



day with a presentiment of disaster. Until Mīr Madan fell there was no sign of this being fulfilled, but when that happened he felt that it was necessary to make a supreme appeal to Mīr Jafar. Sending for him, he took off his turban and placed it in his hands, entreating him to defend it.

‘I now repent of what I have done, and, availing myself of those ties of consanguinity which subsist between us as well as of those rights which my grandfather, Aliverdi Khan, has doubtless acquired upon your gratitude, I look up to you as the only representative of that venerable personage, and hope, therefore, that, forgetting my past trespasses, you shall henceforth behave as becomes a *Syud*,<sup>1</sup> a man united in blood to me, and a man of sentiments, who conserves a grateful remembrance of all the benefits he has received from my family. I recommend myself to you; take care of the conservation of my honour and life.’<sup>2</sup>

Though it came too late, this appeal moved Mīr Jafar to some feeling of compassion and regret, and he swore on the Koran to be faithful to him. But events were hurrying him on, and Mīr Jafar, bound by his pledges to his fellow nobles and to the British, could only refrain from actually fighting against him.<sup>3</sup> This is the most probable explanation of his apparent vacillation in the battle itself.

Seeing that Mīr Jafar and Rāi Durlabh remained neutral, the Nawab ordered the French to retire and fled himself. When he arrived at Murshidabad, most of the chiefs who had followed him left him and repaired to their own houses. Next day he threw open the Treasury, and people crowded to it, not to enter into his service, but to carry off what they could.<sup>4</sup> The city was full of his nobles, but from none of them could he hope for assistance, and the only advice he could get was, though wise, unpalatable. It was to surrender to Clive.<sup>5</sup> Dismissing his few remaining counsellors, he found himself left almost alone, and when late at night he received news of Mīr Jafar’s arrival in the city, he put his wife, Lutf-unnisā Begam, and a number of his favourite women into coaches with all the gold and jewels he could collect, and fled from

24th June,  
1757.

<sup>1</sup> A descendant of the Prophet.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Seir Mutaqherin,’ vol. ii., p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II., p. 423, and Vol. III., p. 324.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. III., p. 324, and ‘Seir Mutaqherin,’ vol. ii., p. 234.

<sup>5</sup> Scrafton’s ‘Reflections,’ p. 90.





30th June,  
1757.

1st July,  
1757.

3rd-30th  
June, 1757.

the city; but instead of taking the left-hand road, which led direct to Rajmahal, probably because he thought the pursuit would certainly go that way, he took the road to the right leading to Bhagwangola,<sup>1</sup> where he embarked with his helpless companions on a number of boats and proceeded up the river. By this flight he cut himself off from those remnants of his army which were still undecided what course to pursue.<sup>2</sup> On the 30th June he arrived close to Rajmahal, and being fatigued with confinement in the boats, went ashore whilst his attendants prepared a meal. Though he had disguised himself in mean clothing, he was recognised by a man named Dānā Shāh. This person had some time before offended Sirāj-uddaula, who had ordered his ears and nose to be cut off. Thus mutilated and disgraced, he was living as a fakir at the very spot where Sirāj-uddaula's evil genius led him to land. Escaping quietly from the spot, Dānā Shāh gave information to Mīr Dāud,<sup>3</sup> who promptly sent a guard to seize and conduct him to Murshidabad. Other officers laid hands on what property they could, and Mīr Kāsim, son-in-law and later on supplanter of Mīr Jafar, took Lutf-unnisā and her casket of jewels, supposed to be worth many *lakhs* of rupees.<sup>4</sup> This apparently happened on the 1st July, and a few hours after Sirāj-uddaula's departure the advance guard of Law's detachment reached Rajmahal.<sup>5</sup> Law had arrived at Patna on the 3rd June. He had a strong presentiment that evil would soon befall the Nawab, but thought he was near enough to join him in time if any emergency arose. He needed only four or five days to go by water to Suti and then two days to march by land to Murshidabad. Even at Patna he heard disquieting rumours, but as late as the 19th he received a letter dated the 10th from the Nawab bidding him not to be uneasy. Probably this was a forgery substituted for a letter written after the Nawab's interview with Sinfray on the 8th, and summoning him to his assistance. All these letters had to pass through the hands of Mīr Dāud at Rajmahal, who forwarded or delayed them as he pleased. Soon after, the rumours of trouble

<sup>1</sup> 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Stewart (p. 531) says the name of the Governor of Rajmahal was Mīr Kāsim, but the 'Seir Mutaqherin' and Broome say Mīr Dāud.

<sup>4</sup> 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 240.

<sup>5</sup> Vol. II., p. 443.





becoming more frequent, Law thought it better to start for Murshidabad, and on the 22nd he received the Nawab's first letter written after the flight of Messrs. Watts, Collet, and Sykes. The same day he wrote and begged the Nawab to wait for him, but Sirāj-uddaula probably never got the letter, for Law himself, hurrying as fast as he could, was delayed by wind and storm. Hence his late arrival at Rajmahal. Hearing that all was over, and knowing the British would promptly send a force in pursuit, he retreated as rapidly as he could, consoling himself with the reflection that, though to have rescued Sirāj-uddaula would have been a feat to boast of, yet now that he was deserted by all his friends the Prince would probably have been more a burden than a help to the French.<sup>1</sup>

When he found himself in the hands of his enemies, Sirāj-uddaula seems to have lost his self-control. He bewailed his fate, begged his guards to spare his life, and offered to retire as a private person on a small pension to any remote corner where the conquerors might send him. Some of the officers seemed to feel pity for him, and so on the 2nd, when he was brought to Murshidabad, Mīr Jafar immediately held a Council to decide upon his fate. Mīr Jafar, it is said, wished to spare his life, but his advisers pointed out that the Colonel was known to be merciful, and that popular opinion might turn in Sirāj-uddaula's favour. Nothing was finally decided, and Mīr Jafar, handing him over to his son Mīrān with strict injunctions to take care of him, retired to sleep.<sup>2</sup> Mīrān mockingly explained to his friends that the best way of guarding the prisoner was to put him to death, and though many of the courtiers, like men of honour, refused the hateful task, one Muhammad Beg<sup>3</sup> accepted it. Taking some armed men with

2nd July,  
1757.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III., pp. 209-213.

<sup>2</sup> 'It has been surmised and very probably not altogether without grounds that there was something of collusion in this matter between the father and the son; a thing indeed not at all unfrequent in this part of the world; and what made it pass for a kind of justice was the remembrance that people had that this unhappy young man, Suraja Dowlat, had been often employed in the very same acts by the old Suba, Aliverdy Cawn, who, availing himself of the sanguinary disposition of his grandson, made use of him to remove such as through avarice, suspicion, or resentment, he inclined to have taken away, and then, to save appearances, disavowed the fact' (Watts' 'Memoir,' p. 108).

<sup>3</sup> 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 242.





him, he hurried to the chamber where the Nawab was confined, and there, without giving him time to perform his ablutions or even utter the prayer which his religion demanded from him at the moment of death, the murderers stabbed him until he fell, crying out that the death of Hasan Kulī Khān, his first victim, was avenged.<sup>1</sup> The British knew nothing of the circumstances of this event until many months after,<sup>2</sup> except that Mīrān had put him to death as his presence in Murshidabad had already excited some commotion amongst the military. The next morning the mutilated body was carried on an elephant through the streets of the town, so that all might know Sirāj-uddaula was dead, and afterwards buried in the Khush Bāgh near the grave of his grandfather.<sup>3</sup>

Thus perished a Prince, the son and grandson of brave and able men, brought to ruin by an evil education and the overfondness of his grandfather, which led him into excesses that disordered his intellect. He was only twenty-six<sup>4</sup> years of age, and, according to native writers, remarkable for the beauty of his person.<sup>5</sup> Hated and despised by his subjects and foreigners alike, he left one faithful mourner in his wife, Lutf-unnisā, who for many years employed *mullahs*<sup>6</sup> to say prayers at his tomb, which she used frequently to visit.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Seir Mutaqherin,' vol. ii., p. 242.

<sup>2</sup> Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 94.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II., p. 444.

<sup>4</sup> Stewart (p. 531) says he was only twenty. Watts' 'Memoir' (p. 108) has 'being at the hour of his death scarce twenty-five years of age.'

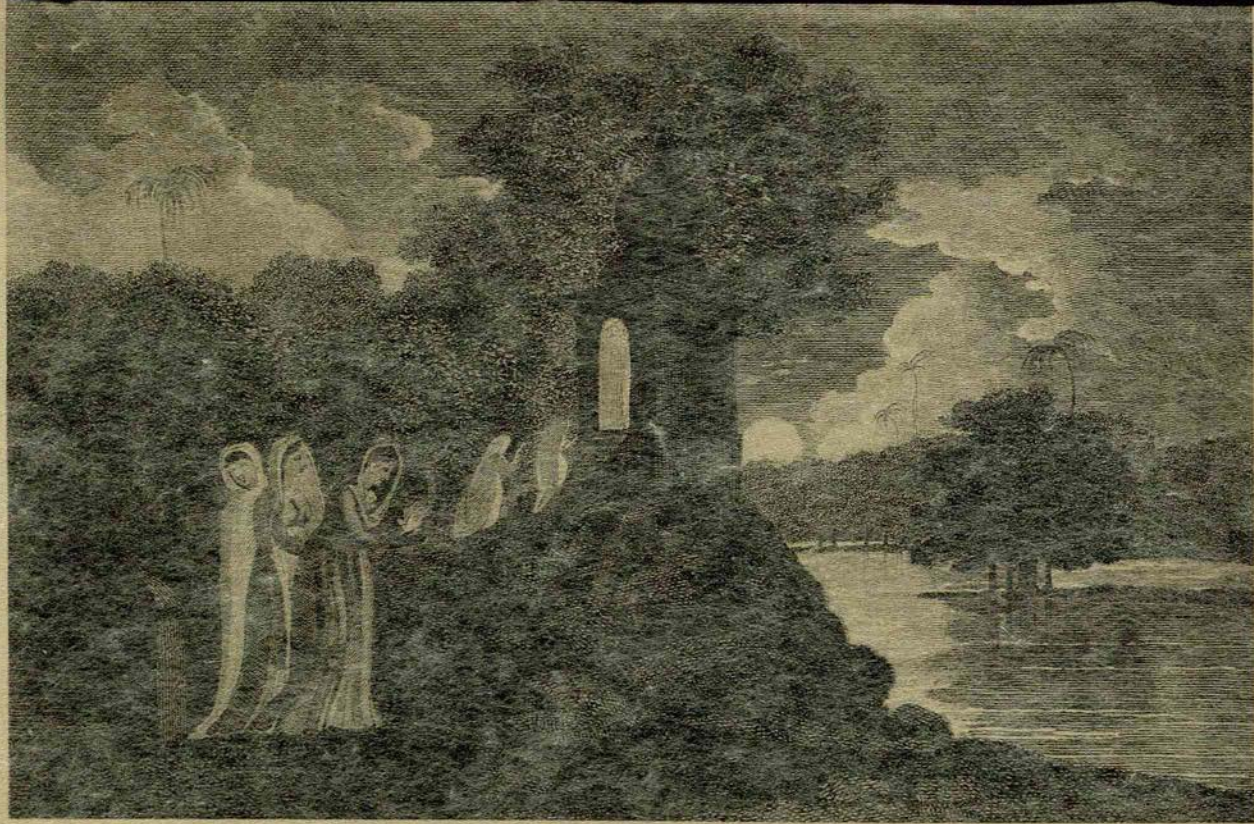
<sup>5</sup> Law (Vol. III., p. 162) describes him as very common in appearance, but see Stewart (p. 531); and in the 'Seir Mutaqherin' (vol. ii., p. 242) there is mention of 'that beauteous face of his, so renowned all over Bengal for its beauty and sweetness.'

<sup>6</sup> Muhammadan priests.

<sup>7</sup> Forster, 'Journey from Bengal to England, 1781,' vol. i., p. 12.

3rd July.  
1757.





MUHAMMADAN WOMEN MOURNING.

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## CHAPTER XVII. CONCLUSION.

