



several of our own lodged in the factory, yet we found ourselves quite destitute of all those helps, even the Governour had no servant but one slave boy. At two this morning, when were with him assembled Captain Minchin, Buchanan, Withrington, Grant, Holwell, Mackett, Lieutenant Court, O'Hara, Ensigns Coales, Baldrick, Messrs. Symson engineer, Baillie, Eyre, Fullerton, Beaumont, Nixon, Valicourt and Lindsay who, having a due sense of our present distressed condition by the fatigue our men on duty had underwent, the disorder of many of the militia and military who had got in liquor, a general complaint for want of provisions, encumbered with at least fifteen hundred women and children and their attendants, together with the enemy being close under our walls and in possession of many of our adjacent houses, in the midst of all this general confusion the before mentioned gentlemen met together and everyone was at liberty to give their opinion, when the Captain of the Artillery was first called on to know the state of our ammunition, who reported that in proportion of our expence there was no more left than sufficient for two days firing, and that the greatest part thereof was damp and not fit for use until dried, and that neither the weather or our present situation would afford an opportunity to dry it. This single circumstance put it out of all doubt but we should be obliged to retreat in that time having no prospect to effect a capitulation. The next consideration was what we might expect to be our situation at break of day, many of our men being drunk and in such state subject to no command, bayonets having been drawn on Messrs. O'Hara and Coales who were ordering some to their duty, no prospect of provision being to be got dressed for them, the Company's House expected to be in possession of the enemy on its being abandoned by us, by which means our people would not be able to stand [on] the south curtain or bastion whereby the barrier leading from the Company's House to the fort would in a manner be left defenceless; these and many other considerations intervening being canvassed, everyone present at that meeting except Mr. Baillie were of opinion there was no security for any of our lives but a retreat on board our ships. The next consideration was when and in what manner it ought to be done, it then being past two in the morning and too late then thought by the



majority to be executed, being flood tide and not a sufficient number of boats remaining to carry off our men, those people having likewise left their employ and fled with their families into the country, besides the numbers which were carried away by the Portuguese women and others and which did not return to our wharf. It was therefore agreed if possible to stand the day's attack though much against the inclination of some present, particularly Mr. Holwell, who strenuously asserted the necessity of an immediate retreat if possible for all, and who evidently foresaw the confusion break of day would produce, for should the enemy get possession of the Company's and Mr. Cruttenden's house, it was an impossibility for any boats to lay at our wharf and we must inevitably have fallen a sacrifice to the Moors, from whom we expected no quarter, and any terms we could propose to the Nabob would not be listened to except that we had consented to deliver up our cannon, pull down our bastions and all fortifications, and submit to inhabit in these dominions as Armenians, which articles had we dared to comply with, would, with this rash Nabob, have submitted us to an easy prey at the expence of being plundered and no security left for future times. Omichund was solicited by Mr. Holwell to go to the Nabob in our behalf though imagined by many to have been deeply engaged in this catastrophe. His refusal was sufficient to confirm he well knew the Nabob's determination to drive us out of the country and had been instrumental in bringing on these troubles.

A circumstance though not very material is thought proper to be inserted to shew how watchful the black women &c. were to make their escape. It was with the most profound silence Mr. Lindsay, a lame gentleman (having had the misfortune to lose his leg), was permitted on request to quit the factory, yet he was followed by numbers who took to boat and were carried off. On his arrival on board the *Dadley* when he found Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Holme, Sumner and Monsieur Le Beaume, he acquainted them with the sentiments of all the gentlemen he had then parted from; which information made those gentlemen as they aver alter the resolution they had taken to come ashore at the setting in of the flood tide and to give what assistance lay in their power to favour the general retreat. They determined to



remain on board and endeavoured to send up small vessels and boats for that purpose to lay before the factory.

At break of day, the 19th June, things were found in as dreadful a situation as was expected. Many of the souldiers and Portugeze and Armenian militia unfit for duty, no preparations for getting any provisions dressed which caused great murmurings and complaint. However in this situation we did not doubt but those men who could not be rouzed at night would on the appearance of day gladly take to their arms and assist their utmost to repulse an enemy, from whom no quarter was expected if taken prisoners, but vain were our expectations for though we beat incessantly to arms scarce a man appeared of the Portugeze and Armenian militia or our souldiery, until the Governour, Messrs. Holwell and Baillie went through every part of the factory where many had hid themselves to encourage and bring them to their duty, to which they came but very faintly.

The southerly new *godowns*, on which were mounted cannon, being quite exposed to the enemy's fire from the Company's House, we endeavoured to carry up bales of cotton which were landed from the *Dadley* but for want of hands we were obliged to empty rice bags and fill them, some few of which we were able to get up before the Moors began to fire on us very warmly from the eastward and southward and attack our detachments which were guarding the Church, Messrs. Cruttenden's and Eyre's houses. It became now our duty to fire briskly on them from our two bastions on the land side and from the curtains to cover our people in the Church and those houses, but to very little purpose the forces against us being concealed under adjacent walls behind and in possession of houses close thereby. It may not be improper to mention here that the Moors had not possessed themselves of the Company's House as was expected, and looking on that place as of the utmost consequence (being not only necessary to defend our men on the southerly curtain but useful in protecting the boats, few of which remained, from deserting or being carried away though the utmost care had been taken to keep them together by placing *peons* as a guard over them) Ensign Paccard with twenty five military were there placed.

At sunrise we perceived that a numerous body of the enemy



were advancing on us from the eastward, they had in the night taken shelter of the battery quitted by Captain Clayton and had mounted cannon thereby. They also threw up a battery by Mr. Bellamy's habitation and had brought cannon to several other places where they could annoy us keeping a constant fire on our out posts and bastions therewith and with their small arms. Those in the factory returned their fire so fast that it was several times forbid the extravagant expence of powder which there would be soon occasion of want thereof to use. Numbers of the enemy were perceived to fall but their numbers increasing from every [side] we found it impossible to repulse them. At eight this morning Lieutenant Bishop, who was posted with a party of men in Mr. Eyre his house, desired leave to retire into the fort, the enemy gauling them so much from the contiguous houses that it was impossible to maintain it any longer. As the suffering this party to retreat into the fort would necessarily occasion the same orders to be given to all the out posts (for on the enemy's placing themselves there it would be an impossibility to maintain the Church or Mr. Cruttenden's house), Mr. Bishop was ordered to remain if possible until the evening, it being of the utmost consequence that he should do so that the general retreat might be made pursuant to our resolutions the night preceeding, but on his further pressing the necessity thereof, many of his men being killed, it was thought requisite to comply therewith and he and his party were then ordered to reinforce Captain Clayton in the Church, who about this time came to the factory and declared he was so beset by the enemy that he could no longer dwell there with his party and that some of them were killed. Soon after Ensign Paccard was brought from the Company's House wounded and his party came in, the enemy some of them having entered the yard of the said house. The Moors having now obtained lodgment in Mr. Eyre's and Company's houses the other outposts were permitted to quit their stations and our bastions and curtains were supplied with an additional number of men who kept up a vigorous fire on the Nabob's forces, which pressed on with great resolution. Now appeared the utmost horror amongst the women in the factory, running to and fro with their children, many sucking at the breast, to escape from the shot flying about



us and to retire from hunger they had endured. The effect of these incumbrances was now felt, they having carried away all our boats except five at half past nine in the morning and so crowded into them that many were upset and the passengers who fled from the cruelty of the Moors many of them were drowned. Our common souldiers and black militia [were] mutinous and under no command. The most dreadful circumstance was that our ammunition had been delivered to the several bastions and curtains by ten this morning except that which was damp and reported unfit for service by Captain Withrington the night before, the person who was employed in that service of delivering the powder making the Governour sensible thereof by a whisper and which was well known to several who were not on immediate duty and was the imagined cause of their flocking into the passage leading to the back gate where no orders given were to be heard through the crowds of the Portugeuze females and several of the black militia who were pressing to get off shore which many of them did carrying what boats then remained at the wharf.

It was now confidently affirmed that the enemy were attempting to force our barriers which would give them possession of the whole part of our parade by the water side. On which the Governour called several times to have the gates of our factory house shut but to no purpose, nor could he obtain any detachment to work the field pieces placed by the water side to defend those barriers. In this tumult the ships and vessels were all dropping down below the fort without orders and several persons had then quitted the factory which made it appear utterly impossible (with only about two hundred and fifty forces within our walls and an incumbrance now remaining of at least eight hundred women, children, and their attendants) to make any retreat, the method of doing it being frustrate by the desertion and carrying away of the boats intended for that purpose in case of necessity, had been agreed on the night before, though then unsurmountable difficulties occurred to everyone in the performance of it when it was universally allowed the fort was not tenable with so small a quantity of ammunition remaining, above half of which was then said to be useless and as there was nothing to be



expected from the known disposition of the Nabob but the utmost cruelty to be inflicted, these reasons made it appear justifiable and necessary to the Governour to provide for his own safety. About eleven in the forenoon as he saw his staying any longer could be of no service and had no hopes of being able to make a general retreat as a small space of time before when he was by the line of guns by the water side he only saw one *budgerow*<sup>1</sup> which was full of people and an empty *parwnsway*<sup>2</sup> which he went on board of soon afterwards with Captain Grant and Mr. O'Hara, many having before quitted the shore and Captain Minchin and Mr. Mackett then getting into a *budgerow* and such as could find any conveyance lost no time to provide for their escape (from a merciless foe) crowding to the wharf for that purpose. The impossibility of a general retreat being made every conveyance, ships and vessels, being moving down the river made the President conclude on the step he now took, firmly imagining every individual would embrace any occasion which should offer to follow him. In this situation he was fired on by the enemy with small arms and fire arrows from the Company's House, Dockhead, and from the shore as far as any European houses reached in his passage down the river to the ship *Dadley*, on board of which ship were the majority of our women and some of our militia with Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, Holmes, Sumner, Mapletoft and others, whom he informed of the situation of the forces remaining in the factory and of the numerous body of the Moors having for some time had possession of the Company's House and other places adjacent to the fort, and that he saw all hopes of a retreat was cut off unless we could send vessels and boats to favour the escape of those remaining behind, which were computed to be about two hundred besides the wounded, on which orders were immediately sent to the Company's ship *Prince George* to lay before the factory (she then being on her way down from Baag Bazar where she was before stationed). Two sloops and what boats we could speak with were also told to proceed up the river, but by reason of the smart fire which was kept on them from the water side and from the houses built there by this intended succour did not reach the fort so that no resource was left for their safety but some extra-

<sup>1</sup> A kind of native house-boat.

<sup>2</sup> A passenger-boat.



ordinary event, it appearing to us they had no means for their escape, therefore that they would be necessitated to surrender themselves up to the mercy of the Moors or dye by their walls. Nevertheless we remained all this night a little below the factory to observe if we could be any ways assisting to our forces shut up there, and used all possible means by large promises to any sloops or boats we could then speak with to persuade them to attempt proceeding up, which Captain Nicholson in the *Hunter* schooner essayed but before he reached the distance of the Dockhead the *lascars* threatened to throw themselves overboard and would not assist in the working of the vessel, which obliged him to return to us. At three in the afternoon we had the mortification to observe that the Company's ship had run ashore and from advice afterwards we were informed the *lascars* had deserted her and that she had only one anchor remaining. At the close of day the Dockhead, Company's House and Mr. Cruttenden's appeared in flames and so great was the fire and smoke that the fort could not be distinguished. In the night flames were perceived throughout the town. A more wretched and helpless situation could not happen in any siege to the forces within the walls surrounded by the enemy and fire, no prospect of a retreat, a certainty that the Moors would be cruel, and starving in the midst of plenty for want of proper people to dress any provisions.

