



Some time after his coming to the government he sent one Narran Sing, brother to Rogeram, who is Nabob of Cuttack and commander of the spys (which in this country is a considerable post) to Calcutta where he arrived privately and in disguise with a letter from the Nabob to the Governor, which the Governor did not think proper to receive as it was presented in such a way, but turned Narran Sing with disgrace out of the place. The Chief of Cossimbuzar being apprehensive that this might occasion some trouble wrote to the *Durbar* officers to prevent any complaint being made to the Nabob, and the affair was seemingly hushed up, but few days were elapsed when he sent for our *vacqueel* and told him he heard they were making fortifications and digging a ditch round Calcutta, and insisted that we should level our new works and fill up the ditch. Upon the *vacqueel's* returning from the *Durbar*, and acquainting the Chief with what the Nabob said, he wrote to him that he had not heard of any new fortifications being raised or ditch dug, and that we were apprehensive that our enemies for their own lucrative advantages had raised these reports. To this letter he returned no answer, but sent a *perwannah* to Calcutta ordering them to desist from fortifying, and to level what new works they had begun. He then marched to the northward and gave out he was going to Patna.<sup>1</sup> On his arrival at Rajamaul he received the Governour's answer, at which he was greatly incensed, and immediately ordered a party of horse and gun men upon our factory, and returned back himself with the greatest expedition, with his whole army, which encamped round our factory, and according to the most moderate computation consisted of 10,000 horse and 20,000 Rajepouts and other gun men with a large train of artillery, and then demanded the Chief to come out and see him, the Nabob's *duan* who commanded the van of the army writing the Chief a letter, that he might come 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

<sup>1</sup> Mistake for Purneah.





faith), to accompany the Chief to the *duan* who was to introduce him to the Nabob. Accordingly agreeable to the unanimous opinion of the gentlemen of the factory and officer of the garrison, the Chief went and was presented by the *duan* to the Nabob, who immediately ordered him into confinement, and insisted on his giving an obligation that in 15 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 we had falsified the Company's *dustucks* by giving them to those that 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 with a eunuch of the Nabob's and two or three others, who acquainted Messrs. Collet and Batson that it was necessary they should go to the Chief and make an end of the affair, they went and were detained prisoners, nothing more being said about the obligation the Chief had signed. The next day we were ordered to deliver up our ammunition and cannon, which upon mature deliberation we thought proper to comply with, in hopes to entirely pacify the Nabob and prevent his march to Calcutta. 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. The Nabob then bent his march towards Calcutta, having ordered all the *godowns* at Cossimbuzar to be sealed with his seal, and the soldiers to be carried prisoners to Muxadavad.

As the Chief &c. going out of the factory, and afterwards delivering up the cannon and ammunition, may perhaps appear to Your Honours extraordinary, we think it necessary to give our reasons for taking such steps. It has been always customary in Bengal for the chiefs of Subordinates 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. Had we attempted to resist our factory must inevitably have fallen into their hands, we 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 bastions, some not 30 yards from our bastions : 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 Portuguese. We had about 80 *maunds* of powder but few or no shot or grenades. We might possibly with this force have held out 3 or 4 days, which would not have prevented the consequences that have since happened, but even supposing we had been able to resist the Government we are humbly of opinion it would have been madness in us to have attempted it when so great a part of Your Honours' estate amounting to many *lacks* of rupees was dispersed over the whole country which would have been immediately seized and you might justly have blamed us for commencing a war with the Government and being the occasion of so immense a loss ; the effects in our factory not being near so considerable as the money, goods, and debts we had outstanding ; all which with the money and goods at the several *aurungs* would have been saved had the Governour and Council thought proper to come to any terms with the Nabob. We therefore hope (though unfortunate) Your Honours will approve off and think the steps we took the most prudent, though by unthinking men who see affairs but in one light we may possibly be blamed.

The best account we can get of the taking Fort William, we being then prisoners in the camp, is that two days before the place was delivered up the Governour, Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Mackett with the Commandant, George Minchin, Captain Alexander Grant, and 8 or 9 of the junior servants with part of the military quitted the fort and retired on board their ships, but with such precipitation that we heard they have saved nothing belonging to the Company not even their books and papers or *Mogul's phirmaund*. Messrs. Pearkes, Hollwell, Eyre and Baillie with the rest of the Company's servants and military remained in the fort. But when the Governour, &c., were gone, the soldiers got to their liquors and wine under no command. Fifty-six of the soldiers that were Dutch deserted that night, after which all was tumult, disorder and confusion which we imagine occasioned the gentlemen to hoist a flag of truce in order to capitulate. This opportunity the Moors took to rush in upon them, applied ladders to the





walls which they scaled and were soon in possession of the fort. Most of the gentlemen, officers and soldiers were carried prisoners to the Nabob, who ordered them into the Black Hole where out of 146 one hundred and twenty three were found dead the next morning, supposed to be suffocated by the closeness of the place. Messrs. Holwell, Court, Burdet, and Walcot an ensign were put in irons and carried prisoners to Muxadavad, of whom we have since heard nothing. We are persuaded this dismal catastrophe of Your Honours' estate in Bengal being plundered, your Settlements lost, your servants destroyed and ruined with some hundred thousands of Calcutta inhabitants might have been prevented had the Governour and Council thought proper to have compromised matters for a sum of money. And as a proof, the Nabob touched nothing at Cossimbuzar but the warlike stores or at any of the other factorys or *aurungs* till he had taken Calcutta. Roydulub, the Nabob's *duan* and who commanded the van of the army likewise frequently sent for the Chief, while he was prisoner in the camp, and told him smiling that we must pay a *crore* of rupees, and when the Chief assured him the Company's whole estate did not amount to that sum he then asked him if they would pay 20 *lacks* of rupees, to which the Chief answered again that the Company's annual trade to Bengal was not more than the demand he made. The *duan* then desired to know what they could afford to pay, to which he replied he had no powers to treat, but if the *duan* would permit him to write to Calcutta he should then be able to inform him. This request the *duan* absolutely refused, but told him if any proposals of accommodation were made first from Calcutta he might then write as often as he pleased. We being surrounded and strictly watched night and day by the Nabob's people, we had no opportunity of writing to Calcutta till we were opposite to Hughly, where we got permission to write to the Dutch Director for some provisions, to whom we sent a letter to be forwarded to Calcutta wherein we wrote that if the Governour and Council would send a proper person to the camp or empower us to act, we flattered ourselves that even then the dispute with the Nabob might be finished for a sum of money. This letter the Dutch Director assures us was delivered to Mr. Drake along with a letter of his own, and we are well informed an answer was wrote,





importing that after the disgrace the Company had suffered at Cossimbuzar by the taking of their factory and imprisoning their servants, they were resolved not to come to any agreement.

Coja Wazeed, a considerable merchant and one who has great influence with the Nabob, his *duan* also told us that he was sent by his master four times to Calcutta to persuade the gentlemen to pay a sum of money and pacify the Nabob, but without effect, and the last time was threatened to be used ill if he came again on the same errand ; from the above proofs there appears to us the greatest moral certainty that the Nabob never intended to drive the English out of his province but would have been satisfied with a sum of money. His treatment of the French and Dutch after the taking of Calcutta is a corroboratory circumstance ; of each of whom he at first demanded twenty *lacks* of rupees, and on their representing to him that their trade in his province did not amount to that sum but that they were willing to make the present which was usually given on a *Subah's* first coming to the Government, he appeared so incensed that he ordered ten thousand men into the Dutch Town with directions to demolish and plunder the houses and people on the first signal. He then demanded their guns, ammunition and colours but was at last pacified with a present of four hundred and fifty thousand *sicca* rupees. The French were threatened and treated much in the same manner, and were obliged to pay three hundred thousand *siccas* ; this account we can affirm to be true as we had it from the gentlemen themselves.

We are informed that Mr. Richard Becher, Chief, &c., Council at Dacca were surrounded by the Nabob's forces and obliged to surrender themselves prisoners and are now in the French factory there, the French Chief having passed his word for their appearance, all the Company's effects and money being seized for the Nabob's use.

Mr. Peter Amyatt, Chief at Luckypore, escaped on board a sloop and has saved about 60,000 rupees in money and goods of Your Honours' estate. Mr. Thomas Boddam has likewise saved from Ballasore about 6,000 rupees. They are now with Mr. Drake and the rest of the gentlemen, who are on board country ships at Fultah.

Enclosed is a letter from Mr. Drake and the gentlemen below





with our answer. We did not think it advisable to act as we were of opinion that the gentlemen who had deserted the fort had by that step abdicated their several stations in the Company's service and had not power to indemnify us if Your Honours should not approve of the measures they might direct us to take, and we are of opinion that as they had wrote to the Governour and Council of Madrass for assistance, and as we had since wrote an account of the taking of Calcutta, we think it more advisable to wait till we have answers from Madrass, and are informed what measures the Governour and Council there may be able to take to re-establish the Honourable Company's affairs in Bengal, then meanly to return into a ruined and open town which the Nabob may possibly consent to in hopes of still further plunder on the arrival of any of Your Honours' ships, as we think he is not to be trusted after affairs have gone the lengths they have.

Enclosed is a translate of the Nabob's letter to the Honourable George Pigot, Esq., on which we must beg leave to remark that the Chief of Cossimbuzar wrote a letter to the Nabob that he was persuaded Mr. Drake would deliver up Rojebullub's son and wealth, who is the person the Nabob means in his letter, whenever he thought proper to demand him, at which as the Chief was assured from Coja Wazeed who delivered the letter that the Nabob seemed then satisfied. Whether the Nabob applied afterwards to Calcutta for the delivery of this man we cannot say.

Since writing the above Mr. Gray Junior one of Your Honours' servants has given us an account of the attack and taking of Calcutta, he being present the whole time, which we now enclose; and here we must beg leave to inform Your Honours that Mr. William Mackett's intentions was not to leave the fort, but his wife having miscarried the night before, he thought it incumbent on him to see her safe on board a ship, when he wanted to return but could get no conveyance though we are informed he offered a thousand rupees for a boat. Enclosed is an account of the Company's servants and officers on board the ships at Fultah.

We have since the above received another letter from the gentlemen at Fultah which we now enclose with our answer thereto. We hope Your Honours will not blame our conduct in this affair,





as what we have done was to the best of our judgment and we flatter ourselves their protest will have no weight with Your Honours, as we think they may with more propriety be charged with what damages and wrongs both have and may ensue by the deprivation of the Company's privileges as contained in the royal *phirmaund*. And we are of opinion that the immediate possession of Calcutta in its present ruined condition can be of no service to the Company, neither do we think it advisable or safe to trust any of the Company's effects there till a sufficient force arrives to defend the place against the Nabob in case he should think proper to attack it again, we being of opinion as we mentioned before that no trust or confidence can be reposed in him.

We were released by the Nabob at Hughly on his return from the taking of Calcutta, and were delivered to the French Governour of Chandernagore, from whom the Nabob took a receipt for us, and ordered him to send us safe to Madrass. We have received here the most humane treatment, and have now 110 soldiers and sailors in their hospital who are all supplied with diet and cloathing.

We assure Your Honours that the above account relating to ourselves and our transactions is in every particular true and just, and what regards the taking of Calcutta is from the best information we could get, in which we have taken particular care not to be deceived or biassed by favour or prejudice. We hope from your candour that you will make allowances for us as men and consequently falliable for any errors in judgment we may have committed. We being conscious of having acted as faithful servants, what we thought most for the interest of the Honourable Company, therefore flatter ourselves we shall meet with your future favour, we being entirely ruined, having lost every thing even to our cloaths and necessarys.

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

62. *Account of the loss of Calcutta by Mr. Grey, Junior, June, 1756.*

On the 17th of June the enemy attacked the redoubt at Perrins about noon, and at 3 o'clock in the afternoon 40 men with 2 field pieces were sent to the assistance of that place, where in the engagement the Moors from behind the trees and bushes killed 2





Europeans, one of whom was Ralph Thoresby. About 8 o'clock an 18 pounder came out to Perrins, and the 2 field pieces with the reinforcement that had been sent in the afternoon went back to their former stations. In the night, Lieutenant Pacard, who had the command at Perrins, sallied out upon the enemy, and having drove them from their guns spiked up 4 of them and brought away some ammunition.

