (Letter to Court, 10 January, 1758, paragraph 133).

⁴ Vol. I., p. 192, and Vol. III., p. 19.

⁵ Extracts of events at Fulta (India Office, Correspondence Memoranda, 1757).

⁶ Vol. III., p. 22.



fellow Members, and was persuaded to attend the Councils of the Agency.¹ This concession seems to have put an end to all the quarrelling, and even the name of the Agency seems to have been gradually dropped.

Apparently the arrival of the *Delaware* had encouraged the British to take provisions by force when they could not obtain what they wanted for payment, but on the 14th the Dutch Fiscal, Van Schevichaven, promising a supply, orders were given that no foraging parties should be sent ashore.

20th August,
1756.

On the 20th August Captain Grant, who had been very ill,² submitted a letter to Council explaining his reasons for accompanying Mr. Drake on board on the 19th June. Council accepted his explanation, Mr. Pearkes alone protesting that though Grant's previous behaviour had been uniformly honourable, he—i.e., Mr. Pearkes—thought he should not be allowed to resume his rank until he had earned his restoration by some conspicuous act of skill or courage.³

At this time the Council meetings were held on board the *Fort William*, the Governor's residence. He was now treated with the respect due to his rank, and even received a salute of guns when he dined on board the other ships.⁴ The Council, however, found it very difficult to preserve any secrecy as to their intentions, and accordingly they appointed a Secret Committee, consisting of Messrs. Drake, Watts, Killpatrick, and Holwell,

'for the better despatch of affairs of the country, and for the receiving of intelligence and advice.'⁵

22nd August,
1756.

This Committee held its first meeting on the 22nd August on the *Phanix* schooner, and it continued to hold its sittings on board that vessel until the 15th September, when it transferred its meeting-place to the *Grampus* sloop. Even before its first formal meeting the Secret Committee began proceedings by writing to Fort St. George to request that all matters connected with the attempt to regain Calcutta should be communicated to them alone.⁶ To deceive the Nawab, who might be supposed to have

¹ Vol. I., p. 203 note.

² *Ibid.*, p. 94.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

⁴ Vol. III., p. 20.

⁵ Secret Committee Consultations, 22nd August, 1756.

⁶ Vol. I., p. 198.

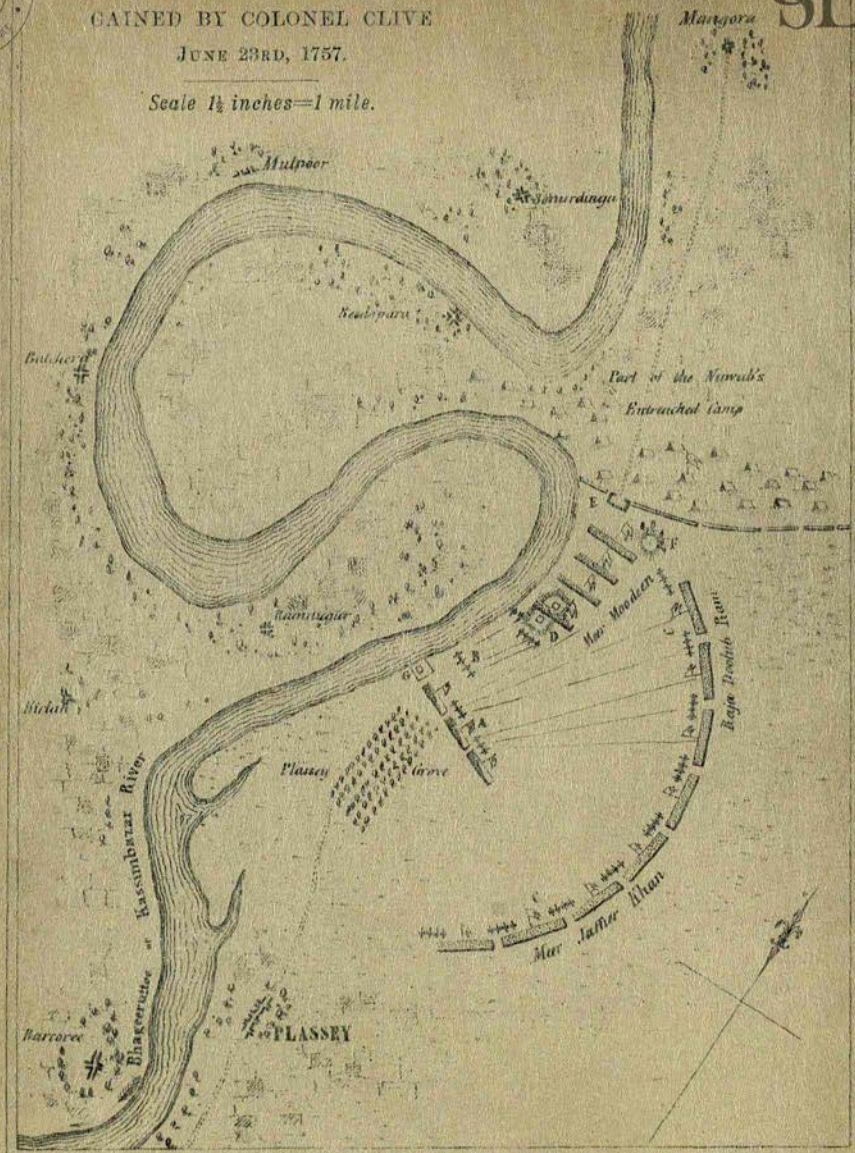


BATTLE OF PLASSEY GAINED BY COLONEL CLIVE

JUNE 23RD, 1757.

Scale $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches=1 mile.

CSL



REFERENCE.

A POSITION OF THE BRITISH ARMY AT 8 IN THE MORNING

B FOUR GUNS ADVANCED TO CHECK THE FIRE OF THE FRENCH PARTY AT THE TANK D

C THE NAWAB'S ARMY

D A TANK FROM WHENCE THE FRENCH PARTY CANNONADED TILL 3 IN THE AFTERNOON, WHEN PART OF THE BRITISH ARMY TOOK POST THERE, AND THE ENEMY RETIRED WITHIN THEIR ENTRENCHED CAMP

E & F A REDOUBT AND MOUND TAKEN BY ASSAULT AT HALF-PAST 4, AND WHICH COMPLETED THE VICTORY

G THE NAWAB'S HUNTING HOUSE



been alarmed at the news of his arrival, Major Killpatrick had already been instructed on the 15th to write and assure him that the British did not bear malice for what had happened in the past, and to ask for a supply of provisions. This letter was ultimately sent to Mr. Hastings, who was still at Cossimbazar, for delivery. At the same time letters from Omichand to the Major were brought by an Armenian, Coja Petrus, and a Jew named Abraham Jacobs,¹ advising him to write to Mānik Chand, Coja Wājīd, Jagat Seth, and Rāi Durlabh,² which he did immediately.

On the 26th August Mr. Becher and the other gentlemen^{26th August, 1756.} arrived from Dacca,³ and Mr. Becher was admitted to the Secret Committee.

In spite of the negotiations, or, perhaps, because of them, Mānik Chand was beginning to take fright. On the 31st August^{31st August, 1756.} news was received at Fulta that he was preparing boats to fire the fleet and a force to occupy Budge Budge. Mr. Gregory, whose adventurous journey to Chinsurah has been already mentioned, informed the Committee that the Nawab was trying to force the Dutch to buy the plunder taken from the British. He was requested to remain at Chinsurah to watch the Moors. Mr. Forth was also deputed to procure intelligence, and Mr. Warren Hastings to continue at Cossimbazar for the same purpose.

The letters sent by Petrus and Jacobs to Mānik Chand quickly^{5th September, 1756.} bore fruit, and on the 5th September the Committee received from him a *parwāna* or order ordering the opening of a *bazar* for the sale of provisions. Omichand did not deliver the letters addressed to the other notables, nor Mr. Hastings that addressed to the Nawab, as there were already signs of trouble at Murshidabad, and it was hoped they might prove unnecessary.⁴

On the 17th September Council decided it was not a proper^{17th September, 1756.} time to think of seizing Moor goods in foreign bottoms, but determined to detain any that might be found in British ships.⁵

¹ Vol. III., p. 364.

² Secret Committee Proceedings, 22nd August, 1756.

³ Vol. III., p. 20.

⁴ Secret Committee Proceedings, 5th September, 1756.

⁵ Extracts from Fulta Proceedings (India Office, Correspondence Memoranda, 1757).



The same day they were informed by Mr. Hastings that the Nawab of Purneah had received a *farmān* from Delhi appointing him Nawab of Bengal, and that war between him and Sirāj-uddaula was at last certain.¹

18th September, 1756.

It now occurred to the Council that, in accordance with the terms of the Company's Charter,² they might formalize their position by taking advantage of the fact that they still retained the Factory of Bulramgurry, and on the 18th September Messrs. Holwell and Boddam were sent there to take possession.³ This was actually done on the 25th October, when that Factory was formally declared the seat of the Presidency.⁴

7th October, 1756.

For the next few days the news from Murshidabad regarding the Nawab was very conflicting. There were rumours of quarrels with Jagat Seth and the officers on the one hand, and rumours that he had received a *farmān* from the Emperor on the other. He seemed to have no time to attend to the British, but had ordered Mānik Chand to deal with them.⁵ Mānik Chand was called to Murshidabad, but excused himself on account of his apprehensions of the British. He seemed, however, to be in no hurry to settle their affairs, and on the 7th October temporarily closed the *bazar* he had sanctioned at Fulta in consequence of a petty quarrel between the sailors and the native boatmen.

9th-10th October, 1756.

About the 9th or 10th October Mr. Hastings was forced to leave Cossimbazar, and came down to Chinsurah. This rendered the news from Murshidabad still more uncertain.

