



Do. of the <i>Success</i> Galleys	
Barrels . . . . .	5
Do. Carr . . . . .	9
	— 14
747 Maund 30 Seer	

This is except the powder belonging to the vessels and merchants.

Page 15. An Account of the iron round shott large and small . 40760

Do. of ready shells large and small

	Ins.	
Do. of ready filled . . . . .	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 10\frac{1}{2} \\ 4\frac{1}{2} \\ 3\frac{1}{2} \end{array} \right.$	$\begin{array}{r} 50 \\ 36 \\ 300 \end{array}$
Hand Granades . . . . .		500
		— 886
Large empty shells . . . . .	$\begin{array}{r} 13\frac{1}{2} \\ 10\frac{1}{2} \\ 8 \end{array}$	$\begin{array}{r} 150 \\ 150 \\ 50 \end{array}$
		— 350
Small shells empty . . . . .		6200
Grape shott		
18 lb. . . . .		50
12 . . . . .		28
9 . . . . .		250
6 . . . . .		600
4 . . . . .		150
3 . . . . .		300
2 . . . . .		250
1 . . . . .		80
		— 2293

Page 16. On the 1st of July was ordered out of Calcutta.

38. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 2 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—It is with the utmost concern we now inform you that Fort William was taken by the Moors the 20th ultimo; the rise of these troubles are as follows.

The Nabob under various pretences sent a guard upon our factory at Cossimbuzar to stop our business, as is customary in this country when they have any demand on the Europeans, and daily increased the force till the factory was surrounded by his





whole army which by the most moderate computation consisted of 10,000 Horse 20,000 Rasepout gunmen and a large train of artillery and then demanded Mr. Watts to go out and see him; the Nabob's *duan*<sup>1</sup> who commanded the van of the army writing Mr. Watts a letter that he might go out with great safety, that no harm should happen and that he would introduce him to the Nabob; upon this we thought proper to send the surgeon of the factory to the *duan* and he gave him the same assurances: and sent him back with a considerable person and a present of *beetle* (which is esteemed a pledge of faith) to accompany the Chief to the Nabob. Accordingly agreeable to the unanimous opinion of the gentlemen of the factory and officers of the garrison the Chief went and was introduced to the Nabob who immediately ordered him into confinement and insisted on his giving an obligation that in fifteen days time the gentlemen of Calcutta should level what new works they had raised, deliver up the Nabob's tenants who had fled for protection there, and that if it could be proved that we had falsified the Company's *dusticks* by giving them to those who had no right to them we should pay back what the Government had suffered by loss of duties. The Chief being in their hands was obliged to sign this, they then told him that his signing was of no consequence without the rest of the Council. Accordingly upon the surgeon's returning to the factory and acquainting Messrs. Collet and Batson that it was necessary they should go to the Chief in order to make an end of the affair, they went and were detained prisoners, nothing more being said about the obligation the Chief had signed (the Chief solemnly asserts that he told the surgeon to let Messrs. Collet and Batson know he did not think it adviseable for them to quit the factory). The next day we were ordered to deliver up our cannon and amunition which we complied with in hopes entirely to pacify the Nabob. The army then drew off from the factory. Mr. Batson was sent back to the factory and Messrs. Watts and Collet kept prisoners in the camp which then bent its march towards Calcutta. We have since heard all the *godowns* at Cossimbuzar were sealed up with the Nabob's seal and the soldiers remaining in the factory carried prisoners to Muxadabad.

As the Chief's going out of the Factory may perhaps appear

<sup>1</sup> Raja Rai Durlabh.





extraordinary we think it necessary to give our reasons for taking such a step. It has been always customary in Bengall for the Chiefs of the Subordinates<sup>1</sup> to visit the Nabobs of the province and we had great reason to believe that on paying this visit we should be able to accommodate matters and prevent his march to Calcutta. If we had refused our factory must have inevitably fallen into their hands with all the Company's effects outstanding in Bengall, our garrison being in no condition to make a defence against so large a force, our factory being surrounded on three sides by houses which overlooked our bastians and some not thirty yards from the bastian; most of our guns were honey-combed and carriages rotten though we had repeatedly indented to Calcutta for new ones. Our garrison consisted of about 50 soldiers most of which were black Portugeuze. We had about 80 *maunds* of powder but few or no shot or granades. We might possibly with this force have held out 3 or 4 days, which would not have prevented the consequences that have since happened and we undoubtedly should have been blamed for having commenced a war with the Government and we are very sensible had the gentlemen of Calcutta thought proper to treat, affairs might have been accommodated even when the Nabob was on his march.

We can give no certain account how Calcutta was taken, we being then prisoners in the camp, but we have since heard the Governour, Commandant, and several other gentlemen of the Council with part of the garrison quitted the fort and retired on board their ships which flung the rest into panick and confusion, which occasioned the fort to be surrendered to the Moors. We hear Mr. Holwell was taken prisoner in the fort and is in irons. We have no certain news of the fate of the other Subordinates but it is reported they are plundered—most of the Company's servants that remained when the Governour &c went away were either killed or have since died by ill usage.

We shall address your Honour &c. again when we can do it with more certainty.

We were released about four days ago and agreeable to our desire were delivered to the care of the French [Director] who has the Nabob's orders to send us safe to Madrass, enclosed is a copy of a

<sup>1</sup> Subordinate factories or settlements up-country.





letter from the Nabob to the Director of Chandernagore as also one to the Governour of Fort Saint George. The civiltys that we and all the English have received from this Settlement requires the greatest acknowledgments. Lest any false reports should reach your Honour &c., we can assure you that to the best of our knowledge the French have given no assistance to the Country Government but have suffered greatly themselves having been obliged to pay 400,000 rupees and the Dutch as much or more.

We beg the favour of your Honour &c. to represent to our Honourable Masters our distressed situation by the first conveyance, and we hope from their candour that the part we have acted will not be disapproved of as we are conscious to ourselves that had the Governour and Council made any proposals to the Government affairs might have been accommodated, Fort William subsisted, and their effects at the Subordinates and the *aurungs* safe, but by all accounts they were as averse to any terms of peace as they [were] incapable of war.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

39. *Translation of an extract from a letter written from Chandernagore, dated 3 July, 1756, concerning the consequences of the capture of Calcutta.*<sup>1</sup>

We have here to perform the same duties to several of the English—amongst others Messrs Watts and Collet—as those you have acquitted yourselves of at Dacca. These two last arrived here on the 28th evening in palanquins, but otherwise in very bad condition, though a few days after their capture the Nawab had given orders to treat them a little better. He<sup>2</sup> was constantly subjected to all kinds of indignities, and he was hardly allowed to keep a part of his clothes and linen. When he passed near Chinsura following the Nawab in his expedition to Calcutta he sent to ask for some assistance from Mr. Bisdorn who, besides some refreshments, sent him a thousand rupees. In order to get this gift from the hands of the leeches who guarded him he was obliged to make terms with them and to sacrifice more than 600

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

<sup>2</sup> Probably refers to Mr. Watts.





rupees of the 1,000 to save the rest. Finally he was released; the Nawab even recommended him to M. Renault with instructions to send him to the [Madras] Coast. It is further said that to repair the evil he has done him he has promised to write in his favour to the Council of Madras when informing them of the insolent behaviour of the English and Mr. Drake, which had compelled him to proceed to extremities against them and drive them out of Bengal. I doubt whether this patronage will benefit Mr. Watts very much, though at bottom he is much less culpable than Mr. Drake. One can at the most reproach him only with feebleness and imprudence whereas the latter is also guilty of cowardice and knavery and of the most dreadful treason a man can commit, having with the Commandant of the troops and the greater part of the Council preferred their safety and that of their wealth to the safety of a number of women, of honest people, and of a crowd of Christian persons. We now know the details of all that passed in this sad occurrence, and the secret springs of this affair, which one can only regard as a *Mystery of Iniquity*. It is no longer a matter of doubt from the way in which Mr. Drake behaved that he had formed a [definite] plan with the Commandant of the troops and certain Councillors, and that they had all agreed that these troubles offered an excellent opportunity to appropriate a portion of the wealth confided to their care. It was with this view that Mr. Drake instead of arranging the matter with the Nawab strove only to force him to extremities by the most insolent replies. He would doubtless have been much disgusted if things had not come to this pass, but it is more surprising that having in view the destruction of his Settlement and his own retreat on board the ships he did not take better precautions to secure this latter, and that he did not put on board the ships water or provisions or sailors or even ballast, thinking of nothing but the money, as if at sea money served instead of everything else. It is said indeed that they are in want of everything, and that the Councillors live like common sailors (*au cabestan*).

Before we knew everything that had happened in the fort, we did not understand how the Moors got possession of it, and by what enchantment the heads of the English had been turned to such an extent. The measures of Mr. Drake were so well taken that he left in the factory three Councillors who were the most opposed



to him, viz. Messrs Holwell, Eyre and Baillie. He chose for making this fine *coup* the moment of a sortie which he ordered. Whilst he was embarking, a crowd of soldiers and common people threw themselves pell mell into the water and into the boats to get to the ships, in which very few succeeded. Several boats were sunk before reaching them. Those who were eye witnesses of this confusion counted the number they saw drowned at more than 200 people.

After this retreat which occasioned a great mutiny, and during which some shots were fired at Mr. Drake, consternation fell upon those who remained. The soldiers of the detachment who came back from the sortie, finding neither Governor nor Commandant present, mutinied, broke into the wine *godowns* and filled themselves with wine. The few who were capable of resisting and [were ashamed] to give way to despair in this manner made a brave stand until—it must have been—Sunday, when, seeing the disorder continue, they thought proper to surrender. The moment when the Moors seized the fort was like that of the retreat, many persons were drowned whilst trying to take refuge on board the ships. The two first days passed in licence and all the disorders of a place taken by assault, with the exception of massacre to which the Moors are not accustomed in regard to people disarmed. About 160 Europeans who were taken in the fort were shut up in a chamber so small that they could only stand upright with their arms raised. The first night 132 died in it suffocated by the heat. Mr. Eyre, Councillor, whom perhaps you knew, suffered the same fate the next day. An Englishman who survived this Hell reports an action of Mr. Eyre which shows what they had to suffer. He says that as he was very fat and corpulent he could think of no other relief, but to take off his cotton drawers, which, as was the case with the rest, were his only clothing,—to take it off, I say, soaked with perspiration, to wring it and press what came from it into his mouth to slake his thirst. It is not surprising that he did not hold out. Mr. Baillie the other Councillor was killed, but Mr. Holwell is without doubt the most to be pitied. As it was he who was *Zemindar*<sup>1</sup> of Calcutta, the Moors had long owed him a grudge. Consequently they beat him almost every day, and we expect to hear at any moment that he has succumbed to this

<sup>1</sup> Magistrate.





torture. When the Nawab entered the fort of Calcutta he could not get over his surprise at seeing such a prodigious heap of cannon, cannon balls and other munitions—of the first indeed there were more than 500, some mounted [and some without carriages]. He was struck with the beauty of the Government House, and considered it worthy to be the dwelling of Princes rather than merchants. Seeing the fire in many parts [of the town] and considering the great number of fine houses, he could not help saying of the English that they must have been mad to oblige him to drive them from so large a town. He immediately ordered the Government House to be destroyed out of hatred of Mr. Drake, whose private property he thought it was, but the others were preserved and the fire extinguished. He even went to live in the fine house belonging to Mr. Wedderburn, and after a time published an order to all Christians and *Gentiles*<sup>1</sup> to come back and live in their houses within 3 days under penalty of losing them. Some have obeyed and he has done them no harm. The majority were afraid and remained in our Settlement. They had good reason not to accept this invitation as during the last few days the Nawab has changed his mind, on what pretext is unknown, and has sent 2,000 pioneers to destroy and raze the whole Settlement, not wishing as he says to leave one stone on another. Indeed the *Faujdar* passed yesterday evening to go and hasten the work by his presence. At first it was said here that this was in revenge for disorders committed by the English at the mouth of the river where they were burning and plundering all the villages, but we have since learned that this news is false, as is also that of the arrival of two of their ships of war, which every day are reported to have arrived and which disappear the next day.