On Sunday the 20th June in the morning the smoke from the fire kindled in the night being dispersed we plainly observed numbers of the Moors on the water side adjacent to the factory, and by accounts since the enemy had killed a great many of our people on the curtains and bastions from their adjacent houses and by their getting on the top of the Church which obliged most of our men to abandon that side of the fort; that about four in the afternoon a Moor came running up to the factory as if he wanted to parley. When Mr. Holwell appeared on the ramparts the Moorman declared the Nabob had given orders to cease firing, requesting we would not commit any further hostilities, and an accommodation might be brought about. On this Mr. Holwell ordered all the souldiery who had been on duty for two days and nights to refresh themselves with sleep, but they had scarcely betaken themselves to rest when the fort was scaled at several



places and numbers of the enemy were entered within the factory who had planted several small flags on the bamboos close under the walls and being likewise furnished with small ladders they mounted our walls with precipitation scarce credible to Europeans. This piece of treachery in the Nabob by which means an opportunity was given for his men quietly to possess our bastions and curtains left no room for any further opposition on our side, yet the men remaining stood to their arms with great resolution until they were threatened by a *jemidar* that if they fired they would be all cut to pieces but that if they quietly surrendered the Nabob had given orders for their being well used, upon which most of the military threw down their arms, a few excepted who lost their lives in persisting to make a resistance. About an hour afterwards Souragud Dowlet entered the factory and held a kind of *Durbar* there to receive the compliments of his officers, among whom was Monsieur Saint Jacques the renegado Frenchman before mentioned who had the chief command of the artillery. The prisoners were brought before him and implored his mercy, when he was carried to another place where Mr. Holwell was conducted to him with his hands bound. Omichund and Kissendass were released and permitted to pay their respects to the Nabob and it is reported that the former's houses were during the siege guarded and protected by the enemies' forces from plunder. Thus was the loss of our Settlement completed and Calcutta destroyed and pillaged by an enemy hitherto contemptible and who shewed themselves at this time of the cruellest disposition, for some of our souldiers having made too free with liquor were riotous, which occasioned the Nabob to order every person his prisoner to be confined without distinction from Mr. Holwell down to the common militia. His people, having no compassion on our sufferings, thrust them into the Black Hole, a very small place with little or no air, in which were put near two hundred persons without water or any kind of provisions, and so pent up were they as to be forced to trample one upon another. The prodigious heat joined to the noisome stench of several wounded men who were put in with them and who had no relief at hand was sufficient of itself to put an end to their miserable beings having been shut up from nine in the evening until seven in the morning of the 21st June,



when there were not left alive more than twenty-five out of the number shut up, among these seven or eight Company's servants and officers, all the rest, except those who had been so fortunate as to be furnished with the means of an escape and those who fell on the bastions, ramparts and outposts, having perished in this inhuman and ignominious manner. The Laboratory and part of the factory house was that night set on fire.

All hopes vanishing whereby any relief could be given to those remaining in the factory, the several ships and vessels fell down to Surman's garden within sight of Calcutta and there lay until the 21st June in the morning when it was essayed to pass Tannah's fort, but such was the haste that everyone was in to pass that the misfortune befell us to lose the *Neptune* snow and *Calcutta* sloop, which were immediately plundered by the enemy and obliged the remaining fleet consisting of the following ships and vessels to stand back (namely the *Dadley*, *Fame*, *Lively* grabb, *Diligence*, *Ann* snow, *Fortune* ketch, and *London* sloop with five other small vessels belonging to the black merchants) on account of the confusion there was in working the vessels. About five in the evening the *Bombay* frigate and *Speedwell* from Bombay joined us, on which ships Tannah's fort had fired in their passage up, where they had fifteen cannon mounted. The wind at this time increasing and being favourable we again weighed and stood through against the tide, the *Speedwell* losing one man and two wounded. The 24th June we passed Bougbouggee being arrived [? joined] by the *Success* gally arrived from Madrass. The enemies forces were also lodged there and batteries were erecting. This day the *Diligence* run aground and was plundered and we found orders were come to every head person at the villages to prevent our being supplied with provisions, of which we were very short not having a week's sustenance in the fleet of either food, wood or water, every vessel being crouded with men, women and children, country born Portuguese. This sad prospect added to our late unhappiness determined us to set ashore such who had no connection with the Europeans and to proceed to Fulta where the Dutch have a small residence, in hopes of supplying ourselves with necessaries of life and anchors, which we were much in want of, where we arrived the 26th June with an addition to our fleet of the Honourable



Company's sloop *Syren* from Madrass and another ship *Speedwell* from Bombay. At this place we agreed to remain in hopes of expected succours from Madrass and for intelligence from some of our servants or others who had been taken prisoners, and as it was represented as a place of safety for our ships and vessels and that we were supplied by stealth with small quantities of provision. Here shall be finished a narrative of a most unhappy event with every fact enumerated to our present recollection, abiding herein in the path of truth. As any other occurrence rise in the memory which have been transacted or passed over, or future intelligence of springs which actuated Souragud Dowlet to make so lawless an attack on the English, they shall hereafter appear as a supplement hereto. Dated at Fulta this 19th July, 1756.

ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR.

67. *Declaration by Francis Sykes.*

I Francis Sykes being a Company's servant at Cossimbuzar do declare (without the least partiality to any gentleman whatever) what he knows (*sic*) concerning Kissendass leaving Muxadavad and taking up his residence in Calcutta.

About the middle of March when Alliverdy Cawn, the late Nabob, was languishing of a fatal disorder, a number of inhabitants were daily hiring houses both in Cossimbuzar and in all other places where they were to be had. At this very time Rajahbullub a man of considerable wealth and power applied to William Watts, Esq., Chief at Cossimbuzar for his interest to get his son Kissendass and his family admitted into Calcutta till his wife was brought to bed; who afterwards was going to Jaggernaut Pagoda. The Chief accordingly wrote to the Governour and Mr. Manningham to have him admitted, which was accordingly done by Mr. Manningham, the Governour being at that time at Ballasore.

On the 9th of April the Nabob died when Surragud Dowlat took upon him the Government, but was for a few days opposed by the *Begum*, wife of the late *Chutah Nabob*.<sup>1</sup> This Rajahbullub was her acting person amongst her forces and one whom she consulted and advised with in the desperate situation of affairs, but her forces

<sup>1</sup> The young Nawab, or heir to the throne. Here refers to Nawajis Muhammad, eldest uncle of Siraj-uddaula.



being discontented, were in a very short time brought over to Surragud Dowlat by his threats and the solicitations of others, when Rajahbullub and all his family that were in the city were brought into disgrace and a spy sent to Calcutta supposed with no other view than to observe Kissendass and his family. The Chief's writing to the Governour and Mr. Manningham to admit Kissendass was never made publick or any consultation held at Cossimbuzar thereupon, but that as soon as the gentlemen came to hear of it they thought it a very imprudent step to shew favour to him or to any person in the *Begum's* service, being not the least prospect that she should ever come to the Government and more so, as our *vackeel* was several times sent for by the Nabob who said that if we gave the *Begum* any assistance or protected any of her people he would highly resent it. From what had passed and by the false representations of the spy to the Nabob concerning our building new fortifications, the Nabob wrote a letter to the Governour signifying his displeasure at our proceedings therein. The Governour answered it which was enclosed to the Chief of Cossimbuzar for him to forward the Nabob. Upon its arrival the *vackeel* explained it, when I do declare to have heard Mr. Watts two or three times mention he thought it a very proper answer and, agreeable to orders, sent it to the Nabob. This is all I can bring to remembrance concerning Kissendass taking up his residence in Calcutta.

68. *Letter from Mr. William Lindsay to Mr. Robert Orme concerning the loss of Calcutta, dated 'Syren' sloop, off Fulta, — July, 1756.*

DEAR SIR,—It is hardly possible for me to express with what concern I sit down to write you this letter, the subject of which being nothing less than to give you a short account of such a scene of destruction and desolation as makes me tremble when I think of the consequences that it will be attended with not only to every private gentleman in India but to the English Nation in general.

I wrote you in my last the Nabob was marching against us with a very large army and a number of cannon. Four thousand of his army attacked our redoubt at Perrings on Wednesday the 16th of June with several pieces of cannon but were repulsed by Ensign Picard with about 50 men. The next day they made a bridge at Cow



Cross and at several other places and vast numbers entered our bounds plundering and setting fire to every house. In the evening the whole Town was surrounded. It will be here proper to mention we had raised several batteries, one at the Court House, one by the saltpetre *godown* and another by Mr. Burrows his house, upon each of which were mounted one nine and one six pounder besides which there was breastworks raised at all the small avenues between the batteries. Several thousands this night got into the great *Buzar* where they murdered every person they met and plundered and set fire to all the houses.

On Friday morning the enemy endeavoured to enter at several of the small avenues and at the battery by the saltpetre *godown*, where they got such a warm reception as obliged them to retire. The enemy about 8 o'clock were advancing down the road opposite to the Goal with two large pieces of cannon, where they were very warmly received by the advance guard from the Court House battery, which battery was commanded by Captains Clayton and Holwell. The dispute lasted for several hours, but the enemy getting possession of the adjacent houses galled our men so much that they had an order from the battery to retire into the Goal. This was between 11 and 12 o'clock. There continued a very warm fire to and from the Goal till about 1 o'clock. Many of our men being killed they were obliged to retire to the battery; the enemy lost no advantage on this but immediately took possession of the Goal, the Playhouse, and all the other houses that overlooked the Court House battery, on which they kept a continual fire of musquetry. By this time the enemy had obliged our men to retire from the tops of the houses adjacent to the other batteries where they were placed to prevent the enemy's taking possession of them, and, notwithstanding we kept a warm fire from the bastions of the fort on the several houses the enemy had got possession of and threw several shells into them, we never were able to dislodge them from one house. About four o'clock Mr. Holwell came to the factory and acquainted the Governor that there was so warm a fire upon the battery that he was stationed at, that they would be obliged to leave it unless there was means found to dislodge the enemy from the houses that overlooked them, and that they had got into some [upon] which they could not bring one cannon



at the battery to bear. The Governor and the other gentlemen being sensible of the consequence of quitting that battery ordered a reinforcement of seventy men and two eighteen pounders to march to their assistance, but before they could get the length of that battery Captain Clayton had spiked all the cannon and had beat a retreat (from this one action we may greatly impute the loss of Calcutta) upon which we heard the enemy make a shout and immediately hoisted their colours upon that battery. This occasioned all the other batterys being recalled. Now for the first time we began to look upon ourselves in a dangerous way. You must remember very well the situation of our fort, a range of *godowns*, one end of which joined to the southwest and the other end to the south east bastions which prevented their flanking them, *godowns* so weak that it was even dangerous venturing four pounders upon them. The Company's House not only overlooking them but also the two bastions. The Church overlooked the north east and south east bastions and also the curtain to the land. Mr. Eyre's house entirely commanding the north east bastion as did also Mr. Cruttenden's the north west bastion and the curtain to the northward. All our *cooleys* and *lascars* having now left us we was in a very distressed condition.