13th October, 1756.

On the 13th Council⁶ wrote to Fort St. George saying they had received no reply to their request for assistance, and that the Moors were beginning to doubt their assurance that they were only waiting for better weather to quit the Ganges, and were beginning to put difficulties in the way of their getting provisions.

23rd-24th October, 1756.

At last on the 23rd October the *Kingfisher* sloop arrived in the Hugli with intelligence that Watson and Clive were leaving Madras with strong reinforcements. This joyful news put heart into everyone, and on the 24th the British flag was hoisted at

¹ Vol. I., p. 219.

² Vol. II., p. 192.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 192.

⁵ Secret Committee Proceedings, 30th September, 1756.

⁶ Vol. I., pp. 237, 301.



Fulta, just outside the Dutch bounds,¹ whilst to be ready for all contingencies a copy of the Company's *Farmān* which Mr. Frankland happened to have in his possession was translated into Persian, and Petrus bribed the *Kāzī* at Hugli to affix to it the Imperial Seal.²

The good news from Madras was counterbalanced by a letter from Omichand received on the 27th announcing that the Nawab had defeated and killed his cousin, Shaukat Jang. However, this had put the Nawab into a good humour, and he had written in favourable terms regarding the British to Mānik Chand; but the latter had been informed of their rejoicings, and on the 30th the Committee heard he was preparing to send troops to Budge Budge in order to surprise them.³

Mr. Drake thought this critical moment a favourable opportunity in which to settle his private troubles, and on the 31st October he asked for an order to be minuted directing all Members of Council to deliver in their complaints against him in the course of a month,⁴ and at the same time placarded

'at every ship's mast at Fulta, and at the most publick place ashore,'

an advertisement asking anyone who had a complaint against him to send it in in writing.⁵

On the 3rd November the Nawab heard that the French were resuming the fortification of Chandernagore, and wrote to the Dutch asking them to assist him in expelling them, as he had expelled the British.⁶

On the 6th Major Killpatrick received a letter from Mānik Chand asking him to say definitely whether the British intended to fight, and a week later Council heard that the Nawab had sent orders to prepare magazines at Tribeni and Hugli, and intended to come down with his army to Calcutta. Meanwhile troops were collecting at Budge Budge, and on the 18th the British expected to be attacked, but the scare proved to be groundless. At the same time it was clear that the Nawab was suspicious, as he had forbidden the Dutch to assist the British, and Coja Wājid

¹ Vol. I., p. 299, and Vol. III., p. 22.

² Vol. III., p. 365.

³ Secret Committee Proceedings, 30th October, 1756.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 134. For Drake's reply to these complaints, see Vol. II., pp. 134-157.

⁵ Vol. II., p. 134.

⁶ Vol. II., p. 18.



and Decem-
ber, 1756.

8th Decem-
ber, 1756.

10th Decem-
ber, 1756.

had had a long conference with M. Renault, it was supposed, to secure his assistance for the Nawab. It was necessary for the British to have correct information, and on the 2nd December Mr. Surgeon Forth was ordered to proceed to Murshidabad. He found it impossible to obey this order, for the natives were so suspicious that on the 8th December the *Faujdār* at Hugli stopped the Dutch trade,¹ under pretence that they were secretly assisting the British.² On the 10th M. Renault informed the *Faujdār* of the arrival of a British squadron,³ which news was confirmed by Mānik Chand on the 11th⁴ ordering the *Faujdār* to proceed to Tanna, whilst he himself marched to Budge Budge, and immediately afterwards prepared ships to be sunk at Tanna in case the British advanced.⁵ No one was allowed to pass up or down the river.⁶ The native inhabitants began to leave Calcutta with their plunder and flock to Hugli, but this only frightened the inhabitants of that city, and many of them fled into the interior.⁷

12th* Decem-
ber, 1756.

Mānik Chand's preparations were somewhat in advance of facts, but they show how good was his intelligence, for the *Protector* had been signalled at Kedgerie on the 10th,⁸ though it was not until the 12th that she arrived at Fulta. She brought news that Watson's squadron had sailed from Madras two days before she left that town. Watson himself arrived on the *Kent* the same day, and was speedily joined by the *Tyger*, *Salisbury*, *Bridgewater*, and *Walpole*.

The last-mentioned ship, an Indiaman, brought orders from the Court of Directors creating a Select Secret Committee

'for managing all matters regarding the said Company's possessions, rights, and privileges in these provinces.'

15th Decem-
ber, 1756.

It was to consist of Messrs. Drake, Watts, Becher, and Manningham. The Select Committee met for the first time on the 15th December, and asked Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive to join them. The former attended the sittings on various occasions, but was never actually a member of the Committee. As Mr. Manningham was absent in Madras, Mr. Holwell was appointed to act

¹ Vol. II., p. 52.

² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

⁸ Secret Committee Proceedings, 10th December, 1756.



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as his substitute.¹ He took his seat on the 22nd at a meeting held on board the *Kent*. Mr. John Cooke was appointed Secretary.

This was the origin of the celebrated Select Committee which carried out all the Revolutions that gave Bengal to the British. It superseded the old Fulta Secret Committee, and in later years developed into what is now known as the Foreign Department.

¹ Vol. II., p. 188.



CHAPTER X.

THE ACTION OF THE MADRAS COUNCIL.¹

‘We drained all the garrisons upon the Coast to strengthen the detachment preparing for Bengal, and to secure to the utmost of our power a speedy success to our designs.’—SELECT COMMITTEE, FORT ST. GEORGE.²

‘We think our unhappy situation deserved a very different treatment.’—SELECT COMMITTEE, FORT WILLIAM.³

I HAVE already mentioned that on the first outbreak of disturbances the Council at Fort William wrote to Madras for reinforcements. In reply to their letters of the 25th May and 4th June, Colonel Lawrence’s offer to go to Bengal having been declined owing to the bad state of his health, Major Killpatrick was despatched with a small reinforcement, which was so rapidly diminished by sickness that, having arrived at Fulta on the 31st July, he wrote on the 17th September to Colonel Adlercron that he had already lost thirty-two officers and men.⁴

3rd August,
1756.

On the 3rd August letters were received from Mr. Drake announcing the loss of Cossimbazar, and asking for reinforcements and military stores. Admiral Watson was immediately requested to send the *Bridgewater* (Captain Smith) to Bengal with 150 men, stores and money, and on the 14th August Council decided to despatch a still larger detachment.

17th August,
1756.

On the 17th August⁵ Mr. Pigot informed his Council that he had heard the previous day from Messrs. Watts and Collet of the capture of Calcutta. The affair had now become so serious that

¹ The contents of this chapter are taken chiefly from the Proceedings of the Council and Select Committee of Fort St. George, which were, of course, too bulky to include in the Selection.

² Vol. II., p. 233.

³ Vol. II., p. 94.

⁴ Letter from Colonel Adlercron to the Right Hon. Henry Fox, dated 21 November, 1756 (India Office, Home Series, Misc., 94).

⁵ Vol. I., p. 195.



Charles Watson Esq. Vice Admiral of the White



the orders of the 14th to send reinforcements were suspended, and it was decided to consult Admiral Watson. Next day Admirals Watson and Pocock attended Council by special request, and offered to place the squadron at their disposal. On the 19th Colonel Adlercron, of the 39th Regiment, attended Council, and immediately began a long and fruitless correspondence as to the terms upon which he would allow his regiment, or a part of it, to go to Bengal.

The Admiral being again consulted, Council suggested that a small force only should be sent merely to recapture Calcutta, but the Admiral advised the delay of any expedition until the end of September, so that the troops might escape the Rainy season. As he said,

'if the ships were to go now one third of the men would fall sick before there would be an opportunity of their doing any service.'¹

Colonel Clive, who had been absent at Fort St. David,² returned to Madras on the 24th, and took his seat in Council. It appears that he volunteered to command the expedition to Bengal as soon as he heard of it.³ 24th August, 1756.

On the 29th a letter, dated 13th July, was received from the Bengal Council announcing the despatch of Messrs. Manningham and Lebeaume. After a long discussion it was determined to acknowledge the Council of Fort William as still retaining its authority, in spite of the loss of Calcutta, but to put off the expedition to Bengal until the arrival of the India ships expected from England, as it was hoped they would bring news of the state of affairs in Europe, where war with France was daily looked for. It was thought that they would not reach Madras before the end of September, so that, whilst accepting the delay advised by the Admiral, Council would also be better able to see how many men could be spared. It ought to be noted that the French were very strong in Southern India, and there was no probability of their observing neutrality if war broke out in Europe; thus the Council of Fort St. George showed great moral courage in denuding their Settlements of a great part of their forces in order to recover Bengal.⁴ 29th August, 1756.

¹ Vol. I., p. 206.

² He was Deputy-Governor of this town, and was to succeed Mr. Pigot at Madras (Vol. III., p. 307).

³ Mr. Pigot also offered to go himself.

⁴ Vol. II., pp. 233-235.



6th September,
1756.

On the 6th September M. Lebeaume arrived with a letter from Mr. Manningham to say that the latter had halted at Vizagapatam owing to the difficulty of travelling in the Rains and the impossibility of procuring palanquin bearers.¹ A sum of money was given him to provide himself with necessaries, but it was thought unwise to admit a Frenchman to their counsels, accordingly after delivering his message he was not further consulted.

19th-21st
September,
1756.