By my last letter I had the honour to inform you, I think, that the English were still with their ships a little below Calcutta, that after having abandoned 5 ships under the fort, and lost one on a bank, they were much embarrassed how to pass Makwa Tanna (Tanner's Fort) where the Moors had built batteries. They have since passed this passage very easily, but at that of Budge Budge where they were waited for with many *cayetoques*<sup>2</sup> they lost two

<sup>1</sup> Hindus.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly country boats, which often carry a cabin. German *hajüte*—cabin. A little below it seems as if a kind of gun was referred to.





of their ships which ran aground and broke up immediately. Luckily the Moors saved all the people, of whom there were a considerable number especially of women, amongst whom was the niece of Mr. Finely (?). No harm was done to any one but the *gemidar* of the place refused to release them except on condition that they gave him 25 rupees a head. We heard later that the English had ransomed them and that they had rejoined the ships. The Moors found on these ships a great quantity of silver plate, in particular that of the Company, and 20 boxes of silver. Our vessel *Le Silhouette* knowing nothing of the war with the English was much surprised when passing before Makwa Tanna to find herself fired upon several times with *cayetoques* (?). The force of the tide prevented her from anchoring there. She cast anchor about that fort. The English, who at that time had not yet passed, came on board, at least some who knew M. Chambon; they told him what had happened, and could not help confessing they were covered with shame at the cowardice with which they had fled; but at the same time they tried to persuade the Captain to reply to the Moors in case they fired on him again. They declared to him that we also were engaged in this business and that the Nawab intended to drive us out of Chandernagore. It is not difficult to discover the object of such a false report. M. Chambon before determining sent a message to M. Renault, who sent him orders to be careful not to give the least offence to the Moors. As a matter of fact he was obliged during the night to send some refreshments which the English begged of him. After the destruction of Calcutta, we, like the Dutch, have had our turn for fear. Not in truth as much as the English, but not far off. Almost the whole army of the Nawab has marched through our Settlement, insulting every one in the streets, committing a thousand acts of violence, taking away the servants and bearers to carry their booty, cruelly beating the people belonging to the port to give them boats. In short what shall I say? Things were twenty times on the point of coming to extremities. To finish with us, the Nawab coming to Hugli on the 25th demanded contributions from the two nations. The Dutch have paid him four *lakhs* and a half, and we, in spite of the general disgust of every one, Company's servants and private people, soldiers and sailors, in spite





of our number of 300 whites, and our desire to avenge the honour of the European name, we have submitted to pay, it is said, three lakhs. One must believe that their fear for the smaller factories has had no little share in determining the gentlemen of the Council, who, their knowledge being greater than that of us young people, are better qualified to judge of the advantages and disadvantages of resistance. In regard to the factory I do not think there was the least fear, and it was easy to see by the ardour shown by every one how safe it was, but it is not the less true that, not to speak of the smaller [up-country] factories, it would not have been easy to defend the Settlement [i.e. the town of Chandernagore] the destruction of which would have ruined all the merchants, &c. The captains of the ships which ran ashore at Budge Budge arrived here yesterday. They were followed by a number of other people of all classes whom the Nawab allows us to receive. He has even said he will send us all whom he captures, so we expect soon to see those of Dacca.

40. *Translation of a letter from the Dutch Council, Hugli, to the Supreme Council, Batavia, dated Fort Gustavus, 5 July, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

HIGH AND WELL-BORN SIRs,—We shall have the honour of answering your respected and honoured public general letter dated the 13th April last, received by the ships *Vosmar* and *Voorburg*, on the next occasion, leaving this matter to the chief officers in order to communicate an event which was as unexpected as unfortunate for the European nations trading here.

The Nawab Aliverdi Khan having died in April of this year, and his grandson Siraj-uddaula being called to the helm of affairs, the English at Calcutta caused ramparts of a certain kind of stone to be erected. With the knowledge of the *Nawab-Subah* (?) or under-Nawab of Dacca, and without paying any attention to the prohibitions and notices issued by the young Prince concerning these matters, they gave protection to one Kissendas, who thought he could escape from the Nawab.

His Excellency, being thus defied, occupied the English fort of Cossimbazar not before the beginning of June. This being surrendered by the Chief and his Council without any fighting or

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, the Hague.





resistance His Excellency, taking our English friends of Cossimbazar as prisoners with him, marched by forced marches straight on Calcutta, at the head of an army of 60 or 70 thousand men.

The whole world thought and expected that he would have knocked his head against such a strong place, but time has shewn that the English defended themselves for three days only. A part of them fled in their ships down the river, and the rest, who did not perish by the sword, have fallen into the Nawab's hands, and are bound in irons. There now is that beautiful place, whose blooming and flourishing condition caused every one to admire it, and from which the English Company drew a great and princely income. The fort and all the other costly buildings have been pulled down, the shops erected before this disaster have been plundered, and the timber wharfs destroyed, the place re-named Alinagar, and put under the government of a *Faujdar*. The officers of the up-country factories are also prisoners in consequence of the self-willed behaviour which is peculiar to this nation.

Had it even remained at this, which God prevent, we should have had to share in the trouble which the above-mentioned nation had drawn upon its own neck, because, having been repeatedly written to by the Prince for assistance in soldiers, ammunition and boats, he on our absolute refusal, immediately after the taking of Calcutta, surrounded us with immensely superior forces, and demanded a contribution of 20 lakhs or 2,000,000 rupees, a claim which we could not satisfy and would sooner have trusted ourselves to die fighting. In the meantime Heaven shewed us a way out of the difficulty so that we, by the expenditure of certain money, brought influence to bear upon that mad Prince, so as to incline him in our favour. By this means we obtained a modification to one fifth of the whole, or four lakhs of rupees. Having gained ground thus far we imagined that some more might be abated, or that in the matter of the *nazarani*, which one is ordinarily obliged to pay to all new Viceroys, we might get off with about half a *lakh* instead of one or two lakhs, but the Prince, seeing our secret joy and flattering himself that he had a right to chastise us, commanded the people with him to forcibly take away our artillery and trample our flag under foot. Now there was no further time for delay, we must either pay or take





the consequences. On the one hand it was hard that the Company should have to pay such an immense sum of money, which, including that spent upon the cost of intercession and some bribes spent upon persuading the Nawab and his army to retire from Calcutta, was to be estimated at 400,000 rupees, and on the other hand there was no chance in the world to hold out against the immense force of the Nawab, who was provided with a considerable force of artillery and a good European constabulary<sup>1</sup> (*sic*), nor was it possible in the present difficulty to flee on our ships. (The fugitive English were still struggling to exist in the neighbourhood of Fulta, not without danger of once again falling into the hands of the Moors.) Although, by God's blessing, our unpardonable stupidity might possibly have been made good, still it appeared an inconsiderate bravery to risk our lives, our liberty, the reputation of our nationality and our colony, by holding out for a day or two, or possibly less considering the weakness of our fort and the bad condition of our artillery as compared with that of the English. Consequently, *volens volens* we decided to concede the demands of the Nawab, the extorted money being advanced by the *gumasta* of Fettusjent on a bond of  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. per month. Thereupon the first and second undersigned were received at his *Darbar* in a very friendly way and were presented with robes of honour, and a head-dress set with precious stones, together with an elephant and a horse, and were verbally assured by His Excellency that he would see to the necessary *parwanas* for the confirmation of the Company's privileges on his arrival at Murshidabad.

Besides the above mentioned damage the Company apparently still stands to suffer a further loss of from 25 to 26 thousand rupees through the D'Eccaas [? Dacca] merchant Saktiram, who had been a servant of the English and, according to all appearances, was fond of them; so that the misfortune of the English is in reality to be deplored, for although the English Company has for the present been deprived of a great share of commerce, still the opposite would be desirable for us, seeing that as far as they are concerned the passage from here to the sea is usually kept open, whereas now our ships will always be held up at Calcutta and

<sup>1</sup> Probably the French deserters or mercenaries who served him as artillerymen.





Muckwa Tana, which the Moors have since strongly fortified, and will be prevented from departing punctually, without calculating the evil consequences which we shall have to sustain if the English make reprisals upon the Nawab and force us to attack him upon the water. The French have had to pay a contribution proportionate to ours, to the amount of 3 *lakhs* of rupees besides another half *lakh* for mediation money. One does not yet know whether the other nations will get out of this difficulty now without tearing their clothes, but it is known that the Empdeners had about two and a half *lakhs* of rupees outstanding amongst the English, and that to all appearances they will never see a doit of this money again, so that this Company may very possibly be ruined, especially if any disasters take place, such as, alas! are hitting our Company more than too frequently, seeing that in the beginning of this month the ship *Voorburg*, whilst sailing up the Ganges, got aground on the shallow of the so-called Jannegat [John's or Jack's Hole] and was lost with all its cargo except the silver, which according to custom had been carried in the sloop. Possibly we might have been able to save a considerable quantity of the cargo if we had been able to get there in time, but we could do nothing towards this owing to the passage being closed by the departure of the Nawab three days ago.<sup>1</sup>

The English as well as the Nawab have sought our alliance, and on our persevering in an absolute neutrality, the English Council has protested against us in the name of His Britannic Majesty, as your Excellencies will come to see by the letters to be despatched by the first ship next September.

For the rest we request your Excellencies to kindly take into favourable consideration the above written statement, and to confirm the measures we have determined upon with the usual honoured approbation.

Meanwhile we remain, &c. &c., A. BISDOM, &c. &c.

41. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 6 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—Enclosed comes duplicate of our letter of the 3rd instant since which we are informed that the

<sup>1</sup> That is, they could not get permission from him to pass Calcutta and Muckwa Tana forts quickly enough.





Dacca factory was surrounded and the gentlemen obliged to surrender, that the French Chief has received them into their factory till he has the Nabob's order concerning them, that Mr. Amyatt has made his escape from Luckipore with effects of the Company's to the amount of about 60,000 rupees, Mr. Boddam from Ballasore likewise with about 5 or 6,000 rupees.

We have been obliged to borrow money of the French Company for our subsistence as we have lost everything we had in Bengall, viz., Mr. Watts 2,000 for him and his family and Mr. Collet 500 rupees, for which we have given receipts. As these notes will be tendered to your Honour &c. from Pondicherry for payment, we beg the favour of your Honour &c. to honour them, and in case the Company do not think proper to make us any allowance we shall with pleasure repay the sum advanced. Enclosed is a list of what gentlemen are on board of the English ships in the river.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

42. *Letter from Council at Fulda to Messrs. Watts and Collet. Dated on board the Ship 'Doddale' off Fulda, 6 July, 1756.*

GENTLEMEN,—We congratulate your safety at Chandernagore. In our situation we are to expect from you who have been so long in the Nabob's camp the most certain account you are able to transmit us of the Nabob's determination respecting the English Company, and what effect you imagine an application to his principal ministers and great men would have in our favour, for which purpose we should be glad you would let us know who would be the properest persons to address to. We are advised that Monickchund, Roy Doolob, Golam Hassein Cawn and Coja Wazeed are those who have the greatest influence, and in consequence of that information we forward you enclosed letters for those officers, and desire you will endeavour to have an exact translate of them made into the Persian language and get them delivered with the original. If you think it would be proper to apply to any other *Durbar* officers upon this occasion, we request you will point out the persons, or (if you judge it will answer the end) we should be glad you would address them yourselves in behalf of our Honourable Employers to interest them in our favours. In hopes of opening a correspon-





dence with the Government, we have absolutely forbid any hostilities being committed on any Moors' ships or vessels which may arrive in the river, or giving any offence to the country people round about us, by which pacifick measures on our side, we hope for a favourable turn of affairs.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, T. BODDAM.

43. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 7 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—Since our last we have received a letter from the gentlemen on board of the ships at Fulta, copy of which we inclose as also copy of a letter they desire to be translated into Persian and sent to the several great men about the Nabob for permission to reestablish the Settlement.

We must beg leave to observe to your Honour &c. that we wrote<sup>1</sup> to the Governour and Council of Calcutta when we were at Houghley (which was the first opportunity we had) that if they would send a proper person or empower us we flattered ourselves that we should be able even then to accommodate matters for a sum of money. We are not certain but are informed that that letter was received and an answer wrote importing that after the affront the Nabob had given of sealing up the Company's effects and confining their servants at Cossimbuzar they could not think of coming to any terms of accommodation. We are informed likewise by Cossenaut one of the Company's *banyans*<sup>2</sup> that Ommichund and some of the principal merchants offered to contribute considerably towards making up affairs. Coja Wazeed, the greatest merchant in Bengall, who resides at Houghley and has great influence with the Nabob, his *duan* told us that he went four times to Calcutta in order to persuade the gentlemen to make up matters with the Nabob but was threatened to be ill used if he came again on the same errand.

We shall do all in our power to get permission to reestablish the Settlement but are without any hopes of obtaining it during the life of the present Nabob. We therefore know of no other

<sup>1</sup> Apparently missing.

<sup>2</sup> Native brokers.





method but that of a military force which we hope your Honour &c. will be able to send sufficient to attack the Nabob even in his Metropolis, as we hear a peace is confirmed with France.

There are 79 of our serjeants, soldiers and others in the hospital here who escaped from Calcutta and are provided with provisions and cloaths by the French Governour and Council, who have been extremely humane to us all and now maintain by charity near 3,000 poor Portuguese men, women and children who were inhabitants of Calcutta.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

44. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Coja Wajid and other native personages.*

SIR,—Relying on your favour and friendship for the English nation, we take the liberty of addressing this letter to you and intreat the honour of your aid and assistance in our present situation. We hope by your means to be informed in what manner we may address the Nabob for his permission to reestablish our Settlement at Calcutta.

To whom can we apply in our present circumstances but to those from whom we have received many marks of favour and protection and on whom we still depend.

Having no *Munsee*<sup>1</sup> with us, we are obliged to address you in English, and hope, Sir, you will for that reason excuse any defect in our stile or omission of the due forms of respect. What can we say more? but that we hope much from your aid and favourable representation of the English to the Nabob.

We are &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, CHARLES MAN-  
NINGHAM, WILLIAM FRANKLAND, WILLIAM MACKETT, P. AMYATT,  
THOMAS BODDAM.

45. *Translation of a letter from M. Vernet to M. La Tour, dated 7 July, 1756.*<sup>2</sup>

The Nawab in accordance with our letter of the 10th ultimo having left for Calcutta and arrived there on the evening of the 15th, has met with the same success as here; for after a

<sup>1</sup> Teacher or interpreter.

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





would serve a day longer, upon which a flag of truce was hung out. During the time they were parling the back gate was betrayed by some Dutch soldiers to the Nabob so that then they could do nothing but surrender themselves prisoners at discretion. During these two days warm fighting there were about 25 killed and 70 wounded of the best men. As soon as the Nabob arrived in the fort he found with covenanted servants, soldiers and officers to the number of 160 who were put into a place called the Black Hole and jammed so close that out of 160 put in alive the next morning 110 was brought out dead for want of air. Jenks, Reveley, Law, Eyres, Bailie, Cooke, Captain Buchanan, Scott and all our other military officers and Covenanted servants dead. The writers and officers behaved bravely. A prodigious number of Moors are killed. All the night our poor gentlemen were in the Black Hole the Nabob's people kept firing at them through the door.

This is the purport of Holwell's letter. I hope we shall all soon get clear off.

48. *Letter sent Mr. Roger Drake, after the loss of Calcutta; in answer to one sent Mr. John Young, Chief of the Prussian Factory, wherein he requested to be informed of the sentiments of the different Nations, in regard to his, and his Council's conduct during his government. Dated l'Hotel des Prusses, 10 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR,—In compliance to your request, I shall now give you an account of the prevailing opinions, regarding the late disaster of Calcutta, and previously thereto, beg, and insist, that the narrative herein collected as an epitome of fluctuating sentiments and ideas of Europeans and country people, without the least aim of mine to reflect on, or reproach any person whatsoever.

First I shall begin with the Nabob, 'tis reported that he declares you used his *perwana*, and bearer thereof, with the utmost contempt, when he demanded Kissendasseat; for which, from Rajamull he returned from his so far advanced march against the Nabob of Purnea with his army, to reduce you to his commands. In his march towards Calcutta, they say, Fuckeer Toujar went or sent, I cannot say which, nor how many times, to exhort and





incline you to pacify measures, which you would neither hear nor accept of; but in lieu thereof, threatned him at last if he dared to return again on that subject. After the Nabob had so easily and unexpectedly reduced Calcutta, and found you were gone, he on his return wrote to the Governour of Fort Saint George, representing you as a person of an extraordinary turn of temper, genius and character, for the employment you had; as appears from the manner you affronted him, and the constant venal prostitution of your *dusticks* to the use of the country people, which is a manifest defrauding of his revenues, no longer to be bore with, and forced him to the resentment he took, and now regretted; but never could for your sake reconcile himself ever to the return to, or settlement of any English man in Bengal; this letter he showed to the French and Dutch Directors, who as far as I could observe of the former, approved of what he wrote. These I think are the material objections and reproaches made by the Nabob, and principal people of the country; what others say, can be of no consequence, as they frequently are misled in their opinions of the best Governours and best of men.

I shall now relate what passed with the French. Male and female of all degrees seemed from the conduct of affairs at Cossimbuzar, to exult and rail; especially in the reduction of Calcutta, their reproaches were so keen and bitter, and their insinuations, so shameful and vile; that in spite of the stand I made against them in vindication of their many ill-grounded assertions, the torrent became so strong to stem, that I was fain to retire, and shut myself up in the Octagon.<sup>1</sup> Scandal was so rife and delusions so powerful that the same opinions and reproaches were found in the mouths of all degrees of persons. You were men without religion, decorum or decency. Your *summum bonum* consisted in excessive drinking, high living, and no oeconomy, at the expence of others, wherefore finding yourselves bankrupts, you had long ago schemed this base desertion of Calcutta, to get into your power the money and effects of the country people and Armenians. To strengthen this very odd and unaccountable opinion, the banks of Venice and Genoa were already stored with a part of your creditors' money. Cowardice,

<sup>1</sup> The Prussian factory.





want of measures and authority in the defence of Calcutta, appeared to be a better grounded topick, but against whom I chose to be silent. The arguments already mentioned of the Moors, were often interspersed, concluding the whole with an indelible affront and reproach brought on all Europeans by your late behaviour; besides the damage of being forced to pay 350,000 rupees to the Nabob.

My distance from the Dutch, and of course little intercourse with them, curtails their scene almost like unto the foregoing; except that it cost them 450,000 rupees.

Now the English enter the scene, of whom about 20 (at first) that escaped death, came up. All of them mostly agreed, that no good measures were taken; the few places that were well defended, were too precipitately abandoned, and without the care and diligence usual, of carrying off or spiking up the cannon, and soon after that, to their great surprize and concern, they found the principal men of the civil and military were gone at, or rather before the town came to be attacked; on which dejection of spirits, and a troubled mind, enthralled some of the first rank; while disorder, tumult and mutinous proceedings, quite destitute of discipline prevailed among many of lesser authority and repute, in so much, that in three hours' time—because firing mostly ceased, the enemy from the houses near the fort assailed the bastions and curtains with showers of small shot, that it was dangerous to be on either—tamely submitted without attempt to sally out and dislodge them. They further agree, that some of the principals who remained to the surrender of the fort, were to have been of the number that deserted the day before, but were prevented by a good look out. The quantity of guns and ammunition were enough, they say, to have held out much longer; nay they believe and affirm, that two days more resistance would have obliged the Nabob and his army to decamp; if true, how dear were these two days.

Next appear Messrs. Watts and Collet of Cossimbuzar, after their release by order, from the Nabob. The arguments they have made use of in their own defence, are drawn up into a written narrative, to serve for that purpose; and indeed from what I have heard them say, I cannot find their conduct blameworthy; their argu-





ments have operated so effectually on the French and Dutch, that they are now silent on their conduct. Those gentlemen seem however to entertain and consent to the ill conducted and worse defended affair of Calcutta, from the beginning to the end thereof; but despise and reject the report of a long and general consideration to withdraw the money and effects of the inhabitants &c. of the place; they further disapprove of the late ill conduct of Mr. Drake and his Council in the river, as if they assumed there a character and an authority to which they have no right and pretence.

Lastly Mr. Holwell with his fellow partners of misery and affliction, from the moment of their capture to that of their release, came to Chandernagore a few days ago. He has also drawn up a narrative of the whole affair, in vindication of his conduct, and of many worthy persons who narrowly escaped with him the late catastrophe of their late friends and companions. Mr. Holwell declares to and assures me that the previous knowledge of the desertion of others is an aspersion; as will evidently appear by the last council of war held with the principal men that fled; and says the information struck him with so much surprize, that it took him some time to recall presence of mind to demand a council of war for fresh measures to be taken; in which assembly Mr. Pearkes (his superior in rank) joined with the unanimous consent of all the other gentlemen in Council, yielding up to him the government of the Company's affairs and conduct of their defence. He begun with a strenuous and pithy exhortation to behave well, for reward thereof he offered three chests of the Company's treasure to be divided among those that should signalize themselves; all his promises and efforts, even threats served little at that time, to keep order and discipline; among many even some of rank that got drunk and would not submit to be commanded, nor persuaded to fight, as they ought to have done against the enemy. The brave and obedient were fatigued with long watching and much action; thus forlorn, he ordered a flag of truce to be hoisted, which had not the desired and expected effect among those barbarians; it served rather to hasten their destruction, by giving them time and occasion to draw under the walls of the fort, while firing ceased. Soon after they entered the gate to the





river side, while some scaled the walls, and others entered the east gate. All that were taken alive, were immediately crammed into the Black Hole, to the number of 146 or 150, wounded and unwounded of all ranks. Out of that number there escaped alive 23 persons of whom Mr. Holwell was one; who declares, that the quantity of ammunition and warlike stores, asserted and already mentioned by others is false; and that it was morally impossible, for the bad measures and desertion of principals, to have held out one day longer. Thus you have, as promised, an abridgment of the cause of the Nabob's resentment, and fall of Calcutta. Since I have gone so far with the opinions of others, it remains that I should give mine, which is to recommend a coalition of parties, to cure the wound that may otherwise canker; and that it may be easy and safe it is necessary little be said, far less published, for the interest of your Honourable Masters and yourselves.

JOHN YOUNG.

49. *Protest of the late inhabitants of Calcutta against Mr. Charles Manningham's going to the Coast. Dated, off Fulta, 10 July, 1756.*

TO THE HONOURABLE ROGER DRAKE, ESQ.

HONOURABLE SIR,—Understanding that Charles Manningham Esq. intends going to Madrass in order to represent the unfortunate loss of Calcutta and the situation of the remaining part of the Colony; as that gentleman and Mr. Frankland left the place before any retreat was agreed to and afterwards refused joining your Councils when sent for, contrary to both their duty and honour, we are of opinion that either of those gentlemen are most unfit to represent transactions, which (as they absented themselves) they must know very little of, and therefore request that neither they nor any member of Council may be permitted to abandon the remains of the Colony and the Company's effects scattered throughout the country.

We are honourable Sir, Your most obedient humble servants.