It was thought absolutely necessary for us to take possession of the above houses which was accordingly done. It is almost impossible to conceive the confusion there was in the fort there being at least two thousand women and children, nor was there any method to prevent their coming in as the military and militia declared they would not fight unless their families were admitted in the factory. It was now about 7 o'clock when a report was brought from the Company's House that the party could not longer dwell therein as there was a continual fire upon them from the next house. It was now thought necessary to send our ladies on board some of the ships which was accordingly done, Messrs. Manningham and Frankland conducting some of them. The enemy began now to fire very warmly upon the fort from all quarters. Our garrison began to murmur for want of provisions, having not a single cook in the fort notwithstanding there had been several lodged there on purpose to dress their provisions. The whole garrison quite fatigued having been under arms great part of the



preceeding night. Many of the military and militia having got at liquor began to be very mutinous and under no command, having drawn bayonets on several of their officers. About 12 o'clock news was brought us that the enemy were going to storm the fort, there being ladders preparing close under the range of *godowns* to the southward, immediately every person repaired to the curtain where we absolutely heard them at work. Orders were now given to beat to arms but none of the Armenians or Portuguese appeared, having hid themselves in different parts of the fort. We threw some hand granades amongst the enemy which soon dislodged them. About two o'clock in the morning the 19th June, there being several military and many private gentlemen present, a council of war was held and every one present (being sensible of our situation and of the enemy we had to deal with, expecting no quarter if taken prisoners) was at liberty to give his opinion. The Captain of the Artillery was first called upon to inform us in what a situation our ammunition was in, who replied if we fired at the rate we had done the preceeding day there was not sufficient in the whole for above two days firing and great part of that damp and unfit for service. This one circumstance put it out of all dispute that we should be obliged to retreat or capitulate within that time. As for the latter there appeared very little prospect of success, his first demand being nothing less (as Mr. Watts informed us) than pulling down all our fortifications, paying him seven *corors* of rupees and delivering up our guns and ammunition, and living in his country on the same footing as Armenians. These and many other circumstances being thoroughly canvassed it was the unanimous opinion of everyone present that the fort was not tenable and the only safety we had for our lives was to retreat on board of our ships. Mr. Holwell was of opinion the retreat ought to be made immediately but all the rest differed from him for these reasons, first that it would be impossible to call the parties from the houses and get them shipped off before daylight, secondly as the flood was just set in they would be greatly exposed to the enemy's fire before they got on board of our ships. It was therefore agreed to continue in the fort till next night and then to make a regular retreat if possible. It was now thought high time to acquaint



Messrs. Manningham and Frankland of the scituation of affairs in the factory and I was accordingly appointed and let out at the back gate for that purpose. I told the gentlemen that as they were resolved to retreat the following night and as I conceived there would be the utmost confusion in the execution of it, let them take the greatest precautions, through the unruliness of the military many of whom were in liquor and at least 1,500 women and children in the factory, very few boats at the *Get* and some of the ships moved down to be out of the way of their fire rockets, and as they were all sensible I could be of very little service in the fort and in case of any confusion on the retreat I should stand no chance of getting off, that if they thought these reasons were sufficient for me to continue on board I would remain there, to which the Governor and Council then present assented. What followed afterwards I shall inform you as it has been represented to me. At daybreak the whole garrison was in the utmost confusion, many of them in liquor, the Portugueze and Armenians so dispirited that it was with the utmost difficulty any of them made their appearance. Before ten o'clock in the morning we were obliged to recall our men from the houses adjacent, which the enemy immediately possessed themselves of. About this time many of the volunteers and other gentlemen went on board of the ships. Chests of money and coral brought to the *Get* and were left there as there was no getting them into the boats such crowds of people were wanting to get off. About 12 o'clock the Governor perceiving all the boats gone from the *Get* but one and that numbers of the enemy were already got to the riverside, this convinced him it would be impossible to make any regular retreat and, deeming it highly necessary and justifiable to everyone to look out for their own safety, this induced him to go on board of that boat on which there was kept a continual fire till he had got on board of the *Dodley*. There was laying a little above the factory the Company's ship the *Prince George*. The gentlemen left in the factory finding all retreat cutt off shutt the gates and were resolved to sell their lives as dear as they could. They made a signal for the *Prince George* to come abreast of the factory but she having only one anchor and cable run ashore and was lost. The enemy had now possession of every house adjacent

to the fort from which there was one continual fire of musquetry upon the factory. There was in the fort many Company's servants. Mr. Holwell after the Governor was gone took the charge of the factory. It was much against his inclination being there, two gentlemen having carried away the *budgerow* he had waiting for him. I mention this as I understand he made a merit in staying when he found he could not get off. The gentlemen in the fort being now quite desperate fought like mad men. On Sunday morning there was above forty men killed on one bastion. About 4 o'clock in the afternoon there was a Moorman came under the walls with a flag of truce and told them the Nabob would cease firing and desired they would as he had proposals to make for an accommodation, which they readily embraced and most of them retired from the bastions to take some refreshments, of which they were in great want. About half an hour after this the Moors scaled the walls on all quarters in a manner almost incredible to Europeans. Now the gentlemen looked upon their scituation as the most desperate. Lieutenant Blagg defended the bastion he was upon till he and his men were cutt to pieces. This officer behaved with the greatest bravery. The gentlemen below drew out and were resolved to die rather than be taken when one of the Nabob's *jemindars* advanced and told them they should not be hurt if they would lay down their arms, the soldiers immediately grounded theirs and the gentlemen were obliged to do the same. About an hour after the Nabob entered the factory and held a *Durbar* to receive the compliments of his officers upon his success. At first they used the gentlemen pretty well but some of the soldiers geting drunk they were all ordered into the Black Hole without distinction to the number of about two hundred. This prison was not large enough to hold one fourth part of the number there. They were pent up from nine at night till six in the morning without anything to drink and the window so small that there was hardly any air. When the door was opened there was not more than twenty or twenty five alive the rest being stifled. Among the living were Messrs. Holwell, Court, Cooke, Lushington, Burdett, and one or two more gentlemen, the rest was soldiers and Portugueze. Holwell was immediately carried to the Nabob and the rest had orders to go where they pleased. Cooke and



Lushington took the *peon* at his word and immediately set out, arrived on board of the ships the same night, we then laying a little above Bugge Buggee. We had a very warm fire upon us as we past Tanna's Fort and several of the ships received damage as they past Buggee Buggee.

Now to give you an account of your concerns in my hands, your tuthenague is entirely lost. I informed you in my last I had wrote to Mr. Holwell and begged he would give me authority to lade it on board some of the ships. I told him I would deliver it to him if he thought he could secure it for you. He said he had no general power of attorney, therefore could give me no authority but that he looked upon it as safe in the Company's House as on board any of the ships. When I heard the Nabob had past Houghly I came to a resolution to send as much of it on board the *Neptune* as I possibly could, but then I could not get a single *cooley* or boat to carry it, and if it had gone it would have shared the same fate, as there was a Company's sloop run foul of her a little above Tannahs. They went ashore and were boarded sword in hand by a vast number of people and plundered in our sight. She had the greatest part of her Persia cargoe on board and I believe a quantity of *couries* belonging to you which Holwell desired might remain on board. I have saved all the jewels deposited with me by Wedderburn on your account, also your Company's bond I had in possession. We hear all the Cossimbuzar gentlemen are in a prison at Muxadavad. That factory was plundered the day after it was taken, therefore the pearls belonging to you and Mr. Moses must also be lost. Your 6,000 rupees in Hastings' hands must have shared the same fate as the Company's *aurungs* are plundered. A few days before the attack on Calcutta, Manningham and Frankland sent to me to receive 4,000 rupees on your account. As I had no occasion for it I immediately sent to Holwell and desired he would send for that sum, his *banian* brought his receipt to me and I gave him mine to be delivered to the gentlemen. Mr. Manningham seeing Mr. Holwell's *banian* come for that sum paid him the ballance of your account. This Mr. Manningham has informed us of since in conversation. Let me assure you Sir, your loss gives me infinite concern. For my part I have lost the greatest part of my own fortune. I did not

save a single coat to my back and out of a large sum of money I had by me I was not able to get off but about 3,000 rupees, so great was the confusion. I have saved all my accounts which is more than any other person has done, hardly one saved anything but what was on his back. The Nabob has given Watts and Collet their liberty who are now at Chandernagore and it is said have liberty to trade. We hear the Moors have pulled down the factory house at Calcutta and all the adjacent houses to the fort. No Europeans upon any account to remain there. The name changed *Allyenagore*. Cotton sold after taking of the place at 5 rupees per *maund* and *couries* at 12 *cawn*<sup>1</sup> for a rupee. The Nabob in his march back without any ceremony sent 100 men into the French factory with pickaxes &c. to pull down their fortifications. They wrote the Nabob they had orders from their Masters to fortify themselves and that they could not deliver up their guns but if he chuse to take them he might, for that they were only merchants and not come there to fight, and further said they were ready to leave the country if their living there was disagreeable to him. However he has made it up with them for the present upon their paying a large sum of money. In the same manner the Dutch came off, but neither of them can carry on the least trade without a *dustick* from the *Phausdar* of Houghley. We have wrote several letters to the *Durbar* to endeavour to get leave to go back to Calcutta. I am as sensible it would be of the utmost consequence to the Company their having even the shadow of a Settlement here as any person, but what security can the Nabob give us we shall not be made a sacrifice of when we are in his power? From his known character there is no relyance upon his word, and to live under a Moor's Government death is preferable. For my own part I am resolved to enter into no Don Quixote adventures. What could induce him to proceed to such lengths as he has done already? He has got a large garrison in our fort and Monickchund is made *Phausdar*. I hardly think all the force we have in India will be sufficient to re-settle us here unto any footing of security, we being almost as much in want of everything as when we first settled here. I don't foresee anything that will prevent my coming up to Madras in August, and though

<sup>1</sup> One *cawn* or *kahan* = 1280 *couries* or *kawris*.



I look upon the Company in such a scituation as to expect no further favours from them I shall not chuse to go home if there is any certainty of our being re-established here. The Moors declared to some of our people that has since escaped that we killed above seven thousand men. This is also confirmed by the French and Dutch and further that there are two thousand in the hospital at Houghly. I think it impossible we can have killed near that number. One of the *zemindars* we took prisoner declared to us that the Nabob's army consisted of 18,000 horse and 30,000 foot, three thousand elephants and camels and a large Train of artillery, to oppose which force we had as follows, military 180, of these not above 40 Europeans, and volunteers 50, militia 60 Europeans, militia 150 Portugueze and Armenians, artillery 35, volunteers 40 consisting of sea officers and helmsmen In all 515. The Dutch inform us that when the Nabob past Chincera there was at least 100,000 men with him. He brought from Muxadavad 7,000 men as plunderers, these were the people that first entered our bounds. We have undergone the greatest fatigues since we left Four [? the Fort] having had hardly anything but rice for some days. Not only the whole country has had orders that we should not be supplied with any provisions but also the French and Dutch, and though there was a Dutch Europe ship arrived a few days ago we got hardly anything out of her. In the night a few of the natives brings off provisions to us by stealth. I believe I must by this time have tired you. I have only had a short warning to scrawl this letter over. I request you will forward the inclosed to my uncle Murray by the first dispatch for Europe either French or English. If the *Delaware* should not be sailed and the Madeira ship arrived, be so good as to buy me a pipe of Madeira if you can get the Captain of that ship to carry it for my uncle and debit my account for the purchase. I have received your favour of the 9th of June but at present cannot enter into business. What has happened to us seems to me at some times like a dream. I am with the utmost sincerity,

Dear Sir, Your affectionate and obliged servant, WILLIAM LINDSAY.

P.S. I take the liberty of inclosing you a power of attorney

and beg you will act for me and receive from Messrs. Adams and Edwards what concerns of mine they have in their hands (agreeable to my directions to them). If Messrs. Clark and Russoll tenders you any money please to receive it. Several disputes amongst ourselves puts everything in great confusion. Mr. Manningham's going up to the Coast was the occasion of most of the Company's servants and inhabitants throwing in a Remonstrance to the Governor, setting forth he was an improper person as he left the fort before there was any retreat resolved upon and would not come back and attend the Council when sent for. He and Mr. Frankland has been very near throwing up the service. I wish I had not signed it. My intentions were very different from the effects it has had, being only to prevent him from going to the Coast as I looked upon his presence absolutely necessary in case of an accident happening to Mr. Drake. *Entre nous* everything that was set forth in the Remonstrance can be proved, at least several people offers to take their oath of it and upon their veracity I signed, WILLIAM LINDSAY.

*Company's Servants Saved.*<sup>1</sup>

Messrs. Drake.  
Manningham.  
Frankland.  
Pears.  
Mackett.  
Sumner.  
Ellis.  
Billers.  
Lindsay.  
O'Haro.  
Vasmer.  
Cooke.  
Lushington.  
Charlton.  
Leyster.  
Senior.  
Tooke.

Messrs. Orr.  
Gray Senior.  
Gray Junior.  
Fullerton.

*Arrived from Jugdea.*

Messrs. Amayett.  
Flodell.<sup>2</sup>  
Smyth.  
Hay.  
Midleton.  
Officer Mure.

