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"THE CAREER OF MIR JAFAR KHAN"

(1757-1765 A.D.)

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE

OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LONDON.

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A B B R E V I A T I O N S

(Further details of the Works are given in the Bibliography)

(1)	Aitchison's Treaties	-	A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads.
(2)	Abs. P.L.R.	-	Abstracts of Persian Letters Received.
(3)	" P.L.I.	-	Abstracts of Persian Letters Issued.
(4)	Ben. Sel. Cons.	-	Bengal Select Consultation
(5)	Ben. Sec. Cons.	-	" Secret "
(6)	Ben. Pub. Cons.	-	" Public "
(7)	Bolt's Considerations	-	Considerations on Indian Affairs.
(8)	C.P.C.	-	Calendar of Persian Correspondence.
(9)	Cailland's Narrative	-	A Narrative of what happened in Bengal in the year 1760.
(10)	Defence of the United Company.	-	A Defence of the United Company against the complaints of the Dutch East India Company.
(11)	Fresh Complaint	-	A fresh complaint lately exhibited to the States of Holland and West Friezland by the Dutch East India Company against the servants of the Englis East India Company in Bengal.

(12)	H.M.S.	-	Home Miscellaneous Series.
(13)	J.A.S.B.	-	Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal.
(14)	J.B.O.R.S.	-	Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.
(15)	Khulasat	-	Khulasat-ut-Tawarikh.
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(17)	Law's Mémoire	-	Mémoire de l'Empire Mogol.
(18)	Memorial of Facts	-	Memorial of Facts relating to the disputes with the Dutch in Bengal.
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(20)	Orme	-	A History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan.
(21)	Original Papers	-	Original Papers relating to the disturbances in Bengal from 1759 to 1764.
(22)	Philips' Handbook	-	A Handbook of Oriental History.
(23)	Riyaz	-	Riyaz-us-Salatin.
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(32)	Yusuf.	-	Ahwal-i-Aliverdi Khan.

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CHAPTER I

THE EARLY PHASE OF MIR JAFAR'S CAREER

The history of India, immediately after the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb, had been considerably influenced by the activities in the provinces of a number of political adventurers. The central authority had lost its vitality, which prompted and enabled these adventurers to usurp political power and to appoint their own 'naibs'[1] and agents. The field of fortune was open to everyone who could use his strength and capacity for intrigue, or who could profitably gather mercenary armies together. Although there were some settled governments in Oudh, in the Deccan, ~~Deccanand~~ in the Punjab, respectively under Saadat-Ali, Asafjah and Saifuddaulah, nevertheless by and large, peace and order were wanting throughout the continent. Bengal was no exception. Its history was a "complex subject in which personalities and nationalities, diversities and contraries are combined and confused". Dark conspiracies, tragic murders and rapid changes at the heart of government, were

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1. Philips' Handbook - "In the 13th and 14th Centuries, a deputy, a Lieutenant Viceroy. A deputy collector" p.70.

the fate of the Bengal State. Adventurers in the persons of Murshidkuli Khan (1717), Shujauddin Khan (1727) and Aliverdi Khan (1740), had usurped the throne of Bengal one after another. Like them, and particularly like his master Aliverdi Khan, Mir Muhammad Jafar Ali Khan came to India as a penniless adventurer[2] and usurped the throne of Bengal in 1757.

The early life of Mir Jafar is obscure like that of many other important personalities of these disturbing times. The material evidence has not survived, or was not recorded. As apparently he had no court chronicler of his own who could have left a detailed account of his life and activities, we are left with a number of occasional references to incidents in his early life.

We possess no information at all on his ancestry or the date and place of his birth. All that we know is that he was a son of an Arab named Sayed Ahmed Najafi.[3] He did not seem to have received any education, a fact which remained a principal drawback throughout

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2. Sarkar - History of Bengal - II, p.469.

3. Yusuf - F.4, C.P.C., IV, p.317.

his life. But it can be said with some amount of certainty that Mir Jafar, however, had received a good military training in his younger days, and contemporary historians and chroniclers have borne testimony to his military talents. His career until the time he became Nawab of Bengal was, we are safe in assuming, the career of a soldier.

When Mir Jafar first appeared in India is not known. For the first time we hear of him in the reign of Nawab Shujaud-din-Khan, and in particular connection with the affairs of the Ostend Company in the year 1734.[4] Mir Jafar was ordered by the Nawab to capture the settlement of the Company and to take the inmates prisoner.[5] At the head of a small army, he surrounded on the land side the fort of Banke-Bazar, belonging to the Ostend Company, and threw up an entrenchment in front of his encampment to defend his army against the fire of the besieged.

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4. For details of the Ostend Company, see Law's Memoirs, p.164. Letter to Court, 26 December 1734.

5. Ben. Pub. Cons., 16 January 1934. Salimullah, p.60.

At the same time he gained control over the river below the fort, and ultimately compelled the enemy to surrender. His tactics in seizing and demolishing the fort, no doubt distinguished him as an able general.[6]

His exploits subsequently attracted the attention of Aliverdi Khan, who employed him in 1740 as a general in his war at Giria[7] against Nawab Sarfaraz Khan, son of Shujaud-din-Khan. Mir Jafar presumably rendered so meritorious a service that Aliverdi, upon his accession, bestowed on him a corps of bodyguards[8], together with a 'mansab'[9]. The Nawab further rewarded him with the exalted post of 'Bakhshi' (literally meaning the Paymaster General, but really the Captain General of the Forces), and eventually raised him to a position next to himself in the state.[10]

GIRIA

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6. Salimullah, p.60.

7. Letter to Court, 4 August 1740.

8. Riyaz, p.324.

9. "A military title conferred by the Mughals, regulated by the supposed number of horse the holder could bring into the field, varying from ten to ten-thousand". Philips' Handbook, p.69.

10. Salimullah, p.106.

It should be remembered that up to this time Mir Jafar was an ordinary officer on a monthly salary of Rs.100[11] but now his salary was raised to Rs.500 per month.[12] Moreover, with a view to gaining his permanent support and assistance, Aliverdi gave his half-sister, Shah Khanam, in marriage to Mir Jafar.[13] This marriage no doubt raised Mir Jafar's social status, and introduced him into the court politics of his master.

From contemporary sources, it is evident that during the subsequent years under Aliverdi's rule, Mir Jafar had proved his valour and knowledge of military tactics in various battles which sometimes threatened the very existence of the state. On every critical occasion, he used to be consulted by the Nawab.[14]

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11. Muzaffarnamah, F.42A.

12. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V, p.231)

13. Ibid, Salimullah, p.106.
Here it should be noted that besides his legal wife, Mir Jafar kept two women, named Muni Begam and Baboo Begam, and loved them passionately, but through fear of Aliverdi Khan, he kept this matter concealed.

14. Salimullah, p.187.

and was employed as deputy commander of the Bengal army under him. For instance, though Aliverdi Khan had seized the provinces of Bengal and Bihar, Orissa remained independent under Rustam Jung. In order to bring that province under control, accompanied by Mir Jafar, Aliverdi Khan marched in January, 1741, from Murshidabad. Mirza Bakar, son-in-law of Rustam Jung, who was leading the van, at once attacked the left wing of the Nawab's army under Mir Jafar.[15] This sudden attack threw the Bengal army into confusion and disorder. But it was Mir Jafar's gallantry and swift action which saved the situation. Gulam Husain, who was often present at the battles in Bengal of this period, but who appears not to have been present on this occasion, writes, "Mir Jafar, seeing how matters stood, jumped down from his horse and putting himself at the head of a strong body, he advanced to the assistance of the discomfited troops . . . . Mir Jafar exerted himself so manfully in that trying moment that he on that day acquired high character for military conduct and soldier-like prowess".[16]

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15. Siyar, I. p.352.

16. Ibid. Muzaffarnamah, F.A.41A.

Mir Jafar's victory thus virtually brought the city of Cuttack under Aliverdi's control. But as soon as he left, Mirza Bakar again made an attack upon the city and confined its ruler Sayed Ahmed (Saulat Jung).[17] On receiving this news, the Nawab immediately sent for Mir Jafar and asked him to march against the enemy.[18] Time was important, and Mir Jafar immediately left with a detachment to rescue the confined Prince.[19] When Mirza Bakar received advice that Mir Jafar was within ten miles of the city, he at once put Sayed Ahmed into a coach, instructing his commanders to put him to death on the arrival of the Bengal army, and he himself left Cuttack.[20] In the meantime, at the forced approach of Mir Jafar, the commanders of

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17. Siyar, I, p.363. Salimullah, p.112.

18. Salimullah, p.112.

19. Riyaz, p.334.

20. Ibid, Salimullah, p.113.

Mirza Bakar, who were carrying the coach, ran their spears into it, but the confined, and no doubt terrified Prince, apparently remained unscathed.[21] Mir Jafar pushed forward hastily and rescued him,[22] and they embraced each other with mutual affection.[23] He then placed the Prince on an elephant, and himself mounted behind in order to protect his person.[24] If Mir Jafar had not come up so quickly, Sayed Ahmed would have been murdered.

Mir Jafar was indeed a faithful servant of the Nawab, who accordingly did not hesitate to employ him also in murderous acts. The Nawab wished to punish the Rajah of Mayurbhanj, who had allied himself to Mirza Bakar. The Rajah on his part appealed to the Nawab for an understanding.[25] The Nawab invited him to his hall of audience and at the same time instructed[26] Mir Jafar to post himself and his followers in a positin

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21. Riyaz, p.335. Siyar, I, p.367.

22. Riyaz, p.335, Salimullah, p.113. Siyar, Vol.I,p.36

23. Salimullah, p.113.

24. Siyar, I, p.367.

25. Ibid, p.381.

26. Ibid.

from which to murder the Rajah and his guards on their arrival. The Rajah entered the hall without suspicion, and no sooner had he taken his seat than Mir Jafar seized him and hacked him to pieces.[27] In a few moments the Rajah's attendants also were no more.

There is no doubt that in the eyes of the Nawab, Mir Jafar proved himself equally capable of facing the enemy on the battlefield, as well as of executing cold-blooded murder, and it is understandable that in almost all the future campaigns he was sent as a commander of the Bengal Army with full power.

In the year 1744, the Ostend Company, whose factory had once been destroyed by Mir Jafar, and since then remained occupied by the Nawab, raised its head again. Some German troops of the Company, in disguise, made a sudden attack at night upon the sleeping soldiers of the Nawab who were posted at their factory and killed a good number of them. The Nawab ordered Mir Jafar to punish the offenders.[28] The General arrived on the spot and swiftly blockaded their factory. The Germans in

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27. Siyar, p.381.

28. Muzaffarnamah, F.56A. Salimullah, p.106.

extreme fear were, however, able to take to a ship and escaped.[29] "People still believe", writes Karam Ali, "that Mir Jafar took a bribe of 10,000 Rupees to allow them to escape".[30] How far this was true we do not know, but the probability lies in the mention by the Bengal Council that Mir Jafar only blockaded the factory from the land side.[31] At any rate, Mir Jafar succeeded in capturing the factory, and having destroyed all the gates, he returned to Hugli.[32]

In the year 1745, the Marathas under their chief, Raghuji Bhonsle, marched into Bihar[33] with the intention of attacking Bengal. To arrest this further advance, the Bengal army was despatched under the command of Mir Jafar. He advanced with his usual courage and at the sight of the enemy at once fell on them with great vigour. He did not give Raghuji any chance to order his troops. The Maratha chief, though surprised

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29. Muzaffarnamah, P.564.

30. Ibid.

31. Letter to Court - 10 December 1744.

32. Salimullah, p.106.

33. Letter to Court, 31 January 1746.

at the swiftness of the attack of the Nawab's general, was not dismayed, and made a counter-charge. In consequence, a furious engagement took place. But after some fighting, Raghuji suddenly left the battlefield. Here again Mir Jafar has been suspected of having allowed the Maratha chief to escape, though in fact, it is uncertain if Raghuji escaped through the neglect of Shamshir Khan (another general of the Nawab) or by the treachery of Mir Jafar, or by his own skill and bravery. In any case, the Nawab did not lose trust in him, and later appointed him as the Deputy-Governor of Orissa.[34]

After the expulsion of Raghuji from the borders, the settlement of Orissa next occupied the attention of the Nawab. Again he thought it advisable to send Mir Jafar there.[35] Accordingly the Nawab invested his son-in-law Sayed Ahmed Khan again with the supreme authority over the government of Orissa, but appointed Mir Jafar to be his 'naib' or deputy in that province, rewarding the latter at the same time with the two

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34. Muzaffarnamah, F.83B. Siyar. II, p.23.

35. Ibid.

'faujdaries'[36] of Midnapur and Hijli over and above the office of 'Bakhshi' which he had been enjoying all these years. This new appointment as 'naib' was conferred upon Mir Jafar in a public audience "where he was honoured with a rich Ikhilat'[37], an elephant and a horse, a sabre and a poniard, with a sirpich and a jica of jewels, after which ceremony he was complemented with another set of jewels, elephants and other presents by Sayed Ahmad Khan, the Governor General, as from himself"[38]. Perhaps Sayed Ahmed Khan here rewarded Mir Jafar for saving his life from the hands of the Afghans.

This new appointment, together with the two faujdaries, made Mir Jafar pre-eminent in the 'darbar'

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36. "In the 14th Century a military officer corresponding roughly to general of division and directly under the general in chief command. In the 16th - 18th centuries, an officer in charge of the general administration of a portion of a province. From the 17th century, the general as distinct from the revenue, administration, and under the British concerned with criminal as distinct from civil jurisdiction. In modern times a police sub-inspector". Philips' Handbook, p.64.

37. "Any article of costume presented by a superior authority to an inferior as a mark of distinction". Ibid, p.87.

38. Siyar, II, p.23. Yuruf - P.64.

and provided him with an independent income for the maintenance of his troops. On leaving for Orissa, "he deputed", writes Gulam Husain, "Mir Ismail, son to his maternal uncle, to act as his agent at court, and likewise as his substitute in the Paymaster's office, and he sent a gentleman called Sujan Singh (Subhan Singh) to govern as his deputy in the district of Hijli".[39] What arrangements he made with regard to his other faujdari, Midnapur, is not known.

Mir Jafar marched from Murshidabad in November 1746, at the head of about 8,000 cavalry and 12,000 infantry,[40] with the object of driving the Marathas further from the vicinity of Orissa, and to settle the government of that province[41] under Seyed Ahmed. After several days' march, he arrived at Midnapur, where he met a body of Marathas and Afghans,[42] and routed them.

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39. Siyar, II, p.23.

40. Ibid. Letter to Court, 30 November 1746.

41. Letter to Court, 30 November 1746.

42. Siyar, II, p.23.

The victorious general then pursued the vanquished Marathas and inflicted a crushing blow on Mir Habib's lieutenant, Sayed Nur on 23 December 1746.[43] He then resumed his march towards Balasore and encamped[44] on the bank of Kanika river, where he stayed,[45] not daring to cross because of a report that some new troops of the Marathas were expected to come up at any moment from Orissa.[46] He was repeatedly advised by another general, Abdul Aziz, to continue the march into Balasore and to occupy its fort before it could fall into the hands of the Marathas. But Mir Jafar refused, and even threatened the general with expulsion from the army. As he was the supreme commander, nobody dared to advise him any further, and hence the whole army remained inactive, and Mir Jafar indulged in drinking and music.

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43. Bengal Pub. Cons. 29 December, 1746.

44. "Mir Jafar with 15,000 men being hourly expected". Ibid. Letter to Court, 22 February 1747. Muzaffarnamah, F.83B.