'The Nabob's generosity.'—CLIVE.<sup>1</sup>

BESIDES the immense sums allotted in the Treaty as compensation for the losses suffered by the Company and private persons on the capture of Calcutta, Mīr Jafar had promised to make a donation to the army and navy in return for their assistance. It was the universal opinion that Sirāj-uddaula possessed treasure amounting in value to forty million pounds sterling,<sup>2</sup> and so when Mr. Becher suggested that the Members of the Select Committee, 'who really set the whole machine in motion,'<sup>3</sup>

should be likewise considered, the Select Committee thought they might well ask for some small share of this treasure. The Select Committee consisted of Mr. Drake, Colonel Clive, Mr. Watts, Major Killpatrick, and Mr. Becher. The matter was suggested to Mr. Watts, to whom Clive wrote :

'The Committee, having taken the oath of secrecy' (*i.e.*, regarding the treaty with Mir Jafar) 'upon the Bible, have agreed that Meer Jaffier's private engagements be obtained in writing to make them (the Committee, in which you are included) a present of 12 *lacks* of rupees, and a present of 40 *lacks* to the army and navy over and above what is stipulated in the agreement.'<sup>4</sup>

Nor was it with the British alone that Mīr Jafar had to share his booty. His fellow conspirator, Rāi Durlabh, demanded five *per cent.* of the Nawab's treasures, whilst the Seths had to be recouped the seven *lakhs* of rupees which the French owed them.<sup>5</sup> As regards the last, Clive wished to hand over the French Factories to the Seths, but to this the Council objected.

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III., p. 314 note.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306, and Crauford, p. 91.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. III., p. 304.

<sup>4</sup> Vol. II., p. 388.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 438.





When Clive arrived at Murshidabad, Messrs. Watts and Walsh were sent to the city to act as agents for the British in securing the Nawab's treasure. They were met by Rāi Durlabh,<sup>1</sup> who assured them the Treasury contained only one hundred and forty *lacks*, instead of the five thousand which popular rumour ascribed to Sirāj-uddaula, and it was intimated to Clive that as the pay of the army was much in arrears, and as these must be discharged immediately in order to ensure Mir Jafar's safety, it was impossible for the latter to pay at once all that he had promised to the British. I have already mentioned that according to M. Raymond, Omichand and Rāi Durlabh had plotted to deceive the British by hiding a great portion of the treasure in the women's apartments. Whether this is true or not, Clive found only the comparatively small amount above stated, and after having discussed the matter with Jagat Seth, took Mir Jafar to visit him at his house, where it was settled that half the promised sum<sup>2</sup> should be paid at once—two-thirds in money and one-third in plate and jewels—and that the other half should be paid in three equal yearly instalments.<sup>3</sup>

The money and goods were immediately handed over, and sent down the river in boats escorted by a detachment of troops.

'As soon as they entered the great river<sup>4</sup> they were joined by the boats of the squadron, and all together formed a fleet of three hundred boats, with music playing, drums beating, and colours flying, and exhibited to the French and Dutch, by whose settlements they passed, a scene far different from what they had beheld the year before, when the Nabob's fleet and army passed them, with the captive English, and all the wealth and plunder of Calcutta.'<sup>5</sup>

Clive calculated that  $4\frac{1}{2}$  millions sterling were paid in compensation to those who had been ruined by the loss of Calcutta, to private persons and to the Company, the latter also receiving large grants of land.<sup>6</sup> In one of his letters he wrote that every subaltern would be £3,000 the richer for the Revolution.<sup>7</sup> Thus, by the generosity of Mir Jafar, the sufferings of the British in Bengal seemed to have been swept away like an evil dream, and for the moment all was triumph and satisfaction; but when the news arrived in England people began to enquire into the pro-

<sup>1</sup> Vol. II., p. 430.

<sup>2</sup> I.e., 100 *lahks*.

<sup>3</sup> Vol. II., p. 438.

<sup>4</sup> The Hugli.

<sup>5</sup> Scrafton's 'Reflections,' p. 93.

<sup>6</sup> Orme MSS., O.V., 19, pp. 221, 222.

<sup>7</sup> Vol. III., p. 362.





portion between the reward given by Mīr Jafar and the services he had received from Clive and the servants of the Company, and it is not impossible that the Court of Directors felt and expressed some jealousy towards their servants, who, so far from their control, could amass such great fortunes as those of which they now saw them in possession. It was not, therefore, unnatural for people to ask whether the action of the Select Committee of Bengal had been altogether honest and disinterested, and whether the hope of what they might themselves obtain from the overthrow of Siraj-uddaula had not to some extent influenced their attitude as representatives of the East India Company towards that Prince. The right of the Company to complain was doubtful, for not only did it pay its servants extremely small salaries on the understanding that their position gave them the opportunity of making fortunes by trade, but at that time, near as it is to the present, it was not held to be unusual or in any way disgraceful for gentlemen to take pecuniary rewards for their services from persons of high rank and station. In his evidence before the Select Committee<sup>1</sup> Clive explained his views regarding such rewards, and it is clear that neither he nor his hearers had any idea that he had behaved improperly. This being so, it becomes very difficult for a modern writer to blame Clive and the Bengal Committee, but it is allowable to consider what has been the result of their conduct, and to use our conclusions as a guide for our own action in the future. What the natives of the country saw was that Bengal, which for five hundred years had been the prey of foreigners, had now been transferred to the Europeans, who a few months before had been mere merchants occupying a somewhat humble position in their country, but were now in the possession of great wealth, and in a position to dictate their wishes to the Princes of the land. They found that new arrivals from Britain came out filled with the idea that in Bengal gold might be had for the asking, and every year they saw Europeans carrying off great fortunes to their native country. They asked themselves whether their new masters were not as rapacious as those whom they replaced, and what they themselves had benefited by the change was not so clear to their minds. Thus every day, as the remembrance of the evils of the

<sup>1</sup> Vol. III., pp. 313, 314.





government of the Nawabs grew fainter, the people looked with greater and greater dislike upon their new rulers. It took many years to remove this taint from the administration, and it is open to doubt whether even now the natives of Bengal are able to appreciate at anything like their full value either the benefit they received by the liberation of the country from the tyranny of Siraj-uddaula, or the disinterestedness of so much of the work done since then by the servants first of the East India Company and afterwards of the British Crown. Finally, one is forced to the conclusion that the first cause of this unhappy miscomprehension lay in the inadequate salaries given by the Court of Directors to their servants both military and civil, which made it difficult for the latter to distinguish between public duties and private desires, and also that a great nation does not properly safeguard its honour when it places its dealings with foreigners in the hands of men who are the servants of a trading Company.





A SELECTION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE  
PAPERS DEALING WITH THE AFFAIRS OF  
THE BRITISH IN BENGAL DURING  
THE REIGN OF SIRAJ-UDDAULA.

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1. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Council at Masulipatam, dated 26 April, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

The Nawab Aliverdi Khan died on the 10th current at Secarandoulab. His nephew, who is also his grandson, has succeeded to the *subahdari*<sup>2</sup> of Bengal without the slightest opposition, contrary to our expectations. Instead of the revolution with which we thought the country was menaced at the death of the old Nawab, everything appears to be quiet and to submit to his successor.

2. *Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet and Batson to the Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 25 May, 1756.*

Yesterday Golaum Hossein Cawn sent for our *vaqueel*<sup>3</sup> and shewed him a letter which his son Golaum Alli Cawn, the Nabob's *arisbeggy*<sup>4</sup> wrote him from his camp, the purport of which was as follows:— that the Nabob receiving a letter from the Governour and at the same time one from the French Director was extreemly angry and immediately sent orders to Roy Doolob to stop our business at Cossimbuzar and to Mohunlol to write to the Nabob at Dacca to stop our business there, and has likewise ordered Cossim Alli Cawn with a body of forces to march to Tannahs Fort and has advanced them two months pay. Since writing the above we have received a message from Kunichowdry,<sup>5</sup> Huckembeg's *duan*,<sup>6</sup> ac-

<sup>1</sup> Pondicherry Records.

<sup>2</sup> Native agent.

<sup>3</sup> Haris Chaudhuri.

<sup>4</sup> Viceroyalty or government.

<sup>5</sup> Officer in charge of petitions.

<sup>6</sup> Minister or manager.





quainting us that 400 horse are arrived upon the Factory. As we have a very weak garrison at present we request your Honour &c. will send us a party with a supply of ammunition. We are &c. &c.

3. *Ditto, ditto, 31 May, 1756.(1)*

Since our last Golaum Shaw a considerable *jummadar*,<sup>1</sup> with his forces are come upon the Factory and put a stop to all provisions coming in.

We are informed by our *vacqueel* who had it from Golaum Shaw, that unless your Honour &c. will fill up the ditch and pull down the new works which he hears is begun upon, he is determined to attack us, therefore if your Honour &c. are determined not to comply with his demand, we request you will send us a supply of men, as our garrison is very weak, however we think it advisable for your Honour &c. to write a letter to the Nabob immediately.

4. *Ditto, ditto, 31 May, 1756.(2)*

We wrote your Honour &c. the 25th instant that that evening Aumee Beg and Asmult Cawn *jemidars* came upon the Factory with their forces, and have ever since been very troublesome in preventing provisions and other necessities being brought into the Factory. We are informed orders are gone to Dacca and all the *aurungs*,<sup>2</sup> to stop the Honourable Company's business.

We have certain advices that Hackembeg, and his *duan* Hurrischowdree have been the occasion of this stoppage by their false representations and insinuations relating to our digging a ditch and raising fortifications in Calcutta. We leave to your Honour &c.'s judgment whether it would not be advisable to represent this to the Nabob, and that Hackembeg had under various pretences for many years past, extorted large sums from us, and impeded our business by erecting of *chowkeys*,<sup>3</sup> in different places of the river and exacting large sums from all boats that pass, and has also occasioned a great loss to the Company by his *duans*, Thessendel<sup>4</sup> and Hurrischowdree, taking up and fleecing our merchants, by which many of them are rendered incapable of paying

<sup>1</sup> A native military officer.

<sup>2</sup> Posts for the levy of tolls.

<sup>3</sup> Factories for piece goods.

<sup>4</sup> Possibly Kissendas or Krishna Das.





their ballances ; by which oppressive means, on us and other merchants, Thessendel on his death was possessed of near 8 lacks<sup>1</sup> of rupees, which Hackembeg we are informed seized to his own use.

We hear the Nabob is near Rajamaul and it is very uncertain when he will return and what his schemes are.

5. *Letter from the Nawab to Coja Wajid, dated Rajmehal,  
28 May, 1756.*

It has been my design to level the English fortifications raised within my jurisdiction on account of their great strength. As I have nothing at present to divert me from the execution of that resolution I am determined to make use of this opportunity ; for which reason I am returning from Rajahmaul and shall use the utmost expedition in my march that I may arrive before Calcutta as soon as possible. If the English are contented to remain in my country they must submit to have their fort razed, their ditch filled up, and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of the Nabob Jaffier Cawn<sup>2</sup>; otherwise I will expel them entirely out of the provinces of which I am Subah ;<sup>3</sup> which I swear to do before God and our prophets. Should any person plead ever so strongly in their behalf it will avail them nothing, as I am fully determined to reduce that nation to the above mentioned conditions and I require that you will not on any account speak in their favour. Enclosed you will receive *perwannahs*<sup>4</sup> for the French, Dutch, and Danes, in which I have assured them of my favour. I request you will deliver them, and see they are well used in their trade and other respects. Endeavour to engage those nations to prevent the English resettling themselves after I have drove them out.

*(The following paragraph was wrote at the bottom in the Nabob's own hand.)*

I swear by the Great God and the Prophets that unless the English consent to fill up their ditch, raze their fortifications and trade upon the same terms they did in the time of Nabob Jaffier

<sup>1</sup> One *lakh* = one hundred thousand.

<sup>2</sup> Murshid Kuli Jafar Khan; Nawab of Bengal, 1704-1726.

<sup>3</sup> Viceroy or governor.

<sup>4</sup> Official letters, grants or orders.





Cawn I will not hear anything in their behalf and will expel them totally out of my country.

6. *Letter from the Nawab to Coja Wajid, dated Muxadavad,  
1 June, 1756.*

I have received your letter acknowledging the receipt of my indent for broad cloth, horses &c., that my *chawbuck swar*<sup>1</sup> had seen and approved of two horses in Calcutta and that the English had sent me one of them as a present by the *chawbuck swar*. I must repeat my desire for complying with my indent of broad cloth. The horse which the English have delivered my *chawbuck swar*, I direct you to return them again, as they have neither regarded my orders nor live with me upon a good understanding, for which reason I will not accept of their present and therefore insist on its being sent back. I have three substantial motives for extirpating the English out of my country, one that they have built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the King's<sup>2</sup> dominions contrary to the established laws of the country; The second is that they have abused the privilege of their *dustucks*<sup>3</sup> by granting them to such as were no ways entitled to them, from which practices the King has suffered greatly in the revenue of his Customs; The third motive is that they give protection to such of the King's subjects as have by their behaviour in the employs they were entrusted with made themselves liable to be called to an account and instead of giving them [up] on demand they allow such persons to shelter themselves within their bounds from the hands of justice. For these reasons it is become requisite to drive them out. If they will promise to remove the foregoing complaints of their conduct and will agree to trade upon the same terms as other merchants did in the times of the Nabob Jaffier Cawn I will then pardon their fault and permit their residence here, otherwise I will shortly expel that nation. Upon what pretence will the French attempt to attack them in the river; which they have never done since the settlement of Europeans in

<sup>1</sup> A rough-rider, groom, or jockey.