The Company's ships *Chesterfield* (Captain Edwin Carter) and *Walpole* (Captain Francis Fowler) arrived from England on the 19th of September. They brought no news of the actual outbreak of war, and so on the 21st it was decided to proceed with the expedition to Bengal; but as the authorities in Madras wished to retain the power of recalling their troops in case of necessity, they resolved to place the expedition under the command of one of their own officers, and not under Colonel Adlercron. Mr. Pigot and Colonel Clive had both offered their services. It was impossible, however, for both Mr. Pigot and Colonel Clive to leave Madras, and the former could not well go now that the Madras authorities had acknowledged the continued existence of the Fort William Council. Accordingly, Colonel Clive was chosen for the duty. He was a Company's officer, but held a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel from the King,² which enabled him to take the command of such of the King's troops as might be sent with him. It was also decided that a member of the Council and Mr. Walsh should accompany him as Deputies from the Madras Council, and form a committee to decide upon the measures to be taken in Bengal and as to whether the troops should stay there, or return to Madras after the re-establishment of the British.

22nd September,
1756.

On the 22nd September Mr. Pigot informed Council that the letters brought by the *Walpole* and *Chesterfield* contained orders, dated 13th February, 1756, from the Court of Directors appointing Select Committees in Bengal and Madras for the management of all affairs of war and diplomacy. Accordingly, the management of the Bengal expedition was handed over to the Select Committee.³ The Council had intended that the expedition should consist of

¹ Vol. I., p. 213.

² Vol. III., p. 397.

³ In their Proceedings of the 22nd September the Committee explained that previous to these orders, they had not fully understood the nature of their duties.



600 men and a company of artillery under Captain Hislop, but the Select Committee, as we shall see, proceeded to increase the number very considerably.

On the 23rd September the Select Committee confirmed Colonel Clive's appointment, in spite of representations from Colonel Adlercron.

Mr. Manningham arrived at last from Vizagapatam on the 29th September, and the Select Committee having discussed matters with him, arranged the final details, giving the command of the expedition to Admiral Watson by sea and to Colonel Clive¹ by land. Their relations to each other and to the Council of Fort William were left unsettled, though the authority of the latter was formally acknowledged. Mr. Manningham pointed out² that the powers given to the Deputies on the 21st September were inconsistent with the recognition of the Council of Fort William, and accordingly on the 1st October³ the Deputies were withdrawn; but Colonel Clive was entrusted with independent authority in all military matters, which, as we shall see, was much resented by the Council of Fort William.⁴ Mr. Walsh, one of the Deputies and a relative of the Colonel, was appointed Paymaster to the force. This was to include 595⁵ Europeans, officers and men.⁶

The despatch of these troops would leave Madras very weak, and accordingly a letter was sent to Mr. Bouchier, Governor of Bombay, asking for reinforcements.

On the 13th October the Council of Fort St. George wrote to Bengal⁷ that the object of the expedition was not merely to re-establish the British Settlements in Bengal, but to obtain ample recognition of the Company's privileges and reparation for its

¹ Major Killpatrick to succeed him in case of necessity.

² Vol. I., p. 223.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 234, and Vol. II., p. 93.

⁵ Vol. I., p. 228.

⁶ The information regarding the constitution of the force is not very clear. Other accounts give different figures. The Select Committee's letter to Bengal, dated 13th October, 1756, gives 328 military, 109 train (artillery), and 940 sepoys. In another account (Vol. III., p. 30) the figures are 276 King's troops, 616 Company's, and 1,308 sepoys and lascars. Of these 97 of the first, 146 of the second, and 430 of the last were on the *Cumberland* and *Mariborough*, which did not manage to reach Bengal until long after Calcutta had been recaptured.

⁷ Vol. I., p. 239.



losses, but that if the Nawab were willing to make a satisfactory Peace they ought not to let

'sentiments of revenging injuries, although they were never more just,'

induce them to run the risk of war and the consequent expense,

'but we are of opinion that the sword should go hand-in-hand with the pen, and that, on the arrival of the present armament, hostilities should immediately commence with the utmost vigour. These hostilities must be of every kind which can either distress his dominions and estate, or bring reprisals into our possession.'

This letter contains another suggestion which was to bear ample fruit, as it fully coincided with the opinion not only of the British but of all the Europeans in Bengal,¹ viz., that a Revolution was necessary if the European trade was to continue.

'We need not represent to you the great advantage which we think it will be to the military operations, and the influence it will have in the Nabob's councils, to effect a junction with any powers in the provinces of Bengal that may be dissatisfied with the violences of the Nabob's government, or that may have pretensions to the Nabobship.'²

Thus the Select Committee did not limit its consideration to the mere recapture of Calcutta, but wisely provided a force which might be capable of taking full advantage of its success. Clive realized very clearly the magnitude of the task with which he was entrusted. In a letter to his father he writes :

'This expedition, if attended with success, may enable me to do great things. It is by far the grandest of my undertakings. I go with great forces and great authority.'³

Yet he was not altogether certain of success.

'I am not so apprehensive of the Nabob of Bengal's forces as of being recalled by the news of a war, or checked in our progress by the woods and swampiness of the country, which is represented as almost impassable for a train of artillery.'⁴

It is curious to observe the contrast between the behaviour of

¹ See Renault's opinion on the state of affairs in Bengal (Vol. I., p. 211), and Law's (Vol. III., p. 173).

² Vol. I., p. 239.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

⁴ Letter to Mr. Mabbot (Vol. I., p. 228).



the Councils of Fort William and Fort St. George. The former, vacillating and uncertain, could not provide even for the necessities of the day, whilst the latter, as brave men always will, drew inspiration from the disaster which had befallen their country and which it was their happy lot to avenge and répair. They felt they were running a great risk owing to the preponderance of the French forces in Madras, but this only suggested the possibility of delivering a deadly blow to France in Bengal. Clive speaks of the coming war with France not merely as possibly hindering the expedition to Bengal, but as certainly giving him a chance to capture Chandernagore,¹ and as soon as they knew that war had been declared² the Select Committee wrote to Bengal:

‘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.’³

This letter reached Bengal only on the 13th January, 1757.

¹ Vol. I., p. 233.

² This was on the 13th November (Vol. I., p. 302).

³ Vol. I., p. 302.



CHAPTER XI.

THE EXPEDITION TO BENGal.

'After a tedious and difficult passage . . . our quick progress has occasioned a general consternation.'—CLIVE.¹

16th October,
1756. ON the 16th October² Admirals Watson and Pocock sailed with a fleet of five King's ships, the *Kent*, *Cumberland*, *Tyger*, *Salisbury* and *Bridgewater*, the *Blaze*³ fireship, and the Company's ships *Walpole* and *Marlborough*. Another armed ship belonging to the Company, the *Protector*, having arrived after the departure of the fleet, was ordered to follow, and did so on the 27th of the month. Two more country ships, the *Lapwing* and *Bonetta*, were also despatched carrying a small number of sepoys.

It appears that the vessels were victualled and watered only for six weeks, which, considering that the *Delaware* made the passage in fifteen days,⁴ might have been thought sufficient; but in the days of sailing ships everything depended upon the weather, and the delay which Admiral Watson had recommended for the health of the troops had the disadvantage of exposing the fleet to baffling winds. The *Protector*, by taking a different course,⁵ managed to arrive in the Hugli at the same time as the fleet, but even then her voyage occupied a month and a half.⁶

10th November,
1756. By the 10th November it was realized that the voyage was going to be a tedious one, and the squadron was put on two-thirds allowance. On the 15th the seamen and military were reduced to

¹ Vol. II., pp. 89, 90.

² Vol. III., p. 30.

³ This vessel, proving leaky, was ordered back on the 16th November (Vol. III., p. 31).

⁴ 21st July to 4th August (Vol. III., p. 19). The *Delaware* took only a week from Madras to Calpee.

⁵ *Ives' Journal*, p. 97 note.

⁶ 27th October to 12th December (Vol. III., p. 23).



half rations of provisions. Scurvy began to appear on the ships, especially amongst the seamen. On the 16th November the *Marlborough*, sailing very slowly, was lost sight of by the fleet. On the 1st December the *Cumberland* struck on the reef off Point Palmyras, but was got off without damage. Two days later the *Kent*, *Tyger*, and *Walpole* managed to round the Point. On the 4th the expedition was met by a pilot sloop, and took on board Mr. Grant, the pilot. The squadron was in great distress for want of water and provisions, and had many men down with scurvy. On the 5th December the Admiral anchored in Ballasore Roads. Here he had to wait until the pilots, Messrs. Smith and Grant, were able to take the ships over the dangerous shoals at the mouth of the river Hugli. 5th-8th
December,
1756.

On the 8th the *Kent*, *Tyger*, and *Walpole* weighed anchor, after the last mentioned ship had received a supply of rice from the pilot sloops. As she carried only sepoys who would not touch the meat provided for the British soldiers,¹ she was in great want of provisions. The same day Messrs. Watts and Becher came on board as deputies from Mr. Drake and the Council, and informed the Admiral of the sickness amongst the British at Fulta, and that Major Killpatrick had now only thirty men fit for duty.

On the 13th December the Admiral arrived at Culpee, and was welcomed by Messrs. Drake and Holwell. He wrote the next day to Mr. Bisdorn, and probably to M. Renault, informing them of his arrival, and warning them that, as he was informed the Nawab had demanded their assistance, he would look upon any help given to that prince as an act of war against Britain.² Mr. Bisdorn replied on the 19th welcoming the Admiral, and promising to observe neutrality; but apparently no answer was received from M. Renault till after the recapture of Calcutta. 13th Decem-
ber, 1756.

The Admiral arrived at Fulta on the 15th December, where he found the *Kingfisher*, the *Delaware* and the *Protector*. So far he had heard nothing for many days of the *Cumberland*, *Salisbury*, 15th Decem-
ber, 1756.

¹ 'When the forces came from Madrass, by the unexpected length of the passage, they were greatly reduced for provisions, insomuch that there was no rice left for the *Gentoo* seapoys, and nothing to serve out to them but beef and pork; but though some did submit to this defilement, yet many preferred a languishing death by famine to life polluted beyond recovery.'—Scrafton, 'Reflections,' p. 11.