*Signed by all the Junior Servants and some of the principal inhabitants that were left.*





59 Letter from Council, Dacca, to Court of Directors. Dated, the French Factory, Dacca, 12 July, 1756.<sup>1</sup>

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—I. The present melancholly situation of your affairs in Bengal will appear a very sufficient apology for our not addressing you in the usual form. Of your Council, some are killed, some prisoners and those who remain retired with Mr. Drake we know not well whither. You have been doubtless long since informed of Ali Verdi Khan having named Seir Rajah Dowlat his successor to this province in prejudice of his nephews Newages Mahmud Khan and Sahid Hamud Khan, the former of which had his residence at Muxadavad, the latter in the Proonean country of which he was Nabob. The succession of Seir Rajah Dowlat notwithstanding this preference was greatly doubted, his competitors were rich and powerful, both men of much more experience in life, the one esteemed of abilities greatly superior. Fortune however had adopted him and took care to pave his way to that point of grandeur to which he is now arrived. In December last died Newages Mahmud Khan a few months after the Nabob of Proonea, and on the 9th of April Ali Verdi Khan breathed his last. The widow of Newages for some time maintained a faint shew of opposition to the succession of Seir Rajah Dowlat in favour of a boy named Muradel Dowlat, nephew to Seir Rajah Dowlat, and who had been adopted by her late husband. But deserted by her adherents she was necessitated to drop it and to claim the protection of Seir Rajah Dowlat at this time firmly established. Kisesendas, son to Rajabullub, who had long acted as Prime Minister to Newages Mahmud Khan is said to have retired to Calcutta in March last with immense riches of his father's and of the widow of his late master. The protection granted to this man and the refusal of delivering him up when demanded is universally believed to be the cause of all our misfortunes. Umbrage taken at some new works of fortification which were carrying on at Calcutta and artful insinuations to the Nabob that the English were putting themselves in a state to make war upon him may be the pretences. On the 23rd of May the factory at Cossimbuzar was invested by

<sup>1</sup> This letter is dated 18 July, but its proper date is 12 July, as may be seen from Mr. Drake's letter of the 17-25 January, 1757, and Mr. Becher's letter of the 22 March, 1757.





a body of about 500 men. From that time till the 3rd of June fresh forces were daily arriving, when the number is said to have consisted of 50,000. That day the Nabob Seir Rajah Dowlat likewise arrived with a large body of horse, the rear of his army. The day following he is said to have dispatched a messenger to Mr. Watts to signify his desire of a conference with him. This was complied with. Mr. Watts was no sooner in his presence than he was made prisoner and the messenger returned to the factory for Messrs. Collet and Batson, the only two gentlemen in Council at that time at Cossimbuzar. He told them their presence was necessary to undersign a paper to which Mr. Watts had set his name and which without theirs would not be valid. These two gentlemen likewise waited on the Nabob. The latter was immediately made prisoner and the former sent back to the factory with orders to the officer who commanded to deliver it up to whoever the Nabob should appoint to take possession of it with guns ammunition &c. His orders were conformed to and the Nabob took possession of it the 6th. This done, orders were issued for the march of the army towards Calcutta. For the particulars of the siege of that place and Fort William we must beg leave to refer Your Honours to some of those gentlemen who continued in the fort till it was taken. The accounts we have vary much and are difficult to reconcile. All agree in this that many brave men have died miserably, whose lives might have been saved by the smallest degree of good conduct and resolution in their leaders. That Mr. Drake refused listening to any terms of accommodation, said to have been proposed by the Nabob while at Hughly to avert the storm which threatened the Colony, is what we can hardly credit, though this is confidently affirmed. In a garrison so ill provided as it appears Fort William was, it would certainly have been eligible to have submitted to any [conditions] for the present, and to have waved his resentment till a change of circumstances might enable him to gratify it and to obtain such as were more advantageous. The Nabob, in his return from Calcutta after marching a number of his men through Chandernagore and committing many irregularities, extorted from the French the sum of 3 *lacks* of Rupees, and from the Dutch 450,000, and from the Danes 50,000. The French have behaved with the greatest humanity to such as have taken





refuge at their factory, and the tenor of their conduct every where to us on this melancholly occasion has been such as to merit the grateful acknowledgment of our Nation. The sloop, which in our correspondence with Monsieur Courtin Your Honours will observe, we became answerable for, to prevent the ill consequences of Mr. Amyatt's seizing her at so critical a juncture, is with her cargo we are informed safely arrived at Chandernagore.

2. It was on the 23rd of May as in a preceeding paragraph we have acquainted Your Honours that Cossimbuzar Factory was first invested. It was the 9th of June before we received any letter from the gentlemen in Calcutta; it was dated the 3rd and in general terms directed us to be upon our guard as the Nabob had taken offence at some works which were carrying on at Calcutta and it was uncertain to what lengths his caprices and passion might lead him. Our situation and the want of embarkations rendered a compliance with their orders of the 7th (received the 12th) utterly impracticable. For our reasons fully deduced, we beg leave to refer Your Honours to our Consultation of the 12th. In these and our publick letters both which accompany this address to Your Honours (the Consultation of the 3rd and 5th excepted, 2 copies of which have been sent to Calcutta, but the originals we have not been able to get out of the factory) we have been sufficiently explicit to enable you to judge and determine on our conduct and shall not enter into a further detail.<sup>1</sup>

3. As your books and papers are all in the possession of the Nabob we cannot with exactness inform you of the loss you have sustained at your factory at Dacca. If they will permit us to extract a few Minutes from the books we shall shortly be able to make it up, and Your Honours may depend on having it by the first occasion.

4. As to ourselves we have lost everything. A consciousness of having to the utmost of our abilities discharged our duty to Your Honours and the hopes of your future favour, should it appear to you we have acted in such a manner as to deserve it, must for the present support us. Your Honours will do us the justice to believe that in the surrender of our factory without resistance we have not been actuated by any unmanly attachment to life. Every

<sup>1</sup> These Consultations appear to have been lost.





necessary disposition our situation would admit of had been made, and while Fort William stood, our resolution was taken to defend ourselves to the last extremity. That gone, and all hopes of assistance cut off, it is certain we might have died, or by exasperating an ungenerous enemy, exposed ourselves to ignominy and torment, but this would in no shape have availed your Honours.

5. The French Gentlemen at Chandernagore and Cossimbuzar are warmly solliciting our liberty. If we are so happy as to obtain it, we purpose going to Madrass in the first ship, where we shall be ready to serve Your Honours in any suitable employment Your President and Council there may point out to us till your pleasure is known.

6. Exclusive of the gentlemen whose names appear at the foot of this letter there are prisoners with us here Mr. John Cartier, a factor of one year's standing, Mr. John Johnstone just commencing, Assistants (?), Lieutenant John Cudmore and Mr. Nathaniel Wilson, Surgeon. Mr. William Sumner the Second at this factory absent at Calcutta by permission, and who we hear is safe having been ordered on board ship some days before the place was taken. We advised the Gentlemen at Madrass of this unhappy event as soon as we could collect any particulars which we thought carried an appearance of truth.

We are &c., &c., RICHARD BECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN, SAMUEL WALLER.

51. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Messrs. Watts and Collet.*

*Dated, off Fulta, 13 July, 1756.*

GENTLEMEN,—Your letter of the 8th instant came to hand this morning, and we now protest in behalf of our Honourable Employers against you William Watts and Mathew Collet Esqrs. for declining to obtain translation and delivery of the letters enclosed under your cover to Monick Chund, Roy Doolob, Golam Hossein Cawn and Coja Wazeed, for all damages and wrongs which may ensue by the deprivation of our priviledges as contained in the royal *phirmand* and do now positively direct you to follow the instructions we gave you in our letter of the 6th instant, having been





advised to take that step and esteeming it ourselves as advantageous and for the interest of the Honourable Company.

We are &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

52. *Letter from Council at Fulta to Council, Fort Saint George.*  
*Dated, off Fulta, 13 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—Our utmost efforts have been employed to dispatch to you sooner the intelligence of the capture of Calcutta by the Moors acting under orders of Souragge Dowlat, the new Nabob, which account we doubt not will have reached you before this can possibly arrive by means of *pattamars* from the *shroffs*<sup>1</sup> or foreign nations. A narrative of this unhappy event will be in our opinion faithfully related to you by Mr. Charles Manningham, which we have not time to commit at present to writing. The above gentleman we depute to your Honour, &c. on the United East India Company's behalf, and require from his representation that you will support us with the whole force you can obtain on your Coast, military and marine, together with a sufficient quantity of ammunition, cannon and all other warlike stores, military and marine, which may enable us to re-establish ourselves in these provinces, which we esteem of the most essential consequence to the East India Company and trade of India in general. It is highly proper to represent to your Honour &c., that the English here were established by patent from the *Grand Mogul*, under whose orders all *Subahs* should be dependant. But as your Honour, &c., are well acquainted that this province was overcome by Allyverde Cawn, who maintained his conquest by force of arms, so was it possessed by his grandson who assumed the title of Souragge Dowlat. Wherefore further to favour our cause and just complaints for restitution and right to the privileges granted us by the royal *phirmaund*, we are to request you will without delay set forth to the *Grand Mogul* the enormities committed by the present Nabob on a nation that has always paid due obedience to the tenor of the *phirmaund*, nor infringed on its privileges, requiring and entreating by his authority to re-establish us in all our rights, and that the loss sustained by the Company and

<sup>1</sup> Bankers.





inhabitants of the Settlement may be made good. We are at present endeavouring to open a correspondence with the principal men, whom we are informed the Nabob attends to, in hopes to bring on a treaty untill we can obtain succour; and that we may in some measure be relieved from our present distress, being in the utmost want of all necessarys of life, and strict orders issued by the Government not to supply us with any provisions. The Dutch and French are also prohibited giving us any assistance. Their situation appears very precarious, and we are told the French have wrote for a large reinforcement from Pondicherry. Our determination is to keep the river untill we are informed of your Honour &c.'s, resolutions, and in case we are not able to procure any favour from the Government, or should be persecuted by the enemy, so as to be obliged to stand out to sea, we shall proceed to Vizagapatam. This we think proper to mention as it may be necessary that the ships in their way to the Bay call there for intelligence, which we shall lodge there, if we are able to procure any conveyances, for the ingratitude of our immediate servants has been such, that we are drove to the necessity of doing every individual office for ourselves, nor have we been able to procure a *pattamar* or a Persian writer, and it is with the utmost difficulty we have hitherto kept together a sufficient number of *lascars* to work our ships, and are daily apprehensive they will quit us on the first occasion. We have desired the gentlemen at Vizagapatam, to provide and hold in readiness what provisions of every kind they are able to procure, to be put on board the vessels coming down hither. We request your honour &c., to represent a full state of all the occurrences to Rear Admiral Watson, the Commander-in-chief of His Majesty's squadron, and entreat his aid and assistance with the Fleet which we hope may be able to proceed hither.

Monsieur Le Bon (who had command of one of our advanced batteries and defended the same very gallantly) accompanys Mr. Manningham, and will in case of accident happening to Mr. Manningham, deliver you these advices, we esteeming Monsieur Le Bon qualified to give you a circumstantial detail of our military proceedings, as also inform you of the various stores we are in want of.





As we imagine the news of this capture will produce very bad consequences in England to the Honourable Company's affairs, if they receive it without being informed at the same time of there being a prospect of our resettling in Bengall, we are to request your Honour &c., will alter your resolution for sending the *Delawar* to Europe, till you know the success of the forces you may be able to assist us with.

We are, &c., &c, ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, C. MANNINGHAM, W. FRANKLAND, W. MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

53. *An Account of the capture of Calcutta by Captain Grant, dated 13 July, 1756.*<sup>1</sup>

As the siege of Calcutta and Fort William and the causes of the loss of them, will undoubtedly be represented in various ways; I think my duty, as well as my having had once the honor of your acquaintance and countenance, require that I give you, at least, the particulars of the military transactions; which, my having been appointed to act as Adjutant General during the troubles, enables me to do with more certainty than I could, had I been stationed at any particular post, as I issued out all orders from the Governor, and saw most of them put in execution.

I must refer you to a narrative of Mr. Drake's for what relates to the negotiations and correspondence with the Government preceeding.