<sup>2</sup> The King or Emperor of Delhi, to whom the Nawabs of Bengal were nominally subject.

<sup>3</sup> Certificates that goods or merchandise belonged to the English Company and was therefore free from all tolls.





the country? I recommend it to you to endeavour by good usage to engage the French to attack the English on the river while I besiege them on shore; and the easier to induce them thereto, you may promise from me, that I will deliver the town of Calcutta into their hands as soon as I have made myself master of it.

*(The following paragraph was wrote in the Nabob's own hand at the bottom of the letter.)*

Please to acquaint the English minutely of my resolutions. If they are willing to comply with those terms they may remain, otherwise they will be expelled the country.

*7. Letter from the Nawab to Coja Wajid, in the way to Calcutta.*

I have seized Mr. Watts, the English Chief at Cossimbuzar (who has acted very unlike a Chief), and have delivered him over to the charge of Hussein Ally Beg Cawn.<sup>1</sup> I now dispatch Nazir Mahmud Daliei to you and direct you to seize all ships, sloops and vessels belonging to my subjects and deliver them to Mahmud Beg; desire the French, Dutch and Danes to be expeditious in getting their vessels of force in readiness to accompany my land army and attack the English by the river while I besiege them on shore. I have sent them *perwannahs* likewise to that purport; and (God willing) I shall soon appear before Calcutta.

*(The following paragraph was wrote in the Nabob's own hand at the bottom of the letter.)*

I swear by the Majesty of God I will not permit the English to remain settled in my country.

*8. Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet and Batson to the Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 2 June, 1756.*

Another large body of forces with a train of artillery is now marching to the Factory. Our *vacqueel* has ten *peons*<sup>2</sup> upon him and is ordered not to come to the Factory, and all intercourse with the country people [has been] put a stop to. We have great reason to expect we shall be soon attacked, therefore request your Honour &c. will immediately send us a party of at least 100 men

<sup>1</sup> Son of Hakim Beg (see No. 13). In other letters (e.g., No. 9) Mr. Watts is said to have been placed in the charge of Hakim Beg himself.

<sup>2</sup> Country foot soldiers or attendants.





as privately as possible by way of Kisnagah river and march over land from thence. We are with respect etc. etc.

9. *Translation of extracts from a letter from M. Vernet<sup>1</sup> and Council, Cossimbazar, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 3 June, 1756.<sup>2</sup>*

The Prince left on the 16th of last month with the greater part of his troops and artillery in the direction of Rajmehal in order, as was rumoured, to make an attack on the province of Purneah, but having received some intelligence concerning the conduct of the English at Calcutta that was not published here, he speedily returned and had their fortified settlement invested by several bodies of troops. Raja Durlabh Ram has even got beyond Tribenikhali with a few guns and has addressed a letter direct to the first undersigned, enclosing a *parwana* from the Nawab, a copy of which we have the honour to present herewith to Your Honour, together with the reply of the first undersigned to Durlabh Ram's letter.

\* \* \* \* \*

The English having acted very manfully at the commencement sent word to Durlabh Ram that they would await two shots out of respect to the Prince, but that he should take care not to fire a third, for that they would then show who they were. But that laudable intention only lasted until yesterday evening, when their Chief had the infamy to allow himself to be prevailed upon by the lamentation and tears of his wife so far as to write a cowardly letter to Durlabh Ram, in which he entirely submitted to the will of the Prince, and one hour after date at the invitation of the said Durlabh Ram, he went with his steward<sup>3</sup> like one distracted, in his nightdress,<sup>4</sup> having only two foot soldiers before him, to meet him. Durlabh Ram received them very courteously and conducted them to the Prince, who instantly ordered them to be pinioned and after keeping them standing for about an hour and a half on the shore among the common people, he had them brought before him and delivered into the hands of Harktsiembeek (? Hakim Beg) for safe

<sup>1</sup> George Lodowijk Vernet, chief of the Dutch factory at Cossimbazar.

<sup>2</sup> Vernet Papers, the Hague.

<sup>3</sup> *Opfermeester*. At first Mr. Watts went with his surgeon, Dr. Forth; Mr. Collet was summoned later on.

<sup>4</sup> *Camisool*.





custody until the chief Watts should have signed three *machalcas*,<sup>1</sup> one to surrender the family and rich possessions of Raja Balav, one to raze their works at Calcutta and one to pay thenceforth the inland trade tolls.

All these matters would not have gone so far, if they had stuck to their first-defiant attitude, for the Prince was so frightened and dejected that he had not the courage to order a shot to be fired; nay, he even sent in the morning a *harkara*,<sup>2</sup> and in the afternoon a horseman, to the first undersigned to assure him of his friendship and ask for assistance, and at about seven o'clock he sent Mir Khoda Yar Khan to the first undersigned to again pay him his compliments and assure him of his friendship, together with the Prince's orders to write to you with due speed that [you] were to be in readiness to assist him with our ships at the river-side to take Calcutta, when he would give us that place as a recompense, and that he expected an immediate reply, in order to be able to arrange his journey accordingly.

To all which, after having first returned the above compliments, the first undersigned replied that we were powerless to assist the Prince here in any way and that he could assure him there were no ships in the river, nor were any expected for some months to come, but that he would inform your Honour of his orders. The *Royrayan*<sup>3</sup> and Durlabh Ram again sent word yesterday to the first undersigned through several messengers 'that he should nevertheless carry out the Prince's wishes,' which shows that great fear exists among his people.

10. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet and Council, Cossimbazar, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 4 June, 1756.*<sup>4</sup>

Since our respectful missive of yesterday, a duplicate of which we annex, we have the honour to communicate to your Honour in reference to the cowardly behaviour of the English that their Second in command, and a Member of the Council, have com-

<sup>1</sup> Formal agreements binding to performance under stated penalties.

<sup>2</sup> A messenger or spy.

<sup>3</sup> A Hindu title for the chief Treasury Officer under the Muhammadan Government.

<sup>4</sup> Vernet Papers, the Hague.





mitted the same folly as their Chief, namely, to surrender to their enemy by whom they have been very badly entertained, whereupon the Prince ordered the fort to be taken, and sent Raja Durlabh Ram with the vanguard of the army in the direction of Calcutta, who will be followed to-morrow by the Prince with the rest of his forces, with the view of laying siege to that place, Durlabh Ram taking along with him the aforesaid chief Watts, but [the latter] was again brought back to the fort to deliver over to the Moors the ammunition of war to be found there, which was actually done, all the other effects being placed under seal and all the military disarmed, so that the military captain there, Nollet,<sup>1</sup> from sheer despair, stabbed himself with a poniard.

11. *Letter from Messrs. Watts, Collet and Batson to Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 4 June, 1756.*

Since our last yesterday another considerable body of forces are come upon the Factory under the command of four *jemmidars*, and more are expected this evening. There is also a party and tents on the other side of the river opposite to the Factory where we hear they intend to place their cannon. The Nabob is expected in the city the day after to-morrow. We have information by some people that the Nabob intends attacking us and from others that they only threaten us in order that your Honour &c. may the sooner comply with their demand in filling up the ditch and pulling down what works you have begun upon, in which he seems peremptory. We therefore desire your Honour &c. will either send us up a body of men that we may be able to defend ourselves or write to the Nabob that you will immediately comply with his demand.

Our doctor having been sent to Kessore Cawn and Cossumally Cawn, two of the principal *jummadars* who came upon the Factory this morning, they informed him that the Nabob was angry with us on no other account than upon your Honour &c. building a draw-bridge at Perrins and the octagon at Mr. Kelsal's garden which was blown down two years ago in the storm and now made larger, which they have taken for a new fortification, and they say that in case you will break down the drawbridge and the

<sup>1</sup> Lieutenant John Elliot. According to other accounts he shot himself when he was ordered to surrender, rather than submit to the insults of the Moorish soldiers.





octagon the forces will be immediately withdrawn; if not, we must stand to the consequence.

Since writing the above we have received the inclosed letter from our *vacqueel* who is at the City.<sup>1</sup>

By the best intelligence we can get, we have about two or three thousand forces stationed about the Factory.

If your Honour &c. will write an *arasdass*<sup>2</sup> to the Nabob that you will immediately obey his orders we are in hopes he will put an end to this troublesome affair.

12. *Letter from Mr. Collet to Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 4 June, 1756.*

Since writing to your Honours our Factory has been invested by the Nabob's whole force and a large train of artillery with repeated orders to attack us unless the Chief went in person to the Nabob, which he complied with as the only method we thought of to prevent the Company being involved in war and losing all the Company's effects at the Subordinates, as our garrison was very weak both in men and ammunition, and the gun carriages mostly rotten and a scarcity of provisions; since which Messrs. Collet and Batson were likewise sent for, in order as they said to accommodate matters, upon which they thought it was most adviseable to go, a *perwannah* coming at the same time to take off all the forces from the Factory except Omubeg and his people.

This morning the Chief and Second and Mr. Batson were accompanying Roydullub on his march, it is said, to Calcutta when they stopped us and told us there was an order come from the Nabob for the Second to return to the Fort and deliver up all the cannon and ammunition which we was obliged to comply with and are now delivering. The Nabob is said to march to-morrow to Calcutta with all his forces, which is computed to be about 50,000 men.

The Chief and Mr. Batson are still with Roydullub, the Nabob's vanguard.

13. *Letter from Francis Sykes to Council, Fort William, dated Cossimbazar, 4 June, 1756.*

As we have been in hourly expectation for these two days past of an attack from the Nabob's army, now reckoned to consist

<sup>1</sup> Murshidabad.

<sup>2</sup> A written petition or memorial.





of upwards of 50,000 men besides a train of artillery, Mr. Watts and the Council have been trying all methods to accommodate matters rather than go to extremities; they after writing several *aradsasses* to the Nabob, and also applying to such persons whom they thought might represent our case in a proper manner, all which efforts have not hitherto had any success. However the 2<sup>d</sup> instant Meer Hossein Alli, Hussebeg's son, came into the Factory and informed the gentlemen that the Nabob wanted to talk to the Chief, upon which it was thought adviseable for him to go immediately with our doctor, accompanied with Meer Hossein Alli who promised him to introduce him to the Nabob. I do not as yet hear this has had the effect expected. They obliged Mr. Watts to sign a *machulka*, which to the best of my remembrance signifies as follows, 1<sup>st</sup> No protection is to be given in Calcutta to any of the Nabob's subjects, 2<sup>d</sup> The draw-bridge at Perrings and the new fortifications are to be demolished, and 3<sup>d</sup> no *dusticks* to be given to any of the black merchants, and upon Mr. Watts' wanting to come to Cossimbazar again, they prevented him, saying they understood his signing any paper would be of no validity except all the Gentlemen in Council signed it, and that he should remain till the rest came, upon which Messrs. Collet and Batson went in expectation to sign it, but when they arrived a *perwannah* came from the Nabob, as the Gentlemen write me, with orders for the Second to return and deliver up all our guns and ammunitions and for Omerbeg to remain at the Factory only. Since writing the above Mr. Collet arrived here, who agreeable to the Nabob's orders has delivered up the cannon, powder, &c. The Nabob is marching to Calcutta with 50,000 men, takes Messrs. Batson and Watts along with him. What the Nabob's intentions are we at present cannot learn but imagine by most that he is going to Calcutta.

P.S.—This I write by the desire of Mr. Watts who is in extream low spirits.

14. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet and Council, Cossimbazar, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 6 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

The distressful circumstances resulting here from the surrender of the English fort have somewhat perplexed us, the more so, as

<sup>1</sup> Vernet Papers, the Hague.





being entirely destitute of men, and our powder and other ammunition being also very insignificant, we are quite unable to operate against the fury of the Prince, if he should keep his word, to wit, that if he should succeed before Calcutta, he will serve all the other nations here in the same way as he has treated the English, who are locked up in their rooms on rice and water, whilst the common people are thrown into chains and in all probability will very shortly fall victims to the fury of that raging tyrant. We therefore most humbly request your Honour to send us as speedily as possible (with 60 military and 2 quarter-gunners and 40 arquebusiers), 10 cannons with a sufficiency of balls and grape-shot for the aforesaid pieces, linstocks, rammers with sponge-heads, a few hand-grenades and 1,000 lbs. of powder, and also to license us to advance the point<sup>1</sup> at the south side of the Governor's residence in order to be able to keep the road past the fort open along that side, as we have done with that on the north side, and, if need be, to construct a stone battery before the gate.

As no sealed letters can be despatched in such troublous times, without their being intercepted and stopped on the road, we should like to have a positive order how we are to act in case of attack, for no reliance whatever is to be placed on the oath and promises of the Nawab, as has been seen in many circumstances with the English, who are always too dilatory in giving information in these matters. *Rayrayan*, *Gholam Hosein*, and all the important courtiers have sent word to the first undersigned to take care and be on his guard. We beg to be favoured with a speedy reply, whilst we have the honour to subscribe ourselves with much respect &c. &c.

P.S.—Flight will be attended with many difficulties, for at such a time the river will be occupied on all sides by the boats of the Nawab. Mr. Forth, Surgeon of the English, has just been to us and claimed our protection; which we have granted him, partly because he is not a servant of the Company and partly because the *jemadars* who are in the fort of the English themselves told him, that now it was his time to flee. Howbeit we request your Honour's orders in the matter.

<sup>1</sup> Any projecting work as, e.g., a bastion.





15. *Letter from the Council, Fort William, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 7 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

The Nawab has taken possession of our factory at Cossimbazar with a large force and cut off our communications with those in the Fort. We are not without anxious fears that he will undertake some step that will reduce us to great straits, which we have good grounds for believing from certain reports we have received that a considerable section of his force is marching to get below [to cross] the river, as also a great quantity of ammunition, both of which have advanced 6 or 7 *kos*<sup>2</sup> on this side of Cossimbazar and it is thus impossible to tell where he will stop; we have, therefore, considered it our duty to point out to your Honour and the Council the danger that lies in the allowing such an insult to one of the European nations settled here to pass unheeded, and request for the sake of our King, and by virtue of the treaty of alliance existing between us, that should we be attacked you will as far as possible render us every aid and assistance in your power. We flatter ourselves that you will not fail in this, owing to the friendship between your Honour and our nation, it being to our common interest to prevent all such annoyances. We request you to make us acquainted, as soon as possible, with your decisions in this respect, and how many soldiers, or other aid, we may expect, for the calamitous state of affairs here renders assistance imperatively necessary. We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, J. Z. HOLWELL, W. MACKETT, EDWARD EYRE and W. BAILLIE.

16. *Letter from Council, Fort William, to Council, Fort St. George, dated 7 June, 1756.*

Since writing to you under date the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, we have received further intelligence that the Nabob has ordered a considerable body of forces and a large train of artillery to march down the river, and that they are 6 or 8 *cos*s on this side of Cossimbazar. All communication between us and that Factory is entirely cut off and we are obliged to depend on reports for what may relate to

<sup>1</sup> Bengal Correspondence, the Hague. Not in the English Records, but translated from a Dutch copy.

<sup>2</sup> A *kos* is, in Bengal, about 2 or 2½ miles.





them. From these appearances and the close investure of Cossimbuzar upon so frivolous a pretence as that of Mr. Kelsal's octagon and the draw-bridge at Perrin's we have great reason to imagine his designs extend much further than is at present known or declared. You will therefore perceive what consequence the least delay in reinforcing this garrison may be of to the Honourable Company, and we doubt not will send us a detachment the minute you receive these advices. We are &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, J. Z. HOLWELL, EDWARD EYRE, WM. BAILLIE.

P.S.—Since writing the foregoing we have received the unfortunate news of Cossimbuzar Factory being delivered over into the hands of the Nabob as you will observe by the enclosed copies of letters received from thence.

R. DRAKE, JUNIOR, PAUL R. PEARKES, J. Z. HOLWELL.

17. *Letter from Council, Fort William, to Council, Fort St. George, dated 8 June, 1756.*

Inclosed are triplicates of what we have wrote you within these few days, and coppies of the letters we have received from the Gentlemen at Cossimbuzar with an account of the delivering up that place to the Nabob the 4<sup>th</sup> instant.

From those advices your Honour &c. will observe he is determined to march against this Settlement and we have received authentick advices that his artillery and a considerable body of his forces are already on their way down. We are preparing everything in our power to make as vigorous a defence as possible, but as our garrison is extreemly weak we shall endeavour to amuse him and avoid coming to hostilities as long as we can in hopes of your sending us a sufficient reinforcement (when you know our situation) not only to repel those troops he may bring against this place; but to recover the Honourable Company's Factory at Cossimbuzar.

As our safety and honour must therefore depend chiefly on the relief you are to send us, we are again to request in the most earnest manner, as you tender the interest of our employers so deeply concerned in this Settlement, as you regard the lives and propertys of the inhabitants, and as you value the honour of our





Nation, all of which are now at stake, that you do not on any motive whatsoever neglect to supply us with the number of men we have demanded, which is the only means left to recover Cossimbuzar, to defend ourselves, and to transact the Company's affairs on any footing of security. Should you after all we have said and urged upon this head either refuse or delay the reinforcement we have demanded, we hope your Honour &c. will excuse us, if we exculpate ourselves by protesting against you in behalf of our Honourable Employers, for all the damages and ill consequences of such default.

We are likewise extremely deficient in musquets, shot, bayonets, small field-pieces, mortars, and most kind of military stores, a proportionable quantity of which we shall likewise expect from your Honour &c. We are &c. &c. ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, P. R. PEARKES, W. FRANKLAND, J. Z. HOWELL, W. MACKETT, W. BAILLIE, EDWARD EYRE.

*P.S.*—As it will be impossible to make gun-powder should our town be closely invested, and as it is probable the quantity we have by us and shall be able to make before his arrival, will all be expended by the time your reinforcement comes, we think it would be proper for your Honour &c. to send us likewise as much of that article as you can.

18. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, to Council, Fort William, dated 8 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

HONOURED SIR AND GENTLEMEN,—We have heard with great regret of the Nawab's intention to attack you, but to assist you as requested in your missive of yesterday lies beyond our power, as your Honours must fain fairly acknowledge, if you consider the uncertainty as to whether Calcutta alone is the goal, also the bad situation of our fort and the weakness of our force in Bengal, we having to employ native *barkandazes*<sup>2</sup> in all troubles that arise. And whereas your Honours require the assistance referred to in your aforesaid letter, in the name of His Royal Majesty of Great Britain, and especially by virtue of the treaty existing between the two nations as allies, to render you assistance as far as possible in

<sup>1</sup> Bengal Correspondence, the Hague.

<sup>2</sup> A matchlock man, but commonly applied to a man armed with a sword and shield, who acts as doorkeeper, watchman, guard, or escort.—*Wilson*.





case of need, we have to reply thereto that, leaving alone that the orders of our Superiors charge us to remain neutral in all cases that do not concern us, we cannot see that the reasons upon which your Honours rely necessitate that we, who are established here as simple merchants, should on that account be obliged or feel it our duty, to expose ourselves to dangerous troubles from which we are not sure we shall remain exempt, and as little do we gather from the contents of the said treaty (unless there be another apart from the one we mean, and which is not in our possession) that the assistance we are bound to render to each other in virtue thereof (when we do not know whether there is room for mediation or not) can in this case be rendered without exposing ourselves to the displeasure of our masters.

We have the honour to be, Sir and Gentlemen, your Honours' most humble servants, A. BRISDOM, R. H. ARMENAUT, L. J. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN, and S. CROMBON. HOOGLEY, at Fort Gustavus.

19. *Translation of a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to M. De la Bretesche at Patna, dated 9 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

SIR,—You will have heard by common report of the capture of the English Factory at Cossimbazar, and the orders given by the Nawab to his troops to march towards Calcutta with intent to attack it. He has written several letters to M. Renault<sup>2</sup> by which he informs him that as there are reasons which oblige him to chastise the English and drive them out of Bengal he offers to put us in possession of Calcutta and assures us he will support and protect us in every way on condition we assist him with all our forces against that nation. Whatever the advantages he offers us on this occasion, as it is not in our power to conform to his wishes without having been in the first instance authorised to do so by our Superiors, we have agreed that the Director should write and thank him for his favourable disposition towards us, and at the same time excuse ourselves for our absolute inability not only to accept his obliging offers but also to supply him with the

<sup>1</sup> Pondicherry Records.

<sup>2</sup> Chief or Director of the French factory at Chandernagore, the chief settlement of the French in Bengal.



assistance he demands. Not knowing what effect our refusal will have on the Nawab's mind and fearing he may take it in bad part, we think we cannot take too much precaution against the resentment he may possibly feel towards us and which must be expected from a man so violent and passionate. It is for this reason, Sir, we advise you to be on your guard against whatever may happen, and to take every precaution which may seem advisable for the security of your Factory and your own persons.

20. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet and Council, Cossimbazar, to M. La Tour<sup>1</sup> at Patna, dated 10 June, 1756.<sup>2</sup>*

Since the death of Aliverdi Khan, Siraj-uddaula has grown more and more violent and has pushed his fury so far as to lay siege with his whole army on the 25th of last month, for some trifling reason, to the English fort here, which he captured owing to the faint-heartedness of the English, removing therefrom all the artillery and ammunition and putting all the effects both of the Company and of private persons under seal, carrying all those who were in the fort prisoners to Moorshedabad, except the officer of the troops who shot himself through the head and so ended his life, and the Chief, the Second in command and also a Member of the Council whom he took along with him in the direction of Calcutta, whither he has marched with his forces to lay siege to it. Hoping that the storm may soon blow over, we remain with greetings &c. &c.

21. *Letter from the Council, Fort William, to the Dutch Director and Council, Hugli, dated 13 June, 1756.<sup>3</sup>*

We have received Your Honour's letter in reply to the request made by us for assistance against the Nawab who is now marching at the head of a great army to attack Calcutta, and we regret to see your Honour and the Council so cool and indifferent. Your Honour should consider the alliance and friendship between His Britannic Majesty and the States-General of the United Provinces. We cannot believe that it is by the orders of their High Mighti-

<sup>1</sup> Jacques Latour, chief at the Dutch factory at Patna.

<sup>2</sup> Vernet Papers, the Hague.

<sup>3</sup> Bengal Correspondence, the Hague. Not in the English Records, but translated from a Dutch copy.





nesses, your Masters; that you are withheld from offering a helping hand to a colony of Great Britain, attacked and brought into great straits as it now is without the least grounds upon a specious pretext; and we venture to think that your Honour is mistaken as regards the instructions of your Company, which we understand can refer only to trade matters and the advantages thereof in reference to the Government. Besides we further think you wrongly conceive your own advantages in not taking a side and in allowing the English to be exterminated by the pernicious *Subahdar*<sup>1</sup> without making any effort to prevent it. His forces are much more numerous than they appear to be and we have received full information as to his intentions and of his purpose to extirpate the power of all Europeans having possessions in this kingdom. We have written the above also to the Director and Council at Chandernagore and have received from them a most satisfactory answer, with the assurance they will lend us a helping hand whenever, and as far as it lies in their power, the same as if they were in alliance with us, and they presume you will be one of the party. With which view we again address this to you and take the liberty of pointing out to you the dangerous consequences likely to ensue from your Honours holding aloof, during these mutual negotiations, from the protection of our goods and possessions. But should your Honours still resolve to look on as spectators of our destruction and refuse us such relief as may be in your power, we shall feel compelled to lay your Honours' actions in the strongest terms before our Masters who, we entertain no doubt, will lay the matter before the Parliament of England, and we leave to your own judgment what the feelings of that assembly will be when they hear that the Directors of the Dutch East India Company refuse the natives and the English colonists to send a strong force, of whatever kind the assistance required may be, to a colony of that Crown to empower her to resist the attacks of a rash, thoughtless, fool-hardy and covetous prince who, without the least show of reason, has resolved to venture his utmost against us.