45. Siyar, II, p.23.

46. Ibid. Letter to Court, 22 February 1747.

On 20 January 1747, Mir Habib came up from the south of Balasore and was there joined by a Maratha force under Janoji Bhonsle (son of Raghuji) from Nagpur via Cuttack. The news of this junction caused great apprehension in the mind of Mir Jafar, though he had a considerable number of soldiers under him. His courage failed him, and instantly, without having permission from the Nawab, and even without acquainting him of this, rushed back some 150 miles to Burdwan.[47] He was pursued by the vanguard of Janoji's army, which captured some of his elephants and beggage. It seems that Mir Jafar went in awe of Janoji Bhonsle. Certainly the latter kept pursuing him with inferior numbers. But Mir Jafar, instead of ascertaining whether he could equally face the enemy, continued his flight.[48]

At this unexpected news, the Nawab at once despatched Ataullah Khan and Fakrullah Beg Khan to reinforce the fugitive general at Burdwan.[49] This Ataullah Khan evidently felt disloyalty to the Nawab, and his first

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47. Siyar, II, p.24. Muzaffarnamah, F.83B.

48. Letter to Court, 22 February 1747. Yusuf, F.65.

49. Muzaffarnamah, F.84B. Siyar, II, p.24.

act at Burdwan was to suggest a conspiracy to Mir Jafar, with a view to entrapping and killing Aliverdi Khan and then to seize the Government of Bengal.[50] Mir Jafar, on his part, agreed to co-operate on the condition that he himself should take possession of the government of Bihar and Ataullah that of Bengal.[51] As Mir Jafar was ambitious, it is likely that he would have taken part in such a secret plot. Moreover, he justified himself by the thought that if Aliverdi Khan could kill his master's heir and seize the throne, why had he not the right to kill Aliverdi and seize the throne.[52] But actually his part in this important plot showed ineptitude. A continual stream of messages passed and repassed between the camps of the two plotters. " So many practices and parleys", says Gulam Hussain, "could not long remain a secret, and as soon as this partition treaty came to the knowledge of Abdul Aziz and some others of Mir Jafar's friends, it was opposed with all their might".[53]

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50. Muzaffarnamah, F.84A.

51. Ibid.

52. Sarkar - History of Bengal, II, p.470.

53. Siyar, II, p.25. Muzaffarnamah, F.84B.

Their reasons against the possibility of the success of this scheme, together with the probable consequences of its failure, made such an impression on Mir Jafar's mind that he at once abandoned it.[54]

The Nawab, upon hearing of this treacherous plot, immediately hastened to Burdwan with a view to lessening their influence and to punish them accordingly. Mir Jafar, without losing time, went to pay his respects to the Nawab. In the open 'durbar', the Nawab severely reprimanded him for his conduct towards the Marathas, and for his disgraceful retreat to Burdwan. He was then dismissed from the 'durbar'. Mir Jafar felt insulted, and silently retired to his quarters. But he did not forget the bitter expressions made use of in the 'durbar' by the Nawab, and therefore refrained from going into the Nawab's presence for some days. To make his sufferings worse, the Nawab treated Ataullah Khan with mildness, and even went to his camp to see him. This partiality on the part of the Nawab no doubt incensed Mir Jafar.[55]

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54. Siyar, II, p.25.

55. Ibid. Stewart - History of Bengal, pp.474-5.

Within a few days, the Nawab realised the gravity of the shock which he had given to his near relation Mir Jafar. He therefore became anxious to regain his affection, and circumstances provided him with that chance. At this time one of his relations having died, Mir Jafar was in a very mournful state of mind, and the Nawab took this opportunity to comfort him. So he paid Mir Jafar a visit at the latter's quarters under the pretence of joining in the ritual prayers that were to be pronounced over the deceased. But Mir Jafar, by his own foolishness and arrogance, missed the chance of a reconciliation with the Nawab. He was so incensed by his recent treatment that he neither showed the usual mark of respect by advancing from his quarters to receive the Nawab, nor addressed him, upon his arrival, in a proper and respectful manner.[56] The Nawab felt insulted at this untoward behaviour of Mir Jafar. He summoned Subhan Singh, deputy to Mir Jafar, with the order that he should be furnished with the accounts of the government of Hugli.[57] This summons acted like a

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56. Siyar, II, p.26.

57. Ibid. Stewart - History of Bengal, p.475.

cold douche to Mir Jafar, who, fearing the discovery of the misappropriation of government funds, answered the Nawab, "that there was no sending for Sujan Singh (Subhan Singh) unless the Viceroy sent also for his (Mir Jafar's) head".[58] At this reply, the Nawab became enraged and sent messengers with explicit orders to bring Subhan Singh by force. Accordingly they went to Mir Jafar's quarters, and after having addressed him with arrogance and in complete defiance of his rank and dignity, caught hold of him and brought him to the Nawab. For reasons of policy, the Nawab appointed Subhan Singh the faujdar of Hijli for the time being, and bestowed the office of 'Bakhshi' on Nurunhal Beg Khan.[59] This arrangement deprived Mir Jafar of his two posts on which his strength and reputation largely depended. At the news of this arrangement, all but a few of Mir Jafar's men at once left him, and he found himself deserted with his reputation and valour gone, and at last ordered by the Nawab to retire to Murshidabad.[60]

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58. Quoted in Siyar, II, p.27.

59. Ibid. Letter to Court, 24 Feb. 1748. Karam Ali says that he was replaced by Faiz Alikhan, which seems to be incorrect - Muzaffarnamah, F.105B.

60. Siyar, II, p.27. Yusuf - F.66.

At this dismissal from all employment, "the fumes of pride that had shot up into his brain and had obscured his understanding, subsided at once"[61], and Mir Jafar, with bowed head, retired to the capital where he surrendered himself at the feet of Nawazesh Muhammad Khan, the eldest son-in-law of the Nawab, and sought his protection and favour. This depressed and humiliated condition of Mir Jafar was noticed by the author of the Siyar who was there at the time, and was accordingly reported by him.[62] Nawazesh Muhammad took pity on him and advised him to remain quiet for the time being in his quarters. But Mir Jafar was impatient, and sought an early reconciliation with the Nawab. Nawazesh Muhammad assured him that this would be effected as soon as possible. Mir Jafar then returned to his quarters, and dismissed some of his servants, as he feared that he would no longer be in a position to maintain them, and he himself remained secluded from the outside world.[63]

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61. Siyar II, p.27.

62. Siyar II, p.27.

63. Muzaffarnamah, F.114B.

A few months after, the Afghan insurrections made the situation very critical for Aliverdi, and at the beginning of 1748 the services of his brother-in-law (Mir Jafar) were once more required.[64] Accordingly Mir Jafar was reinstated in his former posts and raised to his former dignity. But he did not enjoy the Nawab's favour for long. A serious charge of misappropriation of the Soldiers ' salaries was soon brought against him.[65]

While the Nawab was at Burdwan, Mir Jafar was summoned to appear before him. The General obeyed the order instantly, and upon his arrival, the Nawab received him with severe reproaches for his misdeeds. Without waiting for Mir Jafar' s reply, the Nawab further ordered him to dismiss his own brother, Mir Ismail, and to appoint Khwajah Hadee Khan in his place.[66] Mir Jafar gave no reply. How far this

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64. Ben. Pub. Cons., 19 March 1748.

65. Siyar II, p.88. Muzaffarnamah, F.114B.

66. Siyar II, p.91.

charge of misappropriation against him was true we do not know, though Mir Jafar was capable of this. But it should be borne in mind that this discovery of misappropriation[67] was brought by Khwajah Hadee himself supported by another general.[68] However, Mir Jafar, without any protest, immediately complied with the orders of his master.

Besides his activities as a commander in various battles against the Marathas, Mir Jafar also acted as a mediator between the two hostile camps. Being fatigued with long warfare, the Marathas, under their leader Mir Habib, at last became desirous of peace with the Nawab. With this object in view, Mir Habib sent some trusty envoys to Mir Jafar, requesting him to speak to the Nawab regarding an understanding. Mir Jafar transmitted advice of this overture to the 'darbar' in a proper manner.[69] The Nawab, who likewise

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67. Siyar II, p.88.

68. Ibid, p.89.

69. Siyar II, p.111.

was tired of war and was longing for peace, at once replied to Mir Jafar, "giving him leave to send some trusty persons to Mir Habib's camp, and he agreed that should any man of sense and character come from that general with such proposals as would be found admissible, they would be listened to or else the envoy would have leave to return in all safety".[70] Accordingly Mir Jafar sent back the messengers along with two of his own, assuring Mir Habib privately of his sincerity in bringing about a peaceful settlement. The Maratha general responded, and a treaty of peace was subsequently concluded.[71]

Despite the retreat to Burdwan, Mir Jafar all along had distinguished himself as a general in a series of campaigns which raised his prestige at the capital, and which later enabled him to capture the throne. Though Aliverdi Khan had severely resented his conduct on two occasions,[72] nevertheless in his last days the Nawab had to rely on his brother-in-law's fidelity and strength for the succession of Sirajud-Daulah[73] and made him swear on the Koran to protect Siraj from his enemies.

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70. Quoted in Siyar II, p.111.

71. Ibid, p.112. C.P.C. II, pp.331-32.

72. Vide Ante.

73. Law's Memoire, p.165. Hill, Bengal in 1756-57, I, p.30.

CHAPTER II

THE CONSPIRACY OF 1757

The conspirary of the year 1757 which led to the battle of Plassey is a memorable event in the history of Bengal, because it helped to overthrow the former régime and instal the English as a political power in Bengal, nay in India. It is beyond the scope of the present work to deal with all the aspects of the conspiracy and battle which are mentioned in contemporary and secondary accounts. Our object here is confined to the discussion of the part played by Mir Jafar Khan in that conspiracy.

There were two parties involved in that conspiracy: the old Hindu-Moslem nobles of the court represented by Mir Jafar, and the English. The command over a large army, together with his previous military exploits, had given Mir Jafar a superior position in the kingdom and enabled him finally to initiate a conspiracy against his own sovereign. He first took advantage of the discontent and hatred that was prevailing among the old nobility against the Nawab Sirajuddaulah. He mobilised them to

take part in a plot and then invited the English to join it. So far as the English were concerned, it should be borne in mind that they were equally dissatisfied with Sirajuddaulah. From the very beginning of his rule, they wanted to control his policy in their own interests, and if possible, to replace him by a more friendly person.[1]

In dealing with Mir Jafar's role in the conspiracy, one notes two different phases in his attitude. In the beginning, his desire was to replace Sirajud-daulah by another person, but finding the possibility of support from the English, he proceeded to have the throne for himself.

The question which first strikes one is: had Mir Jafar actually been averse to Sirajud-daulah's accession to the throne? The answer is in the negative. On the contrary, he was true to the pledge extended to Aliverdi Khan to support Sirajud-daulah's succession. "He had had the particular regard of the

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1. R. Drake's Letter to Secret Comm. 14 July, 1757. (Vide First Report - 1772, p.217)

late Aliverdi Khan, who dying had recommended Siraj to him and made him swear on the Koran never to abandon him . . . without him Siraj would never have been the Nawab. Mir Jafar was his only supporter".[2] Although Mir Jafar had supported Siraj's accession and did not look for the throne at the beginning of his reign, nevertheless he was of a treacherous nature. He knew the character of Sirajud-daulah well before he became Nawab, and now the latter's policy towards the old influential nobles, and especially his wanton attack upon the Palace of Ghasseti Begam (the eldest daughter of Aliverdi Khan) made Mir Jafar suspicious as to the Nawab's ultimate intentions. He construed this act of the Nawab as the signal for the destruction of the old adherents and relations of the Nawab Aliverdi Khan, of whom he was one. Hence he began to devise means to put the Nawab under control, or if possible to replace him by another person belonging to Aliverdi's family.[3]

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2. Law's Memoirs, p.165. Hill - Bengal in 1756-57, I, p.30.

3. Muzaffarnamah - F.165A. Riyaz, p.365, F.N.

Very soon his eyes fell on Shaukat Jung, the Nawab of Purnea, a cousin of Sirajud-daulah, who was at this time on bad terms with the latter. A treacherous person like Mir Jafar could surely not miss this opportunity. He at once, on his own initiative, sent a secret message to Shaukat Jung, and provoked him to stand up against Siraj and to snatch the throne of Murshidabad from his hands.[4] In order to encourage the Nawab of Purnea to take such action, Mir Jafar mentioned that several commanders and nobles "who as well as Mir Jafar Khan himself, looked upon Sayed Ahmed Khan's son as their only resource against the growing and daily cruelties of Sirajud-daulah, and he pledged himself that he would be strongly and unanimously supported, as the enterprise was easy and it only wanted someone to sit on the throne, in which case all the others would undertake to place him thereon, under certain conditions and stipulations which he mentioned at length".[5] It would suffice to say that on the

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4. Siyar, II, p.196.

5. Quoted in Siyar, II, p.196. Scrafton's Reflections, p.56.

strength of this understanding with Mir Jafar, Shaukat Jung openly defied the authority of Sirajud-daulah, and sent a very insulting letter in consequence of which Siraj advanced with his army towards Purnea. Sirajud-daulah clearly understood the provocative nature of Mir Jafar which had made Shaujat Jung so insolent and rash, but still he placed Mir Jafar at the head of his army and kept him all along under his watchful eyes. Under these circumstances, Mir Jafar could not assist Shaukat Jung in any way, who at last was killed in the battle. Although Mir Jafar's plan did not succeed, still he did not give up hope altogether and soon his attention was drawn to the disaffection of the old nobles in the 'darbar' of the Nawab in the capital, where a spirit of rebellion[6] in fact had been brewing[7] since the latter's accession.

It would not be out of place to mention that Sirajud-daulah courted the displeasure of the old nobles of the court[8] and treated all the generals of Aliverdi

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6. Orme, II, p.147.

7. Davies, Clive of Plassey, p.197.

8. Riyaz, p.363. Watson's Letter to Holdernesse, 16 July 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 95, p.6).

Khan with ridicule and mockery[9], so much so that each one of them was shocked to see such a man on the throne.[10] By the severity and harshness of his temper, he had made many secret enemies both in his court and army[11] and nobody dared to speak freely in his presence.[12] Amongst the court nobles, Mir Jafar was the first to fall a victim to Sirajud-daulah's wrath. He had been enjoying for many years the office of Paymaster General of the Forces, but all of a sudden was dismissed from his post, which was bestowed on a new man, Mir Madan.[13] This appointment was an affront to Mir Jafar, who was a man of great power and distinction[14] and generally beloved by his soldiers.[15] This change was accompanied by the[16]

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9. Riyaz, p.363. Ive's Journal, p.146.

10. Watson's Letter to Holderness, 16 July 1757 (Vide H.M.S. 1795, p.5).

11. Scrafton's Reflections, p.75.

12. Dastur, p.170. Siyar, II, p.188.

13. Siyar II, p.186.

14. Ive's Journal, p.146.

15. Watts' Memoirs, p.81.

16. Clive's letter to Secret Committee 26 July 1757. Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2512. Law's Memoire, p.166.

appointment of Mohon Lal to be prime minister and controller of all affairs.[17] This appointment proved to be a serious injury to Rajah RaiDurlabh (the diwan or minister of finance) who "found his conduct subject to the control of Mohon Lal".[18] The Nawab gave Mohon Lal a large body of cavalry and infantry and ordered all the generals and the nobles of the 'darbar' to pay respect to him. All did so except Mir Jafar, who refused, and for some time ceased to pay respect even to the Nawab.[19]

There was another man of great personality and influence, Jagat Seth, who was one of the chief supporters of Mir Jafar. It is said that Sirajud-daulah had once struck Jaget Seth on the face in the open 'darbar'.[20][21] This may or may not have been the

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17. Riyaz, p.364. Siyar II, p.187. Orme II, p.147.