The surrender of Cossimbuzar on the 4th June, by the Chief's being decoyed under many specious pretences to visit the Nabob in his camp before that place, and, on his being made prisoner, induced to deliver it up, you must be informed of ere now, we having dispatched *pattamars* as soon as we received the news on the 7th.

We may justly impute all our misfortunes to the loss of that place, as it not only supplied our enemys with artillery and ammunition of all kinds, but flushed them with hopes of making as easy a conquest of our chief Settlement not near so defensible in its then circumstances. Cossimbuzar is an irregular square

<sup>1</sup> A version of this letter, published in the *Indian Antiquary* for November, 1899, was taken from a copy of the original letter (dated 'Fulta, on board the *Success* Galley, 13 July, 1756'), made for John Debonnaire on 22 February, 1774. Presumably it was addressed to Mr. Orme or to some other gentleman at Madras.





with solid bastions, each mounting 10 guns mostly 9 and 6 pounders with a saluting battery on the curtain to the river side of 24 guns from 2 to 4 pounders, and their carriages, when I left the place in October last, in pretty good order, besides 8 cohorn mortars 4 and 5 inches, with a store of shells and grenades. Their garrison consisted of 50 military under the command of Lieutenant Ellet, a serjeant, corporal and 3 *matrosses*<sup>1</sup> of the artillery and 20 good *lascars*. The ramparts are overseen by two houses which lay within 20 yards of the walls, but as each is commanded by 5 guns from the bastions, ~~the~~ enemy could hardly keep possession of them.

When we received the news of Cossimbuzar's being in the Nabob's possession, and of his intentions to march towards us with the artillery and ammunition of that place and with an army of 20,000 horse and 30,000 gunmen, who had been encouraged with the promise of the immense plunder expected in Calcutta, it was full time to enquire into the state of defence of a garrison, which had been neglected for so many years, and the managers of it lulled in so infatuate a security, that every rupee expended on military services was esteemed so much lost to the Company.

By last year's shipping there was positive orders from the Company to execute a plan sent home by Colonel Scot for their approbation, but his death was thought too sufficient an excuse to postpone what they had so little inclination to have executed. By a later ship we were still further pressed by the Company to put our Settlement in the best state of defence possible, as there was great appearance of a French war. Captain Jones of the artillery, in September last, thinking it more particularly his duty to represent the defenceless state the garrison was in, and the situation of the cannon and ammunition, gave in a representation to the Governor and Council of what was immediately necessary for the defence of the place in case of a French war; such as making outworks, mounting the cannon which lay then useless for want of carriages, and putting their stores and ammunition in the best condition possible. The stile and form of this paper, and the manner of delivering it in, it seems gave offence, and Captain Jones was reprimanded for his irregularity in not delivering such representations first to the Commanding Officer of the troops.

<sup>1</sup> A sailor. Almost all the artillerymen were sailors.





However, though it contained many truths proper to be considered, there was no further notice taken of its contents, nor no orders given for any military preparations; trusting in the same kind fortune that had for so many years defended them in peace and security, though even at this time, we were daily insulted by constant encroachments and impositions by the Country Government, and though it had been strongly recommended by the Directors, to keep our garrison at Cossimbuzar in a proper state of defence as troubles were likely to ensue on the death of the Nabob who was then very old and could not live long, so negligent were we as to disregard the precaution, and even after his death, when competitors were contending for the Government, we thought ourselves so little concerned in the consequences, that no addition of officers, men nor ammunition was made to the usual garrison of Cossimbuzar nor any demand from thence for it.

On the receipt of the letters by the *Delaware* a few weeks preceding our troubles, there was orders given to repair the old Line before the fort to the river side, and prepare carriages for 50 pieces of cannon 24 and 18 pounders (which had lyen unregarded at the wharff for three years past) in order to have them mounted on this Line, against an attack by water. The carriages on the bastions were at the same time ordered to be repaired, but so dilatory was the execution of these orders and so little was it thought necessary to have them forwarded with any expedition, that when we received the news of the loss of Cossimbuzar the 7th instant that it could be only said they were begun, and but very few of the carriages patched for the guns on the ramparts; and besides the two field pieces we had from Madarass, not another piece of ordinance, fit to be drawn out of the fort.

On receiving the unexpected news of the loss of a place, we thought capable to stand out against any numbers of a country enemy while they had provisions, and with such artillery and stores as they generally use, It was thought proper to join the military captains and Engineer to the Council in order to form a Council of war; they were afterwards desired to retire to consider of the properest methods for the defence of the inhabitants and Town of Calcutta in case of an irruption of the Moors. Accordingly we gave it as our oppinions, that batteries should be



erected in all the roads leading to the fort at such distances as could be anywise defensible with the small number of troops we had; that the inhabitants should be immediately formed into a body of militia; all the carpenters and smiths in the place taken into the Fort to prepare carriages; the ammunition and stores put in the best order, and *lascars* and *cooleys* taken into pay for the use of the cannon and other works to be done, and likewise what *sepoys* and *peons* could be got to be formed into a body under the command of some European. It may be justly asked why we did not propose, the only method that as I thought then, and now do, could give us the least chance of defending the place, in case of a vigorous attack, the demolition of all the houses adjacent to the fort and surrounding it with a ditch and glacey; but so little credit was then given, and even to the very last day, that the Nabob would venture to attack us, or offer to force our lines, that it occasioned a generall grumbling and discontent to leave any of the European houses without them. Nay, the generallity wanted even to include every brick house in the place, Portuguese and Armenian, and thought it hard that any inhabitant should be deprived of protection against such an enemy. And should it be proposed by any person to demolish so many houses as would be necessary to make the fort defensible, his oppinion would have been thought pusilanimous and ridiculous, had there been sufficient time to execute such a work as there was not, nor would it be possible to destroy half the number in triple the time, especially as we had not powder sufficient to blow them up.

From the 7th to the 16th (when the Nabob's advanced guard attacked our redoubt at Perrin's Gardens) all precautions were taken to forward every work that was thought necessary to be done. The militia was formed without loss of time, Mr. Manningham appointed Collonel, Frankland, Lieutenant-Collonel, and Messrs. Holwell, Macket and Mapletoft captains; and subalterns for 3 companys. Our batterys were finished and our troops disposed of as you see them in the plan which since my coming on board I have endeavoured to sketch out from memory, to give you a better idea of our situation. The Militia were constantly disciplined morning and evening and the utmost spirit and resolution shewn by every person concerned to prepare everything for the reception





of an enemy from whom they expected no quarter. Our stores and ammunition were in the utmost bad order when we begun our preparations, no cartridges of any kind ready: the small quantity of grape in store had lyen by so long, that it was destroyed by the worms; no shells filled nor fuses prepared for small or great. The few that were thrown at the siege burst half way. There was 2 iron mortars, one of 13, and the (other) of 10 inches sent out about 3 years ago. The 10 inch mortar, we had just finished the bed for it, but the 13 inch one lay by useless for want of one; though there was upwards of 300 shells sent out for both, all that could be prepared was not above 20 and such as was thrown of them burst, some after quitting the mortar and others half way. We had but a small quantity of powder, and the greatest part of that damp. But you will be surprised to hear, that there was nothing known of this bad state of our stores and ammunition till the night before the Governor's retreat. There happened unfortunately, a misunderstanding to subsist between the Commandant and Captain Witherington who commanded the Train, which prevented Captain Minchin's having the Returns he ought of the stores and ammunition; at least the latter did not exert himself properly in his command, which I imagine was owing to the Governor's giving too ready an ear to Witherington's complaints of Minchin, he happening at the same time to be but upon indifferent terms with the Governor. These animosities amongst the persons who had the whole command and charge of the garrison in their hands did not contribute a litle to our misfortunes. Upon my being appointed Adjutant General I wrote down dayly what orders I thought might be necessary, and shewed them to the Governor for his approbation; They were afterwards issued out to the Adjutants of the military and militia, and by them carried to the commanding officer of each corps. Colonel Manningham, Lieutenant Colonel Frankland and Commandant Minchin for the more regular detail of duty were appointed Field Officers, to mount at the outworks dayly by rotation. I think amongst the first orders given on the news of the Nabob's approach, Captain Witherington was ordered to give in immediately a particular Return of the guns, ammunition and stores fit for service, as likewise of his company, volunteers entered, such as sea captains and Portu-





guese helmsmen and *lascars*, and everything else relating to the artillery. But the whole was never complied with and only a return of the guns and ammunition given the night before the Governor retreated, being the 18th. I pressed dayly to the Governor the necessity there was of having his orders obeyed, and was sorry to receive no other answer, than that Witherington was a strange unaccountable man, and that he did not know what to do with him. Captain Minchin pressed likewise to have his orders complied with in this respect, but in vain. From what motive or partiality to the man I cannot guess, without that his making a bustle and constant noise, recommended him as a very active man, who could not be supplied was he suspended. I often repeated to the Governor the bad consequence that would ensue from trusting the safety of the garrison (as it chiefly depended on the state of our ammunition and stores) to the will and management of such a man, without giving any account or Return of his proceedings.

Our intelligence of the Nabob's motions, and numbers was always very uncertain, and we could never be thorowly perswaded that he would advance against our batterys. The most we imagined was that he would form a blockade and cut off our provision untill we came to an accommodation and comply with his requests; though I believe those demands were only pretences, and the generall oppinion that prevails is, that he was resolved for some time past to rout the English out of the country, having on some account been irreconcilably irritated with us. What greatly contributed to harrass us was our *lascars* and *cooleys* deserting us on the Nabob's approach, till at last we had not a *cooley* to cary a bale or sandbag on the ramparts, nor a *lascar* to draw or work a gun, but totally reduced for the working of our cannon to about 36 men of the artillery for the bastions, out baterys and Labratory, and those very badly disciplined. The volunteers were chiefly employed about the stores and some of them on the bastions.

In this situation we received advice from Ensign Paccard the 16th in the afternoon, that the enemy were then bringing up heavy cannon to play upon the redoubt and sloop that lay before it for the defence of the ditch.<sup>1</sup> He was immediately reinforced with an

<sup>1</sup> This is the Maratha Ditch.





18 pounder the 2 brass fieldpieces and 40 men under the command of Lieutenant Blagg, being resolved to give them a warm reception on their approach. They had got six pieces of cannon playing on the redoubt and sloop when the reinforcement arrived, but on our fieldpieces beginning to play they withdrew their cannon, and abandoned that post, inclining to the southward, where they had on the opposite side of the ditch got possession of a *top*<sup>1</sup> of wood from whence they killed one of our gentlemen volunteers and 4 of the military. They killed 4 Europeans on board the sloop. Before dark the whole body inclined to the southward, and crossed the ditch that surrounds the Black Town, the extent of it being so great, and passable in all parts, that it was impossible to do anything to interrupt them. Lieutenant Blagg about 8 at night demanded a further reinforcement to cover his retreat, as he was apprehensive of the enemys advancing through some of the lanes to cut off his communication. Captain Clayton was ordered with a party to that purpose, who returned safe with Lieutenant Blagg about 10 at night, and left Ensign Paccard in possession of the redoubt with his former detachment.

Next morning being the 17th, Monsieur le Beaume (who was a French officer, and left Chandnagor on a point of honor) desired to be permitted to take possession of the Goal about 200 yards advanced before the battery A, and where three roads terminates into the place. He was accordingly ordered with 2 small cannon, 12 military and militia, and 40 *buxeries* or gunners; he broke embrasures through the Goal House for the cannon, and made loop-holes all round for the musquetry. All this day the enemy did not advance in sight of any of our batterys, but the plunderers annoyed the black inhabitants greatly which we could not possibly help without risquing our men to be shot at from behind houses and walls. Our *peons* brought in severall of their people, but their reports were so different that we could not depend on it. They informed us that they had all the Cossimbuzar cannon with some brought from Muxadavat of heavier mettall, about 25 Europeans and 80 Chittygong *fringys*<sup>2</sup> under the command of one who stiled himself Le Marquis de St. Jacque, a French renegaid,

<sup>1</sup> Tamil *tōppu* = grove or orchard.