We hope that what we have urged will have great weight with your Honours and thus prevail upon you to enter into a triple

<sup>1</sup> Governor of a *subah*, or province,



alliance with us and his Honour the Director and Council at Chandernagore, and thus be able to ensure the preservation of our trade, but should our expectations in that respect be disappointed and (in spite of our arguments) you decide merely to play the part of lookers-on, we feel it our duty collectively and individually to protest against the consequences of such a course on the part of your Honours and the results that may ensue therefrom, and do hereby protest against his Honour the Director, Adriaan Bisdom, and the members of his Council at Hoogley on the one side for our Sovereign Lord the King of Great Britain, and on the other side for our Masters the Governor and Directors of the East India Company in London, on account of your refusal to us of assistance and help against the enterprise of the Nawab of Murshidabad, Suraj-uddaula, who is now marching at the head of a great army to attack this place.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, J. Z. HOLWELL, W. MACKETT, EDWARD EYRE and W. BAILLIE.

22. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the Council, Chandernagore, to the captain of the French East India Company's ship in the Road of Balasore, dated 15 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

In the present circumstances of the war between the Nawab and the English, which make the neighbourhood of Calcutta dangerous, we feel we ought to instruct you to follow the directions sent you by the Director to day, and not to neglect any of the precautions he prescribes for the safety of your ship and the money which you may be bringing.

23. *Translation of a letter from the Director and Council, Hugli, to Council, Fort William, dated 16 June, 1756.*<sup>2</sup>

We were greatly surprised to find in your esteemed favour of the 13th instant a protest against the conduct that our circumstances compel us to follow in the troubles between your Honours and the Nawab of Bengal. We are not aware that the engagements between the Crown of Great Britain and our country extend to the colonies here in India. If your Honours are cognizant of any

<sup>1</sup> Pondicherry Records.

<sup>2</sup> Bengal Correspondence, the Hague.





such undertaking, it shows great remissness in that it was not communicated to us; meanwhile it is certain that the complete harmony existing between our nations mutually obliges us to assist each other in all perils incurred by mischance and without any fault of our own, where it may be done without any too great danger. But that we should expose ourselves to evident peril, merely in the hope of saving you therefrom, our Masters, will surely not, any more than the illustrious Parliament of England, expect of us, provided you be pleased to do us the justice (as we hereby request) to add to the representations to be made to the said illustrious body also a picture of the circumstances in which we are placed, *viz.*, surrounded by the Moors in a fort not near so capable of defence as yours at Cossimbazar used to be. Our force is but very small, and our artillery and ammunition deficient in quality, we having to make shift with Bengal gunpowder. The moneys of our Company are spread all over the *aurungs*, besides what is deposited at Cossimbazar and in the Mint; all this, at the least deviation from neutrality, we might well look upon as lost, and our servants at Cossimbazar and Patna as delivered over to the rage of the Nawab. Would that not be for us a perilous undertaking and should we not be answerable to our Masters who have prescribed to us a strict maintenance of neutrality in all cases that relate in any way to the native Government?

We flatter ourselves that such a true description of our circumstances will fully justify our conduct in these matters; noting further for your consideration that by several *parwanas* the Nawab has importuned us in vain for men, war-ammunition and sloops, rather (we think) to be able to pick a quarrel with us in the future than with the idea of leading us to suchlike [neutrality] violating concessions.

We have, &c., &c.

24. *Translation of a letter from M. Le Conte to M. Courtin at Dacca, dated Chandernagore, 19 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

SIR,—You know already, from what M. Sinfray<sup>2</sup> has said on the subject of the complaints which the Nawab has against the

<sup>1</sup> Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 9 November, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> Secretary to the French Council at Chandernagore.



English, the reasons for the war which he makes upon them, and also all that has happened at Cossimbazar. The capture of their fort in that place far from satisfying Siraj-uddaula has only elevated his courage. The facility with which he got possession of it has, doubtless, persuaded him that with a little trouble he may also drive the English from Calcutta and so make himself master of all the treasures which the *Begum*<sup>1</sup> of Newajis Mahmet Khan and Raj Balab have sent thither. Filled with this idea and the name which he is going to make for himself by this exploit, he has refused to listen to the representations of any one, even those of his mother, who tried to restrain him by the reproach that he was going to measure his strength against merchants. Immediate orders were given to his army to advance. Of this we have seen several bodies of 4 and 6 and 7 thousand men defile past our barriers with their artillery. He himself set out on the 5th, that is to say, 2 days after the surrender of the English Fort, at the head of 20,000 men. His elephants are said to be as many as 300, his artillery of 500 guns, amongst which are 84 pieces which he took from the English Factory with 500 *maunds*<sup>2</sup> of powder, and 2,000 iron cannon balls. With the exception of the European artillery and its ammunition, the rest of this stuff is not very dangerous, at least to judge by some guns which we saw at the Dutch Gardens<sup>3</sup> where a detachment of horsemen who conducted them stayed for two days, having wandered from their road and having been refused a passage through our Settlement. We went to see them out of curiosity. Nothing is more pitiable than the way in which they are mounted and supplied. People say they have only clay bullets.

Since the departure of Siraj-uddaula from Murshidabad, up to the 15th, we had no news of him and this delay gave rise to many jokes, many persons pretending he was still shut up in his Harem, others that feeling the difficulty of his enterprise he would like to negotiate. In fact an agent of Coja Wajid's wishing to make proposals to M. Drake it was suspected that the Nawab, not to compromise himself, had set this merchant at work; but these rumours were soon dissipated by the arrival of the Nawab, who slept on the 15th in the garden opposite Chinsurah.

<sup>1</sup> Princess. <sup>2</sup> The *man* or *maund* weighs 82 lbs. <sup>3</sup> To the north of Chandernagore.





The agents of the two nations having presented him with our *salaams* in this place, ours was well received and even had two *betels*<sup>1</sup> given him for M. Renault, but as for the Dutch he was not content with refusing them, he showed them very clearly the contempt he had for them and his intention to pay them a visit on his return from Calcutta. The next day we saw him pass over the great plain which is opposite the Factory on the other side of the river. His camels, his elephants, his artillery, occupied us all the morning.

Before his departure from Murshidabad, fearing perhaps that the three nations might support each other, or possibly acting in good faith, he summoned to the *Durbar* the French and Dutch native agents, told them of the resolution he had formed to drive the English out of Bengal, and at the same time asked what assistance he might expect from their Masters in his expedition.

The Dutch agent, who apparently had his lesson all ready, hastened to reply that his Company was only mercantile, not constituted for making war, and that at Chinsurah there were hardly 10 guns and 50 soldiers, including both whites and blacks, but immediately added, and evidently to do us a bad turn, 'Address yourselves to the French, they are very strong at Chandernagore, besides they are people who can never keep quiet, and would ask nothing better than to fight against the English. They are always at war with them, sometimes beaten, sometimes beating, they must always have their arms in their hands.' This reply far from producing the effect expected by the native agent, inspired Siraj-uddaula and his *Durbar* with the greatest contempt for the Dutch, which they showed by many marks of indignation, and at the same time gave them an advantageous idea of our nation, whose courage they know. The Nawab was so pleased [with our agent] that he showed him a thousand friendships, sent him back with two *betels* for M. Law and two for himself, and has publicly declared he will give us Calcutta in full possession, and a *parwana* to that effect if we like. To all these offers he has added that his design is to elevate us to as much honour in Bengal as we are in already on the Madras Coast.

<sup>1</sup> Leaf of the *Piper Betel*, chewed with the dried *areca-nut* and *chunam*, or lime. In Bengal called *Pan*.





After having thus sold the bear's skin before he has killed the bear, he was so certain that we would accept his offers that some days after he asked our agent whether M. Renault had yet sent his ships to blockade Calcutta by water, whilst his troops surrounded it by land. You must know, Sir, what was the resolution of the Council on this subject, and the answer given him that we could undertake nothing against the English unless authorized from Europe or at least from Pondicherry, seeing that war had not been declared between that nation and ours.

They [the English] had erected two batteries above and below Calcutta, and were entrenched in them and also behind a great ditch which they had drawn round their Settlement, resolved to defend the approaches to their Settlement as long as they could, but the arrival of the Nawab has changed all their plans. At his approach they not only abandoned this enclosure but even the defence of the European town. They have retired into their Fort where they are terribly crowded. The bravado they made at the commencement, in letting no one go out of their Settlement so as to show their confidence, has only served to increase the confusion.

The English are actually shut up in their Fort, round which they have raised a kind of glacis which entirely protects them. So as not to be stunned by the cries of the women they have had them carried on board the ships, which are ready to make sail to the number of 10 or 12, including the brigantines and boats. They have also, it is said, loaded on them the treasures which are said to have been confided to them. These amount to two *krors*.<sup>1</sup>

25. *Translation of an extract from a letter from Council, Chandernagore, to M. De La Bretesche, Patna, dated 20 June, 1756.*<sup>2</sup>

It does not appear that we have any violence to fear from Siraj-uddaula, whom we thought we had rendered ill-disposed towards us by our refusal to join him, although we made use of all possible means to satisfy him and had reason to flatter ourselves that he appreciated the force of our excuses. He has replied to the Director in very gracious terms, asking only that since we cannot assist him, we will be careful not to assist the

<sup>1</sup> One *kror* = one hundred *lakhs*—that is, 10,000,000. Here refers to rupees.

<sup>2</sup> Pondicherry Records.





English. He received very favourably the *wakil*, whom we sent with our compliments when he passed our Colony to go to Calcutta, and bade him return with the same compliments on his part. . . .

We have no exact knowledge of what has happened in Calcutta. The English have abandoned the Town, the inhabitants of which are fleeing for refuge and dispersing in all directions. The English have retired into their fort, round which they have made a very broad ditch and raised a glacis. It is said also that they have put all their money on the ships they have [in port], on which also they have embarked all the women, and that in this state they are waiting for the Nawab. There have been several small fights in which they have lost some officers and soldiers. The Moor loss is estimated as high as 1,500 men. Besides the large army with the Nawab, which is said to number 60,000 men, with a great number of elephants and many guns, he is still assembling troops who come every day to join those at Calcutta. If large reinforcements do not speedily reach the English, they are likely to see themselves forced to give in.

The Nawab has no grievance against us and he had very great ones against the English, who, besides, behaved with a pride which we cannot be reproached with. We think this news will contribute not a little to quiet your mind.

21 June.

Since the above letter was written we have heard that the Nawab made himself master of the factory of Calcutta yesterday at 5 o'clock. Those of the English who could not escape on board the ships and who made no resistance have been plundered but their lives spared. We do not yet know the fate of those on shore and whether it will be possible for them to gain the ships.

This event, which we did not expect, at least so quickly, throws us into great embarrassment, as we do not know what the Nawab's intentions may be and whether he will not try to annoy us. As we ought certainly to be regarded by him in a light different from that in which he holds the English, and as he has by no means the same grievances against us as he had against them, we flatter ourselves he will not proceed to extremities against us.



We shall take care to inform you of the disposition he appears to be in towards us.

You will do well to be always on your guard as much as possible.

26. *Translation of a letter from M. Le Conte to M. Courtin at Dacca, dated Chandernagore, 21 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

The *pattamar*<sup>2</sup> having been delayed two days gives me time and opportunity to acquaint you with the capture of Calcutta. This event which in truth we did not expect is unfortunately only too certain. These are the particulars which we have heard.

On the 19th we knew by the wounded who passed that there had been a sortie made from the fort by the English in which they had killed nearly 1,500 men of the Moors, but that they had retired precipitately and had been obliged to spike the field guns they had taken. In spite of this success, the spirit of giddiness and confusion had so taken possession of them that they refused to obey any longer. Mr. Drake having withdrawn the previous day, Mr. Holwell, who found himself in command, made not the least resistance. The Moors having climbed on to the houses which command the fort, quietly established their batteries there, and at their ease shot at the English who did not venture to reply. It is said they did not fire ten shot from their guns. The want of order caused the soldiers, who had got possession of the warehouses, to be continually drunk and incapable of serving. In short, yesterday the fire having caught the warehouses the soldiers, instead of trying to extinguish it, took fright and fled pell mell on board the ships. Mr. Holwell seeing their flight immediately wrote to the Nawab to ask for terms and hoisted the Moorish flag.<sup>3</sup> At this signal the Moors who surrounded the fort, thinking their comrades had effected an entry, threw themselves like madmen on the walls, and against the gates, which latter they broke open. This event which happened at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and which we heard of only at 11 o'clock in the evening was accompanied by the saddest circumstances for the English, their

<sup>1</sup> Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 9 November, 1756.

<sup>2</sup> Messenger.