18. Orme II, p.147. Law's Memoire, p.165. Siyar II, p.225.

19. Riyaz, p.364.

20. Forrest - Life of Clive, II, p.411.

21. Hill - Bengal in 1756-57, I, p.CVII.

case, but the author of Siyar reports that "Jagat Seth, the principal citizen of the capital, whom he (the Nawab) had often treated with slight and derision, and whom he had mortally affronted by sometime threatening him with circumcision, was in his heart totally alienated and lost".[22]

So it is obvious that Sirajud-daulah had completely alienated the sympathy and support of his chief nobles, which in fact enabled Mir Jafar to organise a plot so successfully at the Nawab's 'darbar'. He made them all understand that they were practically tired of living under such administration,[23] in such a state of general danger,[24] and incited them to get rid of such a government[25] and of such a cruel and insensate ruler[26] by depriving him of his power,[27] or, if possible, by death.[28]

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22. Siyar II, p.225. Hill - Bengal in 1756-57, III, p.185.

23. Dastur, p.170. Siyar II, p.188.

24. Watts' Memoirs, p.76.

25. Siyar II, p.173. Watson's Letter to Holdernesse, 16 July, 1757 (Vide H. M.S . 1795, p.6).

26. Watson's Letter to Holdernesse, 16 July, 1757.

27. Watts' Memoirs, p.76.

28. Siyar II, p.193.

His proposal was thought to be very just and logical by those disaffected old nobles, and they at once supported him. Thus Mir Jafar succeeded in bringing them together in a conspiracy at Murshidabad,[29] though, of course, he was not decided as to who should replace Sirajud-daulah on the throne, nor how to effect it at all.

On his return to Murshidabad from Calcutta after the conclusion of the treaty of 7 February 1757, the Nawab found all his old nobles and generals disaffected,[30] and beginning to desert his court.[31] Foremost among them was Mir Jafar Khan,[32] who had ceased to attend the Nawab and had retired to his own quarters. Next to Mir Jafar in power and influence was Rai Darlabh, who likewise began to behave indifferently. "As Mir Jafar and Rajah Durlabhram were at the head of the army", writes Gulam Husain, "and they seemed of late to have become different sort of men from what they

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29. Muzaffarnamah, F.167A.

30. Riyaz, p.370.

31. Siyar II, p.223.

32. Riyaz, p.370.

had been, Siraj-daulah concluded that they must be at the head of the malcontents and the very persons that blew the fire of dissension".[33] And the very retirement of Mir Jafar to his quarters further strengthened this suspicion in the mind of the Nawab and he determined to punish them both vigorously. "But he had not the courage", says Gulam Husain, "necessary for such vigorous action . . . nor did he feel himself vigour enough to seize his (Mir Jafar's) person by open force"[34] and to put him to death. He at times became anxious to reconcile his general and at times became overcome by his anger and resentment. On one occasion the Nawab went so far as to order cannons to be planted against the house of Mir Jafar.[35] He was ready to blow him up and ordered Mir Jafar to quit the city. Mir Jafar tendered excuses and apologies, but secretly warned his followers to be alert.[36] Jagat Seth took the opportunity of this strained relationship between Mir Jafar and the Nawab to offer to the former

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33. Siyar, II, p.224. Muzaffarnamah, F.167B. Dastur, p.172.

34. Ibid, p.224.

35. Ibid. Dastur, p.172.

36. Riyaz, p.370. Muzaffarnamah, F.170B.

the prospect of succeeding as Nawab. But Mir Jafar did not agree to that proposal at first, because perhaps he realised that neither he nor the fellow conspirators were strong enough to effect it without the help of a third party, and so continued to wait and watch.

In this state of confusion at the court, there came forward a soldier of fortune in the hope of depriving the Nawab of his government and perhaps succeeding him. This was Yarkhan Lutif, a general of 2000 horse in the service of the Nawab and in enjoyment of Jagat Seth's support and monetary help.[37] It was he who for the first time invited the English to join the conspiracy by sending a secret message to Watts (who was the accredited representative of the English at the court) to the effect that he had something of great importance to communicate to him and wished to see him.[38] "It is probable", says Orme, "that he was now employed by the Seths to discover the real intentions of the English towards the Nawab".[39] Watts sent Omichand (a Hindu

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37. Scrafton's Reflections, p.75. Orme II, p.147. Watts' Memoirs, p.57.

38. Scrafton, op cit, p.75.

39. Orme II, p.148.

merchant of Calcutta) who was informed by Lutif "that the Nawab would very soon march with the greatest part of his forces towards Patna against the Pitans (Pathans) and that he intended to temporise with the English until his return to Murshidabad when he had determined to extirpate them from his dominions, into which he had sworn that they should never return: that most of his officers held him in utter detestation and were ready to join the first leader of distinction who should take arms: that the English army might, during his absence, take possession of Murshidabad, and that he (Lutif) with his own troops would join them in the attempt, when if they would proclaim him Nawab, he should be supported by Rai Durlabh and the Seths: he offered in return to enter into any engagements which the English should stipulate for the advantage of their own affairs".[40] Watts approved the scheme and communicated it to Colonel Clive, who sent it to the Select Committee.[41]

This proposal of Yar Khan Lutif at once revealed the conspiracy to the English. They, thinking themselves insecure, found in this overture a ray of light for their

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40. Quoted in Orme, II, p.148.

41. Watson's Letter to Holdernesse, 16 July 1757, (Vide H.M.S.Vol. 95, p.7).

deliverance from the Nawab, who so deeply suspected them. Indeed by this time mutual suspicion between the Nawab and the English was so much increased that Colonel Clive thought a rupture necessary[42] and even inevitable.[43] "Clive arrived at the momentous conclusion that what he sought was impossible without going a great deal further, even to the length of deposing the reigning Prince. . . . The conclusion was arrived at by himself alone and from now on he was to play practically a lone hand. Nobody else on the English side was capable of forming, let alone carrying out such a design".[44]

In response to the overture of Yar Khan Lutif, the Select Committee led by Clive concurred with the favourable view of Watts, but commended his caution and suggested that he should continue to keep things in suspense and not take any action until he should receive the Committee's future directions, as it was a matter of great weight and importance.[45] Thus in this way "the game with the Nawab now assumed a new and grimmer

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42. Orme, II, p.147. Muzaffarnamah, F.171A.

43. First Report, 1772, p.216. Stewart, History of Bengal, p.520.

44. Davies - Clive of Plassey, p.197. "Clive too had watched the indications of the gathering storm and saw in its approach the dawn of British supremacy". Thornton - History of British Empire, VIII, p.225.

45. Watts' Memoirs, p.81.

aspect"[46], and to satisfy personal interests and greeds, Hindus, Moslems and Christians, irrespective of their creeds[47], became united as one soul.

At this juncture, anticipating the possibility of English assistance, Mir Jafar Khan, who so long had refused the overtures made to him by Jagat Seth, now came forward with his final decision, his object being the 'masnad' of Bengal, and thus began the second phase of his role[48]. He sent his friend and confidant, Khwajah Petrus[49], to Watts with his proposals. Mir Jafar represented to the English the wrongs he had suffered, the injuries inflicted on all the nobles and the resolution they had unanimously made to rid themselves of Sirajud-daulah[50]. Mir Jafar's agent then produced

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46. Davies, op. cit. p.199.

47. "Necessity, which in politics usually supersedes all oaths, treaties, or forms whatsoever, induced the English East India Company's representatives about three months after the execution of the former treaty (7 February) to determine by the 'blessing of God' upon dispossessing the Nawab Sirajud-daulah of his Nizamat and giving it to another". Bolts' Considerations, I,p.40.

48. Siyar, II, p.190.

49. Ibid, Ben. Sel. Cons. 1 May 1757. Law's Memoire,p.166.

50. Siyar, II, p.228. Ben. Sel. Cons. 1 May. 1757.

a paper in which all the conspirators promised to stand by him against the Nawab. The agent further declared, "Do you gentlemen but put yourselves in motion and come to some skirmish with Sirajud-daulah, and we engage after that to do his business amongst ourselves effectually. By a small motion of yours, you should put it in our power to rid ourselves and the world of the oppressions and violences of the tyrant".[51]

In this connection, we should bear in mind that though a treaty of peace was concluded between the English and the Nawab, still the relationship between them was not at all friendly. The English were pressing Sirajud-daulah to carry out all the articles, and moreover, trying to obtain further concessions not included in the treaty.[52] This constant pressure greatly embarrassed the Nawab, and to this embarrassment was added the 'much-vexed' question of the French fugitives, who after

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51. Siyar, II, p.228. Ben. Sel. Cons. 1 May, 1757.

52. "The most of the articles of the Peace are complied with". Letter from Clive to Pigot, 30 April 1757 (vide Malcolm - Life of Clive, II, p.201). Clive's Letter to Watson, 21 April 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2403).

their defeat by the English in the month of March 1757, took service under Sirajud-daulah,[53] which provoked the English into demanding their surrender. Clive in his several letters to Watts, demanded the surrender or expulsion of the French as an indispensable condition of the Nawab's continued friendship with the English,[54] and represented that "according to the recent treaty of Peace (7 February) the friends and enemies of the English were to be regarded as friends and enemies of the Nawab".[55] Under this state of affairs, the Nawab was at last compelled to dismiss the French under M. Law from his dominion,[56] and they left Cassimbuzar on 6 April. But the English tried to destroy them on the way and actually despatched a force after them. At this, Sirajud-daulah got enraged, lost his patience and lodged a strong protest with the English, and at the same time despatched an army with an order to proceed to Plassey.[57]

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53. Siyar, II, p.226 Blochman-Tarikh-i-Mansuri,p.89

54. Malcolm, Life of Clive, I, p.216.

55. Siyar, II, p.226. Tarikh-i-Mansuri, p.89.

56. Malcolm, Life of Clive, I,p.211 " . . . I received his (the Nawab's) orders to leave the country quickly unless I preferred to surrender to the English . . . " Law's Memoire, Quoted in Hill, op. cit, III, p.602.

57. Malcolm, op. cit. I, p.211.

Such a state of suspicion[58] and strained relations could not continue long,[59] and both Watts and Clive came to the conclusion that a change in the Government was indispensable to the very existence of the English in Bengal, and the offers presented to them by Mir Jafar were considered to be the best to effect it instantly.[60] But Mir Jafar did not think it advisable that the English should reach a state of rupture with the Nawab so abruptly before undertaking any definite plan and preparations to make it effective. So he at once advised Watts to ask Clive to break up his camp and pacify the Nawab with every appearance of peaceful intention, and to lull him into a sufficient sense of security in order to enable them to carry out the necessary preparations steadily.[61]

Mir Jafar himself was not sitting idle, who in the meantime endeavoured to increase the number of his soldiers, as he well knew that unless he could gather a strong army

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58. Evidence of Col. Burgoyne (Vide Malcolm - Life of Clive, III, p.337)

59. Malcolm, op. cit, II, p.218.

60. Ben.Sel. Cons. 1 May, 1757.

61. Mir Jafar's Letter to Watts, 10 April 1757, (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.205).

around his standard, he would not be able to infuse a spirit of strong confidence into the English. But this required a huge sum of money which he, in fact, did not possess. So he at once appealed to Ghasseti Begam for assistance. Here it should be remembered that this Begam had a deep hatred for Sirajud-daulah and "her heart was ulcerated by his having turned her out of her property and home".[62] Hence she responded to Mir Jafar's appeal and on his behalf excited the resentment of her friends against the Nawab, and exhorted them to support Mir Jafar.[63] She not only gave Mir Jafar moral support, but actually helped him with the state treasure that she had secreted at the time of the capture of her palace. This financial help of the Begam undoubtedly did much to strengthen the cause of Mir Jafar, as the "general on his side", writes Gulam Hussain, "distributed his money whenever he thought it would be effectual: and he exerted himself so well in having in his party ~~every~~ every disbanded soldier and every hungry adventurer he heard of, that he soon assembled secretly in his house and in his quarters a very respectable force".[64]

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62. Siyar, II, p.227.

63. Ibid, p.228.

64. Ibid. Muzaffarnamah, F.170B.

Besides, he won over some of his own relations and friends, who were still attached to the Nawab, to his side on a promise of huge rewards later on.[65]

On 28 April Watts communicated to Clive that "the Nawab will not keep to his agreement. This you may depend upon. Mir Jafar advises for a few days to be quiet . . . He advises to send no ammunition up, as all boats are strictly searched. His proposals of joining us, I beg you will answer immediately when I shall make a firm agreement, therefore send me your proposals, and when you receive mine, then be ready to march, when I shall proceed to Mir Jafar or he will send a thousand men to defend our factory. Depend on it . . . the three-fourth of his (Nawab's) army are his enemies. When the agreement with Mir Jafar is settled, we cannot have a man more powerful, there is none equal to him . . . it is our interest to follow his advice".[66]

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65. Clive's Letter to Watson, 15 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS, X, p.2427).

66. Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 1 May 1757.

Mir Jafar did not remain content with merely communicating his proposals to Watts. To instigate the English to come over to his side, he even sent to Clive in Calcutta his Agent, Mirza Amir Beg, who communicated to Clive a manifesto purporting to bear the seals of some noblemen and officers of Bengal, recounting their grievances, real or fancied, against Sirajud-daulah and inviting the English to deliver them from the Nawab.[67] He further assured Clive that the latter had only to make a move with his English soldiers when all the fighting would be done by him and the other conspirators.[68]

This personal proposal of Mir Jafar made a profound impression on Colonel Clive. The superior importance of Mir Jafar gave him the preference over every other pretender,[69] and Clive took up his cause very earnestly.[70] He went from his camp to Calcutta and

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67. Riyaz, p.371. Muzaffarnamah, F.171a. Watts' Memoirs, p.82.

68. Siyar II, p.229.

69. Orme, II, p.149, "Mir Jafar was by far the properest person to be elevated to that rank, as his abilities were greater, his reputation better and his connections more extensive than those of Lutif".- Watts' Memoirs, p.83.

70. Hill, Bengal in 1756-57, II, p.366.

communicated the proposals, both of Mir Jafar and Watts to the Select Committee. The Committee then took into consideration whether they could, consistently with the Peace made with the Nawab, concur in the measures proposed by Mir Jafar of taking the government from Sirajud-daulah and setting himself up.[71] The arguments in favour of such a step having been maturely weighed and debated, the Committee were unanimously of opinion that as the Nawab's ultimate aim was to ruin the English and extirpate them from his country,[72] therefore common prudence "obliges us to prevent that ruin which cannot be so effectively done any other way than of divesting the Nawab from all powers of doing us mischief".[73] Moreover, noticing an earnest desire of the chief nobles of the court for a change of government and realising the probability of its success "whether we give our assistance or not",[74] the Committee in that case "think it would be a great error in politics to remain idle

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71. Ben. Sel. Cons, 1 May 1757.

72. Ibid.

73. Ibid.

74. Ibid.

and unconcerned spectators of an event wherein, by engaging as allies to the person designed to be set up, we may benefit our employers and the community very considerably, do a general good and effectually traverse the design of the French and probably keep them entirely out of these dominions ".[75]

Having considered the foregoing reasons, the Committee embraced Mir Jafar's proposals to render him total assistance towards setting him up in the Government provided he promised to comply with the Company's 'farman' (Royal Charter) and the privileges of a mint and all the grants promised by Sirajud-daulah, to compensate fully the losses of the Company and the European inhabitants of Calcutta, to permit an extension of the Company's bounds from Surman's Garden southward to Baranagore westward and the lake eastward, to allow them to fortify their factory of Cassimbuzar, to conclude an offensive and defensive alliance against all enemies as well as Europeans and not to allow the French to re-establish their Colonies in these provinces, to assure the Company that the Nawab would not fortify within 20 miles

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75. Ibid.

of the river side from Hugli down to Hijli, to assign the revenues of certain tracts of land for the maintenance of the Company's soldiers, and to permit an English agent to reside at Murshidabad with the status of Ambassador.[76]

On 2 May Clive returned to the camp, and in compliance with the advice of Mir Jafar, he immediately broke up, sending one half of the troops to Calcutta and the rest into the fort of Chandernagore. Having done this, he requested the Nawab to give the same proof of pacific intentions by withdrawing his army, which still lay encamped at Plassey under the command of Rai Durlabh.[77] At the same time he wrote Watts: "Tell Mir Jafar to fear nothing. I will join him with five thousand men who never turned their backs. Assure him, I will march night and day to his assistance and stand by him as long as I have a man left".[78] He enclosed the proposals of the Committee[79] and instructed him to

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76. Ibid.