² Vol. II. p. 54.



Bridgewater, and *Marlborough*. The *Bridgewater* arrived on the 24th, and the *Salisbury* on the 25th, but the *Cumberland* and *Marlborough* had been forced to put back, thus depriving the expedition of some 250 Europeans and 430 sepoys,¹ with almost all the artillery and military stores. This was a very serious matter, for there had been so much sickness at Fulta that of the Europeans from Calcutta and Major Killpatrick's detachment of 200 men there were in all only about 100 men left effective.²

Watson and Clive were immediately offered seats on the Council, and the same day, the 15th, Clive opened negotiations by a letter to Mānik Chand enclosing a draft of a letter for the Nawab. Mānik Chand replied in a friendly manner, and sent down one Rādhā Krishna Malik as his confidential agent. He also explained that Clive's letter to the Nawab was written in a very improper tone, and forwarded a letter which he suggested he should copy.³ To this Clive replied that a letter couched in the style recommended by Mānik Chand might have been suitable before the capture of Calcutta, but was very ill-suited to a time when

'we are come to demand satisfaction for the injuries done us by the Nawab, not to entreat his favour, and with a force which we think sufficient to vindicate our claim.'⁴

16th Decem-
ber, 1756.

On the 16th Admiral Watson applied to the Dutch for the assistance of their pilots. This request, seeing that the English pilots were all at his disposal, was probably due to the character of the channel of the Hugli, which changes so rapidly that it is necessary to watch it carefully day by day, and it was the Dutch who had the privilege of buoying the Hugli.⁵ Mr. Bisdorn, however, was determined not to involve himself with the Nawab by premature action in favour of the British, and explained that five of the seven Dutch pilots were ill, and that no less than twenty-four Dutch ships were under embargo at the Moorish posts of Calcutta, Muckwa Tanna, and Budge Budge

¹ It is difficult to ascertain the exact number, as there had been a redistribution of the forces on board during the voyage.

² Vol. II., p. 89. Mr. Tooke says (Vol. I., p. 300) only 90 men. A letter from the *Delaware* says that 300 out of 320 soldiers carried on that ship died at Fulta (Vol. III., p. 94).

³ Vol. II., p. 75.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.



on suspicion of carrying anchors, ropes, and provisions for the British.¹

Watson and Clive now thought it necessary to address the Nawab directly, and this they did on the 17th in separate letters of an unmistakably threatening character. It is certain he received these letters, but it is doubtful whether he made any reply.² 17th Decem-ber, 1756.

Watson was eager to advance up the river, but he had as yet little more than half his force. All he could do was to send up the *Kingfisher* to reconnoitre, as it was feared that the passage at Tanna might be blocked by sunken ships.³ In fact, it appears that one Hubboo Syrang, one of the Company's old boatmen who had been forced into Mānik Chand's service, was appointed for this duty, but managed to avoid acting on his orders, so that the ships afterwards found the passage clear.⁴

In the meantime even this short delay was affecting the health of the men. Clive made every effort to obtain information, but fell ill of fever, and had to leave all the preparation of the land forces to Major Killpatrick.⁵ It was not until the 25th that the pilots reported that the state of the river was favourable for the ships, and even then, probably owing to the late arrival of the *Salisbury*, the advance did not begin until the 27th. The sepoys were ordered to march overland, contrary to Clive's wishes⁶ as the roads were by no means suited for troops, but he was not at this time in a position to have his own way. On the 28th the sepoys reached Mayapur, where they were joined by the Company's troops, and on the 29th arrived at Budge Budge. Here the troops halted near the river-bank in a position where they could be seen from the mastsheads of the ships, but could not see the Fort, as they were themselves surrounded by bushes. Clive had been absolutely unable to obtain any trustworthy intelligence, and without his knowing it the enemy were encamped within two miles of him.⁷ The greater part of his little army was thrown out in different directions, when the small force under his immediate command—about 260 Europeans—was suddenly attacked by a body of 29th Decem-ber, 1756.

¹ Vol. II., p. 72.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 71, 86, 114, 173.

³ Vol. II., p. 73.

⁴ Vol. III., p. 346.

⁵ Vol. II., p. 73.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 98.



2,000 men, whom Mānik Chand had brought down. The fighting lasted for half an hour, the enemy, who were

‘presumptuous from their triumph over us at Calcutta,’¹

sheltered by trees and bushes, showing great boldness; but they were driven off, and the arrival of the King’s troops, who had been landed for the attack of the Fort of Budge Budge and had heard the firing, made Clive’s position safe. The British lost one officer, Ensign Charles Kerr, and nine private men killed and eight men wounded.² The loss of the enemy was about 200 killed and wounded, including four officers of rank. Mānik Chand himself received a bullet through his turban. In describing this fight Clive writes:—

‘I cannot take upon me to give my sentiments about our future success against the Nabob in the open field; the little affair above mentioned was attended with every disadvantage on our side: a number of houses, *jungalls*, bushes, etc., which this country seems full of, served as a cover for the enemy, all our sepoys and the choice of our Europeans absent—our cannon in a manner useless.’³

Nothing is more conspicuous in Clive’s private letters than the extreme caution with which he expresses any opinion as to future success.

The skirmish at Budge Budge took place about mid-day. The fleet,⁴ the *Tyger* leading, had arrived before the Fort shortly before 8 a.m., when the Fort opened fire upon her. The fact that the enemy commenced hostilities was duly noted later by the Council and Colonel in their letters to the Nawab and his subjects as a justification for the action of the British.⁵ The enemy were quickly driven from their guns, and the King’s troops landed to attack the Fort. Captain Coote wished to make an assault at once, but his superior officer, Captain Weller, landing, and word being brought that Colonel Clive was engaged with the enemy, it became necessary to go to his assistance. When the skirmish was over Clive went on board to consult the Admiral, and at 7 p.m. the latter sent Captain King ashore with 100 seamen to storm the Fort the same evening; but Clive ordered Captain Coote to postpone the attack until next morning, he and Major Killpatrick being utterly

¹ Scrafton’s ‘Reflections,’ p. 59.

³ Vol. II., p. 98.

⁴ Vol. III., p. 4.

² Vol. III., p. 33.

⁵ Vol. II., pp. 84, 124.

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worn out by the long march of the previous night. Captain Coote remonstrated, and was sent to ask the Admiral for orders. Whilst he was on board, about 11 p.m., a drunken sailor named Strahan¹ waded through the moat, climbed the ramparts, shot or knocked down the first men he met, and cried out that the Fort was captured. In a moment his comrades had followed him, and the natives were either killed or driven out. Coote sadly remarked in his Journal :

' Thus the place was taken without the least honour to anyone.'²

Captain Campbell in the Company's service was shot by some of the soldiers as he was calling on them to cease fire for fear of hitting their own men who had already entered the Fort, and four of the King's soldiers were wounded. With this trifling loss the British captured a fort which

' was extremely well situated for defence, and had the advantage of a wet ditch round it, but was badly provided with cannon, as we found only eighteen guns.'³

Next day the Fort was demolished, and the troops re-embarked in the evening. The sepoys remained ashore, and continued their march by land the whole of the 31st. 30th-31st
December,
1756.

On the 1st January, 1757, the fleet anchored between Tanna Fort and a new mud Fort⁴ on the opposite bank. A French ship lying here saluted the fleet with nine guns.⁵ This gave rise to the rumour that the French had assisted the British in the attack on Tanna, but as a matter of fact the enemy abandoned the forts as the ships approached. The British found in them about forty guns, 1st January,
1757.

' all mounted on good carriages, most of them the Company's.'⁶

In the night the Admiral sent the boats up the river to set fire to a ship and some vessels which lay under the Fort, and were intended to be used as fire-ships. This duty was successfully executed.⁷

At five in the morning of the 2nd January the Company's troops were landed, and with the sepoys marched on Calcutta. Admiral Watson, thinking two ships enough for the attack, ordered the 2nd January,
1757.

¹ *Ives' Journal*, p. 101, and Vol. III., p. 92.

² Vol. III., p. 41.

³ Vol. II., p. 197. Another account says twenty-two guns (Vol. III., p. 34).

⁴ Aligarh (Vol. III., p. 34).

⁵ Vol. III., p. 2.

⁶ Vol. II., p. 197. Another account says fifty-six guns (Vol. III., p. 35).

⁷ Vol. II., p. 197.



Salisbury to remain as a guardship, to prevent the enemy reoccupying Tanna Fort, and proceeded to Calcutta with the *Kent* and *Tyger* alone. The latter was fired at from the batteries on the bank below Calcutta, but these were deserted as the ships advanced. About half-past ten they came opposite Fort William, and in a few minutes the enemy were driven out with such precipitation that the landing-parties from the fleet were able to make prisoners of only a few of the native soldiers.¹ On the British side three of the King's soldiers and six sailors were killed. In the Fort ninety-one guns and four mortars were taken.

Captain Coote was now sent ashore with a garrison of King's soldiers, and orders not to give up the place to anyone without the Admiral's permission. Accordingly, when the Company's forces approached and the sepoys were about to enter they were refused admission. The sentries, however, admitted Colonel Clive, who requested Captain Coote to make over the place to him as his superior officer. Captain Coote pleaded the Admiral's instructions, and asked permission to refer the matter to him. This was done, and Captain Speke brought back a message² to the effect that if Colonel Clive persisted in staying in the Fort the Admiral would be forced to resort to measures which would be disagreeable to both of them. Clive refused to retire, but offered to make over the Fort to Admiral Watson if he would himself come ashore. Captain Latham, who was a mutual friend of both the Admiral and Clive, succeeded in persuading the Admiral to agree to these conditions, and the absurd quarrel was at an end.³

3rd January,
1757.