<sup>2</sup> Half-caste Portuguese.





for the management of their artillery, about 15,000 horse and 10,000 foot, but we found afterwards this to be short of their numbers. From the three grand batterys as many men as could be spared were detached to the breastworks thrown up in the small lanes, and such houses as most commanded our batterys taken possession with serjeants and corporals' guards. This night all our *peons* deserted us, and in short every black fellow, who could make his escape, abandoned us. Upwards of 1,000 bearers left us in one night, on being ordered to carry the powder from the Magazeen into the Fort. And on the plunderers's advancing into the town, all the Portuguese familys crowded within our lines for protection to the number of some thousands.

The 18th in the morning the enemy began to make their appearance in all quarters of the town, but did not seem as if they would advance openly against our batterys. And by their method of advance we could foresee that they intended to force their way within our lines by taking possession of the different houses one after another. This caused us to reinforce such houses as we could most annoy them from as much as possible. About 11 o'clock they brought up two pieces of cannon against the Goal, one of them an 18 pounder by the size of the ball. We advanced an officer with 20 men and 2 field pieces to reinforce Monsieur le Beaume, but the walls of the Goalhouse were so weak that they were hardly any defence against their cannon. However they kept possession of it till about 2 when Le Beaume and Ensign Carstairs (who commanded the party) being both wounded, and numbers of their men killed, had liberty to retire within Captain Clayton's battery. The enemy instantly took possession of that post, and all the adjacent houses, losing no opportunity to take advantage of our retreat. They did not long keep possession of the houses on which our cannon from the batterys could bear, though our metal was not sufficiently heavy to demolish strong pukka houses, as we afterwards found. They poured in numbers into the Goal, Allsop's, Dumbleton's, and the houses behind that and Lady Russell's; and though our men from the tops and windows of the houses kept a constant fire on them as they advanced and our cannon from the fort and our batterys played on every house they could see them in possession of, and





endeavoured, though with little success, to fling shells amongst them (which had they been properly fitted for service would have been of much more use than our cannon) yet the superiority of their numbers under cover of the houses<sup>1</sup> at all quarters made it impossible for our people to withstand such showers of small shott, as they fired into the houses we had possession of. They first broke into our lines through Mr. Nixon's house and fixed their collours (as is their custom every inch of ground they gain) at the corner of the Tank. We were now obliged to abandon the breastwork close to Mr. Putham's and all the houses of that Square, the enemy in multitudes taking possession of each of them. They brought some heavy pieces of cannon through the lane twixt Minchin's and Putham's houses and planted them at the corner of the Tank and door of Mr. Nixon's to play upon us as we passed and repassed to and from the batterys. Having thus lodged themselves in all the houses of the Square on which only two guns from the flank of the north-east bastion could bear, and that at too great a distance to annoy them much, they had a secure footing within our lines; and those houses (being most of them *pucka*)<sup>2</sup> with the multitudes that occupied them were too strong lodgements for us to pretend to dispossess them of; being at the same time attacked in some manner at each of the other posts. This situation of the enemy exposed the battery B to have its communication cut off from the fort, as the enemy might surround them in the rear by advancing through the lane that passes by Captain Grant's and between Captains Buchanan's and Witherington's house; it was therefore thought necessary to order Captain Buchanan to retire with his cannon to the battery D where 2 embrasures had been opened

<sup>1</sup> Here follows an erased passage, '(which method and bush-fighting, these fellows are too near on a par with Europeans) soon enabled them to force one house after another, and oblige our people to abandon the houses they were in possession of. The first place where they broke in upon our line was at Mr. Nixon's, by breaking down the walls of the Compound behind, exposed to the fire of a sergeant's guard that had possession of that house and the adjacent breastwork, and pouring in through that into the Square at the corner of the Tank, the sergeant seeing them advance in such numbers made the best of his way to Captain Buchanan's battery where he was detached from, and left 8 or 10 of our gentlemen volunteers who had possession of Captain Minchin's house to force their way through the enemy where two of them were left behind and destroyed.'

<sup>2</sup> Of masonry.





in expectation of such a retreat. I think it was about 4 afternoon when I delivered this order and I then proceeded to Captain Clayton's battery at A where they had the warmest part of the attack since our retreat from the Goal at 2, by the enemy's keeping possession of all the houses round it, and though we sent an 18 pounder (which by that time we had got mounted on a truck carriage, and were obliged to have drawn to the battery by the militia in the fort, all our *lascars* and *cooleys* having abandoned us) in order to play upon the houses which the enemy possessed, they still not only maintained their ground but advanced apace through one house to another; this occasioned Captain Holwell to go in person to the Governor. Whether by a representation of the state they were in or at his own request he obtained an order to abandon that battery; which having been of the utmost consequence, ought not to have been done but by a determination of a council of war: especially as there was not such numbers killed, but it might have been easily maintained, at least till dark. On my arrivall at the battery I found all the guns spiked, except the two field pieces, with which they were then ready to retreat. I was not a little surprised to find things in this situation, and by the Governor's orders, as they informed me. I therefore requested their stay for a few minutes till I galloped to the fort for further orders. The Governor made me answer that the post was represented to him as no longer tenible, and had accordingly ordered its being withdrawn. Now the guns were spiked, there was nothing further to be done than to get them likewise withdrawn, as leaving them behind must have greatly encouraged the enemy, and convinced them of the pannick that seized us, which only could occasion such a precipitate retreat. As I was going back to the battery I found Captain Clayton and his command with the 2 fieldpieces half way towards the fort. I prevailed upon him to return with me, that, if possible we might not undergo the ignominy of leaving our guns behind us in such a precipitate manner. But when I ordered half the men to lay down their arms in order to draw first the 18 pounder while the other half stood with their arms for defence of the battery, not a man would stir or pull a rope. As nothing could be done I left Captain Clayton to make his retreat as regular as he could. I found by this time Captain Buchanan had like-





wise received orders to retire from the battery D, upon what account I know not. Captain Smith's battery at C was also ordered to be abandoned as maintaining that alone could answer no end, which was very regular done, and their guns brought to the fort gate. The next thing considered of, was a disposition for the defence of the fort, which was all that was left us now to maintain: for few expected that the batterys would have been so suddenly quitted, and most people foresaw that the fall of them would be attended with fatall consequences, as the enemy's getting possession of the houses contiguous to the fort, such as Crutten-den's, Eyre's, the Church and the Company's, all of them the strongest *pucka*, would in such a manner command the bastions and ramparts that it would be impossible to stand at the guns, exposed to the small arms of such a multitude as would occupy those and other houses, especially as the parapets of the bastions were very low, and the embrasures so wide that they hardly afforded any shelter. We had cotton bales and sandbaggs, which might in some measure supply this defect, but were so abandoned by all sorts of labourers that we could not get them carried upon the ramparts, and our military and militia so harrassed for want of rest and refreshments, that it was impossible to get them to do anything. This consideration determined us to take possession of the above houses and Church with the troops retired from the out batterys. We had laid in sufficient stores of provisions, but the irregularity in not appointing proper persons for this, as well as other particular duties (a fatall neglect to us from the beginning) and the generall desertion of the black fellows amongst whom were the cooks, left us to starve in the midst of plenty. All the men at the outposts had no refreshment for 24 hours, which occasioned constant complaints and murmurings all this night as well from them as those in the fort. Such was the irregularity and distress amongst them, that some had broke open *godowns* where liquors stood and where numbers made so free with it, that they were rendered incapable of any duty. The detachment in the Company's House finding the enemy had got possession of Captain Ranney's, thought that their post on the approach of day would not be tenible, and that their communication might be cut off by their being surrounded in the lane that leads to the





waterside along the new *godowns*, where there was no guns to flank, so applied to the Governor and obtained leave to abandon it, in which situation it was left all night. This and our situation in generall left us but a bad prospect for next morning. Half of our men in liquor in the fort, no supply of provisions or water sent to those in the houses without, the drum beat to arms three different times on allarm of the enemy's being under the walls, but hardly a man could be got on the ramparts: the enemy's taking possession of the Company's House, as was expected, would have made it impossible to stand [on] the southerly bastions and new *godowns* nor any boats to stay at the *gaut*. At a council of war held at 8 at night, Collonels Manningham and Frankland were permitted to see the European ladies on board the ships, then before the fort, and afterwards to return, but such crowds of Portugees women and children filled all parts of the fort as occasioned the greatest noise and confusion. It was thought hard to refuse them protection, as their husbands carryed arms for the defence of the place, but undoubtedly it was wrong to risque the safety of the whole on such a consideration.

About one in the morning a second council of war was called, to consider of our then situation, and what in all probability we might expect it to be on the approach of day; as likewise, from every circumstance considered, for what time we might reasonably expect to maintain the fort. The Captain of the Artillery was first asked what quantity of amunition we had then in store (you must observe the Governor never procured a return of it) and for what time he thought it would last according to the expences of the day past. His answer was, that at the same rate, it would not be sufficient for above three days, and even a part of that, he was affraid was damp. This of itself, but added to the other circumstances still more, made it the unanimous opinion that a retreat on board the ships must be determined on in that time, should no circumstances intervene to make it sooner necessary; as nothing but the utmost barbarity was expected from our enemy in case of surrender, as by fatall experience we have found to be the case, with such as fell into his hands. The majority were of opinion that as such a retreat was already fixed on, the delay of it even untill next morning could be attended with no sort of advan-





tage, but might on the contrary produce such consequences as would either make it impracticable, or attended with the greatest risque and precipitation. For instance, did the enemy get possession of the houses we then occupied and the Company's, there was but little to prevent their forcing open the two barriers that lead to the fort from the Company's House and Cruttenden's; and from those two houses they might keep such a fire on the *gaut* and wharff, as would make it impossible for a boat to lye there; either of which would have effectually prevented our retreat. By making our retreat that night, though late, having a sufficient number of boats then at the *gaut*, we might, at least, have carried off all the Company's treasure, and secured every European safe on board before daylight. This opinion Mr. Holwell in particular maintained very strenuously, and several other gentlemen. It was proposed by others to send Omychaund to treat with the Nabob, but he absolutely refused to go, and it was then proposed to write to him, but our Persian writer with every black fellow deserting us made that impossible. In this state of irresolution attended with great confusion did we remain, without fixing on any settled scheme, till near daylight, then adjourning to wait what the morning might produce, in hopes of making our retreat the next night. For no person after the report of our ammunition and hearing the situation we were in stated, had any further thoughts of defending the place, longer than untill with any regularity and safety we could accomplish our retreat on board the ships. By break of day, finding the enemy had neglected in the night to take possession of the Company's House and Ensign Paccard (who had been ordered from Perrin's) having offered to maintain it with 20 military, his proposall was readily agreed to. The other outpost had been but little disturbed in the night, the enemy having satisfied themselves with setting some houses on fire, and taking possession of those from which they thought they could annoy us in the day, such as Captain Rannie's, Messrs. Watts's, Took's and Omichaund's to the east of Eyres's and all the houses from Mr. Eyres's to Mr. Griffith's, likewise the hospitall, Captain Clayton's and Captain Wedderburn's to the southward, and had brought some cannon to the gate of Mr. Bellamy's Compound, as well as behind the battery A which we abandoned, and in the