<sup>3</sup> From an old French map this appears to have been a white flag carrying a crescent, but I can find no certain information on the point.





largest vessel<sup>1</sup> with a very large number of people on board ran aground on a bank close to Calcutta and is there still. The Nawab has loaded a number of boats with straw with which he intends to set the ship on fire if it does not surrender.<sup>2</sup>

27. *Letter from Council, Fort William, to Mr. Adrian Bisdorn, dated Aboard the ship 'Dodalay,' 25 June, 1756.*<sup>3</sup>

Highly esteemed Sir,—We address this to you from Voltha [Fulta] whither we have been obliged to retire with a few of the inhabitants who have fled from Calcutta, and being entirely destitute of any kind of provisions and clothing, and of the bare necessities of life, as also in great want of anchors and cables, etc., for our ships, we beg to express our heartfelt wish that you may favour us with aid and succour in our distress and help us from Hoogley with all kinds of liquors and clothing, together with anchors, cables and tackle, and also give instructions to your officials at Voltha, etc., to assist us as far as lies in their power, we always being ready to reimburse the value of the same.

As we hope that your Government may enjoy due tranquillity, we flatter ourselves that, viewing the intimate agreement between the two nations, your Honour will not fail to send us information from time to time as to whether there is a possibility of our being able to return in personal safety to Calcutta, as regards which point please put yourself in our position and favour us with the earliest intelligence concerning the purpose of the Nawab and the progress he is making. We are, &c., &c.,

ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT.

28. *Translation of Consultations of the Dutch Council, Hugli, 25, 26 and 27 June, 1756.*<sup>4</sup>

(a) *Friday, 25 June, 1756. Forenoon, General meeting.*  
*All present.*

The day before yesterday a *parwana* to the following effect having been received from the Nawab Siraj-uddaula:

<sup>1</sup> Probably refers to the *Prince George*, which ran ashore off Perrin's Garden. The *Diligence* was wrecked the 24th June near Budge-Budge.

<sup>2</sup> The *Prince George* was burned by the Moors (see Fort Saint George letter to Court, dated 28 March, 1757, paragraph 9).

<sup>3</sup> Bengal Correspondence, the Hague. Not in the English Records, but translated from a Dutch copy.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*





*Translation of a Persian parwana granted by the Nawab Siraj-uddaula to the Honourable Adriaan Bisdom, Director of the Bengal Direction sub-dato 22nd and received here on the 23rd June, 1756.*

‘Chief of the merchants and harbinger of friendship Adriaan Bisdom, Director for the Holland Company, live happy and contented !

‘I have too frequently written to you from Moorshedabad that you were to join your power to the King’s army for the destruction of the wicked English by water, though your not doing so is of no account whatever, and you were asked only to put you to the test, for by God’s blessing and help I am so strongly provided that I find myself able to exterminate ten such nations as these English, and if you wish to ensure the continuation of the Company’s trade in this country, you will have to act in accordance with what I caused to be made known to you through my friend Faggeruttojaar, Choja Mhameth Wajed;<sup>1</sup> but in the contrary case, it will be all over with your trade in this *Soubaship*, which is a true warning concerning which you must know your own mind.’

*(Translated by M. Koning.)*<sup>2</sup>

The Director then informed the members how, upon receipt of this definitive sentence, he, as was known, called yesterday afternoon, accompanied by Messieurs d’Armenault and Tsinck, on His Highness’s favourite Faggeruttejaar (alias Chodja Wazid) to enquire as to the real purport of His Highness’s wishes; that the Moor had plainly declared, without mincing matters, that the Nawab being extremely displeased that we, like the French, had refused to assist him against the English, whenever we were spoken of in private, had said: ‘I always thought that the Hollanders were more faithful to the King than that they would have caused him inconvenience about such trifling services as I have asked of them. I have rendered them a considerable service and been at great expense to put down their fellest business rivals, and, maybe, if the results of my enterprise had been in accordance with their wishes, I should have had to return disappointed from a

<sup>1</sup> Coja Wajid, the great Armenian merchant of Hugli. Fakhr-ul-tujjar=chief of merchants; Coja or Khwaja=gentleman or person of distinction.

<sup>2</sup> Martinus Koning, first Clerk to the Council of Policy, Secretary to the Council of Justice, and Translator for the Moorish and Persian languages.





bootless errand,' and lastly when he, Wazid, went to take leave : 'Tell the Hollanders they must bring me twenty *lacs* of rupees or I will ruin them as I have done the English.' That his Honour on hearing this sinister report and growing almost desperate, had asked the messenger what offence was laid to our charge, adding that we were mere merchants and that His Highness demanded services of us which we neither could nor might render him. If His Excellency were tired of us (as one would be led to suppose from such strange proceedings) it would be better for us to quit Bengal, etc., but that at length Wazid, in reply to the firm language used by his Honour, answered that the Nawab was amenable to no reasons but those that were consistent with his own interests. Further that he would not allow us to leave without first plucking one of our fine feathers, etc. Thereupon he saw no alternative but to take him (Wazid) in hand and, under promise of gratuity to request him to use his powerful influence, in order, if possible, to satisfy the Prince with an ordinary *nazarani*<sup>1</sup> or at least with a mediocre contribution. That he had, thereupon, assured his Honour of his friendship and promised to seize a favourable moment on the morrow when His Highness had slept off his fatigue and was in a good humour, but that, meanwhile, he most seriously recommended his Honour to be sure and bear in mind what a pretentious piece of conceit he had to deal with, not to stick at a trifle, and above all, not to be backward in providing vessels, etc., to facilitate the passage across [the river] of the Nawab and his army.<sup>2</sup> Which report having been listened to, the course taken by his Honour the Director was unanimously approved and it was agreed to make shift and bear the cost of freight for the boats to transfer the army, but for the rest not to agree to the Nawab's demand, unless susceptible of great reduction, as being altogether under constraint.

Thus done and resolved at Hoogley, Fort Gustavus, on the above date, A. BİSDOM, R. H. ARMENAUT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, sect., A. HOOREMAN, S. CROMBON.

<sup>1</sup> Complimentary offering to a superior.

<sup>2</sup> In going to Murshidabad from Calcutta it was customary to cross the river at Chandernagore or Hugli.





(b) *Saturday, 26 June, 1756. Forenoon, Extraordinary Meeting.*  
*All present.*

After the members of Council were assembled and seated, his Honour the Director informed them how by the arrangement of yesterday the said agent of the Nawab, Facherudtezjaar had that morning through his factor, sent word to his Honour that he had waited upon His Highness yesterday evening at an opportune moment and had shown him that we were innocent of the matter for which we were to be bled and our inability to raise so large a sum, and had so far appeased him that he had left the regulation of our fine to him Facherudtezjaar, Rajah Durlabh Ram and a few more of his trusted courtiers, under the recommendation, however, that they were to bear in mind that he had been put to heavy expenses and had to bear still more. That they, the said Commissioners, in order not to let the favourable spell of good humour pass over bootlessly, had immediately made a computation among themselves based upon our means and the extent of His Highness's wishes and had fixed the amount to be paid at 4 *lacs* or 400,000 rupees for the Nawab and a half-*lac* or 50,000 rupees as a reward for their intercession, it being understood that we should then be exonerated from the *nazarani* payable to all new Nawabs. That he Facherudtezjaar, had he been free, would have lopped off a much more important sum, and willingly have let us off altogether, but that he served an insatiable master, with whom neither his own nor anyone else's honour or life were safe for one moment—a tiger, who felt as little feeling and compunction in massacring a human creature as in killing a fowl. Wherefore he advised us as a friend to acquiesce in their mediation and to await what time would bring, etc. His Honour the Director added that the assertion regarding the natural disposition of the Prince was not at all exaggerated, but was quite true, and that it might be the reason why the mediators, in order not themselves to fall a prey to the Nawab's cruelty, had taken his interests more to heart than ours, but that the old ministers having been dismissed from their posts there was now no other channel than this along which to approach His Highness; that His Highness had that morning sent his Master of Requests (evidently to add force to his exactions) to demand the delivery of our artillery and flags, and had





already in anticipation seized upon our village whose inhabitants had already fled, so that it was everywhere crowded with horsemen, musketeers, navvies<sup>1</sup> and other people; that if we were able to maintain good order and discipline we should give the Nawab more trouble than the English had, but that our besiegers counted at least seventy thousand armed men, with better artillery than ours and amply provided with good gunners and all kinds of war ammunition and that we could not possibly hold out against them, and even granting we were able to stand a siege for some length of time, much more would be lost than gained, for that all our servants at Cassimbazaar, Patna and elsewhere would be exposed to the fury of the barbarian and the Company's assets in the respective factories and in the Mint, as well as those deposited at the quarters<sup>2</sup> and the moneys in circulation to the amount of about 46 lacs of rupees (or 70 tons of treasure) would be lost in such a case; not to mention that if things turned out adversely our honour would be impaired, our credit broken and probably not fifty lacs of rupees would suffice to make good the damage done to the Company, if besides the assets now here we consider what a heavy expenditure would be required for us to be readmitted and to reestablish ourselves, without our even then possessing the conveniences that we have painstakingly acquired here and at the branch factories in process of time; that, however, in spite of all this, the Nawab's demands remain far too exorbitant and the Honourable Director proposed to pray for a reduction by sending in a request in the following terms:

*Translation of the Persian arzi,<sup>3</sup> written by the Honourable Adriaan Bisdorn, Director of the Bengal Department to the Nawab Siraj-uddaula, dated 26 June, 1756.*

'Renowned Prince. The Hollanders have traded here peacefully for a century and a half, have brought over countless treasures and transported most vast quantities of commodities, under prompt payment of tolls and dues, wherefore they have generally been befriended and countenanced especially by the Princes of the land and, up to the glorious Nawab Souja-ul-molk

<sup>1</sup> Literally 'diggers.' Probably the coolies employed in making entrenchments.

<sup>2</sup> 'Quartieren.' Probably the *aurungs*, the weavers in which received advances of money as a lien upon the produce of cloth.

<sup>3</sup> A petition.





Mahabat Jung<sup>1</sup> inclusive, always endowed with privileges. They have always been faithful to their benefactors, and if ever guilty of a wrongful act they were never backward in granting satisfaction. And yet it has pleased Your Highness to exact a contribution from us much heavier than we are able to pay, considering the calamities that have befallen us on sea and the many losses we have of late years encountered in our commercial transactions. Wherefore I do humbly beseech Your Excellency to confer the great favour upon us of graciously treating us with reasonable moderation in reference to the *nazarani*.

'May Your Highness's power and glory go on increasing.'

(Translated by M. Koning.)

To which the members having agreed; it was further unanimously resolved to charge the Company's *wakil* and broker with the handing over of the said missive to their Worships the mediators for delivery unto the Prince and to give the afore-said *wakil* power-of-attorney to make a bid in respect to the contribution demanded, provided it do not exceed the sum of two *lacs* of rupees, besides the expenses.

Thus done, etc.

(c) Saturday, 26 June, 1756. Afternoon, Extraordinary Meeting.  
*All present.*

The court-messenger and broker having returned from the charge referred to in the resolution of this morning, with the statement that Facheruttejjaar on hearing of their message and seeing our rather indifferently<sup>2</sup> written request, had said that the Nawab, being already altogether dissatisfied with the arrangement they had come to, would surely give immediate orders to cut down our flagstaff, to fill up our moat and storm our fort; that the force required for the purpose was already called out and waited only for His Excellency's order, so that he could not appear before him with a request of such a nature, but would wash his hands of the business, leaving the issue to our responsibility, adding that to convince us of his disinterestedness he would willingly deduct ten thousand rupees from the fifty thousand

<sup>1</sup> Aliverdi Khan, grandfather and predecessor of Siraj-uddaula.

<sup>2</sup> Probably this means 'badly expressed.'





stipulated for ; wherefore led by the motives stated in our previous resolution and considering that information has been received of movements on the part of our assailants that presage an early attack, and we have to deal with an enemy who, when it comes to the worst, will not be satisfied short of our complete ruin, it has been unanimously resolved to grant the Nawab the sum of four hundred thousand *sikka*<sup>1</sup> rupees, to wit, by written bond (on account of a dearth of cash) payable three months after date, as is shown in the bond prepared and adopted in the present meeting to the effect that :—

‘ We the undersigned, acting in the name and for the account of the Netherlands East India Company, do hereby promise to pay, three months after date, to the Nawab Mansur-ul-mulk, Siraj-uddaula, Shah Kuli Khan, Bahadur, Haibat Jang, or his order, the sum of four hundred thousand *sikka* rupees, for value received. At the Netherlands Chief Office, Hoogley, Fort Gustavus, the 26th June, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six. A. Bisdor, R. H. ARMENAU, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. v. SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN and S. CROMBON.’