On the 18th about 9 o'clock in the morning our outworks were attacked. Small parties were dispatched to the tops of some of the highest houses, from thence to annoy the enemy on their approach. Amongst those Messrs. Charles Smith and Robert Wilkinson had the misfortune to be killed. Monsieur La Bonne, who with a small party was posted at the Jail, bravely defended it for six hours, till himself and most of his men being wounded, they were obliged to retire within the battery at the Court House. In the evening the enemy killing and wounding several of our men, and surrounding us on all sides, we were ordered to retreat from our outworks (after having spiked up our guns) and take possession of the Church, Mr. Cruttenden's, Eyres, and the Company's Houses, which we quietly kept all night.

The enemy, on the morning of the 19th advanced upon us, and still surrounding us killed and wounded some of our men; we were ordered to retire from the Church and houses we had taken possession of the night before and come within the fort. The ladies and wounded men were sent on board the ships. The Governour, Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Macket, Commandant Minchin, Captain Alexander Grant, Messrs Cruttenden, Mapletoft, Sommer, Billers, O'Hara, Rider, Tooke, Senior, Ellis, Vassmer, Orr, Leycester, Charlton, with severals of the military and militia fled on board the ships and went down the river, which greatly dispirited our men. Immediately upon the Governour's going off Mr. Holwell was unanimously chosen in his room (Mr. Pearkes who was his senior in Council delivering him up the charge of the factory till the troubles should cease). The new Governour made a publick declaration of his detesting Mr. Drake's base flight, at the same time, encouraging the military to hold out the siege with a promise of 3 chests of the Company's treasure containing 24,000 rupees among them if they could keep the place.





But upon so many of the principal officers leaving us, the souldiers could not be hindered from breaking into the rooms of those that were gone, and taking from thence what wine or spirits came in their way, by which getting drunk they began to be mutinous and unruly. In the night a corporal and 56 men, most of them Dutch, deserted us and went over the walls to the enemy.

Next morning the enemy having got possession of the top of the Church and houses round the fort, from thence galled our men with their small arms, killing several of them (among whom was Captain Smith) and wounding many of our officers. The Church commanded our walls in such a manner that the men could not stand to their guns, and the officers were obliged to go about and present cocked pistols at the souldiers to make them mount the walls which were almost deserted; but they, whenever they were out of sight, skulked and would not go up. About noon the Governour and Council thought it proper to write to the Nabob and *duan*, demanding a truce and accommodation, but had no answer returned. The ship *Prince George* which had hiterto layñ before Perrins (from whence our forces had been sometime withdrawn) was ordered down abreast of the fort, but in the way unluckily ran ashore by the misconduct of the pilot Francis Morris and was taken by the Moors. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, the enemy called out to us not to fire, in consequence of which the Governour showed a flag of truce, and gave orders for us not to fire, upon which the enemy in vast numbers came under our walls, and at once set fire to the windows which were stopt up with cotton bales, began to break open the Fort Gate, and scaled our walls on all sides. This put us in the utmost confusion. Some rushed out at the gate towards the river to take possession of a boat that lay half in and half out of the water, and in an instant it was so laden that it was impossible to get it off. In the meantime the Moors surrounded and shewed them signs of quarter, upon which they delivered themselves up. Some of them went to the Nabob himself and were by him pardoned, and others whilst the enemy were busy about the plunder got into a boat and went down the river to the ships at that time lying off Surmon's Gardens. But most of those that remained in the fort were put into the Black Hole to the number of 146, of whom 123 were miserably





suffocated by the heat, occasioned by so many being shut up in so small a place. Among those that unhappily suffered, were Messrs Eyres, Baillie, Coales, Dumbleton, Jenks, Reveley, Law, Jebb, Carse, Valicourt, Bellamy Senior, Drake, Byng, Dalrymple, P. Johnston, Street, Stephen and Edward Page, Grub, Dod, Torriano, Knapton, Ballard, Captains Clayton, Witherington, Buchanan, Lieutenants Hays, Simpson, Blagg, Bishop, Pacard, Bellamy, Ensigns Scott and Wedderburn. Among those that had been in the Black Hole, but came out alive, were Messrs Holwell, Court, Burdett, and Ensign Walcot who were sent up to Muxidavad in irons, and Messrs Cooke and Lushington who got down to the ships.

At the time the fort was taken there was not above the number of 20 men upon the walls. The greatest part of the souldiers were drunk, and those that were sober were quite fatigued with continual hard duty, and want of a regular distribution of provisions.

63. *Duplicate letters from Mr. J. Z. Holwell to Councils, Bombay and Fort Saint George, dated, Muxadavad, 17 July, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—Little capable as I am in my distressed situation of executing a task of this kind it yet cannot be neglected, consistent with my duty to my Honourable Employers, and the trust last devolved on me at their Settlement of Fort William, now theirs no more, an incident I doubt not but you have before this been advised off, by *pattamars* from this city and possibly by our late President from Ingillee. This conjecture however will not excuse my omitting to transmit you under general heads the several gradations by which our Honourable Masters have sustained this important loss. These I am to request you will forward to them by the most expeditious conveyance in your power, whilst I refer them and you to a particular and distinct narrative of the causes and various accidents which have contributed to our fatal catastrophe in these provinces which I will attempt as soon as the recovery of my health (now much impaired) will enable me.

Our factory at Cossimbuzar being given up to the Nabob the 4th of June last (by the most unhappy and unaccountable infatua-





tion in our Chief and Council there) the foundation of our ruin was laid; the accession was too great to the Nabob to be relinquished and he was sensible he must relinquish it, as well as restore our money and goods seized at the different *aurungs* or entirely extirpate us from the provinces. The cannon, ammunition, and military stores he became possessed of at Cossimbuzar determined him to the latter, and as he expected some succours might reach us from the Coast, he marched against us with the whole force of his provinces, consisting by the best accounts we have since acquired of 30,000 horse and 35,000 foot with about 400 elephants of war, though our best information during his approach made his force no more than 6 or 7000 horse and 12 or 15,000 foot, nor could we ever learn with any certainty whether the Nabob marched against us in person or not, for he had cut off all communication between us and the gentlemen of Cossimbuzar (whom with the garrison he made prisoners) and our spys either had not courage enough to approach his army for any just intelligence, or not integrity enough to give it us. On the earliest notice of his real intentions, we made all the dispositions in our power for his reception,—though I believe never was fortress less defensible, encumbered with houses close round us, and not a proper esplanade for our guns,<sup>1</sup> nor time possibly to pull the houses down to remedy this evil; advanced posts were appointed, ditches sunk, breastwork thrown up and (advanced) batteries raised at three principal posts to wit, at the Court House eastward, at the corner of (Mr.) Griffith's house<sup>2</sup> to the northward, and at Mrs. Piarces Bridge to the southward and the Jail was fortified as a further advanced post,—We had flattered ourselves that we should have mustered between 5 [or] 600 effective men Europeans, blacks, and militia, inhabitants and those belonging to the shipping, but to our utter astonishment when our military roll was returned in Council it consisted only of 45 of the Train and 145 infantry and in both only 60

<sup>1</sup> Here follows in Fort Saint George letter: 'No ditch, no glacis, a ravelin half finished that did no more disservice than service, a number of lanes and avenues opening within less than half-musket-shot of our fort. To remedy these evils advanced posts were,' etc.

<sup>2</sup> Across the ditch, at the corner of Hastings and Council House Streets.





Europeans; in the militia were about 100 Armenians who were entirely useless, and more than that number amongst the black militia boys and slaves, who were not capable of holding a musket; so that in fact when the seafaring people, who most of them appeared only at the first muster, were draughted off on board the vessels (of which we had in port about 30 sail of every craft at least) our garrison did not consist of 250 fighting men, officers included.

On the 7th June all provisions were prohibited by the Nabob being brought into Calcutta by orders to the several *zemindars* round us and the other side of the river. Between the 10th and 13th June several partys of the Nabob's troops took possession of Tanners Fort, to cut off our communication on the river from below,—on the 14th, 3 or 4 ships were sent to dislodge them without effect,—on the 16th Baagbazar Redoubt was attacked by the Nabob's army who were repulsed with considerable loss to them by [Lieutenant Blagg] and Ensign Piccard and 25 men with 30 *buckserries*. Here two European soldiers were killed and Mr. Ralph Thoresby, a hopefull young gentleman who with many others of the junior servants had entered volunteers in the infantry. About this time two Moors ships were brought under our guns which by way of reprisal we had taken below. On the 17th all our *buckseries* to the number of near 700, taken the most of them into our pay on this occasion, fled to a man from our out-*chowkeys* and I believe deserted to the enemy. Early this day our principal post to the northward by Mr. Griffiths' was attacked and something later that at the Court House by flying parties from the streets and houses, whilst a multitude of other detached partys from the Nabob's army were plundering and destroying every part of the town to the northward. These two advanced posts were continually alarmed and harrassed this whole day and the succeeding night and day, that is to say the 18th when the enemy brought a twelve pounder supported with about 5,000 musketry to bear against the Jail which was gallantly defended by a French officer Monsieur Le Beaume with Ensign Carstairs and 32 men detached from the advanced post at the Court House and maintained untill about noon when Monsieur Le Beaume and Ensign Carstairs being wounded, some of the Train killed and





others of the detachment disabled the post was relinquished and one field piece brought off with the party; about four afternoon the enemy having taken possession of the houses all round the advanced post at the Court House it was ordered to be abandoned, and the same evening the like orders were sent to the other two posts to the southward and northward and Piccard's party called from Baagbuzar; this evening at a council of war it was resolved to embark the Company's treasure, books and the European ladies and further agreed that the ships should remain under the guns of the fort. Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, the first Colonel and the other Lieutenant Colonel of the militia, conducted the ladies on board and I understood were to return, when they had reconciled the ladies to their situation; but they never returned again, no more did Captain Lieutenant Mapletoft, Lieutenant H. Wedderburn, Ensigns William Sumner, Charles Douglas and Robert Halsey Baldrick, all officers of the militia, besides about 15 of the volunteers and many of the militia who deserted the fort this day and the succeeding morning. On the 18th more advanced in the night, we held another council of war and the Captain of the Train being ordered to make a return of the ammunition, we were thunderstruck when he reported there was not full three days ammunition in the garrison. The debate then turned on the question whether a retreat with the garrison and all the Company's effects could be attempted that night, but so much of it elapsed in debate that it became impracticable until the next, when myself, and I believe every body else present, judged the retreat was determined to be carried into execution. In the morning of the 19th the enemy were pretty quiet and only now and then threw a random shot at the fort from the batteries they had raised in three or four different stations whilst they were busy in forming lodgements in the houses round us. About 9 this morning our President Mr. Drake, Commandant Minchin, Mr. Macket 2nd Captain of the militia, Captain Grant, Adjutant General, Mr. O'Hara Lieutenant of the Train, privately withdraw out of the back gate, deserted the factory and embarked on board the shipping, which immediately weighed and stood down the river without leaving us a single boat at the *got* or possibility of making a general retreat and this before any one attack had





been actually made on the fort. On the Governour etc.'s desertion being known the garrison fell into the utmost confusion and tumults, when the gentlemen remaining of the Council, officers and others, entreated I would immediately take upon me the government of the fort, as the only means of quieting the present tumults which must have ended in the destruction of the whole. A council was directly called and Mr. Pearkes, waving his right of seniority, himself, Messrs. Eyre and Baillie appointed me governour of the fort and administrator of the Honourable Company's affairs during the troubles, in which light I was recognized by the whole garrison. I immediately visited every post and soon quieted the minds of the people, by assuring them they should have three chests of treasure divided amongst the soldiers and militia, if they would defend the fort untill we could make a general retreat with all the Company's effects and that I would be the last man that quitted the fort. At the council held as above, we suspended the President and the gentlemen of the Council and officers with him from the Company's service, it being the only just piece of resentment in our power, for the cruel piece of treachery they had been guilty of to the whole garrison as well as breach of trust to their Employers. We likewise sent an order to Captain Hague, Commander of the Company's ship *Saint George* stationed at Baagbazar to weigh and immediately drop down opposite the lane between the new *godowns*<sup>1</sup> of the factory and the Company's House: these new *godowns* being the weakest part of the fort and not flanked by any gun from it, the ship in this station would have accomplished this service, have contributed to dislodge the enemy from the Company's House, and have been under our guns. As she was then the only remaining chance we had for a general retreat, 3 or 4 boats being yet with her, Mr. Pearkes was so obliging as to tender himself with three or four volunteers on this service and went on board accordingly, but the pilot neither that day nor the next would undertake to bring her lower than opposite to Mr. Watts's house where she was useless to us. To return to our situation the 19th after the President's desertion from Council I had hardly gone round the ramparts before the enemy attacked