Compound of the Playhouse. From all these different places they kept a constant fire on the houses we occupied, as well as upon the ramparts. About 9 o'clock, Lieutenant Bishop who commanded in Mr. Eyre's House desired leave to retire, being no longer able to support himself against the fire of some thousands from the houses to the eastward and northward of him. He was ordered if possible to maintain his post till evening, but the fire thickening, and numbers of his men killed and wounded he was permitted to make his retreat. About the same time Ensign Paccard was brought in wounded, and the enemy had filled the Compound of the Company's House. Captain Clayton found himself very warmly attacked in the Church from the cannon planted behind our battery and in the Playhouse Compound, and the small arms from the houses. He had severall of his men killed with the cannon shott which came through the Church. The outposts were then all ordered to be withdrawn. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland were not returned from on board the ships though the Governor alledges that he sent for them. The ship *Dodly* where they were on board dropt down below the fort, which the other ships and sloops seeing, they followed. This with the confusion in the fort occasioned numbers of the gentlemen to seize on such boats as they could get hold of, to provide for their own safety, and by this time more than half of the officers of the militia were on board the ships. We fired on the enemy wherever they appeared from all the guns on the fort, and must have done terrible execution amongst them, but did not much contribute to slacken their fire. Betwixt 10 and 11 we were alarmed on the ramparts by a report that the enemy were forcing their way at the barrier that leads from the Company's House to the wharff. But when I came down I found it to be false, they were not then advanced so far. On my return to the back gate, I observed the Governor standing on the stairhead of the *gaut*. I came up to him to know if he had any commands, but found him only beckoning to his servant who stood in a *ponsay* a litle above the *gaut*. I saw numbers of boats setting off from different places with Europeans in them. The Governor just took time to mention the bad consequences of the ships dropping down, that it discouraged everybody, and seeing the boats sett off, and not another then at the *gaut*,





except a *budgerow* where Mr. Macket and Captain Minchin were going aboard of, called to me, that he found every one were providing for their own security; and without giving me time to make answer run up along shore to the *ponsay* where his servant was aboard. I first thought he only wanted to speak to him to secure the boat, but seeing him step in in somewhat of a hurry, I followed, and before I came into the boat desired to know what he was about. On his making answer that he was going aboard the ships, I earnestly entreated he would first acquaint the garison of his design. He represented the impossibility of making a regular retreat on many accounts. That and the ships dropping down discouraged everybody, all the boats being carried off, the enemy being in possession of the Company's and Mr. Cruttenden's houses which would prevent any's coming to the *gaut*, and the crowds of Portugeese women that crowded at the *gaut* to force themselves into any boats they could lay hold of, and said, that he supposed when they saw him retreat such as could possibly find boats would follow. Looking behind, I perceived Mr. Macket and Captain Minchin setting off in their *budgerow*, and the stairs full of Europeans pressing to do the same. I concluded the retreat to be generall, and that everyone who could lay hold of a conveyance would choose to escape falling into the hands of a merciless ennemy, and so with Mr. O'Hara thought it justifiable to follow the Governor in a state of such apparent confusion and disorder, though greatly grieved to see how many of my friends and countrymen were likely to fall a sacrifice for want of boats, as I believe there was not annother left at the *gaut* when the Governor came away. We got on board the *Dodly*, where Messrs. Manningham and Frankland with most of the women were. I then represented to the Governor the cruelty of abandoning so many gentlemen to the mercy of such an enemy, and requested he would order the ships and sloops to move up before the fort, by which means we should be able to send the boats under their cover, to bring off our distressed friends; but the captain of the ship representing the danger it would be attended with, and the impossibility of getting the ships back, in case they went up again before the fort, the Governor thought proper not to insist upon it; and the ships belonging to private owners, I doubt whether such an





order would be complied with, as everybody then pursued his own safety independent of command. We are informed, that as soon as the Governor retreated those that found it impossible to follow, shutt the fort gates, chose Mr. Holwell as Governor and resolved to dye upon the ramparts, in case they could get no conveyance that night to make their escape, rather than surrender to the mercy of the enemy. They endeavoured in the evening to get boats for that purpose, but in vain. Except a few *budgerows* that were then with the ships, every other boat was carried away by the blackfellows. The ships fell down just within sight of the town. We could hear all the afternoon a constant [firing] of cannon and small arms; and at night saw numbers of the houses in fire. The place was taken next day the 20th afternoon, about 30 hours after the Governor left it, during which time upwards of 50 Europeans were killed on the bastions by the enemy's small arms from Mr. Cruttenden's, Eyres's, the Church and the Company's House. The firing was so hot from the top of the Church that they at last were obliged to abandon the easterly curtain and bastions. About 3 afternoon they made a signal for a truce; on which our people desisted firing. But they treacherously made use of it to crowd in multitudes under the walls, and with some ladders and bamboos scaled the easterly curtain and bastions which was abandoned under cover of their fire from the Church and other houses. Numbers were cut to pieces on the walls; all who wore red coats, without mercy. And such as were so unhappy as to be taken prisoners were at night put into the Black Hole, a place about 16 foot square, to the number of near 200 Europeans, Portugeese and Armenians, of which many were wounded. They were so crowded one upon another in this narrow confinement that by the heat and suffocation not above ten of the number survived untill morning. Some of those who give us the account, say that they fired upon them all night with small arms through the doors and windows, but this is contradicted by others. Mr. Holwell is one of the number who survived, and is now prisoner with the Nabob. 30 Company's servants and 15 officers we know to be dead and the Cossimbuzar and Dacca factorys prisoners. Captain Minchin, [Lieutenant Keen, Muir] and myself are all the officers here. Lieutenant Cudmore is at [Dacca], Ensign Walcot





prisoner with Mr. Holwell. These are all the officers alive, the rest were either killed on the ramparts or died in the Black Hole. Lieutenant Ellet who commanded at Cossimbuzar, shott himself after the place was delivered up. The Dutch and French have made up matters with the Nabob, the former for 4 and the latter for 5 lacks of rupees, and he is now returned victorious to his capital of Muxidabad. There is about 3 or 4,000 troops in Calcutta, they keep possession of the fort; but have destroyed the Factory House.

*The author of this Paper was, it appears, appointed to act as Adjutant General at the siege of Calcutta, and deserted the garrison with the Governor and others. Captain Minchin, Lieutenant Keen, Muir, and himself were all the officers that went down with Drake to Fulta.*

A. C. S. August 10, 1829.

*It appears by another account that the Adjutant-General was Captain Grant.*

54. *An Account of the manner of my retreat from Calcutta when besieged by the Moors, and of the causes which induced me to accompany the Governor on board the ships. Captain Grant.*

On receipt of the advices of the capture of Cossimbuzar, and the Nabob's intention to march against Calcutta, amongst other regulations for the defence of the place, I was appointed to act as Adjutant General of our troops; in which station I afterwards issued out the daily orders from the Governor, and made such dispositions as had at different times been agreed on in councils of war. How far I have done my duty in that capacity and exerted myself in every other respect for the defence of the Settlement, I will submit it to the Governor and Council's answer to my letter given in to the Board of the 20th August<sup>1</sup> last, or the surviving inhabitants of Calcutta who were eye witnesses of my conduct. But as my retreat from thence is, I presume, the chief cause of

<sup>1</sup> Apparently refers to a missing letter, dated 20 August, 1756. See Letter from Holwell 30 November, 1756, para. 45.





the censure I have undergone (for want of a proper opportunity of acquitting myself) since that time; I will proceed to that particular: only in order to give a clearer idea of it, must first beg leave to represent the situation the garrison was in, and the resolutions taken the night preceding, being that of the 18th June.

Having withdrawn the batteries which defended the three principal avenues leading to the fort, the evening of the above day; the Company's House, Messrs. Cruttenden's and Eyre's, and the Church (all close to our walls) were taken possession of by the troops who retired from those batteries; and only the militia with 30 of the military continued for the defence of the fort. Till about eight at night I was employed in settling those outposts; in which time several resolutions had been taken in a council of war, of which I remained for some time ignorant; such as permitting Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, our two Field Officers, to escort the ladies on board the ships &c. The guard settled in the Company's House was soon after, on application made by some of the young gentlemen to the Governor ordered to be withdrawn, and that advantageous post left to be taken possession of by the enemy; whereby they would not only have a total command of the two southerly bastions and curtain, but likewise of the wharf and *gaut* where all our boats lay, and consequently have it in their power to obstruct our communication with the river. Continual duty and want of refreshment so harrassed both military and militia that before 12 at night, not a man could be brought on the ramparts, till dragged from the different corners of the fort where they had retired to rest; and by the help of liquor, which several of them met with, numbers were rendered incapable of any duty. This with constant calls from the outposts for provisions and water, and none ready dressed to supply them, occasioned a disorder and confusion in all quarters, not easy to be described. In this situation a council of war was called about one in the morning, to consider of the methods necessary to be pursued in such an exigency. We concluded that before daylight the enemy would take possession of all the houses which our men did not occupy and with the superiority of numbers keep such a fire with their musquetry on our outposts, as would oblige





them e'er long to retire into the fort; and consequently by the enemy's getting possession of those houses also, which lay so close to our walls, we saw ourselves liable in such a case, to be commanded from all quarters. The Captain of the Artillery reported at the same time that, at the rate of the consumption of amunition the preceding day, there was not remaining sufficient for two more. This latter circumstance occasioned a general consternation, as no one had suspected any want or scarcity of this kind. Why those, whose duty it was to know the state of the amunition, should be so ignorant in an affair of such consequence, they best can answer. I only know that from the first day I was appointed to act as Adjutant General, there were daily orders to have such returns given in, but were never obeyed, though I represented to the Governor in the most earnest terms the bad consequences of not having those, as well as all other orders which he issued out, most strictly complied with. But such was the levity of the times, that severe measures were not esteemed necessary. This unexpected report, added to the situation we otherwise were in, easily determined every member of the council of war to vote for a general retreat on board the ships before the expiration of the above time, as the only means of saving the Company's treasure and effects, and the lives and properties of the inhabitants. It was then proposed that, as a retreat was already unanimously determined upon, and no hopes left of maintaining the fort, or accommodating matters with the Nabob; the sooner it was set about it would be the better, as consequences might attend the delay of it, which afterwards might make it impracticable. In this opinion I was one who seconded Mr. Holwell, who strongly pressed immediately to begin a general retreat, and clear the factory of the crowds of Portuguese women, as they were likely to cause great confusion in what afterwards might be necessary to be done. Other members of the council of war (who I imagine must have had something more in view than the publick interest) strenuously opposed this proposal, and would have a retreat deferred in hopes of some favorable change either by treaty or otherwise. These disputes lasted till near day light, and then each person repaired to his particular post without determining anything certain of the time or manner of a retreat. The enemy having neglected to take





possession of the Company's House in the night, an officer and 20 men were placed in it about this time.

Such was the situation of things the 19th in the morning, when the want of rest for two nights before, and constant fatigue obliged me to retire for a little sleep, in order to fit me for the duties of the day, this being the time when the enemy gave us the least disturbance. As soon as I awoke, I came upon the ramparts and found that the enemy kept a pretty smart fire upon us, though not so as to annoy us much, as we still kept possession of the houses close to the fort. About 9 o'clock the outposts were very warmly attacked. The officer who commanded in the Company's House was brought in wounded, and those in the Church and Mr. Eyre's House had sent to acquaint the Governor, that the enemy poured in such volleys of musquetry upon them from the adjacent houses, as would oblige them to abandon their posts, if not soon relieved.

Having thus represented in as few words as possibly I could, the state of things in the fort and outposts to the time of my leaving it, there only now remains to lay before you the manner of it, and the motives which induced me to do it.

About 10 o'clock I received an alarm, when on the south east bastion, that the enemy had got possession of the Compound of the Company's House, and were forcing their way through the barrier that leads from thence to the fort; but when I came there, I found the report to be false. On my return towards the back gate, I saw the Governor standing on the stair head of the *gaut*, beckoning to his servant, who was in a boat about 50 yards above. I came up expecting he might have some commands for me, for I had not seen him before, since we broke up the council of war. When I addressed him, he pointed to me where the *Doddale* and other vessells had fallen down below the Town, and numbers of boats full of Europeans were then proceeding on their way on board of them; saying that Messrs Manningham and Frankland, though sent for in the night, had still remained on board the *Doddale* with the ladies; by which means they had so discouraged numbers of the gentlemen, as to induce them to provide for their own safety, in the same manner, and by their example. He then (without giving me time to make any answer) went down the stairs, up the waterside under the Line, and into the boat where his





servant stood. I was somewhat amazed at his sudden departure being entirely ignorant of his intentions, and only supposed he had gone to give some particular orders to his servant: but finding he did not return soon, I thought it my duty to follow him, as I still remained unacquainted with his designs. When I came to the boat, and desired to know what he intended, he replied that he was resolved to provide for his own safety, as he found others were doing. I entreated him that if that was his resolution, he would wait till it was first intimated to Mr. Holwell and the rest of the garrison, and make as good a retreat as the situation of things would bear. He said it would be impracticable to make a regular retreat in the confusion things were then in; especially for want of boats, most of them being carried off by those who went before. That he therefore thought it would be in vain to wait any longer; and supposed when the rest of the garrison saw him come off, such of them as could find conveyance would follow.