*Arrived from Ballasore.*

Messrs. Boddam.  
English.  
Officer Keen.

<sup>1</sup> This list follows Lindsay's letter, but it is not quite certain that it belongs to it.

<sup>2</sup> Pleydell.



*Gentlemen at Dacca said to be  
safe in the French Factory  
there.*

Messrs. Becher.  
Scrafton.  
Hyndman.  
Carteir.  
Waller.  
Johnstone.  
Officer Cudmore.

*Military Officers Saved.*

Messrs. Minchin.  
Grant.

*Gentlemen said to be taken up  
with the Nabob in irons.*

Messrs. Holwell.  
Court.  
Burdett.  
Ensign Walcot.

*Gentlemen said to be in irons in a  
prison at Muxadavad.*

Messrs. Batson.  
Hastings.  
Sykes.  
Chambers.  
Watts Junior.  
Marriot.

*69. Translation of a letter to M. Demontorcin, dated Chandernagore,  
1 August, 1756.<sup>1</sup>*

In spite of a fever which has been troubling me for nearly two months, I am going to give you, my dear de Montorcin, an account of the most terrible revolution which has occurred in Bengal since the establishment of the Kingdom.

You have without doubt heard of the death of Aliverdi Khan, Nawab of this country, and that his grandson, Siraj-uddaula has succeeded him. In proportion as the former was naturally good and pacific, in the same proportion is the latter cruel, restless and sanguinary. He joins to these unworthy qualities the most sordid avarice and the most extravagant inhumanity. I will give you some instances of this that you may judge for yourself, and then resume the thread of what I propose to tell you.<sup>2</sup> . . . In short there are a thousand other instances, the one worse than the other, which I prefer to omit out of respect to his

<sup>1</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale, MSS., Paris. This curious letter is written in such very bad French that in many places the meaning is by no means clear. The writer spares neither the British nor the Moors, who were both, in his eyes, capable of any crime. It is given here simply to illustrate the outrageous comments of the French to which Mr. Young refers. See No. 48.

<sup>2</sup> These instances are merely amplifications of those mentioned by Mr. Drake in his narrative, and may therefore be omitted.

rank being besides persuaded that I have said sufficient to make you understand his character. So let us return [to our subject]. As soon as he was made Nawab his first care was to strike down those grandees of his Court who seemed to endanger his newly established power. Accordingly he ruined them, so that they might not be in a condition to injure him, and in order that they might owe entirely to his gift such consideration as they might henceforth enjoy. This was certainly good policy, for, by this means, he has strengthened himself in his government. However he could not reduce them all, and this is a proof of it. The *Begum* of Moti Jhil, daughter-in-law<sup>1</sup> of Aliverdi Khan his grand-father, who would have been like him a claimant for the Nawabship if Aliverdi Khan had not chosen him as his heir presumptive, took up arms, not to attack him but to put herself in a state of defence. Knowing the natural wickedness of her nephew she foresaw clearly that she would have everything to fear from a monster like him, and, for their greater safety, placed all her treasures in the care of the English, in the same way as did one Raja Balav who had for a long time been Siraj-uddaula's most bitter enemy, and who took the side of the *Begum*, but Siraj-uddaula was not yet sufficiently firm on his throne to risk a war so soon after his accession, as he feared he might force people to declare openly for one party or other, which was the more probable as he was then threatened by an army of 80,000 men, (sent, they say, by the *Mogol King* to make his grandfather pay considerable arrears of tribute) which was commanded by the son of that famous Mansur Ali Khan, of whom you may have heard people talk. He is as good and brave a general as his father, and has well disciplined troops. He had nearly reached Patna when Aliverdi Khan died. Siraj-uddaula was also threatened by the Marathas. All these reasons induced him to come to terms with the *Begum* of Moti Jhil, all the more so as the *Begum* of his grandfather, Aliverdi Khan, strongly urged him to do so, representing the danger he ran of being driven from his throne if he engaged in a war like this without examining whether it was just or unjust. Consequently she spoke to her daughter, widow of Nawajis Muhammad Khan, who had been Nawab of Dacca and had died eight months before from taking a little

<sup>1</sup> She was really Aliverdi Khan's daughter.



soop which Aliverdi Khan gave him to ensure the kingdom to this young prince. His aunt, this same *Begum* of Moti Jhil, of whom we have spoken above, and widow of this Nawajis Muhammad Khan, willingly agreed to the accommodation which was unexpectedly presented to her, and the affair terminated amicably by her paying over a sum of money. And it is said it was this money which caused the son of Mansur Ali Khan to retire from this country without committing any act of hostility. We were beginning to flatter ourselves that there would be no revolutions in this country after such an arrangement, but the petulant character of this madman ought to have convinced us of the contrary. In fact about two or three months ago he learned that his aunt and Raja Balav had placed their money in the charge of the English. He was extremely vexed, and in consequence sent an order to the English to restore those treasures, as well as the children of Raja Balav, who had been put under the protection of the English flag because the Nawab had seized their father. On being refused he sent 6,000 horsemen to surround the fort which they have at Cassimbazar, but the people there prepared to stand an attack. The Nawab was greatly astonished at this, as if the fort ought to have surrendered at his first summons. He sent another very considerable body of troops with several pieces of cannon, and erected a battery at the angle of one of the bastions of the fort. The English allowed him to do this being persuaded that the affair would terminate amicably. But the Nawab thought very differently, and ordered one of his generals to attack at once. This general, named Raja Durlabh Ram, pledged his head that he would capture the fort alone, mounted his elephant and presented himself before the fort gate to break it down. The English seeing this stupid blustering had it opened to him. He was about to enter, but when he saw 4 pieces of cannon in the entry of the gate, the gunners with matches lighted and ready to fire on him, and all the troops under arms, all this preparation, I say, frightened him and made him retrace his steps with much more promptitude than he had shown in advancing. He said to the Nawab, 'Prince, these people cannot be captured without much bloodshed, so it would be better for you to come to terms with them.' The Nawab was not very far away, and he repeated his



orders to the Raja to make an attack; but this general, the declared enemy of the English and extremely desirous of their ruin, immediately sent word to Mr. Watts, who commanded in the place, to come and talk with the Nawab to whom he had already spoken in favour of the English, saying that the affair would then terminate amicably, and swearing by Muhammad, by his sword, and by his beard &c. that no harm should be done to him. The Council was immediately assembled and nearly all the members agreed that he ought to take the advice given by Raja Durlabh Ram. He started immediately taking only his surgeon as interpreter. While this trickery went on the Nawab knew nothing of what was happening, and was thinking of sending word to Mr. Watts to come and see him, but to come with the dignity of a Chief about to arrange an accommodation, when suddenly a *chobdar*<sup>1</sup> of the Nawab announced the English Chief. The Nawab immediately said, 'Things are changed now, without doubt Raja Durlabh Ram has made him a prisoner of war,' and Mr. Watts appeared before him in a condition the more humiliating because his hands had been tied behind his back. The Nawab refused to listen to him, ordered him to be closely guarded, and immediately marched with the rest of his army towards the place and summoned it to surrender, to which the Second-in-command and the Council agreed, fear having seized them, so that they gave up the place without firing a shot. They were seized, tied up like pigs, and exposed with 30 white soldiers and 20 *topasses* whom they had, in the *Cachari*<sup>2</sup> or public *Chaudri*, to the derision and insult of an infamous mob. As for the wife of the Chief, they sent her to the fort which we have there, and demanded a receipt for her from the chief, Mr. Law. There was found in the place 84 cannons, 30 millions(?) of powder, 5 balls for each gun, a quantity of grape shot, and a quantity of booty. I forgot to tell you that the English officer blew out his brains with his two pistols, holding one in each hand, when he surrendered the place. An act of noble despair apparently in his estimation, but one which I consider mere weakness. I would at any rate have avenged my death in the blood of my enemy by spreading my shots as widely as I could, and I would have died arms in hand. That is what I should think

<sup>1</sup> A mace or staff bearer.

<sup>2</sup> Here means the Public Offices.



a glorious death, and a death worthy of a gentleman. The Nawab, proud of his victory, proposed to himself nothing less than to chase the English out of his country, and determined to go and take Calcutta, the capital of the English in this country and a very strong place. Accordingly he wrote to the other European nations to assist him in accomplishing his purpose, which was refused him, so as not to violate our treaties in Europe. Besides none of us were able to give him any help, especially ourselves as we had only about 60 foreigners (? sepoys) and perhaps 150 *topasses*. Further we feared he might attack us in passing, as the rumour ran that way, though he never ceased assuring M. Renault, that he wished to raise our nation above all the others. The specimen of treason practised on the English Chief gave us reason to fear he would treat us in the same way. Our refusal and that of the Dutch did not prevent his persisting in his design. He sent on his *diwan* with an army of 12,000 men, and started himself some time after with the rest of his army. He sent word to us, as he passed, that we had nothing to fear, that he loved us much, that M. Dupleix was his grandfather, M. De Leyrit his father, M. Renault his brother and M. Law, Chief at Cassimbazar his son, but that he begged us again and again to give him assistance which M. Renault refused, explaining the reasons which prevented him from doing so. Whether he pretended or really believed in the reasons given him, he appeared to be content with them, though he often came back to the charge. All this time we were fortifying ourselves as well as we could, in case he intended to attack us on his return from Calcutta. As for the English they awaited him firmly, and appeared determined to defend themselves to the death, to punish properly the immoderate pride of this young prince, and to revenge themselves for the infamy with which they had been covered by the surrender of the Fort of Cassimbazar. Every man took up arms, and the English had probably 500 Europeans and 700 other people, half castes<sup>1</sup> and *topasses*, all very resolute to fight, and they had ships, I say, 6 or 7 very well armed which were intended to incommode the enemy. They barricaded the streets, raised considerable batteries, and built redoubt upon

<sup>1</sup> The word in my copy is 'Manillois.' This might mean Malay Sepoys, or it might be a mistake for 'Mestis,' or half-castes.



redoubt. All this appeared certainly more than enough for the destruction of the Nawab's army, though it was composed of 60,000 men, 100 white soldiers, 250 cannons, and 500 elephants; however the result proved the contrary, as you will see by what follows, owing to the knavery of Mr. Drake the Governor and of the Commandant of the troops. The Nawab advanced only slowly, it seemed as if the closer he approached the town the more gently he went. His army marched unwillingly, his people murmured loudly against him and said that he was taking them to be butchered and that they could never capture the place. These just murmurs of the army came to the ears of the Nawab; he paid no attention to them. He even treated very cavalierly a person who spoke to him of them saying, 'I do not doubt that thou art afraid thyself, I am not astonished at it for thou art a Bengali coward.'—As a matter of fact this person was one of his dependent *rajas*.—'Learn then, to-day, that we must conquer or die,' he said to him, not wishing to give up his enterprise, 'for the rest, I will teach thee I am not Aliverdi Khan, my grandfather, nor any other of my predecessors, but I am Siraj-uddaula, and I do exactly as I please, and it will cost any man his life who dares to suggest anything contrary to my wish or intention.' In short on the 17th he arrived at about a league from Calcutta and encamped, and from the next morning there were several small skirmishes, in which however he lost many men and even several persons of distinction. On the 19th the English made a sortie of about 50 men, commanded by Monsieur de la Beaume, whom you have seen at Pondicherry, and who did marvels. He killed a prodigious number of the enemy, and I believe that on that day it would have been all up with the [Nawab's] army if Mr. Drake the Governor, who wanted nothing less than his ruin, had not sent him [Monsieur Le Beaume] word to retire immediately. The Moors were astonished at a retreat so unexpected and which gave them so much pleasure; their surprise was still more agreeable when they saw that the town was being abandoned to them. It was in fact of too great extent for effective defence, but what was the use of having made all those barricades, redoubts and batteries, to retire after having beaten the enemy into a fort, ordinarily the last resort after defeat? Indeed they had a