<sup>1</sup> Warehouses.





the fort incessantly the whole remainder of the day from their batteries and small arms; of the former from the battery we had raised at the Court House, from another they had erected in Mr. Allsop's Compound<sup>1</sup> between the Court House and the jail, from a third erected at the south-west corner of the Park, from a fourth in the Reverend Mr. Bellamy's Compound and from a small battery they had raised at the Dock Head. They fired so wildly from their batteries they would not have made a breach in a twelve month though they fired from 18 pounders, but their small arms from the houses round us, particularly the Company's, Captain Rannie's and Mr. Cruttenden's, annoyed us much, from whence we several times dislodged them with great slaughter and obliged them at last to set fire to them and to abandon them. The 19th at night our people had some recess but were obliged to sleep on their arms. The 20th in the morning the enemy formed three assaults at once against the north-west bastion, against the north-west *futtock*<sup>2</sup> or barrier, and against the windows of the laboratory on the eastern curtain, and attempted to scale to the north-westward. From each of these assaults they were beat off with great loss to them before noon and a general cessation in a manner ensued for some hours, when finding we had 25 killed and 70 or more of our best men wounded and our Train killed, wounded and deserted to all but 14, and not two hours ammunition left, we threw out a flag of truce towards the evening, intending to amuse the enemy and make the best retreat we could in the night to the *Saint George*, not then knowing that she was on a sand opposite to Omichund's house. During the parley our back gate was betrayed to the enemy in concert—I judge—with some that had deserted the preceeding night from the walls and those who had the guard of that gate, who were obliged to wrench off the locks and bolts, the keys being in my possession. In this situation we had nothing left to resolve on but a surrender at discretion.

Thus I have transmitted to your Honour etc. as circumstantial an account of this melancholy event as my state of body and mind will at present permit me, (ruined in my own private fortune as well as much injured in constitution) of both having barely strength to hold the pen a yet necessary period whilst I advise

<sup>1</sup> The enclosure round a house.

<sup>2</sup> A gate.





you that of the enemy we killed first and last by their own confession 5000 of their troops and 80 *jemidars* and officers of consequence exclusive of the wounded. The resistance we made and the loss they suffered so irritated the Nabob that he ordered myself and all the prisoners promiscuously to the number of about 165 or 170 to be crammed altogether into a small prison in the fort called the Black Hole, from whence only about 16 of us came out alive in the morning the rest being suffocated to death—amongst those myself, Mr. Richard Court, Mr. John Cooke, Mr. Lushington, Ensign Walcot, Mr. Burdett (a young gentleman volunteer), Captain Mills, Captain Dickson, and about 7 or 8 soldiers blacks and whites; amongst the dead Messrs. Eyre and William Baillie, the Reverend Mr. Bellamy, Messrs. Jenks, Rively, Law, T. Coales etc. our 3 Military Captains and 9 Subalterns, many of our volunteers and inhabitants, of whom particular lists shall be forwarded the Honourable Company as recollection enables me. Myself, Messrs. Court, Walcot and Burdet were sent to the camp the 21st in the morning, there put in irons and marched three miles to town the 22nd, in the sun and our irons, with no covering to our heads, and hardly any to our bodies. At the Dock Head we were detained the 22nd, 23rd and 24th, and the evening of that day put on board an open boat for this city destitute of a rupee or any necessary of life. On the 7th instant we arrived there (our subsistence on the way up on rice and water) and were deposited under a guard in an open stinking cowhouse, a spectacle to the whole city (and hardly escaped a second smothering), untill the 11th when we were removed to the *jemidar's* house under whose custody we were. On the 15th we were again remanded to the cowhouse, flattered with hopes of knowing our ultimate fate, there we remained that night and yesterday [had our fetters struck off and] were once again blessed with liberty and freedom to go where we pleased. The humanity and friendship we received here from the gentlemen of the French and Dutch factorys will ever require our most grateful remembrance.

It only remains that I inform your Honour etc., that at the first approach of the troubles we wrote to Chandanagore and Hughley to join us in a cause we deemed common, and pressed their assistance with men and ammunition, the answer we





received from Hugley was that they were ordered by their Principals to remain neuter in all disputes of this kind with the Government. From Chandanagore the answer was more favourable but of equal utility to us, for when we pressed them for ships and ammunition they genteelly refused us and pleaded their own weakness. Neither were we deficient in writing letter after letter to the Nabob, making him every concession in our power, of which he took not the least notice nor returned one answer.

Your Honour etc., have heard of the sufferings of the gentlemen with me which alone entitles them to the Honourable Company's favour, but I should do great injustice to Messrs. Court and Walcot if I omitted mentioning them in the particular manner they merit, the former the only officer of the Militia and the other the only one of the Military alive who did not desert their Colours, The former has distinguished himself as a faithfull Covenant Servant and both as gallant officers. Dacca Factory is given up, but Luckipore received timely advice to withdraw and have I hear joined the President at Ingellie.

I am etc., J. Z. HOLWELL.

P.S. Our intentions are to quit this city to-morrow, to proceed on board any ship we find at Culpee and take the first opportunity for the coast of Coromandel.

64. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Court of Directors, dated Chandernagore, 17 July, 1756.*

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOURS,—1. Since the conclusion of our letter we were apprehensive that we might be misinformed in regard to the Governour and Council's not making any proposals to the Nabob for an accommodation, Mr. Watts therefore went to see Seree Babboo, Coja Wazeed's *duan* at Chinchura, and enquired of him what he knew of the matter, to which he replied that he was down several times in Calcutta, and that the last time he was there he told the Governour the Nabob was marching down, to which he answered that the sooner he came the better, and that he would make another Nabob, with other harsh expressions he was ashamed to mention. When the Nabob was at Rannah Ghat, which is about two days march from Hughley, Coja Wazeed his master wrote him immediately to go to Calcutta,





that he went as far as Bamagur,<sup>1</sup> but there received a message from his *gomastah* in Calcutta not by any means to proceed, for Ommichund was confined, and he would be so likewise on his arrival, on which advice he returned to Hughley, that when the Nabob was at Banhabazar,<sup>2</sup> Seree Babboo was in the camp from whence he wrote to Mr. Drake enclosing the form of a letter to the Nabob for the Governour to get wrote fair and sign, which the Governour accordingly did, but this letter did not arrive till the Nabob was at Mr. Kellsall's Gardens and hostilities had been then commenced at Tanais Fort, &c.; Seree Babboo delivered the letter but it was too late, and the Nabob then too incensed to reply to it.

2. Seree Babboo also informed Mr. Watts that Mr. Drake &c. at Fulta had wrote to Mr. Bisdom, the Dutch Directore at Chinchura, and enclosed hm letters for Coja Wazeed, Monickchund, Roy dulub and Golam Hossein Cawn, desiring their interest with the Nabob to be admitted again into Calcutta; upon Mr. Bisdom's receipt of these letters he sent to Coja Wazeed to desire a conference to which Coja Wazeed answered, that the Nabob might at this time take umbrage at any private meeting, therefore requested he would send some person of trust to him to let him know what he had to impart. Accordingly Mr. Bisdom sent his secretary with the letters for the fore mentioned persons, and who also acquainted Coja Wazeed with the desire the English had of being re-established in Calcutta, to which Coja Wazeed replied, that as the letters were wrote in English and only signed they would have no force, therefore it was necessary for to have them translated into Persian and sent down to Mr. Drake to have his seal put to them when he would deliver them to the respective people, except Golam Hossein Cawn, who is turned out of the Province. Seree Babboo said he had orders from his Master Coja Wazeed to tell Mr. Watts to write to Mr. Drake that he would deliver his letters agreeable to his desire, but he imagined if the Nabob did so far comply with his request to admit the English into Calcutta, it would not be upon better terms than the Porteguese and Prussians trade on, which is to pay duties and hire houses and ware houses for themselves and goods, he likewise says that we must not expect to be put into possession of Fort William again, and that

<sup>1</sup> Barnagore.<sup>2</sup> Bankibazaar.





Seree Babboo from his master ingenuously told Mr. Watts that the only method to re-establish Calcutta upon creditable terms would be to proceed to Madrass and there concert measures with the Governour and Council, and to return with strength sufficient to enforce any petitions we had to make.

3. We must beg leave to observe here that Coja Wazeed's opinion entirely coincides with what we have already wrote you.

4. We must beg leave further to remark to Your Honours that in our letter to Mr. Drake &c., dated the 8th July, we wrote them as follows 'Had your Honour &c., thought proper to treat before the Nabob reached Calcutta, we are pretty certain a sum of money would have made all easy, prevented the loss of the Settlement and the ruin of many thousands, and we wrote to your Honour &c., to that purpose when we were off Hughley, the only opportunity we had while in the camp, and are informed "the letter came to hand,"' to which in their answer they made no reply, therefore, if they had made any application they should have acquainted us that we were wrongly informed, which as they did not, it appears to us a tacit confession that they made none at least before it was too late.

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

65. *Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet to Council, Fort Saint George, dated Chandernagore, 18 July, 1756.*

Enclosed is a packet for the Honourable the Court of Directors, which we have sent under a flying seal for your perusal, and beg you will close and forward it by the most expeditious conveyance. We likewise send inclosed duplicates of our letters of the 6th and 7th instant to your Honour &c., and are with respect.

W. WATTS AND M. COLLET.

66. *Narrative of the succession of Souragud Dowlet to the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orixia, and of the siege of Calcutta taken by escalade the 20th June, 1756, by Governor Drake, dated 19 July, 1756.<sup>1</sup>*

Some few years before the death of Alliverdy Cawn the late Nabob which happened the 9th of April 1756, he nominated for

<sup>1</sup> This document is characteristic of the author, whose faults were due as much to confusion of intellect as to any other cause.





his successor Mirza Mahomed his grandson. The father of Mirza Mahomed was Zunder Mahomed Cawn, the son of Hodjee Hamed Alliverdy Cawn's eldest brother; so that Mirza Mahomed was both great nephew and grandson<sup>1</sup> to the late Nabob, who, having no male heir, Mirza Mahomed was likewise created his adopted son, so that the right of succession would of course have devolved on him though he had not been nominated thereto by his grandfather, on which nomination he assumed the title of Souragud Dowlet.<sup>2</sup>

As soon as the late Nabob was dead Souragud Dowlet found himself engaged with a most powerful enemy who seemed resolved at all events to set up a competitor against him. This competitor was an infant son of Patchy Kouly Cawn<sup>3</sup> the younger brother of Souragud Dowlet's father and who had been adopted by Nowarris Mahomed Cawn the eldest brother of Souragud Dowlet's father. Nowarris Mahomed Cawn and Patchy Kouli Cawn both dying before the late Nabob, the care of this infant devolved to the wife of Nowarris Mahomed Cawn who had amassed immense riches, one of the most powerful engines of war in these eastern parts, and being determined at all adventures to support her ward she drew together a large body of men under the command of Meir Nazzer Alli her reputed gallant, and fortified herself in the large gardens of Moota Ghill within two miles of Muxadavad the capital of the Nabob of Bengal; she had with her for her *duan* and privy councillor one Rajabullub, who had been Nabob of Dacca and esteemed the subtlest politician in the whole province and one whom Souragud Dowlet was determined to draw over to his party if possible or to have him assassinated the first opportunity.