On the morning of the 3rd January Admiral Watson came ashore, received the keys from Clive, and made over the place formally to Mr. Drake and the Council of Fort William. This enabled Mr. Drake to say later on that he had been restored to his position by the authority of the Admiral.⁴

The quarrel between Watson and Clive is of importance only as showing the difficulties which the latter had to surmount in this

¹ 'At ten minutes past eleven the *Kent* sent a boat manned and armed to search a French sloop we suspected was carrying off the Europeans who had escaped from the Fort' (Vol. III., p. 3).

² Vol. II., p. 77. This is not quite the same as threatening to fire upon him, which is Clive's own version of the story (Vol. III., p. 309).

³ *Ibid.*, p. 96, and Vol. III., p. 309.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 154.



LORD CLIVE.



expedition. Clive was not only a military man, but practically a Company's servant. He therefore suffered not only from the friction that almost invariably showed itself when the naval and military services were acting together, but also from that ignorant contempt which the King's military officers exhibited towards the Company's. Added to this, the independent powers given him by the Madras authorities rendered him obnoxious to the Council of Fort William, especially to men like Holwell,¹ who felt that the distrust shown towards them was largely due to no fault of their own, but to the weakness of Drake and his companions. Clive, though he was himself a heavy loser by the capture of Calcutta,² could not understand the behaviour of the Bengal civilians, and it was equally inexplicable to others of the relieving expedition. Surgeon Ives writes that when the squadron arrived at Fulta the people there, in spite of the miseries they had endured,

'when we saw them first, appeared with as cheerful countenances as if no misfortunes had happened to them.'³

In fact, the only effect of their sufferings was to make them anticipate the sweets of revenge. They looked upon the Madras forces as if they had been sent merely to restore their ruined fortunes, whereas Watson and Clive considered that they had come to revenge the victims of the Black Hole and to obtain compensation for the losses of the Company. Consequently we are not astonished to find Clive writing :

'The loss of private property, and the means of recovering it, seem to be the only object which takes up the attention of the Bengal gentlemen,'⁴

whilst the latter soon came to regard him as a kind of personal enemy, and one who, whilst seeking to benefit the Company, cared nothing for their private wrongs and sufferings. Accordingly, they strove to make a friend in Admiral Watson, and to create bad blood between him and the Colonel. Clive suspected Holwell of being the chief mover in this intrigue, whilst both he and Killpatrick seem to have felt a kindly pity and even liking for

¹ Vol. II., p. 132.

² 'My loss by the capture of Calcutta is not less than £2,500, so that hitherto I am money out of pocket by my second trip to India' (Vol. II., p. 210).

³ *Ives' Journal*, p. 97.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 96.



CSL

CXXXIV

BENGAL IN 1756-57

Drake. Clive wrote to Mr. Drake, senior, that if his nephew had erred he believed it to be 'in judgment, not principle,'¹ and Killpatrick to the Directors that the President was 'perfectly attached to their interest.'² It is even more curious to find that as late as the end of 1758 Clive writes in terms of disapprobation of Holwell, and in praise of Manningham, Frankland, and Sumner, who had all shown the white feather during the siege.

¹ Vol. II., p. 186.

² *Ibid.*, p. 164.



CHAPTER XII.

HUGLI, CHITPUR AND THE TREATY OF THE
9TH FEBRUARY.

‘What an army of Englishmen was capable of doing.’—ADMIRAL WATSON.¹

THE British found Calcutta in ruins. The Fort was much damaged; Government House, the Barracks for the Company’s servants, and the Laboratory had been burnt. Part of the eastern curtain had been pulled down to make room for the mosque built by the Nawab. Outside the Fort the Church, the Company’s House, the houses of Messrs. Cruttenden, Eyre, and Rannie had been burnt; in the other European houses the furniture, doors, and windows had been used for firewood; even the wooden wharfs along the river had been destroyed.² The native part of the town had suffered probably even more severely; parts of it were burnt by the British, parts by the Nawab’s troops, and the whole of it, except a few houses like that of Omichand, over which the Nawab’s flag had been hoisted, had been plundered. Yet the Europeans were prepared to welcome any change after Fulta, and joyously resumed possession of their old homes, so that by the end of January visitors found Calcutta a very pleasant place. One of the new comers writes:

‘The people are all agreeable, vastly free, and very obliging to everybody: once introduced, you are always known to them, and you dine and sup where you please after the first visit without any ceremony. Provisions are vastly cheap, and the best of all kinds of any Indian Settlement. . . . The houses are all large and grand, with fine balconies all round them (to keep out the sun) which make a noble appearance. . . . In about half a year’s time I imagine Calcutta will be once more in a flourishing state.’³

¹ Vol. II., p. 212.

² Vol. I., p. 54, and Vol. III., p. 91.

³ Vol. III., p. 91.



And yet the residents were all so nearly bankrupt that Council had to write to the Court of Directors asking that the ordinary laws against debtors might be suspended.¹ As a further measure of relief, those persons who claimed to have owned Company's bonds and could procure any evidence of the fact were paid their interest and granted fresh bonds, whilst Committees were appointed to examine all claims brought for payment for military stores and provisions sent into the Fort before the siege, and also into the losses of private individuals during the Troubles. Whatever the Madras authorities might advise and Clive attempt to achieve in the making of a Peace with the Nawab which should simply recoup the Company for its losses, there was hardly a man in Calcutta who was not determined that some way or other restitution should be obtained for private losses as well. This feeling will be found influencing all the public proceedings of the Council, and probably suggested those private donations by Mir Jafar to the leading men in Calcutta which caused so much question in England later on.

2nd-3rd
January,
1757.

As has been said, the Admiral handed over the Fort to Mr. Drake and the Council on the 3rd January. They had already, on the 2nd, drawn up in the name of the Company a Manifesto or Declaration of War against the Nawab, and requested the Admiral to do the same in the name of the King. This he did next day. These documents² recapitulated the ill-treatment suffered by the British at the hands of the Nawab, the hostility shown by his officers at Budge Budge, Tanna, and Calcutta to Admiral Watson, and warned the natives and foreign nations in Bengal to give no assistance to the enemies of the British, whilst they offered protection to all natives who would join them. It was evident that the Fort could not be defended against a second attack, so on the 6th January the Select Committee ordered the destruction of all the houses round the Fort, and Colonel Clive and Captain Barker were instructed to submit a plan of defence, which they did on the 10th. At the same meeting the opposition to Clive's independent powers began to show itself more boldly, and it was determined to send a remonstrance to Madras on the subject.

¹ Vol. II., p. 192.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 83, 86.



It was now thought necessary to take precautions against the French, for the rumour of war in Europe was in everyone's mouth.¹ In spite of their kind treatment of the British at Cossimbazar, Dacca, and Chandernagore, it was universally believed that the French had assisted the Nawab, and it was expected that they would do so again. The Portuguese in Calcutta were Catholics; they had behaved badly in the siege, and as it was feared they would help the French in time of war, the Council determined to prohibit the public exercise of the Catholic religion in Calcutta. The Catholic priests were accordingly expelled from the town.² As they could no longer use their Church, it was taken over by the Protestants,³ and both the Company's Chaplains, Messrs. Bellamy and Mapletoft, being dead, Mr. Cobbe, Chaplain of the *Kent*, was appointed Chaplain of Calcutta.⁴

Mānik Chand, the Governor of Calcutta, had, as we have seen, a narrow escape from being killed at Budge Budge. His presence there at all was probably due to that contempt for the Europeans which was so openly shown by the natives after the capture of Calcutta, but his experience at Budge Budge was sufficient to make him change his opinion. He made no stand at Calcutta, but hastily betook himself to Hugli, whence he sent word to the Nawab at Murshidabad that the British he had now to deal with were a very different kind of men from those whom he had defeated at Calcutta. What had most terrified Mānik Chand and the natives generally was the firing of the heavy guns on the big ships. Nothing so dreadful had ever been known in Bengal, and the most extraordinary ideas were entertained of what the ships could do, many supposing that they would ascend the river even as far as Murshidabad. Admiral Watson and the Council, however, thought that something more substantial than these vague fears was necessary to re-establish the reputation of the British in Bengal, and so two plans of operations were discussed. One was to send a party of sailors by river to Dacca, apparently to seize that town, and possibly to set up one of the sons of Sarfarāz Khān,

¹ Vol. II., p. 97.

² *Ibid.*, p. 190. The laws of the Company regarding the Catholics were already sufficiently severe (Vol. I., p. 298).

³ Hyde, 'Parochial Annals of Bengal,' p. 116.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 190.



11th January,
1757.

who were prisoners there, as a rival to Sirāj-uddaula;¹ the other, easier and more practicable, was to send a small expedition to Hugli and burn the granaries and stores which the Nawab had ordered to be collected near that city. As was natural, this was the plan at last decided upon, whilst to protect Calcutta itself Clive, on the 11th,² constructed a fortified camp just outside of the town and north of the Maratha Ditch, near Barnagore, so as to prevent the Nawab advancing directly upon it.³ His reason for taking up what he himself calls a very hazardous position was simply a choice of the least of evils. It was, he says,

‘preferable to continuing in the Fort, which is in a most wretched defenceless condition in itself, and all the houses round it in such numbers that I almost despair of its being made defensible in any time.’⁴

The country in which he established his camp was then very wild, and Surgeon Ives tells us that whilst Clive was surveying the ground for his entrenchment, a wild buffalo attacked his guard and killed one of the sepoys before it could be despatched.⁵

Clive was still in a state of doubt regarding the prospects of the campaign.