77. Orme, II, p.149.

78. Vide Orme MSS., X, p.2409. Actually at this time Clive had not more than 500 soldiers and in the field he could not mobilise more than 3000 soldiers.

79. Ibid. Malcolm, Life of Clive, I, p.239.

"Enter into business with Mir Jafar as soon as you please."[80] Having thoroughly examined the proposals, Watts made the following specific additions, that on account of the Company's loss, the Nawab would pay one crore of rupees and for the lossess of the Hindu, European and Armenian inhabitants, he would pay 30 lakhs of rupees to both the Hindus and Europeans and 15 lakhs to the Armenians. A further sum of 30 lakhs was stipulated for Omichand. Over and above these demands, Watts inserted three more, viz. that the lands within the Calcutta ditch and six hundred yards without the ditch all around should be given to the English, that a tract of land whose rents in the King's Books amounted to 100,000 rupees yearly should be bought at a reasonable price from the Zamindars and the Nawab would assist them in the purchase, and whenever the Nawab would require the assistance of the English troops, he would pay the extraordinary expenses.[81]

This plan of the treaty (as formulated by Watts) was sent to Calcutta where the Committee again made certain changes with regard to restitution money and added that

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80. Letter from Clive to Watts, 2 May 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2409).

81. Watts' Memoirs, p.92. Ben. Sel. Cons., 17 May 1757.

the whole of this agreement should be fully complied with within one month from Mir Jafar's being seated as Nawab at Murshidabad or any other city within the provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.[82] Having done this, the Committee again sent the agreement back to Watts with a blank left, in case Mir Jafar should think the Company's demand too extravagant, when Watts might have liberty to moderate it.[83]

Amidst these negotiations, the Nawab becoming suspicious at Clive's withdrawal of the forces and his subsequent 'soothing' letters to him for the same, ordered Mir Jafar to proceed to Plassey at the head of 15 thousand soldiers, to reinforce Rai Durlabh there.[84] For such an order Mir Jafar was not prepared, but "fearing that by a refusal to proceed to Plassey, he should turn the Nawab's suspicion upon himself, obeyed with appearance of

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82. First Report - 1772, p.217. Ben.Sel. Cons. 17 May 1757.

83. Watts' Memoirs, p.93. Clive's Letter to Watts, 2 May, 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2435).

84. Orme, II, p.150. Broome, Bengal Army, I, p.124.

alacrity and marched from the city . . . . but left his agent to carry on the correspondence with Watts".[85] Watts detailed the revised proposals of the Committee to Petrus, the agent of Mir Jafar, and desired him to get Mir Jafar's approval upon them. Accordingly on 12 May, Petrus went to Plassey and returned on 14 May with the assurance that Mir Jafar gave his entire consent to all the articles.[86]

Meanwhile there followed a counter-move by Omichand within the conspiracy. Both Mir Jafar and the English disliked him. "Mir Jafar had entertained no very favourable notion of Omichand",[87] and even expressed his doubt as to his sincerity and honesty.[88] But there was a necessity for employing and trusting this sordid man,[89][90]

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85. Orme, II, p.150.

86. Ibid, Ben. Sel. Cons. 17 May 1757.

87. Watts' Memoirs, p.94. Ben. Sel. Cons, 17 May 1757.

88. Malcolm, Life of Clive, I, p.244.

89. Watts' Memoirs, p.94.

90. Malcolm, op. cit, I, p.244. Broome - Bengal Army, I, p.124.

as the success or failure of the enterprise much depended on him.[91] Omichand demanded 5 percent of the Nawab's treasures as the price of his participation in the plot and even threatened to disclose the entire plot if his demand was not met. Thus Omichand became a beast of burden and at the same time a danger both to Mir Jafar and the English.[92] Realising the gravity of the situation, the English decided to deceive Omichand, and the expedient was suggested by Clive.[93] Two treaties were accordingly drawn up - one on red paper containing a stipulation that Omichand was to receive 20 lakhs of rupees, and one on white paper in which this stipulation was omitted.[94] This transaction, however, caused some

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91. Malcolm, op. cit, I, p.244.

92. "Mir Jafar is determined he will by no means trust Omichand. If I had followed the interested counsel of the latter, all affairs would have been overset, all confidence of us lost". Letter from Watts to Clive, 17 May 1757. (Vide Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.245).

93. Orme, II, p.154.

94. Ibid, Ben. Sel Cons., 17 May 1757.

delay which made Mir Jafar rather uneasy and anxious as he had not yet heard anything definite as to whether his proposal was accepted by the English or not.[95]

These arrangements having been completed, the Committee at Calcutta thought it indispensable to have direct access to Mir Jafar in order to secure his acquiescence. But as he was at this time at Plassey under the Nawab's orders, it was found difficult to effect this without raising suspicion in the mind of the Nawab.[96] At last, after much deliberation, it was decided to send Scrafton to the Nawab with a letter of great secrecy and importance,[97] to be communicated to

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95. "Mir Jafar is uneasy and anxious to the last degree at not hearing whether his proposals are accepted or not . . . . I am sure he is to be depended upon and has no treacherous views". - Letter from Watts to Clive, 23 May. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 27 May 1757).

96. First Report, 1772, p.217. Ben. Sel. Cons. 17 May, 1757.

97. At this time there arrived a letter from the Maratha Chief Balaji Rao. In this letter, Balaji Rao seeing and hearing of the troubles in Bengal and thinking at the same time that it was a good opportunity to annexe so rich a province to his own, sought for Clive's assistance against the Nawab and assured him freedom of trade. This letter proved to be of great advantage to the English to remove, on the one hand, the suspicion of the Nawab against the hostile attitude of the English, and on the other hand, to have an interview with Mir Jafar.

him. Scrafton was instructed to stop at Plassey and to make a visit, as of ceremony, to Mir Jafar, whom he was to inform of the purport of the treaty and to obtain his assent to it. He was likewise to explain the manner in which the Committee were acting towards Omichand and finally to construct a plan of operation for the impending war with the Nawab.[98]

Scrafton approached Plassey, but could not get a private interview with Mir Jafar, as he was being strictly guarded by the Nawab's spies.[99] They interfered and instructed that Scrafton should take the direct route to Murshidabad, where he arrived on 24 May.[100]

On his arrival at Murshidabad, Scrafton and Watts went to the Nawab and delivered the letter of Clive, the perusal of which satisfied the Nawab and he ordered Mir Jafar to come back to the capital.[101]

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98. Orme, II, p.155. Scrafton - 'Reflections' p.79. R. Drake's Letter to the Secret Committee, 14 July 1757. (Vide First Report, 1772, p.217). Clive's Letter to Watts, 19 May 1757 (Vide, Orme MSS. X,p.2416)

99. Davies, Clive of Plassey, p.204.

100. Scrafton's Letter to Clive, 25 May 1757 (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons., 3 June 1757).

101. Ibid. Orme, II, p.157. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.50. Broome - Bengal Army, I, p.128.

Thus Clive's manoeuvre was crowned with success. Scrafton remained in the city for three days more expecting Mir Jafar's arrival from Plassey. Mir Jafar arrived on 30 May and visited the Nawab, who having no further need of the general's services, treated him very badly. Mir Jafar could not understand the real reason of this insolent behaviour of the Nawab, but suspicious as he was by nature, he at once construed it to be the signal for his destruction. Upon returning to his place, he immediately sent for Scrafton who secretly visited him in his private chamber and acquainted him with the details of the Council's decision in his favour,[102] which gave him some relief. Being uncertain, however, of what was likely to follow, he requested all the generals and officers on whose fidelity he relied, to keep their troops in readiness to defend his Palace.[103]

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102. Orme, VI, p.158.

103. Ibid, p.159. Muzaffarnamah, F.169B. Broome, Bengal Army, I, p.128.

On the same evening Mir Jafar sent one of his confidential adherents to Watts, to whom the latter delivered the two treaties, the real and the fictitious, together with the separate article for donations to the Army, the Navy and the Committee, amounting to 52 lakhs of rupees,[104] requesting that all the three papers might be ratified by Mir Jafar and returned to him without delay. Mir Jafar thoroughly examined these papers, but refused to give his assent to them without consulting Rai Durlabh, who as the Revenue Minister, was expected to know the position of the state treasury.[105] His insistence on contacting him, delayed the ratification for some days because, as it happened, Rai Durlabh had been at Plassey by the Nawab's orders. He came back to the capital on 3 June,[106] when on examining the papers,[107] he expressed his doubt as to the possibility of complying with the demands,[108] because the Nawab's treasury was not

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104. Clive's Letter to Watts, 19 May 1757 (Vide Orme MSS. Vol. X, p.2416). This particular article for 52 lakhs of rupees was not included in the Public Treaty, but it was a private agreement with Mir Jafar.

105. Watts' Letter to Clive, 31 May 1757 (Vide Ben.Sel. Cons., 3 June 1757).

106. Orme, II, p.160.

107. Watts' Memoirs, p.96.

108. Ibid.

sufficient to meet them.[109] After a good deal of deliberation, Rai Durlabh's objection was removed when both Mir Jafar and Watts promised that the 'diwan' would take, at the time of dividing the treasures between the Nawab designate and the English, 5 per cent upon the whole English share,[110] as the price of his joining the conspiracy. These arrangements were made on 4 June.

In the meantime an untoward incident occurred which was likely to shatter the hopes of the conspirators. Whether anything of Mir Jafar's connection with the English had reached the Nawab's ears or whether he had before planned for his destruction and thought the present reconciliation with the English to be the opportune moment for giving effect to it, is not definitely known, but Mir Jafar was found to be in extreme terror, and even made up his mind not to go to the 'darbar'.[111] The Nawab repeatedly summoned him to the court, but to no effect. At this disobedience, the Nawab at once ordered

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109. Orme, II, p.160.

110. Ibid. Letter from Watts to Clive, 6 June 1757. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 11 June 1757).

111. Scrafton's Reflections, p.82. Orme, II, p.160. Watts' Memoirs, p.98.

him to resign the command of the army to an officer named Khwajah Hadee,[112] and surrounded his palace with spies and posted guards on all communications with it.[113]

It should be remembered that, although Mir Jafar had agreed to the terms of the treaties on 4 June,[114] it was felt necessary by the English that he should sign them and take an oath to observe them.[115] But the present confinement of Mir Jafar in his palace under heavy guards,[116] rendered it almost impossible for Watts to have an interview with him. Mir Jafar feared that they could not meet without great risk of discovery.[117] However, a clever but dangerous expedient was arranged.[118] Khwajah Petrus had provided for Watts a covered palankeen,[119] which passed without interruption to Mir Jafar's palace,[120] where both the former and his son Miren received Watts.[121]

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112. Orme, II, p.160. Muzaffarnamah, F.170A.

113. Scrafton's Reflections, p.82. Watts' Memoirs, p.98.

114. Orme, II, p.160. Forrest - Live of Clive, I, p.433.

115. Orme, II, p.160.

116. Watts' Memoirs, p.98.

117. Orme, II, p.160.

118. Ibid. Forrest, Life of Clive, II, p.433.

119. Ibid. Watts' Memoirs, p.99.

120. Watts' Memoirs, p.99. Watts' Letter to Clive, 7 June, 1757 (Vide Ben.Sel.Cons.11 June 1757).

121. Orme, II, p.160. Watts' Letter to Clive, 7 June, 1757.

Then they had a general conversation on the future course of action. Mir Jafar frankly told Watts that there were 3,000 horse on whom he could safely depend but he expected a number of disaffected commanders to join him on the day of battle. He then desired that at all events the English troops should immediately take the field, promising that if the Nawab should decide to defend the capital, he would attack him in his palace on the immediate approach of the English troops.[122] But if the contest was to be decided by a battle on the field, he would, in that case, regulate his conduct "according to the station which he should chance to occupy. If in the van, he would, on the approach of the English, beat his great drum, display his standard, march off with all the troops under his command, and join them on the right: if on either of the wings or in the rear, he would display a white flag, charge the main body of the Nawab's Army as soon as the English began the attack, and endeavour

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122. Ibid. Watts' Memoirs, p.105.

to take the Nawab prisoner".[123] After explaining his mode of action, Mir Jafar "gave his full assent to the terms of the real treaty and to whatever other donations had been stipulated, and signed it (5 June 1757), and then, placing the Koran in his hand, and his other hand on the head of his son (Miran) he promised to perform his engagements faithfully.[124] Mir Jafar in his own hand, affixed by his seal, wrote: "I swear by God and the Prophet of God to abide by the terms of the treaty whilst I have life".[125] The following were the terms of the treaty:-[126]

(1) Whatever articles were agreed to in the time of Peace with the Nawab Sirajud-daulah, I agree to comply with.

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123. Orme, II, p.161. Watts' Memoirs, p.106. Watts' Letter to Clive, 7 June 1757.

124. It can be learnt from the writings of Moslem chroniclers that in spite of his swearings by placing the Koran on his head, Mir Jafar could not make the English believe in his honesty, and so Jagat Seth was to act as surety for Mir Jafar's performances of the pledges.

125. Orme, II, p.161. Watts' Letter to Clive, 7 June 1757. (Vide op. cit).

126. Vide Aitchison's - Treaties, etc., II, pp.201-2.

(2) The enemies of the English are my enemies, whether they be Indians or Europeans.

(3) All the effects and factories belonging to the French in the Province of Bengal, the Paradise of Nations, and Bihar and Orissa, shall remain in the possession of the English, nor will I ever allow them any more to settle in the three provinces.

(4) In consideration of the losses which the English Company have sustained by the capture and plunder of Calcutta by the Nawab and the charge occasioned by the maintenance of the forces, I will give them one crore of rupees.

(5) For the effects plundered from the English inhabitants of Calcutta, I agree to give fifty lakhs of rupees.

(6) For the effects plundered from the Hindus, Moslems and other inhabitants of Calcutta, twenty lakhs of rupees shall be given.

(7) For the effects plundered from the Armenian inhabitants of Calcutta, I will give the sum of seven lakhs of rupees. The distribution of the sums allotted to the English, Hindus, Moslems and other inhabitants of Calcutta, shall be left to Admiral Watson, Colonel Clive, and the rest of the Council, to be disposed of by them to whom they think proper.

(8) Within the ditch which surrounds the borders of Calcutta, are tracts of lands belonging to several Zamindars: besides these I will grant to the English Company 600 yards without the ditch.

(9) All the land lying south of Calcutta, so far as Culpee (Kalpi) shall be under the Zamindary of the English Company, and all the affairs of these parts shall be under their jurisdiction. The revenues to be paid by the Company in the same manner as other Zamindars.

(10) Whenever I demand the assistance of the English, I will be at the charge of the maintenance of their troops.

(11) I will not erect any new fortifications near the river Ganges below Hugli.

(12) As soon as I am established in the three provinces, the aforesaid sums shall be faithfully paid.