Rajabullub finding himself likely to be engaged in great difficulties resolved, according to the custom of these eastern people when trouble is at hand, to send his son Kissendass who was then at Dacca and great part of his family and wealth out of the province, and grasped the first favourable occasion which offered to order them away under pretence of their making a holy visit to Jaggernaut Pagod; this happened in the lifetime of Alliverdy Cawn, but who then was very infirm, Rajabullub foreseeing the

<sup>1</sup> Siraj-uddaula's mother, Aminah Begum, was daughter of Aliverdikhan.

<sup>2</sup> The Lamp of Riches. *Scrafton*.

<sup>3</sup> Or Fazl Kuli Khan.





perplexed situation he should be brought to when the late Nabob was dead.

On or about the 16th of March a letter arrived from Mr. William Watts, Chief at Cossimbuzar addressed to the President and Mr. Manningham certifying an application having been made to him from Rajabullub requesting we would admit his, Rajabullub's, family into Calcutta for the space of two months until Kissendass his wife was brought to bed and able to proceed on her journey (this Kissendass was son to Rajabullub) and strenuously recommended we would not refuse that request as Rajabullub was likely to hold great posts in the government and might from such favour shewn his family be very instrumental in giving an uninterrupted currency to our business at Dacca and its dependencies, which recommendation from Mr. Watts, who then was so nearly situated to the *Durbar* of the capital city, and whose advice on *Durbar* affairs were seldom contradicted, drew a grant from Mr. Manningham (the Governour being for change of air gone to Ballasore) to admit Kissendass his family and attendants into our bounds, where they peaceably dwelt until some time after the death of Alliverdy Cawn and were furnished with a house from Omichund one of our principal black inhabitants, and if report speaks truth large sums of money and jewels were committed to his, Omichund's care who doubtless thought on his own benefit in shewing any appearance of protection to a family who then was in the highest favour with the government, but transient to appearance was Rajabullub's power or interest immediately after the demise of Alliverdy Cawn; for, previous to any advice arriving from Souragud Dowlet acquainting our Presidency (as has ever been customary on change of government) of his succession to the Nabobship of Muxadavad and its dependencies or sending any reply to the President's letter to him of congratulation thereon and intreating his protection and continuance of favour to the English East India Company, than a *perwannah* arrived on or about the 15th of April demanding as was supposed the immediate delivery of Rajabullub's family and wealth, which *perwannah* was intrusted to Narraindass brother of Rogeram the Nabob's head spy and who stole into Calcutta in disguise, and his first foot ashore was at Omichund's wharf. This step was deemed a very





extraordinary proceeding of the Nabob's and that Omichund had fomented it, he having received and read a *perwannah* brought him at the same time tending to this purport; that he was to interest himself in the immediate delivery of Rajabullub's family and wealth to Narraindass. It happened that the Governour and Mr. Manningham were that evening out of town, but too evident it is that Omichund without waiting their return introduced the said Narraindass to Messrs. Pearkes and Holwell, informing those gentlemen of his errand but did not come to acquaint either the President or Mr. Manningham thereof until those gentlemen sent for him, Omichund, the next morning, when on his coming into their presence, where was likewise Mr. Holwell, he seemed strenuous and fearful in his own behalf least his design and intent to serve the government in all respects should by our resolves diminish that power the government thought he held in Calcutta; such was this Omichund's treachery to receive Rajabullub's family in one of his habitations, give them assurance of security, take possession of the most valuable part of their effects and, to conclude all, espouse and solicit obedience to the contents of a *perwannah* we were told demanded the delivery of Rajabullub's sons, family, and wealth into the hands of a person who clandestinely entered the town and was in secret conference with Omichund when the said Omichund was sent for to the factory, and soon after arrived at our back gate the before mentioned Narraindass, concluding as was then thought to be espoused by him with whom he had that instant had discourse. This proceeding was deemed so extravagant that an order was sent to the guard not to admit him into the factory and *peons* were ordered to see that he immediately departed our bounds, which was accordingly done and Mr. Watts was advised thereof in order that by his letters to the principal officers of the *Durbar* any disturbance at this proceeding might be quieted by their pretended attachment to the interest of the English. Mr. Watts accordingly acquainted the principal men of the steps we had taken in regard to a man who under pretence of having a *perwannah* from the Nabob had stole into our bounds, to which representation Mr. Watts advised the President he received for answer that we surely had a right to dismiss such people, and, in that or some other letter to





the Governour, Mr. Watts expressed that the Company would experience and have the advantages which his intimacy and correspondence with the great people would bring about, and by letters since from him he has inserted [? insisted] that Rajabullub would be taken into favour again and advised the rather showing civility to his family than any ways to distress them; giving his opinion at the same time that we should be cautious and not let them leave Calcutta. As the protection granted Rajabullub's family is imputed to the private act of the President, Messrs. Manningham and Holwell, and the principal cause of drawing the Nabob and his army to Calcutta, it is thought far from needless in this place to assert that the general letter from Cossimbuzar never made mention of Rajabullub or his family or that the Nabob was offended at our treatment of Narraindass. His anger towards us, as in those letters expressed, will hereafter appear in this narration; and though the protection or rather the granting residence to that family was not made a publick act of Council in Calcutta (perhaps from a scruple of injuring Mr. Watts who had recommended that protection and from proceedings of the same nature long before practised by former governors without evil arising therefrom, together with being persuaded that in so arbitrary a government every wealthy man might be drove to seek the same shelter in our other European colonies, and therefore their true interest to hold us blameless on such accounts with the reigning Nabob) yet it is well known the whole gentlemen of Council were assembled that morning by summons and were not unacquainted with the dismissal of Narraindass or of the errand he came on, yet neither of them made any objection thereto or spoke of it afterwards as a proceeding they did not assent to; nor can they affirm any restraint has ever been laid on their liberty of dissenting to any act that in their judgments might be prejudicial to the Company's affairs.

We are now arrived to about the 10th of May at which time there was not the least surmise that our business would be impeded or that (as it is now affirmed) the residence of Rajabullub's family in Calcutta had or would give umbrage to the government. It was also much doubted whether Souragud Dowlet could overcome the *Begum's* (wife of Nowarris Mahomed Cawn) forces and those





of her adherents who had promised her their assistance, she still maintaining herself in Moota Ghill and people were much divided in their sentiments whether the Nabob would be able to establish himself as he had made himself generally odious throughout the province, and was spoke of as a monster of cruelty, making no scruple of committing unparalleled ones [? crimes] in cold blood without provocation. One or two instances shall be mentioned, it was an inquisitiveness in him to know how a child lay in the womb and at his order a woman big with child was ripped up in his presence; another day in sport he ordered a passage<sup>1</sup> boat to be overset that he might be a witness of the struggle men, women and children, make for the safety of their lives in time of danger. From such a cruel disposition little good was to be expected, add hereto his oppressiveness, ambition and being intoxicated with his immense riches and power to commit any extravagancies though tending to the ruin of the whole province, and indeed it was the general wish of all to hear he was cut off, his assassination of Hossim Kouli Cawn, Naib of Dacca<sup>2</sup> and a worthy man, being still ripe in their memories with other unbounded and unjustifiable cruelties by him committed. At the same time he had a great share of personal courage which had recommended him to his army.

Affairs remained so long in suspence between him and the *Begum* that Mr. Watts strenuously recommended in a letter to the Governour to protect Rajabullub's family at all adventures, which had it been the prevailing notion that the Nabob was secure of a quiet establishment in these provinces or Mr. Watts suspecting the Government's anger towards us on that account he surely would never have taken on him to write so peremptorily in those people's favour, however at length with specious promises the *Begum* was prevailed upon to disband her troops and return to her allegiance. But she paid dear for trusting to one of his treacherous disposition, for he no sooner had her in his power than contrary to treaty he stripped her of her immense wealth and cut off Meir Nazzerally who by treaty was likewise to have had a safe convoy out of his

<sup>1</sup> Ferry-boat.

<sup>2</sup> He was the *Naib* or Deputy of Nawajis Muhammad Khan. He lived, however, at Murshidabad, and was there assassinated by Siraj-uddaula. This was the first act of the kind committed by the young Prince.



province.<sup>1</sup> Aga Bauba youngest son of Suffrage Cawn who was cut off by the late Nabob was at the same time committed to custody and conveyed to Dacca.

Souragud Dowlet having thus settled affairs with the *Begum* to his entire satisfaction, was alarmed with another enemy from the north, the son of Monserally Cawn Vizier to the late *Mogul*, and who had long been promised the dominions usurped by Alliverdy Cawn. The foregoing events caused Monserally's son to march towards Bengal as it is said with 30,000 troops. These tidings dispirited Souragud Dowlet's forces who were marched towards Rajahmall when they declared an averseness to engage with troops imagined to be sent by order of the Grand Mogul to these provinces, therefore the Nabob thought it more prudent to buy them off which it is said he did at a very large expense. From this may be dated his present quiet establishment, when he arrived at Rajahmall about the 17th of May, in these dominions.

On receipt of the Court of Directors' letter *per ship Delaware* we were acquainted there was great probability of a war breaking out with France and warning the settlement of Calcutta to be on their guard, workmen were immediately employed to repair and put in order the rampart and line of guns by the waterside; the military storekeeper had orders to prepare and make fit for use gun carriages; a sufficient number of oxen were also procured to work night and day in making of gunpowder, which seeming preparations for war came to the Nabob's ears, who immediately wrote a letter to the Governour requiring that we should not only desist from carrying on any new works but demolish our redoubt and drawbridge at Perrin's and fill up the ditch dug round the town when the Morattoes first invaded the country in the year 1743, and for which work we had thanks from the late Nabob as our town was then an asylum to many of his subjects who brought and sent great riches to be there deposited. This letter was on its receipt communicated to the Council and a reply thereto was prepared and forwarded to Mr. Watts and Council with copy thereof setting forth in substance as follows: 'That it gave us concern to observe that some enemies had advised his Excellency

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Law says Mir Nazar Ali was sent with much of his wealth out of Bengal, and that he went to Delhi, and there tried to form a party.





without regard to truth that we were erecting new fortifications ; That for this century past we had traded in his dominions and had been protected and encouraged by the several *Subahs*,<sup>1</sup> always having paid a due obedience to their orders ; That we hoped he would not listen to any false representations, and that we depended on his favour to protect our commerce which tended to the benefit of his provinces, as we exported the produce of the ground in return for bullion brought into the country ; That he must have been acquainted of the great loss our Company sustained by the capture of Madrass by the French ; That there was now an appearance of another war breaking out between the French nation and ours, wherefore we were repairing our walls which were in danger of being carried away by the river and were not otherways erecting any new works or digging any ditch.' This reply Mr. Watts mentioned to be a very proper one and accordingly forwarded it to the Nabob who was then at Rajahmall, on the perusal of which the gentlemen at Cossimbuzar wrote the President and Council that Souragud Dowlet flew into a great rage and instantly ordered his *jemmidars* to march with all expedition to invest Cossimbuzar Factory and that he would follow with his artillery.

Under date the 25th of May Mr. Watts and his Council advised that a party of three hundred horse under the command of Omerbeg were placed on the factory and all business stopped ; That orders to the same purpose were likewise issued to the several *aurungs* and subordinate factories. We were now daily advised of additional forces surrounding Cossimbuzar Factory and threats from the Nabob that he would make an attack unless we strictly complied with his orders to erase our fortifications and fill up the ditch, on which we again addressed Souragud Dowlet setting forth we are quite ignorant of the cause of his so great displeasure and requested if our words were not by him credited that he would be pleased to send some persons in whom he could confide to survey what works we were carrying on, and that we should obey his orders after he had a fair representation made him. This letter was sent to Cossimbuzar in triplicates. We also forwarded Mr. Watts and Council two blanks to fill up with their complaints of the extortions of Hookembeg and other *Durbar* officers as he

<sup>1</sup> Or *Subahdars*, i.e., Nawabs.





and they should think advisable, they having wrote us that Hookembeg fomented this trouble with the Nabob. We further gave them liberty to insert any other circumstances they should themselves approve of rather than reduce the Nabob to such extremities as to begin an attack, but cautioned them not to mention we would demolish our fortifications, nor were these blanks of any avail since they were not received into the factory until after the Moors had obtained the possession thereof.