‘From the slight trial we have hitherto had of the enemy, we cannot form a judgment what success we may promise ourselves against them; deficient as we are of our complement of men, artillery, and stores, the event must needs be doubtful.’⁶

One feels, sometimes, a suspicion that this apparent uncertainty was not really felt by Clive, but was assumed in order to persuade his correspondents to send him reinforcements. Wellington in the Peninsula resorted to the same device.

8th January,
1757.

On the 8th January Clive’s position had been improved by news of the arrival of the *Marlborough* in the river.⁷ The full value of this reinforcement may be judged by the fact that, owing to sickness, he had now only 300 Europeans of the Company’s troops fit for

¹ This is only referred to in the Records (Vol. II., p. 175).

² Vol. III., p. 36.

³ Vol. II., p. 176, and Vol. III., p. 58.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 95.

⁵ *Ives’ Journal*, p. 111 note.

⁶ Vol. II., p. 90.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 92.



service.¹ The *Marlborough*, with between 300 and 400 sepoy and all the field-guns, arrived at Calcutta on the 19th or 20th.² On the 21st Clive was joined by the King's troops, whom the Admiral sent ashore at his request, and having at last got them under his own command, he wrote to Mr. Pigot that he intended to keep them as long as they might be wanted.³

We must now follow the expedition against Hugli. On the 4th January, 1757, 130 of the King's troops, the grenadier company and 300 sepoy, under the command of Major Killpatrick, were embarked on board the *Bridgewater* (Captain Smith), *Kingfisher* (Captain Toby), and *Thunder* (Captain Warwick). Captain King was in command of a landing-party composed of seamen.⁴ The same day the *Bridgewater* went aground off Perrin's Garden, and was not got off till late in the afternoon of the 5th, when she got up to Barnagore.⁵ This was a Dutch Settlement, and the British being unacquainted with the river above Calcutta, Captain Smith asked for the assistance of the Dutch pilots. As the Dutch would not give him any, on the 8th he sent on board the Dutch vessel *De Ryder* and carried off by force one of the quartermasters, whom he compelled to pilot the ships.⁶ The delay caused by the grounding of the *Bridgewater* and waiting for a pilot at Barnagore allowed news of the expedition to get up to Hugli. The native merchants removed their plunder and goods, some inland, others to the Dutch Settlement at Chinsurah.⁷ It was even said that the Dutch allowed the *Faujdar* of Hugli to take the guns out of their Fort to use against the British.⁸

On the 9th the latter passed the French Factory at Chandernagore without the little fleet paying the French the usual courtesy of a salute, and, after firing a few shot at a force with which Mānik Chand⁹ was trying to relieve the garrison, they arrived just below the native Fort about three miles higher up, and landed a party of troops. The latter set to work to burn the houses round them and to block up all the approaches to the Fort, and then lay waiting in Coja Wājid's garden until the ships which had anchored

¹ Vol. II., p. 124.

² *Ibid.*, p. 200, and Vol. III., p. 24.

³ Vol. II., p. 133.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 199.

⁵ Vol. III., p. 35.

⁶ Vol. II., pp. 82, 98, 109.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 81, 99.

⁹ Vol. III., p. 13.



10th January,
1757.

close in shore and begun a bombardment should have effected a breach. This was completed by evening, and at 2 o'clock in the morning of the 10th the Fort was stormed by the land force. The enemy had been deceived by a false attack, and the stormers entered without any serious opposition. As soon as they were inside, the defenders took to flight, though they numbered 2,000 men.¹

11th-19th
January,
1757.

The 11th January was spent in plundering the houses round the Fort, and on the 12th Captain Coote was sent up to Bandel to protect the men-of-war's boats, which were searching the creeks for vessels belonging to the enemy. He burnt one of the great granaries in a village three or four miles above the Fort, and had to fight his way back for over a mile, firing the houses behind him as he passed.

From this time on to the 18th the troops were occupied in pillaging the native houses, even entering some within the Dutch Settlement on the plea that they belonged to subjects of the Nawab, or that property belonging to his subjects or plunder from Calcutta were concealed in them. Mr. Bisdom entered into an angry correspondence with Admiral Watson, and the Admiral sent up his own Captain² to discuss the matter with him; but the sailors ashore could not be restrained, and Mr. Bisdom, though he protested he had not sheltered any of the Nawab's men, and that he had issued orders by beat of drum that no property belonging to the British was to be brought into the Settlement, rather weakened his case by confessing that it was easy for the native inhabitants to deceive him, as the Settlement was an open town.

'Anyone may come and go without its coming to our knowledge from want of servants and watchmen, not to mention the fact, as well known to yourself as to me, that it is always possible to buy the services of the natives for a penny or so; wherefore I am greatly astonished that you ascribe my powerlessness in the matter to a want of sincerity in the observance of the neutrality and the maintenance of the published prohibition.'³

Mr. Bisdom's position was indeed one to be pitied. His pilots had brought up the British, and it was useless for him to protest to the Nawab's officers that they had been forced to do so,

¹ Vol. III., p. 42.

² Captain Henry Speke (Vol. II., p. 199).

³ Vol. II., p. 111.



especially whilst he appeared to allow the British sailors to plunder the houses of native inhabitants of the Settlement. It was certain that the British must soon retire, and it was not known what vengeance the Nawab would take upon him. As early as the 13th the Dutch Council ordered all the women to go on board the ships,¹ but the British would not allow the vessels to leave the town.

At last on the 19th, having destroyed all the Nawab's forts and granaries, the British embarked and returned to Calcutta, ravaging the banks of the river on both sides, and only barely respecting French territory. The same day the Nawab arrived at Tribeni, a little above Hugli.² 19th January, 1757.

The natives of the country had now had a taste of what British troops could do. The sailors especially had given them an example of unheard-of courage and recklessness. It has been already related how a single British sailor took the Fort of Budge Budge, and now an eye-witness wrote :

'The courage of the Admiral's sailors is almost incredible. Three or four, with their cutlasses, will attack fifty or more of the enemy, who are struck with such a panic at the sight of them that they run from them whenever they see them coming, the sailors being determined neither to give nor receive any quarter.'³

Nor were the Madras sepoys anyway behind the Europeans. They had been taught to fight by Clive, and now they fought side by side with their European comrades, engaging any odds with the most dauntless courage.⁴ The Nawab, however, still trusted in his good fortune. He had started from Murshidabad as soon as he heard of the attack upon the Fort at Hugli; but his army showed many signs of unwillingness to march, and so he took the precaution of accompanying his preparations for attack by the pretence of asking the French and Dutch to mediate between him and the British. It was apparently under his orders that the Seths wrote to Clive⁵ on the 14th remonstrating against the violence used by the British at Hugli,⁶ and this was followed on the 17th⁷ by a letter from Coja Wājid proposing that the French might be 14th-17th January, 1757.

¹ Vol. II., p. 102. ² *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121. ³ Vol. III., p. 92. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

⁵ Clive had written to many of the chief persons of the Court asking for assistance, but up till this time few had thought it necessary to reply (Vol. II., p. 126).

⁶ Vol. II., p. 104. ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 110.



21st January,
1757.

the medium of negotiation between the British and the Nawab.¹ On the 21st Clive replied to Coja Wājid in terms evidently intended to frighten him, for he referred very plainly to the loss Coja Wājid had already suffered from the British in the plunder of his property at Hugli. At the same time he enclosed a copy of the demands made by the British,² and offered to accept the mediation of Coja Wājid and the Seths. The Dutch also had offered their services, but the Admiral did not wish to accept their mediation as they were 'only a Republic,' and promptly declined it,³ whilst Clive did not wish for the mediation of the French, who, he suspected, were at war with the British in Europe. However, on the 21st January there arrived at Calcutta two gentlemen—Messrs. Laporterie and Sinfray—deputed from M. Renault.⁴ They acquainted the Council that they were not authorized to propose terms on behalf of the Nawab, but were prepared to act as mediators and to forward any proposals the Council might make. Accordingly they were verbally informed of the proposals already sent to Coja Wājid, viz.:

(1) That the British should receive complete reparation for all their losses.

(2) That the Company should be allowed the full exercise of all its privileges in Bengal.

(3) That the British should have the right to fortify their Settlements as they pleased.

(4) That the Company should have a Mint at Calcutta.

26th January,
1757.

On the 26th January the French Deputies brought back a reply from Coja Wājid asking that these proposals might be put into Persian, and expressing his opinion that the Nawab might agree to grant the first three demands, but as the Emperor alone could sanction the privilege of coining money the fourth was impossible. This reply, of course, did not bind the Nawab in any way, and was only a device for gaining time by prolonging negotiations, for the demands of the British were for everything that had caused the war, and no one dreamed that they could ask more even if they were to beat the Nawab in battle, which as yet they had not done. The Deputies found the British firm,

¹ It is not always easy to follow the course of these negotiations. The Select Committee (Vol. II., p. 207) had left the negotiations with the Nawab to the Admiral and Clive, but these two gentlemen do not seem to have always consulted each other.

² Vol. II., p. 126.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131, 175.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 175.



and as they could effect nothing more, they returned to Chandernagore. Meanwhile on the 23rd the Admiral received a polite letter from the Nawab, and on the 24th¹ the Armenian Coja Petrus brought a letter from the Nawab's 'private Minister' asking Clive to make his proposals direct to the Nawab, which convinced Clive that he was now in earnest,² though at this very time the Nawab was writing to M. Renault pretending great anger with the British for refusing the mediation of the French, and declaring that without it he would make no terms with them.³

On the 27th the Admiral wrote to Sirāj-uddaula advising the punishment of the counsellors who had instigated the excesses he had committed, but this letter produced no effect. As the Nawab approached Calcutta he was encouraged in his hopes of success by the same signs that had accompanied his first march. The sick and women were put on board,⁴ and the natives were hurrying from Calcutta, probably out of fright, but M. Law suggests that they had been expelled by the British to deceive the Nawab.⁵ On the 2nd February Clive submitted to the Select Committee a letter from the Nawab asking for envoys to be sent to his *Darbār*. Messrs. Amyatt and Hastings were accordingly deputed to make not only the demands transmitted to Coja Wājid, but also three additional ones, to the effect—

27th January, 1757.