There was another article from the side of the English and signed by them, by which they promised that:-

(13) "On condition Mir Jafar Khan Bahadur solemnly ratifies and swears to fulfil the above articles, we the under-written do, for and in behalf of the Hon. East India Company, declare on the Holy Evangelists and before God, that we will assist Mir Jafar Khan Bahadur with our whole, utmost force to obtain the Subah-ship of the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, and further that we will assist him to the utmost against all his enemies whatever and whensoever he

calls upon us for that purpose, provided that when he becomes the Nawab he fulfils the above articles". Signed by Adm. Watson, Col. Clive, R. Drake, W. Watts, J. Kilpatrick and R. Becker.

Amir Beg, Mir Jafar's agent, arrived at Calcutta with these treaties on 10 June, and explained to the Select Committee the intentions of Mir Jafar in the same light as he (Mir Jafar) himself had explained them to Watts.[127] The Committee at this representation came to the conclusion that the troops of Mir Jafar, without the assistance of others who might join him, would be fully sufficient to assure the success of the enterprise. It was therefore determined to commence war without delay.[128]

The 'first phase' of the conspiracy was thus over with the completion of these transactions. Dazzled by the dignity to which he aspired, Mir Jafar implicitly acquiesced in whatever was proposed by the English without weighing his ability to fulfil his promises, and without foreseeing the probable future consequences of these transactions.

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127. Ben. Sel. Cons., 11 June 1757.

128. Ibid.

CHAPTER III

MIR JAFAR AND PLASSEY

The promise made by Mir Jafar, which we have already noticed, to stand aloof with a large body of troops from the army of the Nawab,[1] and if possible to seize his person by surprise,[2] strengthened the decision of the committee at Calcutta to commence war without delay.[3] But the problem which now confronted them was, how to commence it "as it is not customary with this nation (English) nor indeed with any man of sense to break with anyone without a sufficient subject".[4] So the committee needed a pretext - and what pretext was found by them? "Probably", says Ghulam Husain, "they found it in the dilatoriness and neglect of the payment of the sum of money stipulated for the plunder made in Calcutta"[5] by the Nawab. Presumably on this

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1. Ben. Sel. Cons., 11 June 1757.
2. Watts' Memoirs, p.105.
3. Ben. Sel. Cons, 11 June 1757.
4. Siyar, II, p.229.
5. Ibid, Ive's Journal, p.146.
   R. Muir - Making of British India, p.47.

pretext, Colonel Clive dismissed the agents of the Nawab from his camp, instructing them to acquaint the Nawab that he was marching on Murshidabad with the object of referring the English complaints, which he enumerated, to a commission of five officers of the Nawab's government. He gave the names of those officers. They were the men who had conspired with him against their master.[6] Previous to the delivery of this letter, the Nawab got a hint, vague and confused, of the intrigues of Mir Jafar, and at once determined to seize his person.[7] For this purpose, he ordered a body of soldiers to surround Mir Jafar's palace,[8] and pointed artillery against it.[9] Mir Jafar acquainted Clive with his critical situation, and advised him that nothing would extricate him from this impending danger but the news of his march.[10] Meanwhile,

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6. Clive's Letter to the Nawab, 13 June 1757 (Vide H.M.S. 193, p.147).
   Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.51.

7. Orme, II, p.165. Scrafton's Reflections, p.82.

8. Stewart - History of Bengal, p.522.

9. Scrafton's Reflections, p.82.

10. Ibid.

he sent a message to Watts on 11 June, advising him to make his escape without delay.[11] Though Watts had previously received instructions to leave the capital as soon as opportune, nevertheless he delayed his departure till 13 June, when Mir Jafar informed him that the Nawab's artillery would begin to fire upon his palace the next morning,[12] which would make it difficult for him to escape. Upon this advice, Watts with his subordinates fled from the city and reached Clive's army in safety.[13] In the meantime, threats and defiance still continued to be exchanged between the Nawab and Mir Jafar,[14] and when at last the report of Watts' escape, together with the news of the march of the English army, reached the Nawab, he was astonished.[15] Because at once it had convinced him ~~convinced him~~ of what he had hitherto been disbelieving that Mir Jafar was in fact in a plot with the English.[16]

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11. Orme, II, p.165.

12. Ibid.

13. Law's Memoirs, p.166. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.51.

14. Orme, II, p.165.

15. Muzaffarnamah, F.173A.

16. Orme, II, p.167.

Being horrified at the impending danger, Sirajud-daulah became anxious to withdraw Mir Jafar from the English side, so he revoked the orders to attack his palace and tried to reach an understanding with him.[17]

At such a crisis, some of the few who were faithful to the Nawab, tried to make him believe that all this mischief was the fault of Mir Jafar, and advised him to kill him immediately.[18] On the other hand, some of the Nawab's officers who had been in league with Mir Jafar were exhorting him to effect a reconciliation.[19] Some historians have accused Sirajud-daulah of being cowardly for not taking strong measures against Mir Jafar. But against this charge, it might be said that if the Nawab had been actually involved in a trial of strength with Mir Jafar at such a critical time, the battle of Plassey would have probably been completed at Murshidabad. The Nawab wishing to protect his

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17. Ibid. The author of Riyaz says that "Taking out the cotton of recklessness from the ear, he (Nawab) displayed to the aforesaid Khan, flattery and endearment and sending the Begam of Mahabat Jung to Mir Jafar opened the gates of apology for his past shortcomings" - pp.373-74. Dastur, p.173. Muzaffarnamah, F.173A.

18. Muzaffarnamah, F.172A. Dastur, p.173. Riyaz, p.374. Scrafton's Reflections, p.84.

19. Scrafton's Reflections, p.85. Orme II, p.167.

independence did not give ear to those who were instigating him to imprison and kill Mir Jafar. He thought that in the name of Islam, in the name of Aliverdikhan and in the cause of independence, Mir Jafar might be prevailed upon to sever his connections with the English and remain attached to him. With these objects in view, he sought an understanding and sent repeated messages to Mir Jafar to come to the 'darbar', when everything would be done to the latter's satisfaction. The weak and vacillating followers of Mir Jafar who were present at that time in his palace, thought it prudent to re-establish good relations with the Nawab, and so they persuaded him to go to the darbar. But Mir Jafar refused to visit the Nawab, as he had no faith in the latter's assurances and actions.[20] Upon his refusal, Sirajud-daulah, without thought for his dignity, himself got into a palankeen and attended by a small bodyguard,[21] proceeded to Mir Jafar's house. This time Mir Jafar came out to receive his master, and

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20. Riyaz, p.374. Dastur, p.173. Orme, II, p.167.

21. Mir Jafar's letter to Amir Beg, 19 June 1757 (Vide Orme MSS., XI, p.2809).

showed him every mark of respect. The Nawab acquainted him with the danger of the advance of the English army and sought his assistance. Mir Jafar was intelligent enough to utilise the Nawab's apprehensions to his own advantage. He promised to remain attached to the Nawab on the following conditions: that he would not continue in the Nawab's service after the impending danger was over; that he would not visit him in the 'darbar'; and that he would not take any active part in the army.[22] The Nawab had no alternative but to agree to these demands. Accordingly, an agreement was concluded, sanctified in the customary way by conjointly taking oaths on the Koran.[23] But still Mir Jafar did not feel satisfied, and he took a written statement from all the commanders of the army and artillery that "when they had conquered the English, they should be bound to see me (Mir Jafar) and my family safe whenever I chose to go".[24] This condition was likewise accepted by the Nawab.

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22. Ibid.

23. "The Koran was introduced, the accustomed pledge of their falsehood". - Scrafton's Reflections, p.85.

24. Mir Jafar's letter to Amir Beg, 19 June (Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2809) Muzaffarnamah, F.173A.

The Nawab was satisfied with the pledge of Mir Jafar[25] and thus for the time being all the doubts and fears which had been so long in his mind, disappeared. But here it should be observed that through this reconciliation, Mir Jafar deceived his master and became more sure of betraying him later.[26]

No sooner had the Nawab departed than Mir Jafar called his son and his other adherents to the private chamber of his palace and discussed the steps to be taken immediately before being ordered by the Nawab to join the army against the English. He proposed to inform the Colonel about his recent understanding with the Nawab, and to persuade the Nawab's army not to advance an inch unless their arrears were paid off.[27] So far as the first proposal is concerned, it should be borne in mind that Mir Jafar did not dare to send any intimation to Clive as the Nawab had posted guards on all the roads

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25. Law's Memoire, p.166.

26. "If the Subah erred before in abandoning the French, he doubly erred now in admitting a suspicious friend". Scrafton's Reflections, p.84. Law's Memoire, p.167.

27. Muzaffarnamah, F.173B. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.52.

out of the capital. But he succeeded in influencing the army not to march along with the Nawab. However, by a large distribution of money the Nawab changed the army's mind. This caused delay, for the army could not reach Plassey before the English. After settling these affairs, the Nawab quitted his Palace of Mansurgung and marched with his army accompanied by his generals, including Mir Jafar.

Meanwhile the English army at Calcutta, with a party of 150 seamen from the squadron, had already begun their march to join the remainder of the English forces at Chandernagore. On 13 June they continued their march and[28], without interruption, reached Patlee on the 16th. From there Clive despatched Eyre Coote with a small detachment to take possession of the fort of Katwa[30], which was done on 17 June.

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28. First Report, 1772, p.217.

29. Clive's letter to Select Committee, 16 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS., X, p.2422).

30. Clive's letter to Select Committee, 19 June. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2428).

The English who had so long been undertaking the expedition on a mere verbal understanding with Mir Jafar, and without his actual co-operation, at this stage discontinued their advance. Clive, in the absence of any communication from Mir Jafar, entertained a suspicion about his real motive. Since he had left Chandernagore Clive had received nothing but bare promises from Mir Jafar. He had no personal acquaintance with him, and so hesitated to risk the fortunes of the Company on the bare word of a man "who whatever his reasons, was a traitor to his own master".[31] It was prudent of Clive to entertain such views about Mir Jafar, and anybody in Clive's position could not help but suspect Mir Jafar's real intentions. Nevertheless, the absence of news from Mir Jafar may be explained by the strict watch of the Nawab's spies, so that it became extremely difficult for him to send news to the English camp regularly.[32]

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31. Ibid.

32. "The Nawab has fixed chokeys (guards) on all the roads . . . ." Mir Jafar's letter to Clive, 19 June. Dastur, p.174. (Vide Orme MSS. XI. p.2808).

From 13 to 16 June, Clive had despatched every day a letter informing Mir Jafar of his progress and position, but had received no news from the latter. It was on the 17th that Mir Jafar's letter dated the previous day came to Clive, in which the former acknowledged his apparent reconciliation with the Nawab and his oath not to assist the English. But he assured Clive that nevertheless the purpose of his covenant with them must be carried into execution.[33] This letter of Mir Jafar did nothing to create any sense of confidence in Clive. It was Clive's plan as previously arranged, that Mir Jafar would join him with his forces at Katwa. But now that he was at Katwa, Mir Jafar's letter had given no hint that he would join the English there. While he was in grave suspense, not knowing what to do

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33. "I understood", writes Mir Jafar, "that you marched the 25th agreeable to your contract. I broke the claims of service on the news of your coming, the Nawab was much intimidated and requested at such a juncture, I would stand his friend. On my part, agreeable to the circumstances of the times, I thought it advisable to acquiesce with his request, but what we have agreed on must be done. I have fixed the first day of the moon for my march . . . . You will take care to send trusty people that our secret may not be divulged". Mir Jafar 's letter to Clive, 16 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2807).

next, there came a messenger from Murshidabad who reported that "he had been introduced to Mir Jafar and his son Miren in a private court of their palace into which, as soon as they began to question him, came some other persons, whom he supposed to belong to the Nawab; for as soon as they appeared, Miren threatened to cut off his head as a spy and the heads of all the English, if they should dare to cross the river into the island".[34] This report increased Clive's bewilderment and suspicions so much that he began to think that he was being betrayed. He noted that Mir Jafar, just as when making his agreement with the English and taking an oath on the Koran, had likewise sworn with the Nawab on the Koran. In such circumstances, it was natural for Clive to suspect Mir Jafar's honesty with regard to his agreement with the English. Furthermore, Mir Jafar did not write anything in his letter as to his mode of action and the part he would play in the war, on which depended the success of the whole affair.[35]

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34. Orme, II, p.169. Ben. Sel. Cons., 25 June 1757.

35. Clive's Letter to Mir Jafar, 18 June (Vide Orme MSS., XI, p.2807).

Clive accordingly informed the Council at Calcutta that until he received sufficient testimony of Mir Jafar's sincerity, he would not cross the river.[36]

At length there arrived on 20 June two letters from Mir Jafar dated the previous day, one to Colonel Clive and the other to his agent, Mirza Amir Beg. In his letter to Clive, Mir Jafar stated, " . . . Tomorrow the day of the Eade (festival), by the blessing of God I shall march. I shall have my tent fixed to the right or left of the army. I have hitherto been afraid to send you intelligence. After I am arrived in the army, mutual intelligence will be easier; but here the Nabob has fixed chokeys (guards) on all the roads . . . I hope that till our affairs are publicly declared you will be very careful".[37] His letter to Amir Beg[38] was nothing more than a narration of the particulars of the reconciliation between himself and the Nawab and some account of the state of the army.

In neither of these two letters do we find any particular explanation of his likely method of action, nor any plan of operations for the English army.

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36. Clive's Letter to Select Committee, 19 June (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2428).

37. Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2808. Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 25 June 1757.

38. Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2808.

The mere information that he was accompanying the Nawab and that he would be on the right or left wing of the army, was neither sufficient nor encouraging to the English.[39] But in his defence it might be said that he could do nothing more at that stage nor could he actually come over to the side of the English, as his movements were being strictly watched by the Nawab's spies. Moreover, had he attempted anything abruptly, no doubt the Nawab might have despatched him with "oriental and dictatorial promptness"[40] and consequently the whole scheme might have been foiled at once. Nevertheless, he was a past master in duplicity, as is evidenced by his latest agreement with the Nawab. He made his present position safe by acting on the agreement to accompany the Nawab, while on the other hand, by forcing the Nawab to agree that he would not participate in any military activities on the battle-field, he understandably made the prospect of victory easier for the English.

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39. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.53.

40. Davies - Life of Clive, p.210.

Although this letter of Mir Jafar to some extent removed Clive's suspicion of his treachery, it did not help Clive to count on his assistance or his resolution.[41] So he again wrote to Mir Jafar advising him to join the English army as soon as possible, fearing that the Nawab's strength might increase every day. He further reminded him that if he did not think it possible to go over /to Katwa then in that case he must join them at Plassey or at any other suitable rendezvous with whatever force he had under his command.[42] But Clive felt some apprehension, so he decided not to advance till he got correct information about Mir Jafar's intentions and his movements.[43]

The inactivity of the English army on the midway and Clive's pusillanimity in not hazarding an advance did not at all please Mir Jafar. He informed Clive of his march from the capital, and assured him of joining the English army when they would come nearer

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41. Orme, II. p.170.
Ben. Sel. Cons. 25 June 1757.

42. Clive's Letter to Mir Jafar, 20 June 1757.
(Vide Orme MSS. X, p.28 08)

43. Clive's evidence - First Report, 1772. p.149.

to him. He further advised the Colonel to lose no time in falling on the Nawab, who had halted at Mankara, a village six miles to the south of Cassimbuzar, before the latter had time to entrench his camp.[44] "If you could send", added Mir Jafar, "two or three thousand fighting men the upper road towards Cassimbuzar, the Nawab's army would of themselves retreat, then the battle will have no difficulty ".[45] This encouraged Clive, who at once replied that he would march to Plassey without delay and would advance as far as Daudpur, where Mir Jafar must either join him with his army or give him instructions for the future course of action. He then ordered his army to move, and after eight hours of hard marching, arrived at Plassey at 2 o'clock in the morning of 23 June, and took up his position in the grove of mango trees.[46] Here the sound of drums, clarions and cymbals[47] coming from the entrenched camp a mile farther to the north,

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44. Mir Jafar's letter to Clive, 22 June 1757 (Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2812).