To the several letters wrote the Nabob in the most mild and submissive terms we received no reply, which convinced us it was not any sum we could dare<sup>1</sup> to give would pacify his wrath nor did the gentlemen at Cossimbuzar ever intimate that money was required; contrary thereto, the President certifies that in one letter he received from Mr. Watts mention was made that it was not money the Nabob wanted, but an implicit obedience to all his orders and that whoever transgressed them suffered great indignity.

On the 3rd June a *cossid*<sup>2</sup> arrived in twenty seven hours with a general letter from Cossimbuzar under date the 2nd of said month importing that a large artillery and the Nabob himself with a numerous force were encamped on the other side of the river opposite the factory and that they were erecting a battery. This advice made us believe no solicitations by his ministers, letters from us, or any gift we could offer would pacify his extreme anger against us. Nevertheless as it was generally believed Coja Wazeed had an interest with the Nabob and had ever professed himself a friend to the English Company, we essayed by his means to have the several letters we had wrote the Nabob delivered him, as we had some doubt whether those letters had not been impeded. Accordingly copies thereof were prepared and sent by express *cossids* to Coja Wazeed but unfortunate for us as it then appeared Coja Wazeed had taken his leave of Souragud Dowlet and was set out from Muxadavad on his way to Houghley.

In the last mentioned letter from Cossimbuzar the gentlemen requested we would if possible supply them with a reinforcement of one hundred men. This was referred to our military officers,

<sup>1</sup> The Court of Directors had forbidden the Council to give presents to the Nawab.

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





we having previously acquainted them that the number of forces then surrounding the factory was upwards of 3000 horse and foot, and that the Nabob with 8000 forces and a train of artillery were encamped opposite the factory. To this the several military officers gave in as their unanimous opinion it was impracticable throwing in any assistance in such circumstances, and at a time of year when the river from Nuddea to Cossimbuzar was fordable in many places,<sup>1</sup> and that any forces we could send would undoubtedly be much annoyed by the several *chowkeys*<sup>2</sup> in the passage up, and to oppose a body of horse and force their way into the factory they esteemed quite impracticable and a great risque of having those recruits [*? reinforcements*] entirely cut off or made prisoners, and that such a detachment would also too much weaken our own garrison, as it was then rumoured the Nabob his design was to march to Calcutta could he obtain by conquest our factory at Cossimbuzar. These reasons swayed our opinions and we replied by the quickest dispatch that it appeared to us an impossibility the sending with any safety the reinforcement they required, not doubting but with the men they had, joined with the *peons* and *buxerries* belonging to their factory, they would be able to make a vigorous resistance if the Nabob his rashness carried him so far as to make an attack upon the factory, and that as the rainy season was nigh advanced<sup>3</sup> we deemed they would be capable to maintain the factory and tire the Nabob and his forces out, especially as Omerbeg the first *jemidar* placed on the factory had behaved with civility and suffered them to lay in provision.

Here it will not be improper to observe that on or about the 20th of May Mr. Watts advised the President that our Settlement of Calcutta had been represented to Souragud Dowlet as a place of no defence, of immense wealth and could with great ease be conquered, Therefore advised that we should immediately raise as many forces as we could and strengthen ourselves with the utmost expedition. This intelligence prompted the Governour immediately

<sup>1</sup> This means that boats could not pass up, and that troops would have to go by land—an impossibility for a small European force in a hostile country and in the hottest season of the year.

<sup>2</sup> Posts or stations for the levy of tolls on merchandize.

<sup>3</sup> The Rains begin about the middle of June.





to issue his order to Commandant Minchin to raise as many souldiers as possible and each man that enlisted was to have a gratuity of twenty rupees. We likewise ordered Mr. Holwell to entertain a number of *buxerries*, advanced the pay of our labourers and began to lay in a stock of provisions; all *cossids* were ordered to bring every letter received and dispatched to the President to be by him read in the presence of those persons to whom they were subscribed or who had wrote such letters, this precaution we found was attended with the intent we had to prevent our hidden enemies and crafty great men from advising the Nabob and his officers of every minute transaction which passed in Calcutta, as at this time every labourer was employed and the greatest efforts made to fortify ourselves in the best manner a small space of time would allow of.

From the receipt of the last general letter to the 7th June we had not any advice from our gentlemen at Cossimbuzar, owing to the Nabob his strict orders being complied with to stop all intelligence from that quarter, however on the 6th June on Sunday night a report was handed from Chandernagore that our factory was taken by the Moors and Mr. Watts conducted to the Nabob with his hands bound. This intelligence did not gain credit in Calcutta as our last advices expressed a resolution among the gentlemen there, who had in garrison about fifty Europeans under the command of a Lieutenant and sufficiently provided with cannon and stores. But as such a tidings was not altogether to be passed over in silence the Governour summoned a Council early the next morning and communicated the purport of what he had heard to the gentlemen thereof. The military Captains were ordered to attend when we termed this meeting a Council of war and ordered that Messrs. Symson and O'Hara engineers jointly with our Commandant and other officers to draw out a plan of defence for the place and inhabitants of Calcutta against the irruption of the Moors, who as they were numerous was at first imagined to require an extensive line.

The engineers and officers in pursuance of this order surveyed the place and delivered their opinion thereon, which was to contract the lines into a narrower compass than was at first intended that our posture of defence might be the sooner completed.





Their proposition was that instant ordered to be set about and every white inhabitant furnished what materials they had to finish the work as soon as hands could perform it.

At 10 in the morning the 7th June we received a letter from Adrian Bisdorn Esq., Director of Houghly accompanied with another from Mr. Collet, second of Cossimbuzar, certifying that the English factory there was in the Moors' possession. This news caused an inexpressible consternation amongst us as we had always been of opinion that the fort at Cossimbuzar was in no danger from a Moors army, and confirmed therein from the positiveness of Mr. Grant, who had been officer there and who certified at the Board that there was not any cause to apprehend the Nabob's forces could conquer and take possession thereof if our men behaved with resolution, and that it was a place he should have no doubt of maintaining with the same number of men then at the factory with the guns and stores.

The certain intelligence of the capture of our fort at Cossimbuzar and of Souragud Dowlet's intention to proceed directly to Calcutta made us seriously to consider what defence we could make for the reception of an enemy who were flushed with hopes that they might obtain by craftiness and deceit as easy a surrender of our capital settlement in Bengal, nothing near so defensible and labouring under a variety of disadvantages from its situation. Accordingly we again sent for the Commandant and officers to inquire into the state of our garrison, who reported that there were upwards of seventy men sick in the hospital and quarters and on parties up and down the river twenty-five. That the remainder were chiefly Portuguese consisting of about one hundred eighty, exclusive of the artillery company.

In pursuance to our last resolution of contracting our lines the engineers threw up three batteries in the principal avenues of the town, one to the eastward adjoining to the Mayor's Court House and running cross that road to the Park<sup>1</sup> on which were mounted two guns, one nine pounder and one six pounder with an embrasure pointing to the southward down the Rope Walk for another gun in case the enemy made an irruption there; another battery

<sup>1</sup> Also called the Lal Bagh. Later known as Tank Square, and now called Dalhousie Square.





was erected to the southward of the town, close to the house of Mr. Burrow, running across that road with the same number and weight of guns; the third battery guarded the northward avenues and ran across the road from Mr. Griffith's house to the waterside on which were mounted two six pounders. These were the only guns ready on the occasion having none of heavier metal mounted on good carriages. The small avenues behind these three batteries were defended by breastworks and intervening spaces were left to be defended by the walls of the houses. A raveline was likewise thrown up before the front<sup>1</sup> gate of our factory. The several roads were likewise cut through and bridges broke down. This was thought to be the best defence that could be made at so short a warning.

To strengthen our garrison we immediately recalled the several subordinates of Dacca, Jugdea, and Ballasore, directing the gentlemen there to proceed to Calcutta with all expedition if they could get through the Nabob's forces with all their military stores, treasure, and books, leaving the charge of the several factories under care of their head *peons*.

The 7th June in the evening the militia were under arms and were ordered to attend early on the parade the next morning in order that the several commissions should be read and they properly formed into companies. The numbers which appeared amounted to upwards of two hundred and fifty, about one hundred of them were Europeans, part of whom were called off their duty in the shipping and could not well be reckoned as Militia. The remainder were country-born Portugeuze and Armenians.

A commission of Colonel was granted Mr. Manningham, Lieutenant Colonel Mr. Frankland; Captains' commission Messrs. Holwell, Macket and Mapletoft;<sup>2</sup> Lieutenants' Messrs. Holme, Wedderburn, Court and Sumner; Ensigns' Messrs. Coales, Baldrick, Douglas and Dumbleton. The military promotions were as follows Lieutenant Smith made Captain-Lieutenant; Captain Grant made Adjutant General, Lieutenant Talbot Adjutant, Mr. O'Hara Lieutenant of the Train. The several commissions being delivered the militia were formed into three companies. But

<sup>1</sup> The eastern gate, facing inland.

<sup>2</sup> The Rev. Mr. Mapletoft was appointed Captain-Lieutenant.





finding the Portugeze and Armenians extremely awkward at their arms it was judged proper that one company should consist entirely of Europeans and all the care possible was taken for disciplining those new troops that the time would allow of, they being constantly trained morning and evening in a body until it was found necessary to form the several dispositions at the three batteries. It is necessary to observe here that many Company's covenanted servants and young gentlemen in the Settlement entered as volunteers in the military, doing duty in every respect as common souldiers and always expressing a forwardness to be sent on command, a spirit shewn never sufficiently to be commended. This was no small weakening to the militia as these young gentlemen had for some time past been planning a scheme for forming themselves into a military body with officers of their own chusing.<sup>1</sup> But as that plan was not compleated the Governour and Council did not think proper to give their assents to it as they thought they might be more serviceable another way.

The posture of defence concluded on being thus set forth, it naturally occurs that particular mention should be made in what manner the Nabob obtained possession of Cossimbuzar Factory which was on the 4th of June,<sup>2</sup> and shall now be set down in Messrs. Watts and Collet their own words penned in a foul draft of a letter which came to hand the 15th of said month, advising that under several dates they had wrote that the factory was surrounded by the Nabob's forces; That on the 2nd of June the whole army except those which remained with the Nabob who was expected in the evening were encamped round them with a large train of artillery and that the Nabob had repeated his orders to attack them unless the chief would quit his fort and come to him, on which they wrote to Roydoolub who was to command the attack and who replied that he would conduct the chief to the Nabob and that he might rest secured no harm should happen to him and to confirm what he had wrote he sent him two *beetles* (which is a token of friendly acts); That as they could not expect

<sup>1</sup> This was done after the recapture of Calcutta. The first commander of this band of volunteers was Mr. Rider. He was killed in the short war with the Dutch in 1759.

<sup>2</sup> The actual delivery of the Fort appears to have been on this date, but Mr. Watts went to the Nabob's camp on the 2nd.





to hold out long against an army reported then to consist of 20,000 horse and 30,000 foot the whole factory concluded and thought it adviseable for the Chief to go as the only means to prevent the factory being plundered and the Company's effects seized at the several subordinates and *aurungs*, also to retard if not prevent the Nabob's expedition to Calcutta; That on Mr. Watts being introduced to the Nabob he was called a *genim* (or robber) and was ordered into immediate confinement and obliged to sign an obligation that the President and Council of Calcutta should fill up the ditch and level their works in fifteen days, and that if it could be proved we had granted *dustucks* to particular merchants we should reimburse the loss the Government had sustained in their duties; That the next day the Nabob sent for Messrs. Collet and Batson to sign likewise the obligation, but on their arrival they were likewise confined and no further mention made thereof; That the day following the Nabob ordered them to give up their guns and ammunition which they consented to, hoping that would pacify him, and Mr. Collet was sent to the factory to deliver them and was delivering them when he was again demanded to the camp and Mr. Batson sent to the factory; That the above particulars they write by order of Roydoolub and that the Nabob was marching down with his whole force determined to attack Calcutta unless we complied with his demands which were then very exorbitant, not less than a *corore* of rupees, the demolishing our works and the delivering up his tenants with all their wealth; That they cannot be certain what Souragud Dowlets intentions are, whether to drive us out of the country or to have a sum of money; That Roydoolub told them the French and Dutch had given obligations to assist the Nabob. This is the purport of a letter brought us by a strange *peon*; other circumstances have been transmitted which we shall here enumerate and one in particular, to serve as a cover to the Nabob's treacherous behaviour and to amuse us, was the entire substance of a letter from Mr. Watts and his Council setting forth that Souragud Dowlet was particularly disgusted at the new redoubt and draw-bridge erected at Baagbazar on the plan of Colonel Scot and at an Octagon built at Mr. Kelsall's garden which was represented to him as a strong fortification. On receipt of that letter the





bridge was taken up and we replied that if the pulling down of the Octagon would be satisfactory it should be immediately set about, and we had some hopes that any small compliance on our side to the Nabob's commands was a pretence by him sought for to retire from our factory at Cossimbuzar with a good grace.