I had but little time for recollection in such a juncture, and was therefore the more readily determined by the circumstances which immediately ensued. Looking behind me at the stairs of the *gaut*, I saw it crowded with people pressing to get away; and amongst the rest Commandant Minchin and Mr. Mackett going into a *budjerow*. This I concluded to be in consequence of their seeing the Governor first make his escape; and according to what he told me before had not then the least doubts remaining, but every other person who observed him and could find conveyance would think the example of their Governor and Commander-in-chief a sufficient sanction for them to abandon a place, already declared not tenible above two days, and then in the greatest confusion. I likewise foresaw that those who should be obliged to remain behind for want of boats, would be exposed to the mercy of a cruel enemy, unless relieved by having conveyances sent them from the ships. My station of Adjutant General had fixed me to no particular post in the fort, but more properly was to attend the Governor for his orders, and act in a manner as his aidecamp. In the situation things appeared to me in this critical moment, my return to the shore when I saw every body was pressing to leave it, (and amongst them my Commander-in-chief; and other commanding officers being either already gone or setting





off) could be attended with no advantage. To embark the Company's treasure, and other effects, public and private, on board the ships, and make a safe and regular retreat with the troops and inhabitants, is all that any person can pretend to say, was aimed at, or ever thought of, since the last council of war. As all this was oversett by the Governor's departure, and the boats being carried off before and after him, there only remained, of what was possible to be done for the public welfare, either to bring up the ships before the fort, or send boats to bring off those who were necessitated to stay behind for want of them. My accompanying the Governor to the ships was undoubtedly more likely to contribute to either of those purposes, than returning to the fort, as I should be more in the way of receiving his orders, and giving my assistance, by returning with what conveyances or succours he might think proper to send. I could make no doubt, that as soon as he got on board, he would immediately think of sending such relief to those who were left behind, as their situation required; and to that purpose soon after our arrival I spoke to him in presence of Captain Young, the Commander, to move up with the *Doddale*, and other ships as the only probable method that then remained, (all the boats, excepting one or two, having abandoned us, and crossed to the other side of the water). But most unfortunately Captain Young representing to him the danger such an attempt would be attended with, the Governor declined giving any orders in regard to it. I proposed the same thing at different times that day, but with as little effect.

Thus I have related the manner and motives of my retreat from Calcutta as minutely as my memory enables me; and in justice to myself I would long e'er now have submitted it to a proper enquiry, had not the scarcity of officers, and my long indisposition deprived me of the opportunity, and which in my above mentioned letter to the Governor and Council I declared to be my intention as soon as the troops then expected from Madras would arrive.

I shall only further add that if the reasons I have given appear not sufficient to justify my conduct in accompanying the Governor at such a time and with the circumstances above related, I desire any person to point out to me, what other method I could possibly have taken, that would have been attended with greater advan-





tages; or whether, in the station I acted in, it was not the most consistent with my duty to attend the Governor, in order to rectify by the only means I could think of the disorders which then prevailed; and to give my assistance in executing what directions he might give for that purpose.

55. *Letter from Council, Dacca, to Council, Fort Saint George, dated 13 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—This is designed to inform you of a most melancholy and surprizing revolution in the Honourable Company's Settlements here in Bengall, having been all taken by the Nabob Serajah Dowlat. As we have not received the least advice from any of the gentlemen of Calcutta of a later date than the 9th of June, we are obliged to depend on the French for a particular account of the taking of Fort William. We now enclose your Honour, &c., the account received by Monsieur Courtin, the French Chief here, from their Secretary at Chander-nagore. We see no reason to doubt the authenticity of it, more especially as every material circumstance is confirmed by the Moors, who have from the beginning assured us that the cause of the Nabob's anger against the English proceeded from the Governour and Council having given protection to one Kissendass who had been the Naib of this city. He retired to Calcutta in March last with great riches, part of which are said to belong to the widow of Nowagies Mawmud Khan, who died in November last, and whose riches Serajah Dowlat claimed on his coming to the *Subahship* of Bengal; when the Nabob sent a *perwannah* to demand him, Mr. Drake tore the *perwannah* and threw it in the face of his messenger. This insult provoked Serajah Dowlat to such a degree that they say he took an oath to drive the English out of Bengall which he very soon put in execution as you will observe Cossimbuzar was delivered without firing a gun and Fort William only resisted him three days. We take the liberty to enclose your Honour, &c., copies of our Consultations of the 27th and 28th ultimo, when we were obliged to surrender our factory and ourselves prisoners to Serajah Dowlat, from whom we are in hopes to obtain our liberty as he has already released Messrs. Watts and Collet, &c. If we are so happy as to get our liberty, our present





design is to proceed to Madras when we shall depend on your Honour, &c., Council's protection and kind assistance, having lost everything we had in the world except a few cloathes. We would have sent you copies of our Consultations and letters from the beginning of the dispute, but as this goes by a *pattamar* it would make too large a packet. We design by a French ship bound to Europe which is to leave Chandernagore next month, to address ourselves to the Honourable Court of Directors and give them the best account we are able of the miserable state of their affairs in Bengall. As we flatter ourselves your Honour, &c., Council will not think us any way to blame in delivering up our factory after the surrender of Fort William, we are to request your kind representation of our case should you have an opportunity of writing the Court of Directors before we have the pleasure to see you. As by all accounts the riches Mr. Drake, &c., have carried off with them are immense, we hope our Honourable Employers will be in some measure indemnified for the great loss they must have suffered by the taking their Settlements in Bengall.

We are etc. etc., RICHARD BEECHER, LUKE SCRAFTON, THOMAS HYNDMAN, SAMUEL WALLER.

56. *Extract from Fort Saint George Public Consultations,*  
14 July, 1756.

No. 95, No. 96, and No. 97, from the Honourable Roger Drake, Esq., President and Governour &c. Council of Fort William, the first dated the 25th of May. . . .

That by the advices they received from our Honourable Masters by the *Delaware* they have great reason to apprehend a war, and it being recommended to them to be upon their guard, they think it incumbent on them to represent to us the weak state of their garrison, occasioned chiefly by our detaining the recruits designed them for several years past, amounting to 663 as *per* list now sent us, that it is highly necessary we should send them as large a re-inforcement as we can possibly spare and also some musquets which they are in great want of. . . . That their Nabob Allyverdi Cawn is demised and is succeeded by his adopted son Seer Raja Dowlat. . . . The second dated the 4th June acquainting us that since the date of their last they had been and are still involved in





a dispute with the country Government occasioned by the Nabob's taking umbrage at their repairing and strengthening their line of guns towards the river, and that by letters from Cossimbuzar, copies of which they send us, they are afraid matters will be carried to extremities, the Nabob having stationed a party of horsemen round that factory and seeming much exasperated. That should they be attacked they are resolved to repel force by force, and to that end desire we will send them as soon as possible all the recruits we have detained from them, or at least a reinforcement of 500 men with a proportionable quantity of arms and stores, which if we neglect doing they deem themselves no ways responsible for what may happen. That they think it adviseable we should communicate this to Admiral Watson. . . .

*(Decided that two Companies be sent to Bengal under command of Major Kilpatrick.)*

57. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council at Fulta,  
dated Chandernagore, 14 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—We have received your letter or protest dated the 13th of July 1756 and are surprized you should protest against us for all damages and wrongs which may ensue by the deprivation of our privileges as contained in the royal *phirmaund* when we think we can with more propriety say that the majority of you, gentlemen, deprived our Honourable Masters of their priviledges as contained in the royal *phirmaund* when you incensed the Nabob to come against Calcutta and then deserted the place and fled on board your ships, which in all probability and by all accounts was the occasion of the loss of the place which might have been defended if you had staid, and by which step we are of opinion you abdicated your several stations and are now no longer to be deemed Servants of the Company ; but setting the above aside if we thought it had been for our Honourable Masters' interest we should not have hesitated a moment getting the letters translated and delivered ; but if you at this time look on yourselves as a Governour and Council you must of course allow us our stations, in consequence of which we are persuaded we have a right to dissent and make our representations against any of your measures which we think contrary to the interest of our





Employers as an application at present we are of opinion is, and that it would be more advisable to wait to see what steps the Governour and Council of Madrass may be able to take to reestablish the Company's affairs and credit in Bengal, we having advised them of the taking of Calcutta the 3rd instant by express *coissids*. Therefore we think an application will be more efficacious and made with a better grace when any force arrives from thence than it can at present. Whereas should the Nabob now permit you to return into a ruined and defenceless town it may be with an intent to replunder the place and secure your persons, for we are of opinion the Nabob is not to be trusted after things have gone the length they have ; and as a further reason to imagine that your return may be attended with a risque is the harsh and inveterate manner in which the Nabob has expressed himself against Mr. Drake.

We are credibly informed that when you wrote us you made application to those who had more interest and power to give weight to your proposals than we, who by great intercession had but just obtained our liberty. On our coming to the knowledge of this, our intermedling we thought might have been rather hurtful than any ways of service, however if after the reasons we have given you are still of opinion that the letters you sent us ought to be translated and delivered we shall, agreeable to your desire, get them done and send them to the respective persons directed, except Golam Hossein Cawn who is turned out of the province. We have no power or interest of our own to make applications ; if we had we should certainly have before made use of it for the service of our Honourable Employers.

We are, &c., &c., W. WATTS, M. COLLET.

58. *Notification to the Honourable Company's Covenanted Servants on board the fleet.*

GENTLEMEN,—I am ordered by the Agents for the Honourable Company's affairs, to inform you that they do not think you have forfeited your title to the Company's service by the loss of Calcutta and its dependencies, as our establishment is not absolutely dissolved by this capture and as a prospect still remains of being able to recover our Settlement.





I am therefore further directed to acquaint you that your diet money and salary will be continued as usual, and will be discharged by Roger Drake Esq. upon a tender of your bills.

I am, Gentlemen, your most obedient servant,

Signed JOHN COOKE Secretary.

*'Sloop 'Syren,'  
the 14th July, 1756.*

59. *Extract from Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations,  
14 July, 1756.*

The President acquaints the Committee that upon intelligence received last night from the Governor and Council of Fort William of dangerous disturbances raised in Bengal by the new Nabob, it was resolved in Council this morning to send thither a re-inforcement of 200 men under the command of Major Killpatrick.

60. *Letter from Mr. Roger Drake to Council Fort Saint George,  
dated, sloop 'Syren' off Fulta, 14 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—You must naturally conclude the mind cannot recover itself, in our present situation, to transmit you such a narration of the event passed by the capture of Calcutta by the Moors, as the circumstances thereof require to be penned with impartiality, which shall be my strictest endeavours to set forth, when I am eased of the anxiety my station has drawn on me: I am therefore now to entreat your conclusions on my conduct may be suspended untill the motives, actions and reasons for such our conduct are impartially set forth.

I am, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR.

61. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Court of Directors,  
dated, Chandernagore, 16 July, 1756.<sup>1</sup>*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—It is with the utmost concern we now inform you that Fort William was taken the 20th of June by the Nabob of Bengal, grandson of Alli Verdi Cawn who died last April. The first rise of these troubles are as follows.

<sup>1</sup> Orme MSS., India VII., pp. 1802-8. Under date 3 July, which must be wrong, as the letter refers to a letter of the 6th July from Messrs. Drake and Council at Fulta.