2nd February, 1757.

(1) That the Nawab should not demand or molest any of the merchants or inhabitants of Calcutta ;

(2) That the *dastak* of the British should protect all their boats and goods passing through the country ;

(3) That articles to the above effect should be signed and sealed by the Nawab and his Ministers.

It must have been evident to everyone that both the Nawab and the British intended to bring matters to a decision by force, the one pretending readiness to receive proposals, the other asking more and more on each new occasion. Meanwhile the Nawab's forces were steadily approaching Calcutta. On the 14th January they had been found by the Brahmin Rang Lāl at Nya Serai. On the 19th the Nawab was at Hugli. Here he seems to have halted for some time, probably to inquire into the behaviour of the French and Dutch.

14th January to 3rd February, 1757.

¹ Vol. II., p. 133.
Vol. III., pp. 17, 24, 26.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 182.



Before the British attack on Hugli, M. Law, looking forward to the war with England, had steadily cultivated his favour, and had been promised a *parwāna* very favourable to the French. But when the Nawab heard that the French had allowed the British fleet to pass Chandernagore without firing on it, he was furious, and tore up the *parwāna*. Apparently the failure of the French Deputies to persuade the British to allow of their mediation now convinced him that he had been mistaken. At any rate, he pretended to believe in their loyalty, and slowly proceeded on his march. On the 25th his vanguard under his brother was at Cowgachi,¹ and on the 30th January the Nawab himself crossed the river at Hugli.² On the 2nd February, as we have seen, he sent a messenger—Coja Petrus—to Clive asking for the despatch of envoys, but he did not wait for a reply. M. Law points out that the Nawab ought never to have marched down to Calcutta.³ As long as war lasted the British could do no trade, and could obtain provisions only with difficulty. He ought therefore to have prolonged the war, whereas he did the very reverse, and so played into the hands of the British. Though his messenger was still with Clive, on the 3rd February the Nawab's army began to defile past his (Clive's) camp towards Calcutta. Eyre Coote puts the number of his troops at 40,000 horse and 60,000 foot, 50 elephants and 30 pieces of cannon. The British force was 711 foot, 100 artillerymen with 14 six-pounder field-pieces, and 1,300 sepoy.⁴ As the Nawab's messenger had promised that he would await Clive's reply at Nawabganj,⁵ this advance of the army looked like treachery, more especially when some of the vanguard entered the town by the Dum Dum Road and began plundering.⁶ Lieutenant Lebeaume was sent with a small force to drive these latter out, which he effected successfully, and about 5 p.m. Clive himself sent part of his force to harass the enemy on their march and ascertain where they were encamping. A brisk but indecisive cannonade followed until sunset, when Clive withdrew his forces to camp. The same evening he received another letter from the

¹ Vol. II., p. 133.

² Stewart, p. 515.

³ Vol. III., p. 181.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵ About twenty miles from Calcutta (Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 63).

⁶ Vol. II., p. 210.

3rd February,
1757.



Nawab, and determined to despatch Messrs. Walsh and Scrafton to him with the Select Committee's proposals. They started on the morning of the 4th, but found he had left Nawabganj, ^{4th February, 1757.} and it was not until evening that they were brought to him in Omichand's garden, in Calcutta itself.¹ Scrafton writes:

'At seven in the evening the Soubah gave them audience in Omichund's garden, where he affected to appear in great state, attended by the best-looking men amongst his officers, hoping to intimidate them by so warlike an assembly.'²

The Deputies were referred to the Nawab's Ministers for an answer. They demanded that the Nawab should withdraw to Nawabganj, which the Ministers refused. They then asked for a private interview with the Nawab, but he pretended to be afraid of assassination, and declined. Accordingly they asked for permission to withdraw, which the Nawab granted, but bade them first see Jagat Seth's Agent, who had

'something to communicate to them that would be very agreeable to the Colonel.'

What this was is not known, but the Nawab had given orders that excuses were to be made to detain them, as he intended to attack the Fort next day. Suspecting his design, they retired to their tents, put out their lights as if they had gone to sleep, made their escape in the darkness, and joined Clive in camp. He determined at once to surprise the Nawab's army in the morning. On the 21st he had persuaded the Admiral to place the King's troops under his command, and Watson had already promised him a body of sailors if he should need them. Clive had been in the highest spirits since the capture of Hugli, and looked forward to the conflict with the certainty of success.³ At the same time immediate action was necessary, for all his coolies had run away, and he could obtain supplies from the Fort only by water.⁴ Clive felt

'if something was not done, the squadron and land forces would soon be starved out of the country.'⁵

¹ It is asserted by the French that the Deputies were sent merely to spy out the camp (Vol. III., p. 182). In the 'Seir Mutaqherin' the work is said to have been done by a native spy (vol. ii., p. 221). Native tradition has it that the spy was the man afterwards so well known as Raja Naba Krishna.

² 'Reflections,' p. 64. ³ Vol. II., p. 209. ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 238. ⁵ Vol. III., p. 310.



5th February,
1757.

He immediately wrote to the Admiral to land the sailors. The Admiral had already sent up the *Salisbury*¹ to cover the camp, and on receiving Clive's message he sent Captain Warwick ashore with 569 men.² They landed at Kelsall's Octagon at 1 a.m. on the 5th. At 2 a.m. they reached the Colonel's camp, and found his troops under arms. The whole force used in the attack numbered 500 rank and file, 800 sepoys, 600 sailors, and 60 artillerymen. A start was made almost immediately, and the little army reached the Nawab's camp to the north-east of Calcutta about daybreak. As is common at that period of the year, a heavy fog came on soon after sunrise, and the battle was fought in great confusion. The British, after repulsing one or two bold attacks of the Persian cavalry, forced their way through the enemy's camp, without the natives daring to come to close quarters, until they came opposite to the Nawab's tents in Omichand's garden. The Nawab himself was nearly surprised, and is said to have escaped with difficulty. About 9 a.m. the fog began to lift, and the British who were outside the town found themselves exposed to a cannonade from the natives, who had lined the Maratha Ditch. However, though they had to leave behind two guns which had broken down—a third was saved by the gallantry of Ensign York³—they forced their way southward as far as the Bungalow, where they came upon the great road or avenue which leads directly west to Fort William. Here the fighting ceased, and the British marched unmolested to the Fort, which they reached about noon. About 5 in the evening they returned to camp. Thus ended a skirmish which was much more bloody than the decisive battle of Plassey. The British had lost 27 soldiers, 12 sailors, and 18 sepoys killed; 70 soldiers, 12 seamen, and 55 sepoys wounded.⁴ In their losses were included several officers: Captains Bridge and Pye and Clive's Private Secretary, Mr. Belcher, were killed; Captain Gaupp, Lieutenant Rumbold, Ensign William Ellis (a Company's servant), and Keshar Singh, commander of Clive's sepoys, were wounded.⁵ On the other hand, the enemy

¹ Vol. II., p. 211.

² *Ibid.*, p. 253. The sailors had to draw the guns, and complained to the Admiral that they had been used as coolies (Vol. II., p. 395).

³ Vol. III., p. 45.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁵ Vol. II., p. 214.



had lost 1,300 killed and wounded, amongst whom were 22 officers of distinction, and also a number of elephants, horses, camels, and bullocks.

At first the effect of this skirmish upon the Nawab's mind was not known in Calcutta, and the Admiral wrote to Sirāj-uddaula that the attack was merely a specimen of what English soldiers could do,¹ whilst Clive sarcastically remarked that he had been cautious to hurt none but those who opposed him.² From what M. Law says it appears that these letters were interpreted to the Nawab as threats to take him prisoner and send him to England.³ On his march down he had found many of his soldiers, and even some of his officers,⁴ unwilling to follow him, and the latter took advantage of the heavy losses they had already suffered and the alleged threats of the British to persuade the Nawab to peace. The Nawab was forced to agree, and thus gave another of the many accepted proofs of his cowardice; but in the absence of any definite information, we cannot speak positively as to his motives. Some accounts say that he fled from the field of battle, and was only brought back after the British had retired by the threats of his officers that the whole army would disperse if he did not rejoin it;⁵ whilst others assert that it was he who rallied the troops as soon as the fog cleared, and that if he had been properly supported Clive would not have been able to effect his retreat in safety.⁶ Whatever may be the true reason,⁷ he agreed to a Peace, and Jagat Seth's broker, Ranjit Rāi, wrote to Clive the same day, diplomatically informing him that what had happened would not be allowed to interfere with the negotiations. At the same time the Nawab's army decamped towards the Salt Lakes, so as to put a safe distance between it and Clive's forces. This made Admiral Watson suppose Ranjit Rāi's letter to be merely a trick, and he urged Clive to pursue and attack the Nawab, even going so far as to suggest that Clive should call a Council of War.⁸ To a man of Clive's character this was an insult, but he submitted, and apparently the Council of War supported him in his opinion

¹ Vol. II., p. 212.

² *Ibid.*, p. 213.

³ Vol. III., p. 183.

⁴ Sraffon says that Mir Jafar was one of these ('Reflections,' p. 66).

⁵ Vol. III., p. 183.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 246.

⁷ Some writers say there was fresh news of an attack threatening from Delhi (Vol. II., pp. 223, 239).

⁸ Vol. II., p. 215.