After Mr. Batson had delivered the guns and ammunition to the Moors the Treasury and warehouses were sealed up and the gentlemen and souldiers were made prisoners and a few days after were carried to Muxadavad; Mrs. Watts and her children were sent to the French factory and a receipt was exacted from the French Chief for the redelivering of them when demanded.

Our further resolutions and proceedings on the 7th June were as follows, and it was primarily thought adviseable to write to the French and Dutch Governours and Councils requiring their assistance against this rash Nabob whom we thought ought to be looked on as a common enemy to the several European nations. The reply we received from the Dutch was that they had positive orders from their superiors to be neuter in any quarrels or dispute with the Government and other nations, that they were only placed in Bengal as merchants and could not afford us any assistance. The French replied they were ready to enter into a defensive alliance but that their garrison was very weak and they should too much expose themselves by sending us assistance at a time they also expected the extravagant temper of the Nabob would determine him to make an attack on Chandernagore. A second letter was wrote the French acquiescing with their proposal of a defensive alliance, but affairs now coming to a crisis and the Nabob his near approach put it out of our power to conclude on articles and put that scheme in execution. In this second letter we required the French to assist us with two large ships but even that request was denied nor did they furnish us at our desire any kind of ammunition. In reply to the Dutch letter the President and Council formally protested against them but with no better success. We had already by five conveyances dispatched letters to Madrass and Vizagapatam informing the gentlemen there of our situation, peremptorily demanding a strong reinforcement of men with ammunition and other warlike stores which we now repeated in our advice to them of the loss of Cossimbuzar factory, and



requested that the purport of our letter might be communicated to the Admiral, giving them a hint that upwards of 600 men had been detained on the Coast<sup>1</sup> since the year 1752, during their troubles, which were sent out by the Company to recruit our Settlement. This stoppage of our men as also firearms together with a large body of Europeans we had sent to their relief at the close of last war will account for our having been so barren of Europe military. Their numbers will be hereafter specified, and here it is to be remarked that our garrison at the Subordinates were most of them Europeans. The President forwarded to Mr. Pigot copies of such letters he had received from Mr. Watts which were most circumstantial to inform of our situation with the Nabob and we also wrote to the Presidency of Bombay.

The evening of the 7th June Soo Babboo, Coja Wazud's *duan*, came to Calcutta by order from his master and brought with him three original letters which Souragud Dowlet had wrote Wazud from Rajahmaul, Muxadavad and in his way to attack us, translate of which letters will be annexed to this narrative and they are now particularly referred to the perusal thereof, convinced us that the Nabob had thrown off all regard for the prosperity of his provinces, and that he listened to no advice offered him by any of his prime ministers or principal merchants and *shroffs*<sup>2</sup> as our destruction must inevitably bring on ruin to his country. It was also given out that he was determined to extirpate the French and Dutch after he had drove out the English. The purport of those letters referred to will bear this interpretation that no late act committed by the English has been the real cause of the troubles they are now involved in, but as expressed in the Nabob's first letter an obstinate resolution to expel them his dominions. However we had some idea that if a fair opportunity was given Souragud Dowlet he would retract his severe threats, and to afford him a favourable occasion imagining Coja Wazud's *duan* was sent partly to obtain a condescension on our parts and to make his master appear interested to our Employers,<sup>3</sup> we agreed to write him to the following effect 'That we always esteemed him as our friend

<sup>1</sup> Madras, or Fort Saint George, was ordinarily referred to as the 'Coast,' Bengal as the 'Bay.'

<sup>2</sup> Bankers.

<sup>3</sup> The Court of Directors.





and patron with the Government and gave to his decision the present difference actuated by our enemies even in our own Settlement, (Soo Babboo having privately acquainted the Governour that Omichund had been assisting to draw the Nabob's anger on us, and which information the President made known to Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Holwell and others of his Council), with which letter Coja Wazud's *duan* was immediately returned to his master carrying with him another letter for the Nabob wrote in the most submissive terms and acquainting him we had referred an accommodation to Coja Wazud. This concluded the proceedings of this day.

The utmost diligence was now used to finish our batteries, ravelin, and outworks, providing quantities of provision, exercising our militia and preparing in every respect to stand a siege; in sending spies by different ways to learn the motions of the Nabob and how his army stood affected. The reports brought us were that he was marching hastily towards Calcutta with an army consisting of fifty thousand men horse and foot, 150 elephants, and a number of camels with the greatest part of the cannon he had taken at Cossimbuzar with 25 Europeans as gunners and upwards of 200 Portuguese. It cannot be said that this report depressed the brave resolution which was shewn to defend to the last our lives, liberty and fortunes, and in proof of our steadiness to oppose the enemy as much as possible three vessels and a detachment were ordered to attempt taking possession of Tannah's fort, at which place we heard a body of men were arrived with some artillery and that the Moors intended to raise a fortification in order to impede our ships, vessels, and boats passing and repassing, and to cut off all supplies of provision coming up the river. We so far succeeded in this first attempt as to drive away the small forces which were then arrived, spiked and threw into the river seven of their cannon, burnt what houses were prepared for the shelter of part of the Nabob his army, and broke down part of the embrasures, but it not being in our power to maintain that place on account of the small number of forces we had, the military were recalled and the ships *Dadley*, *Prince George* and *Lively* grabb<sup>1</sup> were ordered to remain there, which they did until

<sup>1</sup> Arab word for a galley.



the 15th June when a body of upwards of 2,000 men and 15 pieces of cannon arrived, on which those vessels being of no farther use in that station they were recalled and we found we had lost some men and others wounded. All Moors boats were ordered to be stopped and we brought up to town two ships that carried their colours.

The 10th of June Coja Wazud's *duan* made us another visit from Houghly and presented a letter from his master to the Governour to this purport that with our approval he would have a meeting with the Nabob, who then was advanced to Kishnagur, and use his interest to stop his progress; at the same time advised us not to be amused but to strengthen ourselves with as much expedition as possible. This second message led us to imagine affairs would be accommodated, however we did not slacken the preparations concluded on to receive the Nabob's attack, but approved by letter what Coja Wazud had proposed. A detachment of 10 military and five volunteers were at night ordered to go up the river as far as Sooksoor (half way to Houghly) by beat of drum and to return without any noise. This caused a great alarm, as was intended, to the people inhabiting the banks of the river, and the report flew that the English were on their way to attack Houghly, which threw them into the utmost confusion and, before the next night, 2,000 horse arrived to their assistance from the advanced party of the Nabob's army ready to drop down through the expedition they came with. Variety of intelligence now was brought us by the spies we had sent to different parts, some declaring the Nabob's forces seemed averse to advance any further, others quite contradictory that they were exulting in their camp and had this encouragement given them that the plunder of the town should be their own property; That a granary was preparing about seventeen miles from Calcutta and that orders were issued to make a passage over Gollaut Nulla, about five miles distance from us, in order to transport cannon to Bougbuggee, situated by the river side thirteen miles below Calcutta; That the Rajah of Budwan and every principal *jemidars* were ordered to join Souragud Dowlet's forces and strict orders were given that we should not by any ways or means be supplied with necessaries of life. Such intelligence made us conclude that no entreaty could stop the progress of the Nabob his march.





On Friday the 11th June having received certain intelligence that the Nabob had crossed the river of Kishnagur with a great number of cannon it was resolved that a general review should be had of our whole force the next morning. In order to make the necessary disposition of them at the batteries and in the fort for this purpose it was judged necessary that the Militia Adjutant should receive orders from Captain Grant, Adjutant General, and the next morning there appeared under arms as follows:—

Military (of these not above 45 Europeans)	...	...	180
Volunteers (Europeans)	...	...	50
Militia (Europeans)	...	...	60
Militia (Armenians and Portugeuze)	...	...	150
Artillery (Europeans)	...	...	35
Volunteers (consisting of sea officers and Portugeuze helmsmen)	...	...	40
			<hr/> 515

These were the forces to be disposed to receive the attack of the Nabob his army and were marched off the parade in the following manner. To the Court House Battery

Military	...	...	...	...	50
Volunteers	...	...	...	...	20
European Militia	...	...	...	...	20
Artillery	...	...	...	...	8
					<hr/> 98

under the command of Captains Clayton and Holwell with three subaltern officers. To the Southern Battery

Military	...	...	...	...	50
Volunteers	...	...	...	...	20
European Militia	...	...	...	...	20
Artillery	...	...	...	...	8
					<hr/> 98

under the Command of Captains Buchanan and Mackett with three subalterns. To the Northern Battery

Military	...	...	...	...	30
Volunteers	...	...	...	...	10
European Militia	...	...	...	...	20
Artillery	...	...	...	...	8
					<hr/> 68



under the command of Captain-Lieutenants Smith and Mapletoft with three subalterns.

For Garrison duty in the fort were allotted the Armenian and Portuguese Militia consisting of about one hundred and fifty with 25 Military commanded by the remaining subaltern officers.

The remaining 25 Military were posted at the Redoubt of Baag Bazar under the command of Ensign Paccard. As it was expected the enemies forces would attempt their first passage there the remaining part of the Artillery Company were destined for the service of the Fort and Laboratory and 20 of them and their Volunteers were ordered to be ready to march with the seven field pieces at a moment's warning.

As related in the foregoing paragraph was the disposition of our small forces, and during the time of their remaining at the batterys the Military and Militia were disciplined together in the most useful part of the exercise. Additional pay was offered to *lascars*<sup>1</sup> who could have been of great service in working the large guns. The *cooleys*<sup>2</sup> pay was increased as an encouragement to keep them from flight and that our works should be completed. The Military and Militia were allowed diet money and promises of future reward (in case we overcame our enemies of which we believe no man doubted at least until we could be supplied with a reinforcement from the Coast of Coromandel). Having thus mentioned the disposition of our troops, it is time now to give some account of our military stores and fortifications that it may be judged what situation we were in those respects to endure a siege.

First then our guns on the bastions when we first heard of the Nabob his approach were in general in such bad order that scarce a carriage was to be depended upon, nor had we a carriage small or great fit to be drawn out to any of our batteries except two field pieces six pounders, expecting Colonel Scott his indent to Europe for trucks &c. materials would be complied with. To remedy this defect all possible diligence was used and both English and country carpenters were employed night and day in that service and besides the guns mounted at the batteries we had several others in a short time on our bastions in a good condition.

<sup>1</sup> Indian sailors.

<sup>2</sup> Porters or labourers.





With regard to warlike stores we were in a very bad plight, few cannon cartridges or shells being filled or fitted with fuze that could be depended upon, neither had we any quantity of grape shot fit for service, what stores had been formerly prepared being rendered in a great degree useless from the damps of the climate and vermin,<sup>1</sup> but these defects were remedied by the constant labour of those employed in the Laboratory, and our women diligently employed themselves in making cannon cartridges. The most mortifying circumstance we laboured under was the small quantity of gunpowder we had in garrison, not exceeding seven hundred *maunds*, great part of that damp, but this was a larger ballance than we have had remaining for some years past, and it is an impossibility in the Rains to preserve it good. Our fortifications were very disadvantageous to endure a long siege, our parapet being greatly too low to cover our men, neither could we get labourers to bring sand bags or cotton bales to raise them (those kind of people hourly deserting and carrying their families inland). The wall of our parapet not above three feet thick and the embrasures so large as to expose our men greatly on the bastions to small arms. Besides which we were so closely surrounded on all sides by the Church and upper room houses which commanded our whole parapet and bastions that our men could not stand [on] them with any security but were liable to be picked off one by one by the enemy who compleatly overlooked us on all sides as we found afterwards to be the case.