very different design in their hearts—but the town was in a minute full of the enemy and of plunderers who set it on fire everywhere. During this time, the English prudently embarked on the ships all the ladies and the valuables, and drove out the natives in their service whom they had sheltered in the fort, and made several little sorties in which they killed a number of people. The Nawab began to despair of his enterprise, when suddenly on the 20th, towards 3 o'clock in the evening, he saw the English retire to their ships and embark in great disorder, and the Moorish flag flying on the fort. The army thought that the few people who had been sent to plunder the town must have taken the fort; they rushed upon it like madmen, but what was their surprise to see the gates closed and the sentinels at their posts. A single cannon shot, my dear fellow, a single discharge of grape-shot would have scattered this mob of men who did not know what to do, but at last the gates were opened to them, and nearly 200 men surrendered themselves ignominiously with their arms. The ships cut their cables and let themselves drop down with the tide, which was luckily in their favour, to get out of reach of the cannon, the wind being contrary. Without doubt such a singular event must seem extraordinary to you. You will be right for it is incomprehensible, but I am going to show you what was under the cards. Would you believe it, my dear fellow, that these Englishmen, unworthy to bear the name of Europeans, gave themselves up without firing a single gun in their fort, and that by common consent—excepting 4 or 5 men of distinction who did not wish to stain themselves by so black an action, and who preferred to sacrifice themselves to the fury of the Moors rather than consent to it, and who now actually have irons on their feet and hands. These unworthy wretches, I say, made this execrable agreement not merely after they were attacked but at the time when they were first threatened with war. What is this agreement? Nothing less, my dear fellow, than a most barefaced robbery. Here is the proof of it. They embarked the money deposited by the *Begum* of Moti Jil and Raja Balav, as well as immense sums which their merchants and private people had put in their charge, thinking that they and their fortunes would be safe with them. It is said that all the money which they are carrying off amounts

possibly to more than 4 *kroors*. This is, without doubt, how these gentlemen reasoned, 'We owe much to the Moors, we are not rich, here is an opportunity of paying our debts and those of the Company and of enriching all of us, so do not let us miss the chance. We shall dishonour ourselves, it is true, in the opinion of foreigners, but what does that matter to us, so long as we have the money? Besides we shall assert loudly that the French assisted the Moors and so forced us to retire as we could not resist their fire.'<sup>1</sup>

I do not, it is true, know their sentiments from themselves, but what can one think of behaviour so dishonourable as theirs, if they are not of this nature? It is, indeed, the opinion of everybody, and even of the Moors, who are in despair at having missed capturing what was the real cause of the war, besides the conduct of Mr. Drake, the Governor, and of the Commandant of the troops proves clearly that such was their fashion of thinking, for they decamped on board the ships the first day of the attack, saying openly as they went off 'It is not possible to keep the fort, as the French have lent soldiers to the enemy. You can try, gentlemen,' they said to the English, 'to defend yourselves as best you can, we four<sup>2</sup> are going to retire as it is useless to fight,' but the next day the Council followed them. Their shameful flight, my dear fellow, covers all Europeans with a disgrace which they will never wipe out in this country; every one curses, detests and abhors them. They [ruin] by their flight perhaps 15,000 persons, at whose expense they enrich themselves without any remorse. They have committed, it is said, abominations, even to throwing their own children into the Ganges to prevent their being taken, so they said, by the Moors. God knows if it was not to get rid of them the more certainly.

After this disaster there arrived at Chandernagore a number of people of all kinds who were fleeing from the fury of the Moors. There were cries and lamentations which made the heart bleed. One woman was seen weeping for a son who was drowned

<sup>1</sup> The 100 whites referred to by the writer (p. 178) were deserters from Chandernagore. They managed the artillery, and it was the shot from their guns which placed the ships in danger and suggested the advisability of their moving.

<sup>2</sup> Refers to Messrs. Drake, Minchin, Manningham, and Frankland.



whilst trying to escape, and four boys for their mother, killed or carried off by the Moors to satisfy their brutal and shameful passions. It was a general desolation. Terror had seized all the people in the country: they cried and ran about like senseless people, they exterminated with their curses the English and their posterity for carrying off their wealth, and causing the loss of their women, their children and all their relations. They besought again and again, some the Heavens and some their demons, that the ravishers of their goods might not profit thereby and that they might perish miserably, they and their ships. I firmly believed that their vows would be accomplished, for the English were not yet in safety, for the following reason. The Moors having seen them in flight sent [men] to erect batteries at two places on the river named Mackwa Tana and Budge-budge, the two narrowest portions of the river, and the ships being obliged to pass quite close to the batteries which they had made, there was reason to fear that they would be sunk, and it would have been all up with them, if these people had known how to aim a gun, for they were bound to be terribly embarrassed with all the women, who were likely to communicate their fear to the remainder of the soldiers and to the crews by the outcries they would have made, if they had been obliged to make a landing. In short whatever one may say, these gentlemen, especially Mr. Drake, will never free themselves from such an infamy, and Mr. Drake will never be able to deprive his nation of the right to hang him and all his Council. But, though this is the just punishment which they may look forward to, they passed on the 25th June the batteries which they had had reason to fear. We also learned the same day that the Nawab had made a considerable booty in Calcutta, that he had found all kinds of munitions of war, and weapons sufficient to arm 7 to 8 thousand men in European fashion. Judge, my dear fellow, what injury this does to the [French] nation. We learned also that he had sent a body of troops which was in reserve in the direction of Hugli, a Moorish town, to besiege Chinsurah, a Dutch colony 3 leagues away from us. The Nawab demanded from them only 12 lakhs as the price of his refraining from pulling down the four bastions of their fort and cutting down their flagstaff. We expected our turn when the

Dutch had finished with him. We were certainly not deceived in our conjectures, for on the 26th the siege was raised from before Chinsurah, the Dutch having paid  $4\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, and the same day there came one of the Nawab's *jemadars*, a kind of Captain, with 50 people, to pull down our bastions and cut down our flagstaff, if we refused to pay 9 lakhs, of which they were unwilling to abate anything. We certainly had no intention of paying this sum, and as the *jemadar* would not go away without having a positive reply from the Council, he said he would sleep in the fort, in order to be handy to carry out his commission, i.e. to pull down the bastions, he and his 50 men. At last the Council ordered every one to retire into the fort at 8 in the evening with all their most valuable property as we were likely to be besieged in the night of the 27th to 28th. The town was in the greatest confusion. Every one was frightened and carried his goods into the fort as quickly as he could run, all the posts were distributed, and every one for the time being turned soldier. As for me I was charmed with this adventure, because I had a musket, having always had a sneaking affection for the military life. I expected to kill at least a dozen of the Moors for myself in the first sortie that should be made, for I was quite resolved to join in it and not to stand idle on a bastion, where one often gets hurt without having the pleasure of hurting the enemy. Every one seemed quite determined to fight valiantly. The Moors would not have taken us so cheaply as they had the English, but peace was made on the 28th at 10.30 A.M. for [a sum of money]. I did not however think it would have ended in that way. Doubtless the Nawab had become sober again, since he withdrew the order to besiege us, on condition that we paid 3 lakhs and 35 or 36 thousand rupees, so they say, and every one received orders to go home. I leave you to judge if our ladies, who the day before were in the depths of desolation, received this news with pleasure. For the ladies don't like people to play at skittles [i.e. roll cannon-balls about] so close to them. However, my dear fellow, as for us, it was the mountain which brought forth a mouse. But the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  lakhs, you will say, that the Company has to pay, is that a mouse? Yes, my dear fellow, for I should like it to have to pay still more, to teach it not to leave this factory, which is



beyond contradiction the finest of its Settlements, denuded of soldiers and munitions of war, so that it is not possible for us to show our teeth, nor to protect ourselves from the insatiable cupidity for money which these people have shown of late, especially this very Nawab, who appears to me a kind of fellow disposed to vex the European nations as much as ever he can.

The 30th June we learned the loss of two English vessels,<sup>1</sup> full of silver and women, one at Makwa Tana, the other at Budge Budge, though we had been assured that they were all safe. It is said that the plainer of the women on board these two ships were allowed to ransom themselves; there was especially one lady who paid 25 rupees for each of the prettier women.<sup>2</sup> I do not know what their fate will be, and we persuade ourselves that this piece of information is not true. Besides so many jocular stories are made up about this business that one may be permitted to disbelieve many things which are reported, especially this, seeing that the Moors are very respectful to women.<sup>3</sup> As for the English they ought to recognize clearly, little as they are in the habit of thinking about it, that it is God who has made them feel the weight of His arm, and they ought to doubt no longer that the measure of their crimes is full.

15th August, 1756.<sup>4</sup>—We have just learned that the English wish to return and take Calcutta, and that they number 800, including the reinforcements which have come to them from the Coast to make this expedition. All those who took refuge here with the Nawab's permission, are going down to find their vessels, and, without doubt, to take part in this expedition. It is asserted that the Nawab, having got wind of this, is raising an army of 80,000 men to oppose any enterprises which they may undertake. He has sent 10,000 men to guard Calcutta. I don't know how all this will go off. Some say this formidable army is to oppose the *Grand Wazir* of the *Mogol King*, who is coming, they say, to make war on the Nawab and put another in his place. The Nawab

<sup>1</sup> The *Neptune* and the *Diligence*.

<sup>2</sup> Evidently a French version of the chivalrous action of Mirza Omar Beg, who restored some captured English ladies unhurt to their husbands.

<sup>3</sup> As seen in their behaviour to Mrs. Watts at Cossimbazar.

<sup>4</sup> A kind of postscript added to the preceding letter. (Note of the copyist.)



says he is coming to help him to punish the English if they dare to seek a quarrel with him. However the country is already in a state of combustion or [soon] will be. I don't know whether the Europeans will suffer by it; there is everything for them to fear—I except the English. If the Nawab is victorious over the *Grand Wazir*, he might well drive them out of his country as he has done the English, under the idea which possesses his mind that our colonies are extremely rich. And, greedy of money as he is, there is nothing he will not undertake to get it. It is to be hoped that peace may be made in Europe and that the European nations may form a league to repress the insolence of this prince, who again appears indisposed to leave them in tranquillity and inclined to annoy them as much as he can. A concert must be established and if possible another Nawab put in his place. It is true that there would be many difficulties in this expedition—the different interests of the nations would never agree, the English and Dutch are too jealous of their commerce—and those people would betray their own fathers in such a matter, and it would be impossible to make them hear reason. However the actual facts must make them forget everything else. We are despised and mocked beyond endurance, and one needs the patience of the Saints to submit, however we must be patient in spite of ourselves, having no soldiers to shew them our teeth. Finally, my dear fellow, I will let you know the results of the revolutions in this country, and assuredly they ought to be both great and interesting. Adieu, be as well as I wish you to be, and believe me, whilst I live, your sincere and best friend.

26th August, 1756.<sup>1</sup>—There is nothing new since the 15th except a rumour that the English wish to come and re-take their town at once, not being able to sustain themselves any longer at the mouth of the river, all their people falling ill through the impossibility of setting foot on shore, owing to the country being so inundated that one cannot even erect a straw hut. You understand of course that they could find plenty of dry ground in the interior, but what could they do then with their ships? However I doubt this news.

<sup>1</sup> Second postscript from the same to the same. (Note of the copyist.)



70. Letter from J. Z. Holwell to Council, Fort Saint George, dated  
Hugli, 3 August, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—With this you have copy of my letter dispatched *per pattamar* from Muxadabad the 17th ultimo, on the reprizal of which I find a few errors and omissions occasioned by the wretched state I was then in, and which I now beg leave to rectify.

On the three advanced batteries being withdrawn Friday the 18th, possession was taken by our troops of the Church, and Messrs. Eyres, Cruttenden's, the Company's and Omy Chund's houses, but were all abandoned the next day (I think after the desertion of the President, Commandant &c.), but will be only positive as to the party in Mr. Cruttenden's house, commanded by Captain Lieutenant Smith, because when I was going round the ramparts after being appointed to the government of the fort, I discoursed with that party from the curtain next to Mr. Cruttenden's house.