45. Ibid.

46. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2515).

47. Orme, II, p.172.

convinced the English that the Nawab's advanced guard was on the spot.[48] Mir Jafar, who was so long advancing with the Nawab's army, expected that according to his recent instructions, Clive would attack the Nawab's army on the midway which would facilitate his joining the English army. But to his utter astonishment, no such thing happened, neither did Clive in his reply give such a hint. Hence he felt very much disturbed, but neither attempted to detach himself from the Nawab's army nor dared to send any message to Clive.[49] On the other hand, this absence of any message from him made Clive's position very critical at Plassey, who at length despatched a note to Mir Jafar stating strongly that "whatever could be done by me, I have done. I can do no more. If you will come to Dandpur, I will march from Plassey to meet you, but if you do not comply even with this, pardon me, I shall make it up with the Nawab".[50] However, for some reason which we do not know, the message never reached Mir Jafar.[51]

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48. Ibid. Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.262.

49. Muzaffarnamah, F.172 A.

50. Vide, Orme MSS. XI, p.2813.

51. Malcolm, op. cit.

At daybreak on 23 June, the Nawab's army began advancing from the camp towards the grove[52] of which the English were in possession[53], their intention being to surround the English.[54] The Nawab's army made a profound impression on the English, - as Scrafton reported, "What with the number of elephants all covered with scarlet cloth embroidery, their horse with their drawn swords glittering in the sun, their heavy cannon drawn by vast trains of oxen, and their standards flying, - they made a most pompous and formidable appearance".[55] The first shot was fired by the French General M. Sinfray, at 8 o'clock in the morning, and a general cannonading continued from the Nawab's artillery. The English guns returned the fire with considerable effect.[56] The cannonading

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52. Orme, II, p.173.

53. The grove of Plassey extended north and south about 800 yards in length and 300 yards in breadth, and was surrounded by an earth bank and ditch.

54. Ive's Journal, p.151.

55. Scrafton's Reflections, p.66.

56. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.61.

from both sides continued for a while in which the English lost 10 Europeans and 20 Sepoys. Clive then ordered his troops to take shelter in the grove.[57] The Nawab's army under Sinfray supported by Mir Madan, who was anxious to gain victory,[58] being elated at this retreat of the English, at once advanced with their heavy artillery and fired with greater vivacity than before.[59] Had Mir Jafar, who was on the left wing of the army nearest the English, at this time joined Mir Madan in cannonading, the victory would have been decided at once for the Nawab. At such a time of steady advance of the Nawab's army under Mir Madan and Sinfray, Sirajud-daulah repeatedly summoned Mir Jafar to his side, but he did not move from his position.[60] "All this while", writes Gulam Husain, "Mir Jafar Khan, the author of all these evils and troubles, contented himself with standing at a distance

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57. Orme, II, p.175.

58. Siyar, II, p.231.

59. Orme, II, p.175.

60. Riyaz, p.375. Dastur, p.173.

with the troops under his command, exactly like one who had come only to see the engagement although his sole aim was to effect Sirajud-daulah's downfall"[61]
In spite of Mir Jafar's co-operation, the brilliant cannonading of the Nawab's artillery and the continual advance of Sinfray, Mir Madan and Mohonlal, so much embarrassed and frightened Clive that he severely reprimanded Omichand who was near him and was reported to have told that Mir Jafar had assured him that the troops as well as the commanders were totally alienated from the Nawab, and pledged himself that as soon as the fighting should take place, they would all come over to the English side. But "as much as I can see", added the Colonel, "the very reverse of all that is taking place".[62] Perhaps Clive was not aware of Mir Jafar's inactivity.

During the greater part of the day, Mir Jafar neither co-operated with the Nawab's army nor displayed any inclination to join the English army. He remained

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61. Siyar, II, p.231

62. Siyar, II, p.231.

motionless, and his aloofness raised doubts in the mind of Clive. But it is not difficult to ascertain Mir Jafar's intentions in such a situation. It is very probable that he was himself undecided whether to follow any particular course of action, when the fighting was hanging in the balance. Possibly he decided to shape his course of action as circumstances permitted.[63] Naturally continuing firm in his post, he had been watching the turn of events, and so to come over to the winning side.

In the thick of the fighting and in the heat of the work of carnage, whilst victory and triumph became sure on the Nawab's side, all of a sudden Mir Madan, the most trusted and gallant warrior, fell on being hit by a cannon ball.[64] He was carried into the presence of the Nawab, where having uttered a few words of his own loyalty and the want of it in others, he surrendered his soul to his creator. His death appalled Sirajud-daulah, who became confounded and seemed to have lost his presence of mind.[65] In such a state of perplexity

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63. Muzaffarnamah, F.174B.

64. Riyaz, p.375. Siyar II, p.231. Orme, II, p.175. Muzaffarnamah, F.175B. Mutur, p.173.

65. Siyar, II, p.232. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.62.

he at once sent for Mir Jafar.[66] It should be borne in mind that Mir Jafar was not aware of this situation in the Nawab's camp, and so he wondered at this unexpected summons of his master. He endeavoured to get the correct information from the messenger, but did not succeed. He then consulted his associates and Miren, who was his father's right-hand man, and they all advised him not to proceed an inch from his camp, as they apprehended treachery against him. Mir Jafar appreciated this advice, and at once wrote to the Nawab in reply that in the absence of any sufficient reason for his summoning, he could not meet him. At length, however, repeated messages obliged him to go to the Nawab. But as he was not sure of the Nawab's intentions, he brought his son Miren, Khadem Hussain and a numerous body of his adherents, all well armed.[67] He hurriedly entered the Nawab's camp, and without the proper courtesy, harshly asked him why he had sent for him. Although trembling with fear of assassination, Mir Jafar was rash. The embarrassed Nawab, without more ado, spoke to him in the humblest strain, even descending to supplication[68] He took his turban off and placed it before the general.[69]

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66. Muzaffarnamah, F.175B. Siyar, II, p.232.

67. Stewart - History of Bengal, p.328. Siyar, II, p.232.

68. Dastur, p.175. Orme, II, p.175.

69. "He sent for me and flung his turban off before [illegible]" Mir Jafar's letter to Clive, 23 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. II, p.2613)

"I now repent of what I have done", he said, "and availing myself of those ties of consanguinity which subsist between us as well as of those rights which my grandfather Aliverdi Khan has doubtless acquired upon your gratitude, I look up to you as to the only representative of that venerable personage and hope therefore that forgetting my past trespasses, you shall henceforward behave as becomes a Said[70], a man united in blood to me, and a man of sentiments who conserves a grateful remembrance of all the benefits he has received from my family. I recommend myself to you, take care of the conservation of my honour and life"[71] This pathetic appeal, instead of moving Mir Jafar, encouraged him in his ambition and he responded to the appeal with apparent sincerity. The Koran was again introduced, and for the second time he took his solemn oath by "placing in the respectful manner which indicates devotion, his crossed hands on his breast and bowing over them, he promised to exert

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70. "A Lord, a chief. A designation assumed by Muslims who claim descent from Husain, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad". Philips' Handbook, p.74.

71. Quoted in Siyar, II, p.232. Orme, II, p.175. Muzaffarnamah, F.175B.

himself to the utmost. When he made that gesture and when he uttered those words, he was lying".[72]

Being now certain of the results, Mir Jafar took advantage of the situation. He suggested "that the day was now drawing to its end, and that there remained no time for an attack. Send a counter order to the troops that are advancing: recall those engaged and tomorrow with the blessing of God I will join all the troops together and provide for the engagement".[73] The Nawab expressed his fear that the enemy might attack him in the night upon the withdrawal of the troops.[74] Mir Jafar, in order to make the Nawab believe in his sincerity, took upon himself the entire responsibility for providing against any night attack, and also assured him that the enemy would not dare to launch such an attack.[75] Relying on the[76]

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72. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.63. Scrafton's Reflections, p.98. Orme II, p.175.

73. Quoted in Siyar II, p.233. Jamiu-T-Tawarikh, p.427

74. Stewart - History of Bengal, p.528.

75. Siyar II, p.233. Stewart, op. cit. p.528.

76. Siyar II, p.233.

solemn oath of a Moslem upon the Koran, Sirajud-daulah sent orders to Mohon Lal to return from his post.

Mohon Lal at this order became astonished and at once replied "that this was not a time to retreat . . . that should he turn his head to march back to camp, his people would disperse and perhaps abandon themselves to an open flight".[77] The Nawab in his utter perplexity, not knowing what he ought to do, turned for advice to Mir Jafar who had stayed with him. The general again coldly assured him that the instruction he had given was the best in his power and that as to the rest, "His Highness was the master of taking his own resolutions".[78] The Nawab being intimidated by Mir Jafar's coldness and overcome by his own fears and apprehensions, surrendered his own power of judgment and submitted himself to his general's desire. He sent repeated orders to Mohon Lal, who at last obeyed and retreated from the post to which he had advanced at 2 o'clock.[79] [80]

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77. Quoted in Siyar, II, p.233.

78. Ibid.

79. Orme, II, p.175.

80. Siyar, II, p.233.

Having completed his treacherous plans, Mir Jafar, on Mohon Lal's return, decided to declare himself and despatched a note to Clive in which he stated, "I was in the Nabob's presence on this plain and observed that everybody was intimidated. He sent for me and flung his turban off before me and . . . . he made me write on the side of the Koran so that I cannot come over to you. By the blessing of God you have the better of the day. Mir Madan was wounded by a ball and is since died . . . . Rai Durlabh, Lutif Khan and myself are moved from the right to the left. Make a great and sudden discharge and they will run away and we shall do our part . . . . Attack him at 3 in the morning; they will run away, and then will be my opportunity . . . . Attack him in the night by all means. We three shall be to the left of the Nabob. Khwajah Hadee will remain firm to the Nawab. If you come you may have an opportunity of seizing him (Nawab). The commanders of the foot and of the swordmen have left the entrenchments leaving the guns there. I have mentioned but a small part of the loss, that the part of the army commanded by Mir Madan has sustained. Had you taken that opportunity to advance with your army, there had been nothing more to do. It grieves me that I was then at a distance . . ."[81]

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81. Vide Orme MSS., XI, pp.2813-2814.

However, this letter was never delivered to Colonel Clive, as the messenger feared to proceed while the firing continued.[82] Nevertheless, Mir Jafar had played his part.

The inevitable consequence of Mohon Lal's retreat now became obvious. It made a profound impression upon the troops[83] who interpreted the return to camp as a defeat and began to fly.[84] The Nawab being informed of this, became alarmed by the presence of the enemy in front and the traitors in his own camp, and he lost all firmness of mind. He at once realised the high price which he had paid to Mir Jafar's solemn oath on the Koran. However, at such a critical moment the Nawab issued orders to the army to retire from the battle-field,[85] and himself left it accompanied by about 2,000 horsemen.[86]

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82. Stewart - History of Bengal, p.528.

83. Siyar, II, p.233.

84. Muzaffarnamah, F.177B.

85. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.63.

86. Law's Mémoire, p.168. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. July 26, 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2514). Muzaffarnamah, F.177B.

Mir Jafar had been calmly surveying the result of his plan[87], but now the time had come to set his troops in motion. He advanced with his army slowly, but steadily to join the English. His signal not being understood, the English fired at him and compelled him to keep at a distance.[88] Up to 5 o'clock Mohon Lal and Sinfray continued fighting vigorously, but at length being disappointed at the treachery of the Nawab's generals, they were compelled to leave their posts and retired, whereupon the English advanced and took possession of the deserted camp of the Nawab. Thus the mockery of Plassey was over. "It was", says Malleson in his comment, "only when treason had done her work, when treason had driven the Nawab from the field, when treason had removed his army from its commanding position that Clive was able to advance without the certainty of being annihilated. Plassey then, though decisive, can never be considered a great battle".[89]

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87. Scrafton's Reflections, p.89.

88. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. IX, p.2514).

89. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, p.69. "Their (English) memoirs", says M. Law, "bears witness that unless such miracle happened, the battle could not produce to their advantage". Memoirs, p.167.

The victory was confirmed by a letter from Mir Jafar which successfully reached Clive, congratulating the latter for executing the design so quickly in a satisfactory way. He advised the Colonel to send to him either Mirza Amir Beg or Watts, on the banks of the lake where he was waiting in accordance with Clive's wishes.[90] Clive at once sent back the messenger with a note, requesting Mir Jafar to meet him the next morning at Dandpur.[91] After despatching the note, Clive with his soldiers started on their march, and about 8 o'clock at night halted at Dandpur.[92]

On the morning of June 24, Clive sent Scrafton and Amir Beg[93] with a letter to Mir Jafar in which he stated, "I congratulate you on the victory which is yours not mine . . . . We propose marching tomorrow to complete the conquest that God has blessed us with and I hope to have the honour of proclaiming you Nawab".[94] Mir Jafar was expected to rejoice at this congratulatory letter, but he could not do so, because he was aware of

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90. Vide, Orme MSS. XI, p.2814.

91. Ibid.

92. Orme, II, p.178.

93. Scrafton's Reflections, p.89.

94. Vide, Orme MSS., XI, p.2815.

the fact that he did not take any active part in the battle which he promised to do according to his agreement and which he now thought might perhaps be construed by Clive as non-compliance with the agreement and accordingly might be resented. So "he evinced more apprehension than joy". However, he proceeded, as instructed by Clive, to Dandpur accompanied by his son Miren[95] and his usual followers.

Upon his entry into the English camp, the military honours with which he was received alarmed him to a considerable extent.[96] Being unable to understand the implication of this compliment,[97] he at once recoiled, "as if", says Scrafton,[98] "it was all over with him", and thought it a preparation of his destruction.[99] At this psychological moment, Clive came forward hastily, received him, and with respect saluted him as the Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and

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95. Orme, II, p.178.

96. Ibid, Scrafton's Reflections, p.89.

97. Orme, II, p.178.

98. Scrafton's Reflections, p.89.

99. Ibid, Orme, II, p.178.

Orissa. His anxiety and fears were thus allayed, and he expressed much gratitude at the service done him.[100] They conferred for about an hour and Mir Jafar assured the Colonel in the most solemn manner that he would faithfully perform his engagements to the English.[101] Clive advised him to proceed immediately to Murshidabad and not to allow Sirajud-daulah to escape nor his treasures to be plundered,[102] because he was afraid that if Sirajud-daulah got the chance to escape, he would definitely try to join up with Mr. Law and thus undo the victory of Plassey absolutely.

Mir Jafar appreciated the reasonableness of this advice,[103] and so immediately returning to his camp, he hastened with his troops to Murshidabad and arrived[104] there early in the morning of 25 June.[105]

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100. Clive's letter to the Secret Committee, 26 July 1757.

101. Ibid, Watts' Memoirs, p.112.

102. Ibid.

103. Watts' Memoirs, p.113.

104. Siyar, II, p.236. Orme II, p.178. Watts' Memoirs, p.113.

105. There is a difference of opinion as to the time when Mir Jafar entered Murshidabad. Orme says that he arrived in the evening of the 24th. Clive in his letter to the Select Committee states Mir Jafar arrived in the city in the evening of the 24th. But the author of the Siyar states that he arrived on the morning of the 25th. This

Here it should be remembered that Sirajud-daulah having issued orders to his troops to retire from the battlefield, himself left it and arrived at the capital in the morning of 24 June. Without any loss of time, he tried his best to gather troops again. His palace was full of treasures, but with all that treasure he could not purchase the confidence of his army. He distributed considerable sums among his troops to engage them in another battle,[106] but all in vain. The soldiers received the bounties and deserted him with them to their homes.[107] He was deserted not only by his soldiers but also by his own relations and friends. So he thought it dangerous to stay there any longer,

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Continuation of footnote 105 on previous page:-

statement appears to be correct, because according to Orme, Mir Jafar was informed of Sirajud-daulah's flight at midnight and immediately he sent parties in his pursuit. If that be so, Siraj might have been caught very easily and he could not have proceeded as far as Rajmahal. The opinion of Siyar corroborates the opinion of the Riyaz. So it would be safe to rely on the statement of Siyar.