But first to forward the 10,000<sup>2</sup> *sikka* rupees in cash to Facher-udtezjaar, according to his request in order to satisfy the mediators. Further to urge the Prince to grant a *sanad*<sup>3</sup> or general order for the free and uninterrupted carrying on of the Company's commercial dealings everywhere, etc., and the confirmation of its privileges.

Done (etc.).

(d) Sunday, 27 June, 1756. In the morning, Extraordinary Meeting. All present.

The Director having informed the Council that the *gomasta* or factor of the Moorish merchant Choja Wazid had that morning brought back the bond for 400,000 *sikka* rupees, issued yesterday in favour of the Nawab, bringing with him at the same time the

<sup>1</sup> Bearing the stamp of the King of Delhi. Standard rupees.

<sup>2</sup> Should be 40,000, Choja Wazid having deducted the 10,000, which was his own share.

<sup>3</sup> A royal grant.





factor of Fettusjen's heirs,<sup>1</sup> Beyenaat, with intelligence that His Excellency being in great want of money, it was his desire, if we could not supply him with cash, we should enter into negotiations with the said Beyenaat for an advance of the money. So, though such an arrangement will be more disadvantageous to the Company, as it will now also lose the interest, yet, there being no alternative if we do not wish to expose ourselves to difficulties or incur the Prince's displeasure, it was with one accord decided to conform to His Excellency's wishes, whereupon the aforesaid bond in the Nawab's favour was withdrawn and a bond in favour of Fettusjen's heirs at the ordinary interest at the rate of  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. a month was granted, which read thus:

'We the undersigned acting on behalf of and for the account of the General Netherlands East India Company do hereby acknowledge having effected a loan of four hundred thousand *sikka* rupees with the bill-brokers Jagat Seth Fettusjentie and Seet Amendjendie,<sup>2</sup> which sum, together with the interest due thereon at the rate of 9 per cent. per annum, or  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. a month, we promise to pay when the service of the East India Company shall allow of its being done. The Netherlands Chief-Office, Hoogley, Fort Gustavus, the 27th of June of the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-six. A. BİSDOM, R. H. ARMENAUT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCHEVICKHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN, S. CROMBON.'

It was further agreed to withdraw the aforesaid bond in favour of the Nawab and to issue another promissory note in the name of Fettusjent's heirs, to enter note thereof, as thereupon was done.

The Director further stated that the Nawab had expressed a desire that he should wait upon His Excellency on the morrow in the afternoon to render due salutation, and the Worshipful Director also informed the members that he intended at the proper time to go and perform the said ceremony in company with the Head Administrator<sup>3</sup> after the custom of the country. But Mr. R. H. Armenault considering it not to be good policy in

<sup>1</sup> The Seth family, descendants of Fateh Chand.

<sup>2</sup> Probably means Seth Mahtab Rai and Seth Swarup Chand, grandsons of Jagat Seth.

<sup>3</sup> Apparently Mr. R. H. Armenault himself.





these troublous times for the Chief and the Second both to repair [at the same time] outside the fort, requested the opinion of the Council on the subject, asserting, at the same time, his perfect readiness to go with the Director to observe the aforesaid custom of salutation, if it could not be otherwise. This objection having been discussed, and the circumstances of the time and the custom obtaining in the country being weighed, it was considered fit and proper that the salutation by the Worshipful Director and the Head Administrator should take place.

29. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Council, Hugli, to M. Vernet, dated 27 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

After the taking of Calcutta (now called Alinagar by him) the Nawab and his army being arrived the day before yesterday at Hoogley or at the Moorish fort, with the intention of keeping there the day after to-morrow the feast which follows the Moorish fast,<sup>2</sup> and afterwards proceeding on his march to Muxadabad,<sup>3</sup> his arrival caused us great uneasiness, on account of the uncertainty we felt as to what would become of us. All about our Settlement there was a heap of men of His Excellency's troops, and as the inhabitants had fled we found it necessary to repair to the fort. A *parwana* had been sent to the first undersigned by the Nawab even before he came here, whereby he warned us that in case we were unwilling to do what was about to be proposed to us by his friend the Moorish merchant Coja Wazid, it would be all up with our trade in Bengal. The upshot of this was that His Excellency claimed twenty *lacs* of rupees of us; at which exorbitant demand, being struck all of a heap and further considering that we should not be justified in at once agreeing without demur to the Nawab's demand, we engaged the aforesaid Coja Wazid to urge the Nawab on our behalf to concede a considerable reduction, in which we were so successful, that yesterday morning, after the Master of the Requests had already been to the Director to demand our flag and all our artillery and to have a Moorish banner hoisted, etc., we at length prevailed upon His Excellency to be satisfied with four *lacks sicca* rupees. Also a further 40,000 *sicca* rupees for

<sup>1</sup> Vernet Papers, the Hague.

<sup>2</sup> The annual great fast of the Ramazan.

<sup>3</sup> The old name of Murshidabad.





expenses, in which the customary *nazarani*, which is usually paid at Cossimbuzar on the election of a new Nawab, and the remainder under the name of contribution are included, [has been agreed upon], whereupon tranquillity has been restored, and in answer to an *arzi* presented by us we expect every moment a *sanad* from His Excellency for a free and unimpeded continuation of the Company's trade, etc., in every shape and form, whilst in the morning the two first undersigned are about to pay the Nawab a visit at his request, all of which we have thought it necessary to bring to your Honour's knowledge for your peace of mind, for which purpose only this is directed, we remaining &c. &c. A. BISDOM, R. H. ARMENAUULT, L. ZUYDLAND, J. L. v. SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, A. HOOREMAN and S. CROMBON.

30. *Dacca Consultations, 27 June, 1756. Present: Richard Becher, Esq., Messrs. Luke Scrafton, Thomas Hyndman, Samuel Waller.*

The Consultation of the 21st read, approved, and signed.—This day at noon our *vakeel* came from the *Durbar*<sup>1</sup> and acquainted us that the Nabob told him Surrajah Dowlat had taken and plundered the town of Calcutta and had also made himself master of Fort William, taken Mr. Holwell and some other gentlemen prisoners. That the Governor, Second and some few more having taken to the ships were endeavouring to make their escape down the river. That this intelligence came from the French. Our *vakeel* further acquainted us that Dusseraut Cawn our Nabob demanded that we should surrender ourselves immediately, which if we did not comply with, he would attack us, having everything in readiness. This account appears to us so improbable, that we apprehend it is put about in order to induce us to surrender. Agreed therefore that Mr. Scrafton write to Monsieur Courtin desiring him to acquaint us if he has received any certain advice of the taking of Fort William by Surrajah Dowlat. In answer to which we received the melancholly confirmation of what our *vakeel* had told us, Monsieur Courtin assuring us that he had received the most certain advice of Fort William's being taken by the Nabob; That

<sup>1</sup> Court or Court officials.





his letters were of the 19th, 20th, and 21st, from the Governor and Council of Chandernagore and several other gentlemen, that he was using his endeavors at the *Durbar* to save our lives and honor, he advises us to come to as speedy a resolution, telling us that bravery becomes temerity and imprudence when exerted *mal à propos*. Taking this affair into our most serious consideration, we are unanimously of opinion that there is no reason to doubt the truth of this news. Agreed therefore, that we write to Monsieur Courtin returning him our most sincere thanks for his kind designs in our favor and to desire he will permit Monsieur Fleurin to come to us, and let us know what terms can be procured for us in case we find we cannot avoid surrendering.

We now take into consideration the state of our factory, garrison, provisions &c. and from thence are to form a judgement whether we can render any material service to our Honourable Employers by attempting to defend ourselves.

As to the situation of our factory it stands in a large town surrounded with numbers of houses from which they might annoy us with cannon and small arms. The factory is little better than a common house surrounded with a thin brick wall one half of it not above nine foot high. Our garrison consists of a lieutenant, 4 serjeants, 3 corporals and 19 European soldiers besides 34 black Christians, and 60 *buxeries*.<sup>1</sup> As to the last we have little to expect from them, as they have almost all demanded leave to quit us. Our provisions may last three weeks or a month, but if we are attacked our ammunition will soon be expended, and our men exhausted with fatigue as we have so few they must be almost always on duty. Our factory is at the distance of near a quarter of a mile from the river. The passage by water to Calcutta from 14 to 20 days, that from Muxadavad to Dacca about four, from which place our enemies might receive reinforcements in 8 or 10 days. Notwithstanding the disadvantage of our situation, the smallness of our garrison &c. we were determined to defend ourselves to the utmost had we been attacked while Fort William continued in the hands of the English, and to enable us to do it we had planted what guns we had to the best advantage and with the assistance of the soldiers thrown up breast-works &c., and privately procured

<sup>1</sup> Gunmen.





an additional quantity of powder. But since we are sure Fort William is taken, and that we cannot expect the least assistance or reinforcement from the gentlemen who are escaped in their ships, it does not appear to us that our attempting to defend ourselves can be of the least advantage to our Employers, and would rather be an act of rashness than bravery. Agreed therefore that we endeavor to procure the best terms possible by means of the French, and surrender our factory.

Observing numbers of armed men all around us, Ordered our garrison to keep under arms and a strict watch to prevent a surprize.

RICHARD BECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN,  
SAMUEL WALLER.

31. *Dacca Consultations, 28 June, 1756, at six p.m. Present: Richard Becher, Esq., Chief, Messrs. Luke Scrafton, Thomas Hyndman, Samuel Waller.*

The Consultation of the 27th read, approved, and signed.

This morning Monsieur Fleurin, the French Second, came to our factory to acquaint us that he had been with Dusseraut Cawn our Nabob endeavouring to procure us the most favorable terms he could, but that all he was able to obtain, was, that the factory should be delivered up directly, the soldiers lay down their arms, and be carried prisoners to the Nabob, the ladies go out in pallanquins to the French factory, the pallanquins not to be searched on Monsieur Fleurin's giving his word that nothing should be in them but the cloaths the ladies had on. As to the Chief &c. Company's servants, the Nabob demanded that they should first be brought to him, and afterwards go to the French factory, Monsieur Courtin giving his parole to the Nabob that we shall wait the orders of Surrajah Dowlat in regard to our future fate. Taking these proposals into consideration, we think them very hard, but as Monsieur Fleurin assures us that very little alteration can be expected, Agreed that we beg Monsieur Fleurin to endeavour to save us the disgrace of going to the *Durbar*, and obtain permission that we go directly to the French, also that the soldiers may not be ill used. This he promises to endeavour to obtain and to return in the afternoon.

The 28th June in the afternoon Monsieur Fleurin returned and





acquainted us he had obtained permission for the gentlemen to go to the French factory without going to the *Durbar*, and that the Nabob had promised the soldiers should not be ill used or put in irons. We then gave our paroles to the French Chief, gave up our military prisoners to the Nabob's people and are now with sorrowful hearts leaving our factory, being permitted to carry off nothing but the cloaths upon our backs, having still this satisfaction left, that we have to our utmost discharged our duty to our Honourable Employers.

RICHARD BECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN,  
SAMUEL WALLER.

32. *Translation of the Secret Consultations of the Dutch Council, Hugli. Monday, 28 June, 1756. Forenoon, Extraordinary Meeting. All present.*<sup>1</sup>

The Director having shown us a letter received by him from the English Governor and some members of the Council, under date of 24th instant, Voltha, aboard the *Dodaly*, whither they had been compelled to retire with a few of the inhabitants on account of the taking of Calcutta by the Nawab, containing a request for assistance in the shape of provisions and clothing, also of anchors, cables and other cordage, as also that our officials at Voltha should be instructed to aid them with everything in their power, with a declaration of their readiness to pay the value of any article or articles thus supplied, so we have viewed with surprise the presumptuous recklessness of that nation in first bidding defiance to such a formidable enemy as the Nawab, and afterwards, after offering little or no resistance, in abandoning their permanent fortress and matchless colony without making any provision for the few things that were absolutely required. Having further weighed the request itself, so on one hand full consideration was given to the fact that we ought to lend a helping hand to all Christians in distress, especially the English, but on the other, duly weighing that the chief nation is not only the cause of her own ruin, but also of the heavy losses incurred by the other nations trading with this country, among which may surely be reckoned the costly ship *Voorburg*, which having stranded on the so-called Jannegat flats, might most probably have been saved, if

<sup>1</sup> Bengal Correspondence. The Hague.





the passage down the river had not been impeded by the army of the Nawab. And further how His Excellency, having, upon pain of his extreme indignation, stringently forbidden succouring in any way the fugitive English, the least violation of the said interdict, with which he would be sure to be made acquainted by his spies who are roving about everywhere, would be severely punished and, maybe, after the same method practised upon the English. It has, therefore, for the welfare of the service of the East India Company and for the safety of our people here, been deemed advisable to render the aforesaid fugitives no assistance in the present troublous times and to avoid all correspondence with them, and therefore not to reply to their aforesaid missives.