9th February
1757.

that a further attack was unnecessary. On the 9th Clive received another letter from Ranjit Rāi, which appeared to show that the Nawab was trying to postpone a decision, and therefore replied peremptorily, demanding that the Select Committee's proposals should be accepted at once.¹ The Nawab complied immediately, and formal agreements were exchanged between the Nawab and his Ministers on one side, and the Admiral and the Council of Fort William on the other.

This Treaty was shortly to the following effect:

1. All privileges granted by the Emperor of Delhi to the British to be confirmed.
2. All goods under the British *dastak* to pass free throughout Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa.
3. The Company's Factories and all goods and effects belonging to the Company, its servants or tenants, which had been taken by the Nawab to be restored; a sum of money to be paid for what had been plundered or pillaged by the Nawab's people.
4. Calcutta to be fortified as the British thought proper.
5. The British to have the right to coin *siccās*.
6. The Treaty to be ratified by the Nawab and his chief officers and Ministers.
7. Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive to promise on behalf of the English nation and Company to live on good terms with the Nawab so long as the latter observed the Treaty.

It will be seen at once that the Articles of the Treaty² are substantially the same as the demands of the Select Committee; but the manner of the Nawab's acceptance is neither clear nor satisfactory—*e.g.*, in reference to the demand for restitution for the losses of the British, the Nawab only promised to restore or pay for such property as had been entered in his own books,³ thus taking no account of the property that had been plundered by his soldiers or which had been secreted by his officers. This was made the subject of further demands.

In addition to this no notice was taken in the Treaty of the losses of private sufferers, but the Nawab verbally promised a sum of 3 *lakhs*⁴ for this purpose, and also, it seems, a particular sum

¹ Vol. II., p. 219.

² *Ibid.*, p. 215.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 216.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 239, 308. The actual words are 'for the Company's other losses.'



to recoup Colonel Clive and Major Killpatrick for their personal losses, and 20,000 gold *mohurs* to be distributed amongst the leading persons in Calcutta for their good offices in arranging the Treaty.¹ The last-mentioned was unknown at the time to the parties concerned, and a mere trick of Ranjīt Rāi to get a handsome sum for himself. Clive mentions that the latter brought presents from the Nawab to the Admiral and himself, but there is no mention of money until later on.² Finally, the Nawab also agreed to a European envoy being sent to Murshidabad.

There was, however, one matter of which the British could not obtain a satisfactory settlement. Clive had proposed to the Nawab's envoys an alliance against, and an immediate attack upon, the French.³ To this the Nawab would not agree, but he weakly wrote to both Watson⁴ and Clive,⁵ promising that he would have the same friends and enemies with them. These letters the British held to be as binding upon the Nawab as the Treaty itself, and his refusal to carry out his private promises they considered to be a breach of the Treaty.

No sooner was the Treaty signed than the Select Committee began to regret that they had allowed the Nawab such easy terms, and asked Clive to call a Council of War to consider whether the British were not strong enough to force him to grant better ones.⁶ The Council replied that, all circumstances considered, it was not advisable to press the Nawab further, and so, fortunately for the credit of the British, the Committee determined not to break the Treaty which it had only just signed.

We have seen that Clive's relations with Admiral Watson were not of the most friendly nature. On the other hand, he met with equal hostility from the Council. Having entrusted the negotiations with the Nawab to Watson and Clive, they had sufficient leisure to brood over their grievance against the Madras authorities for investing Clive with independent powers. They not only wrote to Madras and to England complaining of the indignity thrust upon them, but they chose the critical moment,

¹ Vol. II., p. 381.

² *Ibid.*, p. 240.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 240. In Watts' 'Memoirs of the Revolution in Bengal,' p. 27, it is stated that news of the war in Europe arrived at Calcutta on the 10th February, but, as we have seen, it was known before by both French and English.

⁴ Vol. II., p. 220.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁶ *Ibid.*

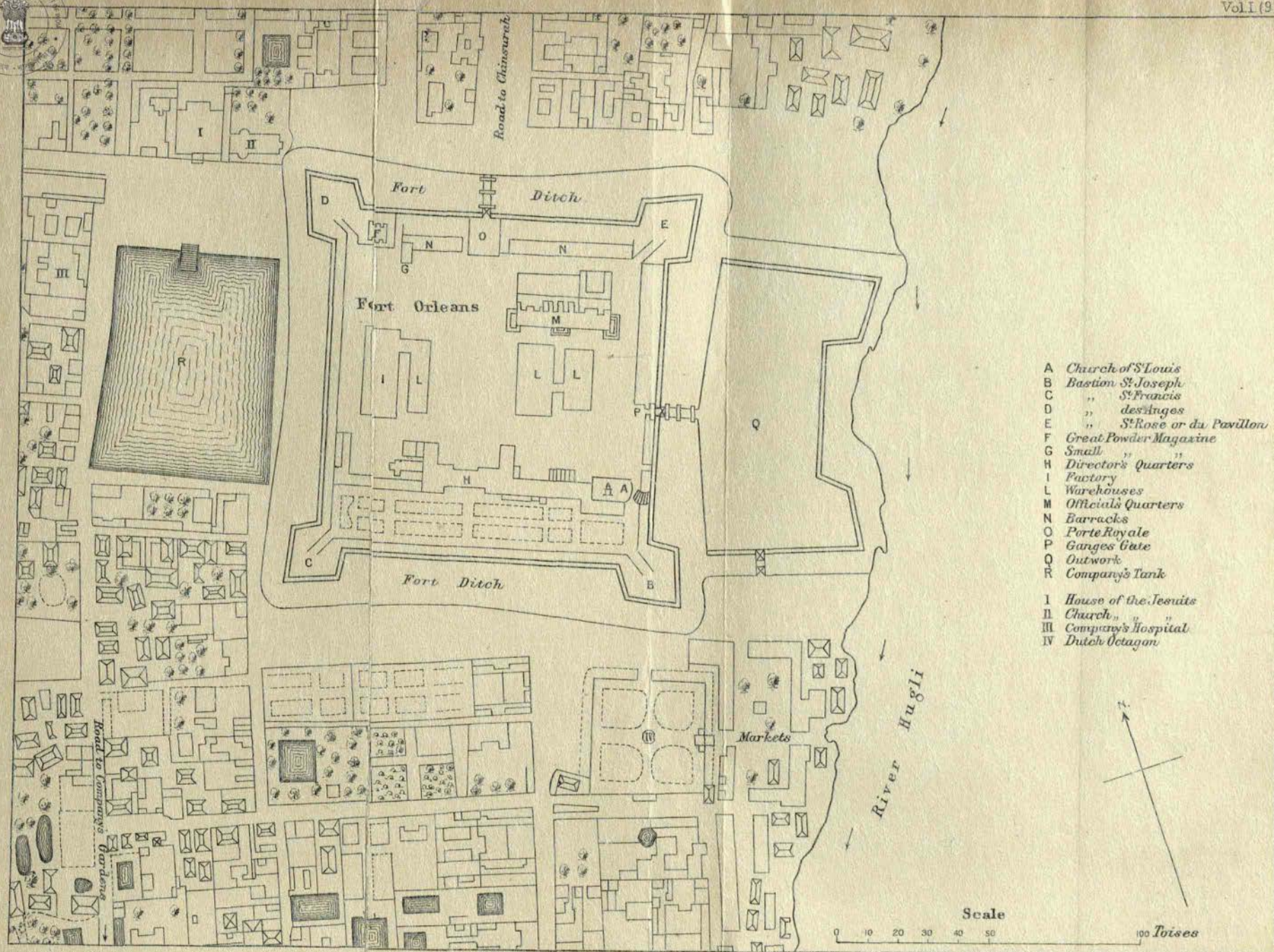


when the Nawab was marching upon Calcutta, to harass Clive himself, and on the 18th January demanded that he should place himself under the orders of the Council of Fort William both as to the plan of military operations and the conduct of negotiations. In reply on the 20th January, Clive politely but firmly informed them that he would consult them in every way possible, but could not give up the authority he possessed to anyone but the Council of Fort St. George itself.¹

In spite of all his vexations Clive's delight in his victory was intense, and he now ventured to give reins to his ambition. In a letter to his father he writes that in all probability his success has saved the Company, and that it is his wish to be appointed Governor-General of India.²

¹ Vol. II., p. 123.

² *Ibid.*, p. 243.



PLAN OF CHANDERNAGORE

Made by M. Mouchet 15 Dec., 1749.

Stanford's Geog. Estab. London.



CHAPTER XIII.

THE CAPTURE OF CHANDERNAGORE.

'An unexpressible blow to the French Company.'—CLIVE.¹

We have seen that even before the siege of Calcutta the French were reported by the British spies to have given assistance to the Nawab, that a number of deserters from their military force served him under the command of a French ex-officer, and that the reports sent home by the French of the quarrel with the Nawab were considered by the British to be not only unfriendly, but untrue.² On the other hand, those of the British who had been captured by the Nawab's forces and made over to the French, or who had escaped to Chandernagore direct, had met with the most humane treatment. In other words, there existed in Bengal between French and British much personal esteem and kindly friendship, combined with an almost exaggerated commercial and political hostility. The reinforcements sent from Madras came animated by feelings much more uniform in nature, for in the last war Madras had been captured by the French, and the instructions³ sent to Lally by the East India Company had been intercepted and showed that the French intended to behave with the utmost severity if they were successful. In the mind of every soldier, as in that of Clive, there was the hope that, the native Government once beaten and rendered powerless to interfere, they might be able to strike another blow at their old enemy France.

What had M. Renault and the French in Bengal to rely on? The personal gratitude of a few individuals not of the highest

¹ Vol. II., p. 307.

² Their comments on the British after the capture of Calcutta were so extravagantly unjust that the Prussian Agent, Mr. Young, was disgusted with them (Vol. I., p. 63).

³ Orme MSS., O.V., 27, pp. 29-33.