106. Clive's Evidence, First Report, 1772, p.155.

107. Ibid, Siyar, II, p.234.
Orme, II, p.179. Dastur, p.173.

and at length the unfortunate Nawab, leaving the magnificent palace and the throne of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa behind, had to fly at midnight accompanied by his wife and children.[108]

Mir Jafar, upon his arrival at the capital, found general confusion reigning throughout the city. Proceeding directly, he took up his quarters in Sirajud-daulah's palace of Monsurgung and immediately despatched several parties in pursuit of the fugitive Nawab. He ordered his son-in-law, Mir Kasim, with a corps, to capture Sirajud-daulah.[109] Pressing letters were likewise sent to his brother, Mir Daud, who was at Rajmahal, with an injunction to spare nothing in laying hold of his person.[110] He then imprisoned all the females of the Serglio, together with the youngest brother of Sirajud-daulah, Mirza Mehdi Ali. Mohon Lal, who left the battlefield at 5 o'clock and returned to the capital in the hope of

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108. "In the dead of night, he put Lutf-on-nessa his consort and a number of favourites into covered coaches and covered chairs, loaded them with as much gold and as many jewels as they could contain and taking with him a number of elephants . . . he quitted his palace about 3 in the morning and fled, it was the 7th of Sheval". Siyar, II, p.235.

109. Riyaz, p.375. Siyar, II, p.239.

110. Siyar, II, p.239. Mir Jafar's letter to Clive, 26 June (Vide M.M.S. Vol. 193, p.168)

assisting the Nawab, was also caught[111] and was delivered to Rai Durlabh's custody. He was put to death after some days.[112] After taking these measures, Mir Jafar sent two letters[113] to Clive in which he mentioned the flight of Sirajud-daulah and the capture of Mohon Lal, assuring him at the same time that he need not entertain any doubts regarding the capture of the fugitive Nawab. Clive, expressing his joy, replied, "I hope, by the blessing of God, you will have the like success over the rest of your enemies and that you will be a great Prince and make your subjects happy".[114]

With the occupation of Sirajud-daulah's palace by Mir Jafar, the battle of Plassey was consummated. This battle caused the immediate strengthening of British influence, both commercially and politically, which within a decade led to the establishment of British rule in the Ganges valley, while it sealed the fate of Bengal and Muslim power in that valley.

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111. Mir Jafar's letter to Clive, 26 June (Vide op. cit.)

112. Siyar, Vol. II, p.240.

113. 25 and 26 June 1757. Vide Orme MSS., XI, p.2816. Ben. Sel. Cons. 29 June 1757.

114. 26 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2817) Dastur, p.121.

But there is another aspect of the consequence which followed Plassey. At this time "the people in Bengal were sunk in the abyss of moral debasement and cankers of dark ingratitude and treachery, untruthfulness and venality had crept into the vitals of their hearts".[115] In the pursuit of power, personal jealousy, self-aggrandisement leading to bloodshed, was the order of the day. The rule of the Mughals was dying, and in the absence of a strong centralised government, naturally there appeared on the political horizon of the country numbers of military adventurers, who caused disruption and anarchy. In such a state of uncertainty and war-making, the whole community suffered. In very exceptional cases, autocracy becomes a blessing. At this time in India the autocrat was only interested in the increase of his military strength and the accumulation of riches. He seldom cared for the betterment of his people. Bengal was no exception. Within four decades after the death of Emperor Aurangzeb, Bengal witnessed a succession of five Nawabs, whose rule was fundamentally unstable. In consequence, the condition of the people deteriorated. The country

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115. Riyaz, p.376 F.N.

therefore needed a new and better influence to save it from further degradation. It needed a ruthless destruction of the foundations of the old order of society, because such a destruction was the necessary precedent to any new advance. Although, of course, the establishment of the new order did not bring any betterment in the lot of the people immediately, yet by the end of the century, the victory at Plassey "introduced into this richest province", observes Malleson rightly, "in a commanding position another foreign race, active, capable and daring, bringing with them new ideas . . . . the love of justice, of tolerance, of order, the capacity of enforcing these principles which were necessary to infuse a new and better life into the Hindustan of the last century". [116]

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115. The Decisive Battles, p.67.

CHAPTER IV

MIR JAFAR'S ACCESSION TO BENGAL

The change of order took place so abruptly that it threw the whole city of Murshidabad into a state of general consternation. Nobody knew what was to follow next. In such a confused state, Mir Jafar himself becsme perplexed and found it difficult to restore order. So he sent a message to Colonel Clive advising him that the unexpected and successful flight of Sirajud-daulah had created great confusion amongst the people, so much so that it was beyond his power to pursue any definite course of action. Under these circumstances, continued Mir Jafar, it would be prudent if the Colonel sent Watts and Walsh to Murshidabad for the purpose of using their best endeavours to quiten the metropolis, and assist him in his desire to fulfil the agreement and to put an end to the present confusion as soon as possible.[1] Clive therefore sent forward

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1. Watts' Memoirs, pp.113-114.

these two English officers to assist Mir Jafar[2] and also to enquire into the state of the treasury, and to inform him what was being transacted at the palace.[3]

Upon their arrival at Murshidabad they paid a visit to Mir Jafar and assured him of their full support. Their presence, on the one hand, convinced the inhabitants of the capital that they should look upon Mir Jafar as their sovereign, while on the other hand, raising him to that position of authority. Immediately he issued proclamations throughout the length and breadth of the country, asking the people to remain quiet and assuring them of his protection of their lives and properties.[4]

Then in a conference with Mir Jafar, Rai Durlabh and Jagat Seth on 26 June, Watts and Walsh raised the question of the stipulated monies, "the price of English assistance had to be paid first". Rai Durlabh declared pertinaciously that on examining the treasury, the balance

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2. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 25 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2431).

3. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2515).

4. Riyaz, p.375.

found was only one crore and fifty lakhs of rupees which would hardly meet the expenses of the Government and the debts contracted to the English.[5] Watts then proposed that Mir Jafar should apply to Jagat Seth to make up the deficiency and repay him out of the future revenues. But this proposal did not meet with Rai Durlabh's agreement, and he replied that Jagat Seth could not advance such a huge amount.[6] It is interesting to note that Mir Jafar, who was bound to discharge his obligations to the English, remained silent instead of offering any concrete solution of the problem. And this silence did not escape the notice of the English representatives, and raised suspicion as to the real position of the treasury. Though nothing could be said definitely as to the real contents of the treasury, nevertheless the unconcern of Mir Jafar and obstinacy of Rai Durlabh caused Watts and Walsh to conclude that they had been duped. There may have been some reason for their so thinking. With regard to the treasury, the translator of the Siyar writes that Walsh himself went into the treasury with Watts,

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5. Drake's letter to Secret Comm 14 July 1757. (Vide, First Report, 1772, p.218).

6. Orme, II, p.180.

Lushington, Ramchand, the writer, and Nabakrishna, the Persian Secretary, and found it to contain one hundred and seventy-six lakhs in silver, thirty-two lakhs in gold, two chests of gold ingots, four of jewels set and two lesser ones of loose stones and gems.[7] "But what is singular and yet true" continues the translator, "this was only the outer treasury; and those renowned English . . . did not know anything of the inner treasury, said to contain eight crores, and which by a custom well-known in India, was kept in the 'Zenana' or women's apartments. This inner treasury was made away with between Mir Jafar, Amir Beg Khan, Ramchand and Nabakrishna, whose silence was purchased by a share in the contents, or who, it was said, made away with the Colonel's share. This much is certain that ten years afterwards Ramchand, who in 1758 was only a writer at sixty rupees per month, died worth seventy-two lakhs in cash and bills, four hundred large water pots, eighty of which were of gold and the rest of silver, eighteen lakhs in landed

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7. Siyar, II, p.237 F.N.

property and twenty lakhs of jewels, in all a crore and a quarter . . . "[8] This account of the treasury further corroborates the account given by the author of Tarikh-i-Mansuri.[9] Therefore the suspicion aroused in the minds of Watts and Walsh with regard to the contents of the treasury were probably justified. At last, upon their failure to bring about an adjustment with Mir Jafar, they sent a message to Clive wherein they detailed the proceedings of the conference, advising the Colonel at the same time to "interrogate Omichand and let us know his sentiments of the Nawab's wealth".[10] Because in a private meeting Omichand told Watts that he knew all the places where the treasures were hoarded, "for hoarded there are and many by the information we have had".[11]

This was not at all encouraging to Clive, and he accordingly decided to go to the city in order to settle[12]

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8. Ibid. pp.237-238, F.N.

9. J.A.S.B. No. II, 1867, p.95. There is another account of the treasury given by the author of Muzaffarnamah, who says that "with Rajah Durlabhram, Mir Jafar went to examine the treasury and found there 2 crores of rupees besides jewels worth another 2 crores of rupees . . . . . with a view to get more treasures. Mir Jafar even destroyed a building of Sirajud-daulah's Palace but got nothing out of it . . . " F.181A and F.182A.

10. Letter to Clive, 27 June 1757 (Vide H.M.S.Vol.193,p.232)

11. Ibid.

12. Drake's letter to Secret Comm. 14 July 1757.

the financial matter with Mir Jafar and to set up the new government on a solid foundation.[13] But in the meantime both Watts and Walsh had discovered some design against the life of Clive, and they at once warned him not to enter the city until further intelligence. Because "Ranjit Rai", they continued, "is dispatched to us by Jagat Seth to desire that you will not come into town this afternoon for treachery is intended you. A consultation was held last night between Miren, Rai Durlabh and Kasim Ali Khan about cutting you off at your visit to the Nawab. You may return on pretence of illness, if you are on the road, but it will be necessary to write of it. Jagat Seth will then visit you tomorrow morning. He begs you will not mention a syllable of this intelligence - as you value his life".[14] How far this rumour of treachery against Clive's life was correct and whether Mir Jafar was in any way concerned with it, is not known. But at the same time such a notion of treachery could not be ignored in that age when conspiracy was the order of the day. Moreover, it should be borne in mind that as Sirajud-daulah had not yet been captured, every person of importance in the city had been

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13. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 27 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2432).

14. Quoted in Orme II, pp.180-181.

in a constant state of terror and suspicion not knowing who was friend or foe. So, upon the advice of the English officers from Murshidabad, Clive instead of entering the city, waited at Cassimbuzar for further intelligence. But as no such intelligence was forthcoming,[15] his apprehensions were at last removed and he entered the capital accompanied by 200 Europeans and 500 Sepoys,[16] at daybreak of 29 June. Mir Jafar at once sent his son Miran to accord the Colonel a hearty welcome, who accordingly, attended by a few soldiers, visited Clive, showed him every respect and accompanied him to a spacious house and garden near the palace.[17] On the same evening, Clive visited Mir Jafar, who had been waiting with all the great officers of the Government and his close adherents, to receive him. Mutual greetings being over, the Colonel invited Mir Jafar to sit on the 'masnad', but the latter seemed to hesitate. What could have been the reason for his so hesitating? Perhaps at this moment, reviving the

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15. "By what means, we do not know" says Orme II, 187.

16. Clive Evidence - First Report 1772, p.155.
Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 30 June/1757.
(Vide Orme MSS.X,p.2515). 26 July

17. Clive's letter to Select Comm.30 June 1757.
(Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2433).

memory of his master Aliverdi Khan, he at first hesitated to occupy the very throne which in the name of Siraj, he had promised to protect. At this moment of indecision, Clive himself took Mir Jafar's hand and led him to the 'masnad' and saluted him as the Nawab of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa in the usual forms, and as a representative of the English company, honoured him with a presentation of a plate with gold rupees.[18] The translator of the Siyar gives the following account of the crowning ceremony, "The day of his being proclaimed, he (Mir Jafar) invited the Colonel and the principal English, as well as the principal grandees of his court and the principal commanders of his troops. A magnificent 'masnad' or throne was spread at the north end of the hall, where it remained empty for a time, notwithstanding the Colonel's entreaties. At last the victorious commander got up, took Mir Jafar Khan by the hand, carried him to the 'masnad' made him sit on it, kept him down with his arm, and then presented his 'nazar'. This was followed by the 'nazars' and homage of the English and of all present, and a royal salute announced the proclamation to the whole city".[19]

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18. Ibid. Scrafton's Reflections, p.93. Orme, II, p.181. Tarikh-i-Mansuri (J.A.S.B. No. II, 1867, p.95).

19. Clive's letter to Select Comm.30 June 1757.(Vide Siyar, II,pp.236-237,F.N. Orme MSS.X,p.2433). Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757. (Vide Orme MSS.X, p.2515).

Whether the common citizens of the capital were jubilant over this change of government, is difficult to imagine, but it can be said that to their utter astonishment they found the throne occupied by a Nawab, for the first time in the history of Bengal, under the protection of a foreign race. They were neither invited by the new Nawab to witness his crowning ceremonies in the palace, nor were they voluntarily assembled there to offer their congratulations. Leaving aside the sentiment of the general populace, this much is certain that Mir Jafar had not the support and sympathy of all the important personalities of the capital, some of whom were maintaining a strict neutrality all along, while others were still inclined towards Sirajud-daulah. But now, when his accession was complete with English help and in their presence, those who were neutrals hastened to offer their congratulations and to present their homages,[20] not indeed, out of any sincere attachment to him but by way of formal submission to his authority and power. And even

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20. Siyar II, p.237.

those few who still stuck to Sirajud-daulah in their hearts and were not pleased with this change of government, "found themselves obliged to join the throng for fear of being pointed at with the finger and of becoming objects of chastisement and oppression".[21] In the innermost recesses of their hearts they no doubt harboured feelings of resentment and hatred towards him for his treacherous conduct.

The formalities of the crowning ceremony being over, Nawab Mir Jafar Ali Khan beat loud 'nagarahs' (large kettle drums) and drums of dominion and command[22] announcing his accession to the 'masnad'.[23]

On the morning of 30 June, Nawab Mir Jafar paid a return visit to Clive to settle the financial business. He alleged that the money in the treasury fell short of his expectations and was not sufficient to satisfy his obligations to the English nor to meet his necessary expenses.[24] This excuse did not surprise the Colonel,

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21. Ibid.

22. Ibid. ~~Siyar, - II, - p.237.~~

23. Riyaz, p.375. Dastur, p.173.

24. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 30 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2433).
Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2515).

as he had already been informed by the message of Watts that great sums had been secreted and made away with by his ministers,[25] to which reference has already been made. But as the task of financial settlement would be a difficult and invidious one for Clive to handle, he suggested to Mir Jafar that the latter should apply in collaboration with him, to Jagat Seth for mediation.[26] Accordingly they both went to the house of Jagat Seth,[27] accompanied by Scrafton, Miren, Watts and Rai Durlabh.[28] After a long but friendly debate, Jagat Seth settled the point as follows: that the English should be paid one half of their demand immediately, two-thirds in money and one-third in jewels, plates and goods and the other half should be paid within three years in three annual and equal payments. Sufficient money should be left to the Nawab for the payment of his troops to whom heavy arrears were due. This amicable settlement was beyond Clive's expectation, and he

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25. Vide ante.

26. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 30 June
Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757
(Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2516).