Done and resolved, Hoogley, at Fort Gustavus, on the above date A. Bisdorff, R. H. ARMENIAULT, L. ZUYDLAND, M. TSINCK, J. L. VAN SCHEVICHAVEN, J. H. SWENKELS, M. BASTIAANSE, Secretaris, A. HOOREMAN and S. CROMBON.

33. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Captain of the French East India Company's ship in the Road of Balasore, dated 28 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

We feel we ought to warn you of this event in order that you may be on your guard against any enterprise which these fugitives may attempt . . . out of their absolute necessity, which may force them to use violence to procure for themselves supplies of necessities, not being able any longer to provide themselves with these from the country. It is said they are not very well furnished with provisions or munitions, having thought only of embarking their riches which are calculated at immense sums. . . . They have embarked many women and very few sailors. There is every reason to believe that they will find themselves reduced to very great misery before they get out of the Ganges. The extreme care we have to take in everything concerning the Nawab, who would not fail to seize the slightest pretext to do us some outrage, causes us to warn you to have no intercourse with these ships and to give them no assistance. This refusal may easily be excused by our fear of an approaching war and the precautions which that naturally makes us take. We shall send you our letters only when

<sup>1</sup> Pondicherry Records.





you have passed these ships and are far enough to fear nothing more from them.

34. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to M. de la Bretesche at Patna, dated 28 June, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

SIR,—This letter is merely to advise you that you need not be in any anxiety and that you can resume your operations and continue them as usual. We have accommodated matters with the Nawab who on his return from Calcutta has demanded contributions from all the [European] nations, in return for which he leaves them in peace.

The English of the Dacca Factory have been obliged to surrender and those of the Factory of Luckipur have embarked in three sloops with which they will, doubtless, go and join those who escaped from Calcutta.

35. *Letter from the Nawab to Council, Fort Saint George, 30 June, 1756.*<sup>2</sup>

36. *Translation of an extract from a letter from the French Council, Chandernagore, to the Council, Masulipatam, dated—June, 1756.*<sup>3</sup>

The ship *Silhouette* has entered the Ganges and yesterday was two short leagues from Calcutta, where she met the English vessels which were waiting a favourable wind to pass a fortress where batteries had been raised to stop them. Some English who came on board said we were at war with the Moors who intended to drive us out of their country as they had just done the English, who had been forced to abandon Calcutta and take refuge on their ships. This report prevented the captain of the *Silhouette* from venturing to come further without having orders from M. Renault who, immediately he heard from him, wrote to undeceive him and to instruct him how to behave until he has sent word to the Nawab and obtained an order for the people in the fort to let the ship pass without firing on her.

It is said the English [ships] passed to-day. They are nine in

<sup>1</sup> Pondicherry Records.

<sup>2</sup> See later, Fort Saint George Consultations, 17 August, 1756.

<sup>3</sup> Pondicherry Records.





number besides many other craft by which they are probably accompanied.

37. *Narrative of the loss of Calcutta, with the Black Hole, by Captain Mills, who was in it, and sundry other particulars, being Captain Mills' pocket book, which he gave me, it is octavo, 16 pages, 7 June to 1 July, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

Nabob Sur Rajah Dowlah 1756.

Page 1. June the 7th. We heard of Cassembizars being delivered up to the Nabob and Mr. Watts with the other gentlemen made prisoners.

On the 15th the French sent us word of the Nabob's army's march to Calcutta.

On the 17th the enemy attackt the redoubt at Perrins about noon. At 3 in the afternoon 40 men with 2 field pieces were sent to reinforce that place where in the engagement the Moors from behind the trees and bushes killed 2 of our men one of whome was Mr. Ralph Thoresby one of the Honourable Company's writers.

About 8 at night an 18-pounder gun was sent out to Perrins; and the 2 field pieces with the reinforcement that had been sent were ordered back to their former stations.

In the night Lieutenant Pacard who had the command at Perrins, sallied out with his party on the enemy, and having drove them from their posts, spiked up four of their guns, and brought away some of their ammunition.

Page 2. On the 18th of June about 9 in the morning our out-works were attacked by small partys in the skirts of the town, we dispatched several small partys to the tops of several of the highest houses near hand to annoy the enemy, and Monsieur Labonne with a party of militia and volunteers and two field pieces to guard the cross roads.

Amongst those small partys were killed Messrs. Charles Smith and Wilkinson. Monsieur Labonne, who retired to the Jail house with his party, bravely defended it for six hours, till himself and most of his party were wounded, were ordered to retire within the trenches at the Court house after having spiked up their guns, and brought off all the wounded.

<sup>1</sup> This document was given to Mr. Robert Orme. The original spelling has been preserved as far as possible.





The enemy finding the firing to desist took possession of the post, but in the retreat many of the *buckerys* deserted us and went over to the enemy. This afternoon we sent most of the European ladies on board the ships and several of the gentlemen deserted with them particular the Cornel and Lieutenant Mr. Manningham and Frankland, with several others.

Page 3. In the evening the enemy attacked us smartly, killing and wounding several of our men with their small arms, they endeavoured to surround us. Were ordered to retreat from the outworks, after having spiked up our guns, and take possession of the church, Mr. Cruttenden's, Aires's, and the Company's houses which we quietly kept all that night.

The morning of the 19th the enemy advanced to us, and attacked us vigorously on all sides, having got into Mr. Aires's compound and outhouses, several volleys of small arms were fired by those that kept that post and as readily returned, but they having made a hole through the east end of the church, and firing their cannon through at the same time, which killed two men, were ordered to retire from the outworks into the garrison, upon which Lieutenant Blagg sett fire to Mr. Cruttenden's house and retired to the garrison. This morning sent the remainder of the European women with all the wounded on board the shiping.

Page 4. 19th. About 10 the Governour, Messrs. Maggott, one of our Captains, the Commandant Minchin, Captain Grant, Messrs. Cruttenden, Mapletoft, Sumner, Billers, Rider, Tooke, Senior, Ellis, Vossmer, Charlton, Leycester, Dr. Fullerton, Lieutenants Oharo, Whitherburn, Messrs. Heugh Bailie, Edward Ridge, attorney, Robert Bolderick, supercargo, Henry Summers, Elves, Lange, Smith, Whaley, Lyng, the fidler, Whatmore, Thomas Barnard, Abraham Jacobs, Francis Child, Robert Carr

Page 5. fledd on board the ships, and weighed their anchors, and dropt down the river takeing with them all the boats, sloops and vessels. Being cutt off from a retreat, and the principle officers deserting with so many along with them greatly dispirited the people in the garrison.

Upon which Mr. Holwell was at the Governor's absconding, made General and Governor of Calcutta, Mr. Pearks who was senior in Councill, giving it up to Mr. Holwell for the time being, Mr. Holwell





expressing his hearty intentions to defend the Fort till the last extremity, and made a publick declaration upon the bastions of his detesting Mr. Drake's flight, at the same time encourageing the military to stand to their arms and hold out the seige with a promise of 3 chests of the Honourable Company's treasure, containing 24,000 rupees, amongst them if they would keep the place.

But for want of a sufficient number of officers, so many having left the place,

*Page 6.* the Dutch soldiers could not be hindered from breaking into the rooms of the officers that had absconded, the military and gunroom<sup>1</sup> mostly consisting of that country, and takeing from thence what wine and spirites they could lay their hands on, by which means they began to be mutinous and unruly. In the night a corporeal and several private men, most of them Dutch, deserted us by dropping over the walls and going to the enemy.

We remained firing as opportunity required; in the meanwhile the enemy continued plundering the town, and burning the houses in sundry places.

Next morning on the 20th the enemy gott possession of the top of the church and houses round about the garrison which being loftier then the walls, and commanding all the bastions and galled us so that no man could stand them (for their small arms) they killing or wounding all that appeared in sight, amongst whome was Lieutenant Smith, Captain Pickering,

*Page 7.* and wounding most of our officers, Ajudent Talbot who after dyed of his wound &c.

The surviving officers were obliged to exert themselves pistol in hand to keep the soldiers to their quarters. At noon the Govournor and Company thought it proper to write to the Nabob and *duan* demanding a truce, but he disdainfully threw it away and would not give us an answer.

The Honourable Company's ship *Prince George* which had hitherto layn before Perrin's Gardens was ordered down abrest of the fort, but in the way unfortunately by the bad conduct of the pilot, Francis Morris, a Dutchman, ran ashore and some time after was taken by the enemy, the Captain and his officers who gott up to Chincera after seeing the fort taken was by the Dutch delivered up to the Moors in three hours after their arrival.

<sup>1</sup> The artillerymen.





About 4 of clock in the afternoon the enemy called out to us not to firing

Page 8. in consequence to which the Govournor shewed a flagg of truce, and gave orders for the garrison not to fire. Upon which the enemy in vast numbers came under our walls, and at once began to sett fire to the windows and gates of the fort which were stopt up with bales of cotton and cloath, and began to break open the fort gate, scaleing our walls on all sides.

This put us in the utmost confution, some opening the back gate and running into the river, others to take possession of a boat that lay ashore half afloat and half dry was so full in an instant that she could not be gott off. In the meanwhile the Moors surrounding us on all sides, and shewing signs of quarters to all the people in the water, they went on shore and delivered themselves up to the Moors, some of them went to the Nabob and where by him pardoned, others in the confution gott into a *budgerow*, while the enemy

Page 9. was plundering, and escaped down on board the ships at that time lying little below Surmons Gardens.

But most of those that remained in the fort where put into the Black Hole, to the number of 144 men, women, and children.

Off whome upwards of 120 where miserably smothered by the heat occasioned by so many being shut up in so small a place, as to be obliged to stand upon one another.

Amongst those that unhappily suffered were Messrs. Eyres, Bailie Senior, Coales, Dumbleton, Jewkes, Revely, Law, Jebb, Carse, Vallicourt, Bellimy Senior and Junior (Thomas shott himself on the wall), Drake, Byng, Dalrymple, Patrick Johnstone, Street, Stephen and Edward Pages's, Grubb, Dodd, Torrians, Knapton, Ballard, Captain Clayton, Buchanan, Whitherington, Lieutenants Simson, Hays, Blagg, Bishop, Paccard, Ensign Scott, Wedderborn, James Guy, carpenter, Captain Hunt,

Page 10. Robert Carey, Thomas Leach, the 2 Stopfords, Porter, Hylierd, Cocker, Carce.

Page 11. Amongst those that had escaped death in the Black Hole and came out alive were John Holwell, Esq., Governour, Court, Burdett, Walcott Ensign, who were taken away by the Nabob's party and put into irons both legs. Messrs. Cook, Lushington gott down on board the ships, the rest remaining is





Mr. Mills  
Mr. Dixon  
Patrick Moran  
Thomas Meadows  
John Angell  
John Burgaft  
John Arnd  
John Jones  
Philip Cosall  
Peter Thomas  
John Gatliff  
John Boirs  
Barnard Clelling  
Richard Aillery

} all that escaped the terrible dungeon.

*Page 12.* At the time the Fort was taken, there was escaped the two Doctors Noxes, Doctor Gray, Paul Richard Pearks Esq., Dr. Taylor, Dr. English, Captain Collins, Captain Lewis, James Andrews, George Gray Junior, George Alsop, Edward Savage, James Johnstone, William Tedcomb, Thomas Henderson, Thomas Hirwood.

*Page 13.* Having no men on the bastions, but two or three centinels, the greatest part of the soldiers for want of provisions and having plenty of drink could not be prevailed on to mount the bastions any more.

Those that were otherwise, were excessively fatigued, having been on duty ever since the first of the siege.

The garrison being so reduced for want of relief, was most untimely overcome with plenty of ammunition at hand.

*Page 14.* An account of the powder at the Fort with other ammunition :

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Europe barrels        | . | . | . | . | . | . | 37  |
| Do. $\frac{1}{2}$ do. | . | . | . | . | . | . | 13  |
| Bombay do.            | . | . | . | . | . | . | 187 |
| Bengall do.           | . | . | . | . | . | . | 159 |

396

Powder of Captain Whitheringtons

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |    |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| Bengall     | . | . | . | . | . | . | 45 |
| Do. Barrels | . | . | . | . | . | . | 50 |

95