The black merchants and inhabitants<sup>2</sup> were greatly terrified at the near approach of Souragud Dowlet's army sending their women and effects to different parts of the country. They had before been sent for and ordered to erect *futtocks* in different streets of the Black Town,<sup>3</sup> but they are such a niggardly race of people that we gained no assistance or strength to the place from any of those whose great-great-grandfathers had enjoyed the protection of our flag under which they accumulated what they were now possessed of. We should do injustice not to distinguish

<sup>1</sup> Probably refers to white ants.

<sup>2</sup> I am told the term *habitans* is still used by the French Canadians to describe the country settlers.

<sup>3</sup> This term was commonly used in India for the native quarter. There is now no such absolute distinction between the portions occupied by Europeans and natives.



the spirit shewn by Govindram Metre who employed several hands at his part of the town by Baag Bazar in felling down trees and cutting through the roads to break the enemy's passage, stopped up the small avenues leading into our town, and destroyed many houses where the enemy might have obtained shelter.

On the 12th June a letter was brought us from Messrs. Watts and Collet from the opposite side of Houghly informing they were then with the van of the Nabob his army, who then talked very high, and hoped we would consider them as they had been betrayed into that confinement by going to see the Nabob, induced thereto by fair promises, imagining by that step to have prevented the Company's effects being plundered; That they did not think proper to write more as they were in doubt whether any letters could arrive safe. This certain news of the enemy being so nigh at hand made us conclude the several pretexts of Coja Wazud's *duan's* errands were fallacious and that he was a secret enemy under pretence of using his endeavours to accommodate matters and stop the progress of the Nabob his army. Mr. Watts when at Cossimbuzar made mention that he Coja Wazud was not unsuspected being an instigator to the troubles which were then in agitation. Hereupon our forces were told to repair to their quarters, expecting small parties would endeavour to annoy us, and from the foregoing circumstances we could not expect by any means to appease the wrath of the Nabob or to retard his motions, therefore we had nothing left but to appear undaunted at the approach of an army consisting of 65,000 effective men, horse and foot besides a train of artillery and elephants and camels, hoping we should be able to repulse them on the first attack and throw such a fear into the Moors as to make them cautious how they again attempted our lines. It was essayed to draw from the Nabob's army the several Europeans and Portugeuze by application in writing from the priests who by three letters represented to them how contrary it was to Christianity their taking arms in the service of the Moors against Christians, with threats from those priests unless they quitted the evil way they were in and came to our assistance where they would be received into pay. These letters were sent to the Nabob's camp to be delivered the first Christian could be met with. On receipt thereof they declared





there was no means left for them to escape, that had they been before advised of the offence they were committing they could possibly have found an opportunity of coming over to us.

The utmost care was taken that no spies should be harboured within our town and several were taken up on suspicion of coming from the Nabob's camp. Omichund having been suspected that he had engaged with the Government against our interest, a strict eye was kept to seize on any letters that came to him and it having been observed that a small boat had for two days past been seen passing to and fro, a reward was offered to any person that secured her, which was accordingly done the 13th of June and the people were brought up, who denied they had any letters for any person, but after having received punishment they confessed there were two letters hid in the boat directed to Omichund from Rogeram the *Phousdar* of Midnapoor and principal spy to the Nabob, which were perused and contained the following circumstances, 'That it would be prudent for him Omichund to secure his effects in the best manner he could, at the same time he demanded a sum of money due to him and particularly desired that all effects he had in Calcutta might be sent out of the Settlement and assured him of his friendship.' These letters were wrote in a language scarce anyone in the place could read but Omichund's dependants, one of whom had the explanation of them.<sup>1</sup> The caution used to prevent these letters being seized gave strong suspicion that Omichund held further secret correspondence and was engaged in the interest of Souragud Dowlet and that not without good and sufficient grounds founded on the favour which had been for these four years past shewn him by the late and present Nabob, it being a known truth, that two years ago he was offered the Nabobship of Poorenia, and a few days past obtained a *perwannah* giving him the same grants and privileges as enjoyed by Juggetseat, which grant he endeavoured to conceal. This together with the chief provision of the Company's investment being taken out of his hands and his treacherous dealing with Rajabullub's family will we think convince any man that he was deeply engaged to bring about our ruin and to enrich the Nabob in order to save his own wealth and interest with him, a base ingratitude not with any

<sup>1</sup> Omichund was not a Bengali, but an up-country man.





degree of patience to be thought of and which were the motives that determined the President to order him into immediate confinement in the fort and a guard of twenty military to his house that his effects might not be carried away. His brother-in-law Huzzeroomull hearing of the confinement of Omichund concealed himself among the women for that night but was apprehended the next morning by our souldiers on his Huzzeroomull's servants firing on them from the windows, on which he [? they] cut off his left hand and, though it is not materially to the purpose yet it ought not to be passed over in silence, the amazing resolution shown by Jaggernaut the commander of Omichund's *peons* on this occasion, who seeing his master imprisoned killed thirteen women and three children with his *catary*<sup>1</sup> and afterwards set his own house on fire, where was believed were deposited several letters. On our souldiers being attacked by the servants in Omichund's house they entered therein and found several firearms and cutlasses laying about and two small rooms were filled therewith which the military had broke open as Captain-Lieutenant Smith informed the Governour. This may serve as a glaring proof that we had a enemy situated close by our outlines furnished with warlike stores to supply the Moors. At night Mr. Holwell sent word to the factory that Kissendass, son to Rajabullub, had prepared to make his escape and had twice attempted to force his passage through the guard that was placed on his habitation, on which military was sent to secure him. He and his attendants were brought to the factory the 14th June in the morning. This step was pursued to secure his and family's presence before the Nabob if that would have been assisting to moderate his passion.

At noon the 14th June our spies brought us word that a division of the Nabob's army were encamped nigh Barrasut, fifteen miles distance, and that a small party had been seen at Dumduma about seven miles distance. A letter was also received from a renegado Frenchman addressed to the President and Council who informed them that through various misfortunes he had been obliged to take service with the Moors where he had obtained an honourable title, signing himself Le Marquis de Saint Jacques, and, as he flattered himself by having the command of the Nabob

<sup>1</sup> Dagger.





his artillery that he was in no small favour, he doubted not but by his interest he should be able to make an advantageous peace if he had our authority for so doing and that he was extremely pleased to hear from Mr. Renault, the French Director at Chandernagore, that we were in amity. Copy of this letter the President transmitted to Mr. Renault, who replied thereto that this Monsieur Saint Jacques had been an officer and was turned out of Pondicherry with disgrace, that he had likewise committed great enormities at Chandernagore and was a flighty hair brained man not in the least to be depended on or regarded. When this answer came to hand it was imagined sending a reply to his offer of service could no ways prejudice our cause but might be a means of drawing him, the Europeans and Portugeuze under his command, over to our side, wherefore he was wrote to the following purport that we were highly sensible of his offer of service but it was not in our power to stipulate any terms to be made the Nabob as we were quite ignorant of the cause which brought his army against us or of his expectations; that in recompense for his, Monsieur Saint Jacques', good will towards us we assured him a kind reception with the Europeans and Portugeuze under his command, and that if he thought proper to bring them off with him he should have no occasion to complain of our ingratitude. No reply to this letter coming to hand made us doubtful whether or not it reached Monsieur Saint Jacques. A further information we received that this said renegado had been dispatched at the head of 200 horse to the Dutch and French factories demanding from them in the Nabob's name assistance of sloops, ships, cannon and ammunition, with threats, if they refused, to invest their factories on his return from Calcutta, and we were told by a spy that a quantity of gunpowder was landed by the French at Banquebazar.

A report prevailing at Houghly that we had confined Coja Wazud's *duan* occasioned his sending the Governour a letter by *cossid* desiring in short terms we would send Omichund (whom he heard was at our call) or some other person to the Nabob in our behalf. This was looked on as chiefly intending to obtain Omichund his releasement, therefore it was concluded to make this reply that we had before at Coja Wazud's request submitted the Company's affairs with the Government to his management,





that sending Omichund or anyone else to the Nabob after his having offered to espouse our cause we did not see could avail anything in our behalf, therefore as we had before entrusted him to accommodate all differences between the Nabob and us we still relied on his influence to extricate us from Souragud Dowlet's heavy displeasure. Having brought down our situation to this time we shall now resume the account of our military transactions.

The 14th June we appointed three field officers, *viz.*, Colonel Manningham, Lieutenant-Colonel Frankland, and Commandant Minchin each to take his day in four and to visit the out batteries now compleated, to receive all reports and issue orders from the President and Adjutant General. Mr. Manningham at this time seeing the Governour was fully employed and attentively engaged for the prosperity of the Settlement, voluntary offered to undertake the charge of the Marine, which was consented to by minute in Council and application on that branch was hereafter to him applied and his orders followed.

Frequent alarms of the near approach of the enemy made us resolve to make as clear a passage as we could to oppose the attack, for which purpose we set fire to all the straw houses within our Lines, which fire spread itself to a much greater distance. Our *cooleys*, *lascars* and servants now deserted us. The Portuguese and Armenian women with their slaves now filled all the houses adjacent to the factory, and the 16th June in the evening our own women were called into the fort, the alarm signal being made which was three guns fired at a minute's distance from the north-east bastion. Great resolution was still shewn by every individual and we were as we thought sufficiently prepared to hold out against the Moors until we could have further supplies of men and ammunition from the Coast, which we expected to arrive about the 10th August, though we should be obliged to keep the fort, having lain in a quantity of rice, wheat and biscuit with other provisions under our commands within the Lines.

To the period of time the 16th of June at half past one in the afternoon we were not disturbed with the noise of our enemies' cannon, when we received an alarm that an advanced party of the enemy, consisting of 4,000 men and some artillery, were attempting a passage at Baagbazar and that they had raised a battery of





eight pieces of cannon to play on the redoubt. On this advice it was thought proper to reinforce Ensign Paccard's party and accordingly a detachment under the command of Lieutenant Blagg with two field pieces were ordered to march to his relief with the utmost expedition. The cannon of the enemy played chiefly on one of the two sloops which lay before the redoubt and killed five men. On the approach of our field pieces the enemy soon ceased their firing, attempting only to gaul us with their musquetry by keeping themselves concealed behind bushes and as little exposed as possible. Here we lost Mr. Thoresby<sup>1</sup> one of the Volunteers and three European souldiers who had advanced beyond the redoubt. Before dark the enemy was entirely drove off and retreated to the eastward on which Captain Clayton was detached with a small party to cover the retreat of Lieutenant Blagg. This step was thought necessary as they were to pass a number of small avenues least they should have been interrupted and cut off. In the evening we endeavoured to be at a certainty where the main body of the Moors had encamped, which we learnt was in Simily<sup>2</sup> and in and about Omichund's garden, when it was determined to set fire to the straw houses round about where the Nabob's forces lay in order to throw them into confusion and to retard their attack, which was accomplished but it being a dead calm the fire made little or no progress. Our *buxerries* had this day secured some plunderers who were got into some houses, among whom was a *jemidar* who reported to us that the army consisted of such numbers as has before been specified, *viz.*, 65,000 men, horse and foot, that the Nabob was himself about two miles distance and intended to make his general attack on Friday the 18th of June it being esteemed by the Moors a lucky day in the Ramazan which was at this season, to which superstitious notions those people pay the utmost regard. Let it be permitted to make mention that the President was informed that some time since Omichund had wrote the Nabob to hasten his march for that the English were not prepared for any defence, and if he now delayed proceeding with the utmost expedition they would be reinforced with Europe ships and men from the Coast, desiring that his letter

<sup>1</sup> A Company's Servant.