In my letter of the 17th July, I omitted mentioning the enemy having made a lodgement on the Church on the morning of the 20th, but they did not finish their breastwork of bales upon it untill after 12. From this post which commanded every line and bastion of the fort, the enemy must have been dislodged by a counter lodgement upon the top of the Factory House had there been ammunition to have maintained the fort any longer.

I likewise omitted mentioning that one of the Moor's ships which were under our guns, was intended to be taken with the *Saint George* for the general retreat we had intended and planned for the night of the 20th, and which would have been carried into execution the 19th at night, had the *Saint George* come down to us with her boats.

In my mention of the western gate being betrayed to the enemy during the parly, I did not advise that the guard there and a great part of the garrison, military and militia rushed out the moment the gate was opened and endeavoured to escape; many were killed, some escaped, and others received quarter. The gate was forced by a sergeant of the Train named Hedleburgh now in the service of the Nabob. During the parly, the southerly *futlock* or barrier was deserted by the sergeant and guard there, who fled,



and the enemy forcing that barrier, found nothing to oppose their entrance into the fort as soon as the western gate was forced. All the foregoing particulars in this paragraph came not to my knowledge untill my return from Muxadabad.

I remarked to your Honour &c. 5,000 of the enemy being killed by their own confession; but from more certain intelligence their loss is first and last seven thousand at least.

I over reckoned the number of prisoners put into the Black Hole and the number of the dead; the former being only 146 and the latter 123, many recovering after air was let in by opening the door in the morning; and many more I doubt not might have recovered had any means or care been taken of them. I charged the Nabob with designedly having ordered the unheard-of piece of cruelty of cramming us all into that small prison; but I have now reason to think I did him injustice. His orders I learn was only general, 'That we should be imprisoned that night, our number being too great to be at large.' And being left to the mercy and direction of his *jemidars* and *burkandosses*, their resentment for the number of their brethren slain took this method of revenge; and indeed they ceased not insulting us the whole night, though witnesses of horrors which bar all description.

I have said there was an order of Council the 18th in the evening for embarking the Company's treasure, books and the ladies. On recollection I think the Company's books was not part of the order. My mistake arose from a short conversation after Council between Mr. Manningham and myself on the propriety of carrying also the Company's books and essential papers off with him when he went to conduct the ladies. Whether the treasure or books were embarked I cannot say, the late President and Gentlemen below who have assumed the title and authority of 'Agents for the Company's Affairs' are the best judges. After the President's departure, I made inquiry after the Sub-Treasurer and keys of the Treasury, but neither one or the other was to be found. I intended on the first recess to have opened the Treasury to have been satisfied in this particular; but that recess never came.

I have said the enemy was repulsed at Baag Buzar Redoubt by Ensign Paccard and 25 men, but forgot to mention his being reinforced by Lieutenant Blagg and 30 men; I also omitted that



the *Saint George*, Captain Hague, and another small vessell commanded by Captain Campbell, was stationed up the river to cover that post, at the attack of which the enemy lost at least 800 men from the fire of the detachment on shore and from the ships, which obliged them to abandon their design of entering at that quarter, which they never attacked again.

I have more than once made mention of the want of ammunition as one principal cause of the loss of the Settlement, but beg leave to remark here, that had the quantity of our ammunition remaining been ever so great, it would have been morally impossible to have defended the fort another day, circumstanced as we were. For (not to mention the particulars of less moment, such as some of our Dutch soldiers being drunk, and a few worthless low fellows amongst the militia seditious and troublesome) our garrison by the numbers killed, wounded and deserted became so reduced that the duty and action was continual and without relief, and the strength of both officers and soldiers were in a manner quite exhausted. I should not have added any trouble to your Honour &c. on this subject, had I not been informed that a pompous account of the ammunition in Fort William when taken, has been transmitted to your Presidency and to my Honorable Masters, by some whom I am sorry to say must in this case have been glad to act on levelling principles, or they would have been a little more circumspect in transmitting the Report,<sup>1</sup> which I hear was taken from an old invalid sergeant of the Train named Myers, and a *matross* of the Train named Miller, which account as I am further informed was given by those people as the whole of the ammunition contained in the factory at the beginning of the siege, and indeed must be so from the nature of things, though I hear it is transmitted to your Honour &c. as an account of ammunition &c. remaining in the fort when surrendered. This I will suppose was by mistake, for I would not be thought to insinuate it could possibly be done with design. The whole quantity of the Company's powder in the magazine of the fort was at the beginning 740 *maunds* only, and some quantity belonging to the ships which as usual on their importing were deposited there, and a double quantity redelivered to

<sup>1</sup> See below, 'An account of ammunition in Fort William at the time of the Moors taking the place.'

them when sent on service to Tanner's Fort and to cover Baag Buzar Redoubt—four ships I think to Tanner's and two to Baag Buzar. The former cannonaded that post as I remember a day and night, and sent for a supply of powder which they received, and none was returned back from any of them. Add to this, the powder expended in the number of shells thrown, the continued cannonading from the advanced batteries to the northward and to the eastward as well as from the fort the 18th, and from the fort only on the 19th and 20th, and it will appear impossible there could be many hours' ammunition in the fort when surrendered. Add to this the Captain of the Train's report in Council the 18th which must surely carry greater weight and conviction with it than that of the people abovementioned, supposing their report to have been as transmitted; to corroborate which report of Captain L. Witherington, I beg leave to mention another circumstance that during the enemy's three attacks made to the northward in the morning of the 20th, Mr. Baillie and the Captain of the Train came to me and pressed my then throwing out a flag of truce, the latter telling me there was no powder left, but what was wet; I asked him whether there was not enough for a few hours. He replied that was the utmost; I then told him the enemy should be first convinced we could repulse them, and that a flag of truce would be afterwards thrown out with a much better prospect of success. The small quantity of powder at the beginning was the reason we could not think of blowing up the houses round us, and to have pulled them down would have been two months' work—*pucca* houses near as strong as the fort itself. Powder we made every day more or less untill the place was actually invested, but it was wet and useless, and a dependence on some shells filled with this powder had like to have been the loss of the north-west bastion the morning of the 20th, not one of them taking. Thus on the whole I may aver to your Honour &c. that not one article in the account of ammunition transmitted you, said to be in the fort at the time we surrendered, is true, save that of the wet powder of which I believe there was about 100 *maund*.

Accompanying this are the several lists promised in mine of the 17th ultimo. They are as correct as I at present can make them, and are deficient in nothing but in the number of those of the militia



and others who quitted the fort the 18th and 19th, whose names I cannot obtain untill I join our scattered Colony below, which I intend doing in a day or two if I can attempt the thing with any degree of safety, having advice that Major Killpatrick is arrived on the *Delawar* with a reinforcement of 250 men.

I am &c. &c. J. Z. HOLWELL.

P.S. Since closing the above I have been favoured with letters from some of the gentlemen, subalterns of the militia, extenuating their quitting the fort, concerning whom I am to request your Honour &c. will suspend your judgement until they have an opportunity of speaking for themselves, more particularly Messrs. Mapletoft, Wedderburn, Douglas and Sumner, who were with leave on board the ships to secure some papers and just to see their families. The three former asserting the late President assured them the retreat was general and that everybody was quitting the fort, and the latter proving he was detained on board the *Dadaly* by the express order of his officer Colonel Manningham and all deprived of any possibility of returning by the falling down of the ships. In saying Ensign Walcot was the only military officer of the garrison alive I committed another mistake, Ensign Carstairs wounded in the gallant defence of the Jail is living, though appears to have lost the use of his arm.

J. Z. HOLWELL.

*A List of those who quitted Fort William the 18th and  
19th June, 1756.*

Governor Drake, 19th June	Charles O'Hara, Ensign and
Colonel Manningham, 18th do.	Lieutenant Train, 19th do.
Lieutenant-Colonel Frankland, 18th do.	Henry Wedderburn, Lieutenant Militia, 19th do.
Mr. Mackett, 2nd Captain Militia, 19th do.	Charles Douglas, Ensign Militia, 19th do.
Captain Minchin, Command- ant, 19th do.	Thomas Holmes, Lieutenant Militia, 18th do.
Captain Grant, Adjutant- General, 19th do.	William Sumner, Lieutenant Militia, 18th do.
Rev. Mr. Mapletoft, Captain Lieutenant Militia, 19th do.	Robert Halsey Baldrick, Ensign Militia, 19th do.

*Volunteers.*

Mr. William Ellis, 19th June  
Mr. William Billers  
Mr. William Rider, 19th June  
Mr. Ascanius Senior  
Mr. Willam Orr  
Mr. Francis Vasmor, 19th June  
Mr. Robert Leicester  
Mr. Stephen Page  
Mr. William Tooke  
Mr. Francis Charlton  
Mr. — Champion, 19th June  
Captain Lodwick Lord,  
wounded  
Captain — Campbell, 19th June

*Militia.*

Mr. Edward Holden Cruttenden  
Mr. Anselm Beaumont  
Captain David Rannie  
Mr. William Nixon  
Mr. John Putham  
Captain Nicholson and Officers

Captain Austin and Officers  
Mr. William Lindsay  
Captain Whatmoug and Officers  
Captain Young and do.  
Mr. Margass  
Mr. Pyfinch  
Captain Walmsley  
William Burton  
Monsieur Albert  
Monsieur Carvallo  
Mr. John Wood  
Captain Laing  
Henry Sumus (Summers)  
Captain Hugh Baillie  
Edward Ridge  
William Elves  
Daniel Whaley  
William Ling  
John Strousenberg  
John Helmstead &c.

*Doctors.*

William Fullerton

*A List of those smother'd in the Black Hole the 20th June, 1756, at Night, exclusive of the English, Dutch, and Portugeuze Soldiers, whose names I am unacquainted with.*

Messrs. Edward Eyre } Esqrs.  
William Baillie }  
Rev. Mr. Jervas Bellamy  
Messrs. Jenks  
Revely  
Law  
Valicourt  
Jebb  
Coales  
Toriano

Messrs. E. Page  
Grubb  
Street  
Harod  
Johnston  
Ballard  
N. Drake  
Carse  
Knapton  
Goslin



Messrs. Bing	Serjeant Major Dumbleton,
Dod	Ensign Militia
Dalrymple	Mr. Atkinson
Captains Clayton, Command-	Abraham
ant	Cartwright } Serjeant Militia
Buchanan	Bleau }
Witherington	Cary
Lieutenants Bishop	Stephenson
Hays	Guy
Blagg	Porter
Simpson	Captain Hunt
Bellamy, Junior	Parker
Ensigns Paccard	Stephen Page
Scott	Captain Osborne
Hastings	Purnel
Charles Wedderburn	Mr. Calker
	Bendal, &c.

*A List of those who came alive out of the Black Hole the 21st  
in the Morning.*

Messrs. Holwell	Messrs. Moran
Court	John Meadows
Cooke	Captain Mills
Walcott	Dickson
Lushington	and
Burdett	8 or 9 Soldiers and Gunners

*A List of Officers killed and wounded after the desertion of  
the Governor, &c.*

Captain-Lieutenant Smith, killed.	Ensign Paccard—wounded.
Captain Pickering, one of the Captains of the Points at the Great Guns—killed.	Scott—ditto.
Lieutenant Simson—wounded.	Coales of the Militia— wounded.
Lieutenant Talbot—wounded and died of his wounds the 21st in the morning.	Carstairs—wounded at the Jail the 18th; As also Monsieur La Beaume who commanded at that Post.



71. Letter from Major Kilpatrick to Council, Fort Saint George, dated on board the 'Delaware,' Fulta, 5 August, 1756.

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—I take this (the first opportunity I could possibly meet with) to have the honour of acquainting you that I arrived on the river on the 28th ultimo, with the troops under my command, mostly in good health and spirits. Of these I here now inclose you a return together with a state of the military at Bengal and of the ordinance stores.

I need not I believe inform you, Gentlemen, of the melancholly news I met with upon my first arrival here, which you will no doubt have heard and before this can reach you, and with all its cruel circumstances from Mr. Manningham.

I left the *Delaware*, which is now safely come up, on the 30th ultimo at the request of the Governour and Council, and found them the same day on board of their ships in a situation not easy to be described. You may more easily imagine the condition of those poor gentlemen, driven out from their habitations, driven out from all they have in the world, and what is worst, having lost all or almost all that had been committed to their charge; where many people around them who have also lost their alls, are discontented and even troublesome, pretending to find fault and give their opinions without showing that respect which they ought. I hope however when we all meet (for there are still three of the Council up at the French Factory) that we shall be then able to re-establish harmony, and take such resolutions as will be most for the benefit of the Honourable Company, and advantage of the whole.

When I mention the Council, I ought to inform you that I have the honour to act here as one of the members, in a manner at the desire of the gentlemen themselves, for they told me that it was the Company's orders, that whenever a Major happened to be with them, he should always take the third place at the Board, which I accordingly did; though I let them know at the same time that I never had had that honour with you, and the reasons which had been given for it.

We have been pretty well supplied with provisions since I have come here, which has a good deal taken off from the apprehensions



of the country people, who, I believe, are otherwise disposed to supply us, as we take care that they are well used.

The place and situation we are in renders it extremely unhealthy, and I am sorry to hear that it will be but more so as the season advances. Yet I don't believe we well can move from this, till we have had advices from you; for I am informed that both sides of the river downwards, and a good way up, are so entirely swamps and *paddy* fields that it would be impossible to keep the people on shore: and to attack the enemy at present, though we were even sure to make ourselves masters of Calcutta, would be to no manner of purpose in the world, if you are not in a condition to send us large supplies of, in short, everything.

I have found neither men, guns, nor ammunition here. The enclosed will shew you our numbers. The four field-pieces you sent with me is all our Train; and the ammunition you sent with those is all we have got of the kind. Captain Winter<sup>1</sup> spared us some powder and lead with which I have made up about fifty rounds a man, which is all we have to trust to in case of an attack, of which we have had some uncertain reports, particularly from a great armament of boats which we have heard they are preparing against us up the river.

Affairs are in such a situation here that I have entirely given over all thoughts for the present of returning home as I intended. I have always had that attachment to the Honourable Company, whatever disappointments I may have met with, as never to have let any private concerns sway with me where they were at all interested: nor would I ever leave their service, unless I was extremely ill used indeed, at a time when my staying might be so necessary as it very probably will be here. I was sorry, it is true, to find this season that they had not thought proper to put me on the footing that the station you had given me and my services I imagined might have deserved. But as I have always had so much your good inclinations, gentlemen, I hope you will be able to represent things to them in such a manner by the first shipping, that they will think it right to consider me in a way that will be both agreeable to me and for my honour.

I have &c., &c., JAMES KILLPATRICK.

<sup>1</sup> Of the Delaware.



72. *Captain Mills' account of what happened to him after he came out of the Black Hole, until he joined the fleet on the 10th of August, 1756, at Fulta.*

Captain Mills as soon as he came out of the Black Hole began to break out all over in boils, the pain of which together with his weakness disenabled him from walking more than 30 yards at a time without resting. He however with Captain Dixon, Mr. Moran and — got down to Surman's gardens in the evening from whence the ships had sailed a little before. Here one of the Nabob's officers advised them with much humanity to desist from proceeding any farther down the river because guards were placed all along, by whom they might probably be insulted or ill used. On this they returned to Gobindpore, where they remained three days in a hut where they were supplied in the night by the natives who had lived under the English protection with victuals; but in the day were often insulted by the Nabob's troops. The Nabob then published an order signifying that the English might return to their houses and, the wounded man being dead, Captain Mills with his two other companions returned to the town, where they were joined by Mr. John Knox of Patna and Mr. Gray junior, and the whole company went and lived in the house of Mr. Knox, where they were supplied with some provisions by Omichund and got at more that remained in the houses of other European inhabitants. The Nabob went away about the 25th but this date is not certain; and on the last of June a drunken European sergeant killed a Moorman on which Monickchund, who was left Governor of Calcutta, issued an order that all the Europeans should quit the Settlement. On this Captain Mills with his companions went up to the French Gardens where resided Mr. Young, the Prussian Supercargo, by whom they were received and entertained with much humanity and politeness; from whence they went the next morning to the French at Chandernagore by whom they were likewise received with great hospitality. Here they remained until the 8th or 9th of August when they hired a boat and joined the fleet at Fulta on the 10th.



73. *Extract from a letter from Council, Vizagapatam, to Council, Fort Saint George, dated 13 August, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—We dispatch this express to your Honour &c. to advise you of the arrival of our Honourable Masters' sloop *Syren* yesterday evening at Bimlepatam from Bengal, and it is with the deepest concern we are to acquaint your Honour &c. that she brings us an account of the capture of Calcutta by the Nabob the 20th of June last, for the melancholy particulars of which we refer you to the accompanying letters from the President and Council there and Mr. Manningham, who is come on the above sloop in order to proceed to Madras overland which he intends doing with the utmost expedition.

The gentlemen at Bengal having applied to us to supply the *Syren* with stores and other necessaries we shall comply therewith and immediately dispatch her back to them, agreeable to their orders, but as they inform us they shall soon want our further assistance we therefore desire your Honour &c.'s directions thereon.

\* \* \* \* \*

We have, &c., &c., J. L. SMITH, MARMADUKE BEST.

74. *Fort Saint George Public Consultations, 17 August, 1756. Present : George Pigot, Esqr. (Governor and President), Stringer Lawrence, Henry Powney, Robert Orne, William Perceval, John Smith, Charles Bouchier.*

The Book of Standing Orders lying on the table.

The President acquaints the Board that he had summoned them to communicate the contents of a letter received last night from Messrs. Watts and Collet, advising of the loss of Fort William which letter is now read as follows :—

*Letter from Messrs. Watts and Collet, dated Chandernagore, 2nd July, 1756 (See No. 38).*

The President also lays before the Board the translation of the copys of two letters one from the Nabob of Bengal to him, the original whereof is committed to the care of Mr. Watts, the other from the Nabob of Bengal to the French Director at Chandernagore, which are as follow :—



*A copy of a perwana or letter from Nabob Mansoorul Muloch Serajah<sup>1</sup> Dowlah Bahadar Hayabet Jung to the Gomasta of the English of the Koatey or Trading House at Madras.*

Directore Pigot, of high and great rank, and greatest of the merchants, May you be possessor of the *Patcha's*<sup>2</sup> favour.

It was not my intention to remove the mercantile business of the Company belonging to you from out of the *subah* of Bengal, but Roger Drake your *gomasta* was a very wicked and unruly man and began to give protection to persons who had accounts with the *Patcha* in his *koatey*.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding all my admonitions, yet he did not desist from his shameless actions. Why should these people who come to transact the mercantile affairs of the Company be doers of such actions? however that shameless man has met with the desert of his actions and was expelled this *subah*. I gave leave to Mr. Watts who is a helpless, poor, and innocent man to go to you. As I esteemed you to be a substantial person belonging to the Company, I have wrote these circumstances of his shameless and wicked proceedings. Dated the 1st of Moon Shaval in the 3rd year of the *Mogull's* reign which is the 30th of June 1756.

*A copy of a perwana or letter from Nabob Mansoorul Muloch Serajah Dowlah Bahadar.*

Great merchant and man of friendship, Monsieur Renaud, Directore-General of the French Company, Be happy.

I have sent Mr. Watts an Englishman and *gomasta* at Cossimbuzar to you with a letter to Mr. Pigot commanding in the *koatey* (or trading house) at Madras, a copy of which is enclosed, you must therefore send for the said Mr. Watts's family who were committed to the charge of the *gomasta* at Sydabad<sup>4</sup> and send him away with his family to Mr. Pigot at Madras. See them arrived and send for Mr. Watts's receipt with an answer to my letter and forward them to me who am welwisher of the people. Dated the

<sup>1</sup> *Mansur-ul-mulk*, ruler of the country, and *Haibat Jang*, terrible in battle

<sup>2</sup> i.e., *Badshah*, or Emperor.

<sup>3</sup> Factory

<sup>4</sup> The French Factory at Cossimbazar.



29th of Moon Ramadan in the 3rd year of the *Mogul's* reign which is the 28th of June 1756.

The great importance of the Settlement of Calcutta to the Company appears in such a light to the Board that they are thoroughly satisfied the utmost efforts should be made to recover it. It is agreed therefore to consult Mr. Watson on this occasion as it is the opinion of the Board the squadron, or part, may render great services at this time, and in consequence of this resolution it is agreed to suspend the embarkation of the troops as settled in consultation the 14th instant untill further measures have been concerted with Mr. Watson.

GEORGE PIGOT, STRINGER LAWRENCE, HENRY POWNEY,  
ROBERT ORME, WILLM. PERCEVAL, JOHN SMITH, C. BOURCHIER.

75. *Letter from the Council at Fulta to the Council, Fort Saint George, dated 18 August, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—We have received your several letters of the 8th, 14th and 20th July by the *Mermaid* sloop, *Norwood* and *Delawar*, with the consignment of treasure and red-wood your Honor &c. have sent us on those vessels.

Major Killpatrick and the detachment under his command joined us on the 31st ultimo. Had his reinforcement arrived before the loss of our Settlement, it might have been of great use in defence of the place; but in our present situation we cannot pretend to undertake any thing with so small a force and without cannon, for which reason we flatter ourselves your Honor &c. will comply with the request we have made by Mr. Manningham (duplicate of which address we now enclose you) for assisting us with a sufficient force both military and marine in order to re-establish the Honourable Company's Settlements in these provinces, the importance whereof to our Employers we leave your Honor &c. to judge.

Major Killpatrick has in a separate letter transmitted you a return of the military and stores now in the fleet; from which your Honor &c. will judge what stores and ammunition will be wanting, and supply us accordingly.

Should your Honor &c. not have it in your power to furnish

us with a proper and necessary force to re-establish ourselves on a secure footing, we request you will send us the earliest notice of what we are to expect, as the season is far advanced, and our ships will not be able to proceed to the Coast after the 20th or 25th September.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR, WILLIAM WATTS, JAMES KILPATRICK, PAUL RICHARD PEARKES, J. Z. HOLWELL, WILLIAM MACKETT, P. AMYATT, THOMAS BODDAM.

76. *Letter from Secret Committee at Fulta to Council, Fort Saint George, dated 19 August, 1756.*

HONOURABLE SIR AND SIRs,—That such advices and material transactions which are requisite to be performed with diligence and secrecy might be so practised, a Secret Committee is composed consisting of the subscribers hereto, who have thought proper to keep from the knowledge of the publick the contents of your Honor &c.'s letter dated the 4th instant, per *Sea Horse* sloop enclosing invoice of one hundred barrells of powder and twenty barrells of musquet ammunition, with the agreeable advice of Admiral Watson having been so good as to spare the *Bridgewater* man-of-war, in order that your Honor &c. might have conveyance to embark us a second detachment with a further supply of military stores. From the latest advices we learn that the Nabob his forces quartered now at Calcutta, Tannah's Fort, and Boug Bougee consist of about seven thousand, and that further numbers are ordered to proceed towards Calcutta. We esteem it necessary to acquaint your Honor &c. that many private letters advises that the *Bridgewater* and forces are preparing to proceed to our relief; therefore to prevent too soon a publication of your resolutions touching what support you are able to afford us, we are to desire express orders may be given to every commander of any vessels proceeding down here, not to deliver any letters whatsoever but to the gentleman whom he may find acts at the head of affairs.

We are, &c., &c., ROGER DRAKE, WILLIAM WATTS, JAMES KILLPATRICK, J. Z. HOLWELL.



77. *Extracts from a letter from the Council, Fort Saint George, to Admiral Watson (Consultations 20 August, 1756).*<sup>1</sup>

What we should have done before your departure we now anticipate in laying before you our full sense of the late calamity at Bengal, the fatal consequences it may, we fear will, produce, and the resolutions to be taken by us will be nothing more than the result of these reflections.