<sup>2</sup> A village or district within the British boundaries.





might not be shewn Coja Wazud who was our firm friend, however Wazud's intimacy with Souragud Dowlet obtained him a sight of that letter by whose means it became published. It is likewise well known that on the Nabob's forces being repulsed at Baagbazar he Souragud Dowlet flew into a great rage and consulted with Monnickhund and others how to make a second attack there when it was agreed to place the elephants and camels in front to receive our cannon shot, by which means their men would be covered and force their entrance, but a message from Omichund altered that resolution and made the forces strike off to the eastward, he advising that an easy entrance into our town would be obtained there, and sent his own *jemidar* to conduct and shew them the passages. This has been declared by some of the *sepoys* and a servant who attended Omichund when in the factory and which servant was deputed to go to Jaggernaut the *jemidar* with those commands.<sup>1</sup>

In the morning of the 17th June large parties began to advance towards our northern and eastern batteries and indeed surrounded about two thirds of our Lines, advancing their cannon in the different avenues as they approached. From the northern battery Lieutenant Sumner and Ensign Walcott were detached with a small party of military and militia with a field piece to secure the principal avenues leading to that battery against which a party with an European at their head seemed to be forming a design of erecting one, but our cannon soon dispersed them and we had no further molestation that day at that quarter except that the plunderers who came close up to some breastworks within that command kept our musquetry in full employ. Their whole force now seemed to be bent against our battery which was commanded by Captains Clayton and Holwell, but soon perceived their intention was not to expose themselves to our batteries but that their dependance was on their great numbers to force themselves into the unguarded parts of our Lines and to take possession of our houses to annoy us with their small arms ; for this reason we detached several small parties to guard such dwellings that we were most exposed to, but with so small a force it was impossible to detach the least force to them all, at most being able only to spare a serjeant and

<sup>1</sup> It must be remembered that Omichand was at this time imprisoned in the fort.





ten men to any of the houses we did take possession of. Before noon 4 or 500 of the enemy entered into that part of the town inhabited by our black merchants setting fire all about and plundering what they could find, committing most horrid cruelties. *Buxerries* were sent to disperse them but with very little effect having only brought in a few prisoners, from whom we learnt that the Nabob's artillery consisted of about sixty-five pieces [of] cannon, most of them large, which were directed by Europeans and Portuguese. The general attack being now soon to be expected a confused noise of the shrieks, cries, and entrance into our factory of the several women and children and their attendants was heard who had before situated themselves in the houses within our Lines. If we mention that the whole number of these incumbrances was 2,500 we shall not exceed; about 500 of which took immediately with our shipping. In the evening two field pieces were ordered to be advanced to each battery to be sent out as occasion required, but this did not answer the ends expected for besides the unskilfulness of most of the Train and the small number we had of them together with the desertion of the *lascars* who were to be employed in serving them they did not do that execution which might reasonably have been expected. Another step pursued this day was to take possession of the Goal<sup>1</sup> which commanded the grand avenues leading to the eastern battery. There we posted two small guns mounted on ship carriages and made loop holes fronting that battery. That command was given to Monsieur Le Beaume, a French officer who had left that flag thinking himself ill used and who on this occasion manifested great courage and conduct. With him were posted 6 military, 6 militia and 40 *buxerries*. This evening every person repaired to the stations allotted them and advanced centinels were placed to prevent a surprize from the Moors. Crow feet were ordered to the three batteries to be thrown on the road where we expected an advance of horse and things remained quiet after eight this night until the morning following, the 18th of June, when about sunrise we had notice that the enemy's army had divided themselves into three bodies in order to make three attacks, the first was on our northern battery and which was

<sup>1</sup> Jail





repulsed after a quick fire from our cannon and musquetry during the space of two hours, when the enemy had lost a number of their men. The second was made on the Goal where they advanced with two pieces of cannon, eighteen pounders, on which Monsieur Le Beaume was reinforced with an Ensign and ten volunteers, when he drew out his two small guns to oppose their coming on, but was obliged to retire to his post forthwith, that party being joined by those who had been repulsed at the northern battery and by those who intended an attack on the southern battery. It was now perceived their intent was to possess themselves of the Goal, to which place they advanced and kept a continual fire thereon but were at that time repulsed by our cannon and partridge. Hereon Captain Clayton (under whose orders Monsieur Le Beaume acted) being apprehensive of being attacked in flank and imagining the Goal could not long be supported sent and demanded the detachment there, and ordered Monsieur Le Beaume to retreat, on which he, considering the great utility of keeping possession thereof and that the enemy would meet with great obstacles without being able to advance through his fire, acquainted Captain Clayton therewith, demanding a further supply of ammunition to be enabled to keep his ground, which he maintained until about three in the afternoon, having lost three fourths of his people and himself and Ensign Carstairs wounded, when the retreat therefrom was made in obedience to repeated orders from Captain Clayton, the communication to supply him with ammunition being then cut off, bringing away the two field pieces which were sent there from the eastern battery, the ammunition which remained, and spiking up the two cannons.

The Goal being evacuated by our people the Moors immediately took possession thereof, the Playhouse and other adjacent houses, having cannon planted under cover of a wall close to the Playhouse. From these their possessions they kept so hot and continual a fire on our eastern battery and on the houses we had pretended to guard as to force those small parties to quit their station and retire to Captains Clayton and Holwell their command. The enemy lost no advantage having thrown in great numbers between the houses of Messrs. Margas and Minchin, occupying every place which could command the eastern battery, and they





were so well covered from every quarter that the cannon there could not annoy them and they stood the fire of our field pieces and small arms with great resolution. In order to batter the houses where the Moors were lodged an eighteen pounder was brought up from the fort and we were put to the shift of drawing up this large cannon by the aid of the militia, the *cooleys* having deserted. With the fire of this cannon the Moors were drove out of some of the houses and numbers of them were killed, but the houses being so numerous and each of them possessed by the enemy there was no possibility of silencing the continual fire they kept on the eastern battery which on the contrary hourly increased. The factory was annoyed from nine in the morning until the close of the evening with cannon shot, partridge, and fire arrows from the enemy, during which time the fort fired their cannon and threw cohorn and mortar shells from the bastions and rampart commanding the eastward part of the town, which was found to do execution at the Goal and several of the houses, and once a shout was heard that the Nabob's forces had retired from that quarter being drove in great numbers out of the Playhouse, which was again soon filled with people.

Captain Clayton judging that his post could not be held until next morning desired Mr. Holwell to bring us that report to the factory, which he did in the evening after having held argument thereon with Captain Clayton. The report was that the enemy pressed hard on them, that they were surrounded on all sides except in the avenues leading to the factory, and that they thought the post no longer defensible and requested leave to retreat. On which as we were highly sensible how material it was to keep possession of that battery a reinforcement was ordered thereto with positive orders not to quit, if possible to be defended until next day, when we imagined from the number of men slain of the enemies by the fire from the fort and other places a terror might seize them in the night and that they would decamp if we continued to appear resolute, fearful that we should fall on them, but before Mr. Holwell returned to Captain Clayton, or the succours arrived, he had beat the retreat which greatly astonished the several military and militia in that command, coming only away with their field pieces, on which an exulting noise was heard from



the enemy who immediately entered our lines between Mr. Nixon's and Captain Minchin's houses to the south-east.

Captain Buchanan's battery being at some distance advanced to the southward was now left liable to be cut off from any communication to the fort, for which reason he had before been ordered to retire with his guns to another inner battery erected for that purpose, commanding the same avenue as the further advanced battery did, and which was now thought too risquous to endeavour maintaining as also the northern battery, both which were recalled, the enemy having possession of the Court House and eastern battery.

This retreat gave everybody no small shock, being sensible how little able we were to defend ourselves in a fort which was from every quarter overlooked by houses, joined with the appearance of our field pieces and ammunition being brought in by our own small forces, almost every *cooley* and *lascar* having took to flight, so that the great guns on the outward batteries could not be brought in, they were therefore spiked up and dismounted. Our safety now seemed to depend on taking possession of the Church and houses which commanded the bastions and curtains, and those too in reverse, and which in the hands of the enemy were so many forts against us even with small arms. The next step was to dispose our troops in them to the best advantage, whereupon a Council of War was called to deliberate on the measures and ways still to repulse the enemy. This was about seven in the evening of the 18th June when it was agreed that the Church, situated about thirty yards distance from our front gate, should be possessed by Captain Clayton with a party of 25 militia and military, that Lieutenant Bishop should with the same number post himself in Mr. Eyre his house close to the Church on the northward and which entirely commanded the north-east bastion of the fort. Captain-Lieutenant Smith and a party of 30 military and militia was ordered to Mr. Cruttenden's house, directly opposite Mr. Eyre's and situated within twenty yards to the northward of the fort and which commanded the whole north-east curtains with the north-east and north-west bastions. Lieutenant Blagg was posted in the Company's House situated to the southward of the fort with 25 military and militia and which com-





manded the south curtain, south-east and south-west bastions. The rest of the troops were divided on the several bastions and curtains and the command of each bastion was given to the two most experienced sea captains that offered themselves out of the whole number, and Captain Weddrington of the Artillery Company was appointed to see that the ammunition was properly supplied. These necessary dispositions brought on night when we were left by every individual *lascar* and *cooley* kept in pay for the service of the great guns, the enemy keeping a constant fire on our fort until almost midnight. Our factory was crowded with women and children of the black inhabitants who, to avoid the cruelty and sword of the enemy, had as before mentioned pressed into the factory with families of our souldiers and militia who were fighting on our side.

We had almost forgot the arrival into the factory of Ensign Paccard and his party who had orders to retreat from Baag-Bazar and who brought with him his cannon and ammunition by water and whose whole behaviour merits the utmost commendation.

Messrs. Manningham and Frankland, Colonel and Lieutenant Colonel, had in the daytime pressed the sending on board of ship our own women and children which was at the Council of War concluded on and those gentlemen voluntary offered to see them on board, the ships *Dadley* and *Diligence* being designed to receive them and a detachment of thirty men was ordered for the safeguard of such women and children, but so great was the confusion and disorder which prevailed that no regularity in the execution of orders were at this time put in practice, the men being so fatigued there was no rousing those who were not on immediate duty on the bastions and curtains to stand to their arms, and with difficulty Monsieur Le Beaume, though wounded, obtained four souldiers as an escort to them. The Company's treasure was ordered to be shipped off which could not exceed 80,000 rupees, however that order was neglected, the Treasury being locked and the key (in the possession of the Sub-Treasurer and *Banyan*) not to be found that night. These foregoing dispositions being formed the Council of War broke up at half an hour past eight in the evening. Soon after Lieutenant Blagg requested that he and his party might have orders to retreat into the fort as they found the Company's house





so annoyed from Captain Rannie's which was situated close to the southward, from whence the enemy kept a very hot fire that it was not possible to maintain it any longer. His representation appeared fact and leave was given for their retreat. The President expressed himself astonished that Messrs. Manningham and Frankland did not return ashore. Their absence with Lieutenants Holme, Wedderburn and Sumner caused no small uneasiness to several. About ten Captain Holwell was by the President acquainted there seemed to be a sloth in the garrison and as he imagined occasioned by those gentlemen not returning from the *Dadley* at which he also expressed a surprize, when Colonel Manningham's note was received sent by Lieutenant Wedderburn importing that the thirty military were not come on board, this seeming intention of his and the other militia officers remaining out of the fort drew from the Governour a note signifying that the military could not then be spared and requiring his, Colonel Manningham's, presence ashore as quite necessary, to which no reply came to hand.

At eleven at night we were alarmed with the enemy's being under our walls and so adjacent were they as to distinctly hear they were preparing as was thought bamboo ladders to scale our walls, when our cannon to that quarter interrupted their design. The President who was then on the curtain to the southward ordered the commanding officer at the guard gate to beat to arms but without having the success of any man then off duty appearing and but one bastion answered the challenge which was given from the veranda of the new Consultation Room, neither had those on the curtains and bastions been regularly relieved, which prompted a second order for to beat to arms, but such was the fatigue our men had underwent in the day time that there was no rousing them. At about half past one of the 19th June in the morning at a third beat of arms, the Armenians and Portugeze militia were quite dispirited and there was a constant call from our out posts for water and provision, none of them having had any refreshment the whole preceding day and the same complaint had been loud within our walls, for though care had been taken to lay in a quantity of provisions and some heads of the Armenians and Portugeze provided cooks to dress for their own people and