It is necessary to mount a little higher than the present times, that you may be entirely master of this subject.

An embassy deputed by the East India Company to Delhi about 40 years ago, obtained from the great *Mogul* at more than the expence of £100,000, the rights and privileges which their Settlements have hitherto enjoyed in Indostan. They obtained for the Presidency of Bengal infinitely more than the violence of the *subah* of their province permitted them to possess themselves of. Regardless of the King's mandate, he prevented them from possessing nine-tenths of the lands which had been granted.

What remained was sufficient for the establishment of a flourishing colony. Calcutta by its investments has been hitherto, notwithstanding all the interruptions of the Nabobs, the most beneficial part of the Company's estate.

The space of three years together has seldom passed without demands of money made by the Nabob upon the English under groundless pretences. The state of the Company's investment laying in the reach of the Government, and out of the reach of the Presidency, has generally induced the English to submit to pay some consideration in money in order to prevent greater detriment to the Company's affairs. The late Nabob, grandfather to the present, several times obliged the English to these concessions.

Some such pretences, groundless we believe, the present Nabob made use of in order to sanctify the violence of his late proceeding. He tells our President, Mr. Pigot, in a letter, that it was not his intention to extirpate the English from his *subah*. Intentions are best seen by facts. The wealth of Calcutta was his aim and, to

<sup>1</sup> This letter is copied in Orme's MSS., vol. iii., pp. 785, 786, where it is stated to have been composed by Robert Orme himself.

the vast misfortune of our nation, he has possessed himself of it. We are advised just now by private letters that he has plundered all the effects of the colony, to whomsoever belonging.

To this immense loss and detriment has been added circumstances which will weigh equally in the opinion of the nation, cruelties and barbarities inflicted on the subjects of Great Britain, which have ended in the death of many gentlemen of consideration there, the survivors drove to their vessels, and interdicted by his ban from receiving any kind of succours from his subjects.

We refer to you, sir, how much the honour of the English nation is concerned in these most violent breaches of faith, and of humanity. We submit to you, sir, to determine whether exemplary reparation is not necessary.

On these sentiments we made our first application to you. The taking satisfaction in the most exemplary manner will in our opinion be the quickest means of re-establishing the English in the province of Bengal and even on better terms than they have hitherto obtained.

The appearance of a flag<sup>1</sup> will add weight to the terms that may at last be made, and the greater our force in Bengal the more immediately will the reparation of our injuries be in our own hands.

On the contrary should nothing of this kind succeed, we tremble for the consequences which will befall the Company.

78. *Extract from Fulia Consultations, 20th August, 1756.*

Captain Alexander Grant now sends in a letter to the Board in relation to his behaviour at Calcutta during the siege.

Ordered it to be entered after this day's Consultation.

Upon taking the same into consideration and being well satisfied with his behaviour during the siege,

Ordered the Secretary to inform him that we have no objection to his acting in his rank as a Captain of the military from which station they never suspended him, but only desired Lieutenants Keene and Muir to keep the charge of their respective military to prevent any confusion. Mr. Pearkes objects :—

<sup>1</sup> His Majesty's flag.



First. He thinks that in a great measure both he and Captain Minchin have suspended themselves, for when the Ballasore and Jugdea parties came they never required the returns of those officers nor had they them delivered, which was a tacit acknowledgment of their not esteeming themselves as acting as Captains, or they would have obliged the officers of that detachment to have regularly delivered them their Returns.

Secondly. He acknowledges and esteems it but justice to testify to the good behaviour of Captain Grant during the time of his being an officer on the Bengal Establishment and particularly during the siege while he stayed; which gave every one the greatest opinion of him and he was esteemed the best officer in the service, and in consequence thereof entrusted with the whole direction of the military as far as he could be, by the name of Adjutant General, and Captain Minchin's going occasioned not the least concern to anyone, but that it was with great difficulty we could persuade ourselves that Captain Grant had left us, and though he imagines there might have been some sudden infatuation that occasioned his leaving us, yet he cannot upon any account give his vote to a gentleman on whose conduct and bravery we so much relied, acting as a Captain again, after having deceived us, till by some future conduct as a volunteer, he reinstates himself in our good opinion, or is cleared by a proper court martial.

79. *Mr. Holwell's Minute and Dissent in Council, the 20th of August, 1756, at Fulia referred to in the preceding<sup>1</sup> letter of the 25th October.*

Mr. Holwell observes that we have a bill before us, amounting to Arcot rupees 64662 annas 8, on account of expences and damages of ship *Dodaly*, commencing 9th of June, 1756. He further remarks, that the charge of this ship is founded on her being taken up for the defence of the Company's fort, effects, and Settlement; but that she abandoned such defence, by falling down from the fort and Settlement, without orders, the 18th of June at night; to which he cannot help attributing all the misfortunes

<sup>1</sup> Given under its own date.



which ensued. He therefore dissents to any payment or consideration being made by the Honourable Company, on account of her expence, loss or damage charged in the said bill, except for provisions, etc. for the use of the Company's servants on board.

80. *Mr. Holwell's Minute on the Fulda Consultations, at his first joining the Agency at that place. Fulda, 13th August, 1756.*

Captain Dugald Campbell's commission being tendered to Mr. Holwell to sign, he refused the same, and requested the gentlemen would please to excuse his not signing that, or any other paper whatsoever, in the present state of the government affairs, for the following reasons :

1st. He conceives that when the Honourable the late President, and Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Macket abandoned the fort and garrison of Fort William the 18th and 19th of June last, and quitted the defence of these and the Honourable Company's effects, they did, by such act, to all intents and purposes, divest themselves of all right or pretensions to the future government of the Company's affairs, or the colony.

2dly. That on the said abdication of the Honourable the late President, and Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Macket, the remaining gentlemen of Council (the only government then subsisting) did with the unanimous approval of the garrison, officers, etc. elect and appoint, in Council, him, Mr. Holwell, Governor of the fort and garrison, and administrator of the Company's affairs during the troubles; his right to which latter appointment, he does not think the gentlemen at present constituting the Agency have any just power to divest him of, or with-hold from him; howsoever, and under whatsoever other head the remainder of the colony, who are not servants to the Company, may think proper to dispose of themselves.

3dly. That the late President, and Messrs. Manningham, Frankland, and Macket being (justly as he conceives) the 19th of June in Council, suspended the Honourable Company's service, he thinks this act alone sufficient to divest them of all future rule in any matters relative to the Company's affairs, until their pleasure from Europe be known. The more especially as the said suspension met with (as he is informed) the approval and assent of



Messrs. Watts and Collet, in their disavowing any subjection to be due to the orders of the Agency, issued to them from Fulta; a confirmation of the suspension by six members, the majority of the whole Council.

4thly. That in consequence of the before-recited transaction, he thinks Mr. Peter Amyat (the senior servant of the Company then present) was on his joining the fleet with his factory of Luckypore, the only person invested with any just title or authority to conduct the affairs and concerns of the Company, and to associate with him as many of their servants next in standing to him, as he thought necessary, until the arrival of the gentlemen of the Board of Calcutta, who lay under no censure or suspicion from the service.

5thly and lastly. That, to avoid the further embroiling his Honourable Employers' affairs, by raising feuds and differences, which might ensue by his openly and publicly asserting and claiming his undoubted title to the administration of them, he submits such his just right to the breasts of the Agency themselves, and will quietly abide by their determination; but cannot, by any act of his own, either wave such his just title or admit any just authority to be invested in the Agency; a character assumed, in his absence, without right; and permitted by the indulgence only of the remainder of the colony, and now continued, as he conceives, to the prejudice of the rights of himself and others. He therefore thinks himself justified in refusing to sign any paper or Consultation whatsoever, which he cannot do consistently with himself, as he cannot consider himself in any other view, or point of light, than in that in which the last subsisting government of Fort William placed him; but shall, notwithstanding, be always ready to devote his person and counsel to the interest of his Honourable Masters' affairs, wherever they call him. To that purpose shall duly attend the Councils of the Agency, agreeably to the request of the Honourable the late President made to him in writing the 12th instant.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> N.B.—Some few days subsequent to the above transaction, the Agency thought it highly essential to elect and constitute a Secret Committee, and urging to Mr. Holwell that the good of the service required his being one of that body, but that such election was impossible unless he receded from his resolution of not signing; he therefore was prevailed upon to recede from that part of his Minute only on the above consideration, and to evince that no private motive or resentment could sway



81. *Copy of the President's letter above mentioned, to Mr. Holwell, dated Thursday, 12 August, 1756.*

SIR,—Had not our boat been so extremely leaky, I proposed doing myself the pleasure of waiting on you this morning.

We have concluded to meet on shore, on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. It will be an infinite satisfaction that you will be pleased to join us, particularly to me who esteem your advice, and who am, very truly,

Your, &c., ROGER DRAKE, JUNIOR.

82. *Extract from Fort Saint George Select Committee Consultations, 21 August, 1756.*

The President acquaints the Committee that intelligence was received on the 16th instant of the taking of Calcutta by the Moors on the 20th June.

83. *Extract from Secret Committee Proceedings at Fulta, 22 August, 1756.*

‘Major Killpatrick on the 15th instant wrote a complimentary letter<sup>1</sup> to the Nabob Suraged Dowla complaining a little of the hard usage of the English Honourable Company, assuring him of his good intentions notwithstanding what had happened and begging in the meantime, till things were cleared up, that he would treat him at least as a friend and give orders that our people may be supplied with provisions in a full and friendly manner.’

84. *Translation of a letter from M. Furnier to M. le Marquis Dupleix at Paris, dated Chandernagore, 24 August, 1756.*<sup>2</sup>

SIR,—I had the honour to write to you by the ships of the last expedition;<sup>3</sup> but as they have been stopped at the Isle of France,<sup>4</sup> I think my letters will not reach you long before this.

---

him to any determination detrimental to his Employers' service. The Committee was accordingly appointed, consisting of the President, Major Kilpatrick, and Mr. Holwell' (*Indian Tracts*).

<sup>1</sup> Sent through Mr. Bisdorn, the Dutch Governor, to Mr. Warren Hastings at Cossimbazar for delivery. From the proceedings of September 30 it would appear that Hastings thought its delivery unnecessary.

<sup>2</sup> Bibliothèque Nationale MSS., Paris.

<sup>3</sup> That is, 'the last yearly fleet,' despatched early in the year.

<sup>4</sup> Mauritius.



Without doubt you will be surprised, sir, when you learn, from the letters of the Company's Council here, the loss suffered by the English last June of all their establishments in Bengal. You will not be less [surprised to hear] of the contribution which the Nawab has forced us [to pay] and which is without example since our establishment [at Chandernagore]. However it was not till we had tried everything that prudence could dictate in such critical and delicate circumstances that we submitted; and this resolution appeared to us the wisest we could come to in the situation in which we found ourselves, so as not to compromise [the safety of] our colony. This makes us hope that the Company, when it has weighed our reasons, will not disapprove of our action.

The Dutch have not been treated better than ourselves. It has indeed cost them much more, and all the merchants, without exception, in anything like easy circumstances, have experienced the cupidity of Siraj-uddaula. This young man, who knows no laws except those of his own wishes, spares no one, not even the officers of his grandfather Aliverdi Khan, whom he despoils of all their property.

This success of the Moors, though they owe it only to the imprudence and the inconsiderate conduct of Mr. Drake, Governor of Calcutta has rendered them insupportably arrogant and insolent, so that if this government continues on its present footing we shall have much to suffer, and commerce will become extremely difficult.

The English are at Fulta, to the number of 800 men, including a reinforcement which arrived lately from Madras; however they make no movement, and it is not known what resolution they will come to; but whatever they do, it will not be possible for them to recoup their Company for a loss so considerable as that which they have just suffered, nor to re-establish the fortunes of a number of private persons, white and black, whom this unfortunate event has reduced to beggary.

We are in the utmost impatience to learn what will be the result of the great preparations for war which are being made in Europe. The situation in which we are here makes us desire that these preparations, far from serving for war, may procure us a solid and durable peace.