27. Ibid.

28. Orme, II, p.181.

at once gave his assent.[29] Rai Durlabh, being one of the chief conspirators and now the principal minister "through whose hands the affairs of the English must pass", it was also decided in the conference that he should be allowed a commission of 5 per cent. These material points having been settled, Jagat Seth represented that he had suffered a loss of 7 lakhs of rupees by the French, and therefore deserved compensation. As it was not possible to realise the amount from the French, both Mir Jafar and Clive agreed, subject to the Select Committee's approval, that he might take what goods of the French should be found at their settlements and aurungs (place of manufacture) and the balance, if any, should be made good by the company.[30]

The last and the most important question which then came up for discussion in the foregoing conference was about the confirmation of Mir Jafar's Nawabship by the Emperor of Delhi. It should be borne in mind that the custom prevalent in those days was that the Nawab of any

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29. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 30 June 1757. (Orme MSS. X, p.2434). Ben. Sel. Cons. 6 July 1757.

30. Ibid.

province under the Mughals, upon his accession to the throne, must get his confirmation from the Emperor, otherwise he could not expect to have the allegiance of the people of the provinces concerned. This confirmation, generally speaking, had a traditional influence over the people who were used to obeying the command of a ruler approved by the Emperor. Therefore, if Mir Jafar was to have the allegiance of his subjects, he must have that confirmation. The Select Committee at Calcutta, though responsible in bringing about this change of government, found themselves in an awkward position at this stage to proclaim Mir Jafar's accession publicly in the city and hence they advised Clive to secure the confirmation as soon as possible.[31] Clive, as the chief spokesman of the day, had to bear this responsibility, and he requested Jagat Seth, who had a great influence at the Court of Delhi, to secure it on behalf of Mir Jafar, and to represent the transactions of the English in the most favourable light, so as to secure 'farman' from the court which they might have had occasion for, and to which the Seth gladly agreed.[32] Though Mir Jafar

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31. Letter to Clive, 29 June 1757 (Vide First Report, 1772, p.157).

32. Clive's letter to Select Comm.,30 June 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2434).

outwardly acquiesced in the Colonel's proposal, at heart he was averse to the idea of Jagat Seth pleading at the Mughal court on his behalf, lest as he feared, it would minimise his newly-acquired dignity. So he persuaded Clive to apply to the court separately. Accordingly two applications were made to the Emperor by Clive and Mir Jafar.[33] The news of confirmation from the court that Mir Jafar should occupy the throne reached Clive on 20 January 1758, and he at once acquainted the Nawab with it.[34] In his answer to the Colonel on 21 January, the Nawab confirmed this news when he wrote, "By letters from Ramprasad (Mir Jafar 's agent at the Mughal court) I learn that the titles, posts and 'mansabs' which I wrote for myself, my sons, my relations and friends are settled . . ."[35]

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33. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 196, pp.186-187.

34. Mir Jafar promised to pay 52 lakhs of rupees annually to the Emperor as the revenue of the three provinces. But he did not pay more than 15 lakhs which made both the Emperor and his wazir displeased with him, and they withheld his confirmation for some time. It was only upon Clive's assurance that he would discharge the dues fully within a short space of time that Mir Jafar was ultimately confirmed by the Emperor.

35. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.265.

36. Ibid, p.267.

According to the latest arrangement, the Company received the stipulated monies, and the task of transporting this to Calcutta now remained.[34] The first payment seemed to have been the cause of much delight, as it was a great achievement for the English in the course of their first efforts at empire building.[37] The money was packed in 200 country boats that were to go down the river Hugli to Calcutta under a strong escort, and on 3 July the city of Murshidabad had witnessed a magnificent parade of the English. In a long procession, they started their victorious journey "with music playing, drums beating and colours flying". They passed through the Dutch Settlement at Chinsura and the half-deserted French settlement at Chandernagore, exhibiting to the inhabitants, as Scrafton might well observe, "a scene far different from what they had beheld the year before when the Nawab's (Sirajud-daulah's) fleet and army passed them with the captive English and all the wealth and plunder of Calcutta".[38]

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37. "Never before did the English nation at one time obtain such a prize in solid money", says Orme, II, p.188.

38. Scrafton's Reflections, p.93.

The same day, Murshidabad also witnessed another parade with a heavy heart, the funeral of Sirajud-daulah. Gulam Husain records that what struck him most were the heart-rending cries of the mother of Sirajud-daulah. "The unfortunate princess", he continues, "unable to contain herself, forgot at once her sex, veil and slippers and running out of the house like one distracted, she threw herself on the body (of her murdered son) which she covered with her kisses and sate disconsolate, greatly affected the bystanders".[39] Sirajud-daulah had been unlucky. Travelling day and night in his flight, he had arrived at a place called Barhal,[40] 8 miles from Rajmahal, on his way to Patna, where he was unexpectedly captured by Mir Jafar's brother and his son-in-law. The Nawab at once sent his son Miren to bring the prisoner back to Murshidabad,[41] which was done "with great secrecy at night" on 2 July. Upon his arrival at the capital, a

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39. Siyar II, p.243.

40. Riyaz, p.373.

41. Scrafton's Reflections, p.94. Muzaffarnamah, F.180A. First Report, 1722, p.150.

mock conference was staged to decide his fate and ultimately he was killed.

With regard to this murder of Sirajud-daulah, different accounts have been given by different authors. The point of difference seems to be as to who ordered the murder of Siraj - Mir Jafar or Miren? Orme says that when Sirajud-daulah was brought into the presence of Mir Jafar, the latter seemed to be moved with compassion because he well knew that he owed all his former fortunes to the generosity of Aliverdikhan, who died with the conviction that Mir Jafar would repay his bounties by attachment and fidelity to his beloved protégé. Sirajud-daulah prostrated himself and implored for life alone. Miren, the son of Mir Jafar, insisted on instant death. But Mir Jafar ordered the prisoner to be removed.[42] The Nawab then conferred with his courtiers to decide the fate of the unfortunate youth, and asked the opinion of everybody present. It is mentioned in the report of the Select Committee that all, with one voice, called for the murder of Sirajud-daulah.[43] But Orme writes, "Most of the

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42. Orme, II, p.183.

43. First Report, 1772, p.149.

principal men in the Government were at this time in the Palace . . . . All these Jafar consulted. Some, although they had before trembled at the frown of Sirajud-daulah, now despised the meanness of his nature more than they had dreaded the malignancy of his despotism; others for their own sakes did not choose to encourage their new sovereign in despotic acts of bloodshed; some were actuated by veneration for the memory of Aliverdi: others wished to preserve Sirajud-daulah, either as a resource to themselves or as a restraint upon Mir Jafar; all these proposed a strict but mild imprisonment. But the rest who were more subtle courtiers, seconded the proposal of Miren respecting the risks of revolt and revolution to which the Government of Jafar would be continually exposed while Sirajud-daulah lived. Jafar himself gave no opinion and Miren seeing his unwillingness to pronounce, advised him to go to rest and he himself would take care of the prisoner. Mir Jafar, pretending to understand these words as if they meant to violence, dismissed the assembly and retirned into the inward apartments of the Palace, when Miren privately sent one of his menial servants . . . . with the fatal mandate"[44]

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44. Orme, II, p.184.
H. Beveridge - History of India, I, p.587.

On the same matter, the author of the Siyar gives a slightly different account. " When Sirajud-daulah was brought into town ", he reports, "Mir Jafar Khan was taking his afternoon nap, for that sudden and excessive alteration in his circumstances so far from having affected that custom of his, had only added strength to it, especially when he had taken his dose of 'bhang' (an intoxicating beverage, made of the leaves and seeds of a kind of flax). The dose now being taken on the chair of command and on the 'masnad' of dominion, had operated in a twofold manner; he lay dead to everything; nor was any man daring enough to awake him. But there was no need of interfering his sleep, his virtuous son, before any intelligence had been conveyed to his father, had already disposed of that unfortunate prince and as Mir Jafar Khan, on raising from sleep, had made haste to send a message to that high-born son of his, for recommending vigilance and watchfulness over the deposed Prince, the hopeful son laughed at the message and returned for answer 'that he was not a man to neglect so important a charge' and then turning to the bystanders . . . . he tauntingly reflected on his father who was now sending messages and injunctions on a matter which he had already taken

care of by disposing of the man and effectually doing his business".[45] So we find in Orme's account that Mir Jafar did not give any express authority but an implied one to kill Sirajud-daulah. While on the other hand, Gulam Husain does not make him responsible at all for the murder. The two authors, however, agree on the point that Sirajud-daulah was murdered by Miren's order.[46] Of course, Miren had a strong motive behind this murder, which, in his opinion, would ensure his future accession to the throne. But even then, taking all the facts into consideration, it would not be right to put the entire responsibility on his shoulders, because, whatever might have been his motive, it is evident that he brought the prisoner into the city, and this suggests that he wanted his father's tacit approval and his definite hint. Did Mir Jafar give that hint? If that be so, the question arises as to whether he carried the whole responsibility of giving such a hint, or whether he shared it with somebody else, as the author of the Riyaz is reported to

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45. Siyar, II, p.244.

46. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 4 July 1757. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons, 6 July 1757).

have said "that on the advice of the English chiefs . . . he (Mir Jafar) slew him".[47] Here it should be borne in mind that Clive at that time was present at the capital and "by his conduct", writes Malleson, "he placed himself in the position of an accessory after the act".[48] But Clive in his evidence says that he "knew nothing of it till the next day".[49] Of course, we do not know whether Clive was really aware of what was happening in the Palace or was ever consulted by Mir Jafar on this subject. But this much is certain, that he would not regret Sirajud-daulah's passing, and of this Mir Jafar was quite sure. Therefore, weighing up the pros and cons regarding the murder of Siraj, it might be reasonable to assume that it was prompted by Mir Jafar indirectly, who considered the existence of Sirajud-daulah to be a source of perpetual danger to his authority,[50] and Miren carried out the fatal act.[51]

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47. Riyaz, p.376. Dastur, p.174.

48. The Decisive Battles - p.47.

49. First Report, 1772, p.150.

50. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 26 July 1757. Muzaffarnamah, F.280B.

51. Ibid. Harcharan Das - Chahr-Gulzar (Elliott, VIII, p.214).

With the death of Sirajud-daulah, although the new Nawab became free from his anxieties, he felt helpless and unsettled in his exalted position without the permanent friendship and attachment of the English. His trusted counsellors advised him to reward the English officials sufficiently, so that they might always remain attached to him. Miren seriously objected to this proposal and he was reported to have said that, according to the terms of the treaty, the English Company, with their army and navy, had already been rewarded, and why should the English officials in particular now be additionally rewarded? However, his objections were of no avail, because the Nawab, who was conscious of the meritorious services rendered to him by the English, was at last induced both by gratitude and policy, as well as tradition, to make liberal presents to those who had been the immediate instruments in placing him on the 'masnad'.[52] But he had something more in view. He distributed enormous sums to the Company's officials[53] with a view to purchasing an influence which might enable him to escape from the obligations he had contracted to the Company and to other parties.[54] The sums which he distributed, and as recorded

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52. Clive's evidence (Vide First Report, 1772, p.148).
53. Third Report, 1773, p.311.
54. Beveridge - History of India, I, p.582.

in the Report of the Select Committee, are as follows:-

Governor Drake - received -		Rs. 280,000
Colonel Clive - as a member -		Rs. 280,000
	" commander-	Rs. 200,000
	Special presents-	Rs16,00,000
Watts - as a member -		Rs. 240,000
	Special presents-	Rs. 800,000
Major Kilpatrick - received -		Rs. 240,000
	Excess presents -	Rs. 300,000
Manningham	-	Rs. 240,000
Becher	-	Rs. 240,000
Walsh	-	Rs. 500,000
Scrafton	-	Rs. 200,000
Lushington	-	Rs. 50,000

The generosity of the new Nawab even extended to those members of the Council who were not members of the Select Committee and who consequently had no claim "to be considered" under the original scheme. Each of them, numbering six, received a lakh of rupees.[55]

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55. Evidence of Richard Becher (Vide First Report, 1772, p.145).

After these transactions were concluded, Mir Jafar assumed high-sounding titles amidst great pomp at the capital on 26 July, impressing thereby upon the wondering populace of Murshidabad that the change of government was effective. The author of the Siyar gives the following description of the ceremony: "As he (Mir Jafar) was very much smitten with the charm of the title of Mahabat Jung, which had been borne by Aliverdi Khan, he ordered a new seal to be engraven for himself, when he assumed the style and title of Shuja-ul-Mulk, Hussain-ud-daulah, Mir Jafar Ali Khan Bahadur, Mahabat Jung, that is the high and valiant Lord Mir Jafar Khan, who is the valorous of the state, the sword of the empire and the formidable in war and the majestic in battles. At the same time he bestowed on his son that title of Shahamat Jung or valorous in war, which had been borne by the late Nawazesh Muhamad Casem Khan, that being the title that had once been borne by the illustrious Zainiddin Ahmed Khan".[56] Then the Nawab distributed 'khilats' and other

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56. Siyar, II, p.238.

presents amongst the English officials, in connection with which Edward Ive writes, " On the 26th of July, the new Nawab sent presents after the custom of the country and of the east in general, to the Admiral (Watson) consisting of an elephant, two fine horses, a rich moorish dress of gold gingham, with turbans and fashis and a rose and plume composed of diamonds, rubies, sapphires and emeralds, which though not of great value, made a pompous appearance. Admiral Pocock was also complimented with a present of the same kind. Admiral Watson received the ambassadors on the occasion with marks of great respect; he made a present of fine cloth and velvet to each in return; dressed his ships and displaying as many flags of different nations as could be disposed of on the yards, masts and rigging of the ships, saluted with his cannon"[57] The Admiral in reply wrote the following congratulatory letter to the Nawab: "Whom you have done me the honour to depute to me, has delivered me your letter and the other marks of friendship with which you have been pleased to favour me. He has also satisfied my desire in giving me an ample account of

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57. Ive's Journal, p.154.
Ben. Pub. Cons. 1 August 1757.

your health and prosperity. But what pleases me beyond expression is to hear that all men rejoice in them; and while they acknowledge you are worthy of them; pray for their continuance. This is a satisfaction which your predecessor never knew and which while it gives the sublime pleasure to a mind generous like yours, promises happiness to yourself and a quiet succession to your son".[58]

The Nawab also sent some costly presents to the English Governor, Roger Drake, who in return presented him with a fine organ clock which the Governor had purchased at 5,000 rupees.[59]

He then rewarded some of his adherents with sonorous titles and appointments, although they hardly deserved any.[60] The following is a list of the first appointments which he made immediately upon his accession:-

(1) Kunja Behari and Rash Behari - the two brothers of Rai Durlabh - Accountants at Murshidabad and Dacca respectively.

(2) Munilal and Chunnilal - Administrators of Jaghirs.

(3) Mirza Amir Beg Khan - Faujdar of Hugli.

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58. Quoted in Ive's Journey, p.154.

59. Ben. Pub. Cons. 5 June 1758.

60. Muzaffarnamah, 182B, 183A, 183B.

(4) Mir Kasim Khan - Faujdar of Rangpur.

(5) Mir Cazem Khan - Second Bakhshi.

(6) Khadem Ali Khan, son of Khadem Husain - the head of the Artillery.

(7) Gulam Husain Khan - 'Darogah' of Diwankhana.

(8) Guzer Khan, Akbar Khan, Mir Husain Ali Khan and Mir Karan Ali Khan - Generals of the Army.

(9) Mir Suleman Khan - Bakhshi under Najmud-daulah and Saifud-daulah, the two minor sons of the Nawab.

(10) Mirza Gulam Ali - Controller of the Mint.

It should be observed that the Nawab did not evince either prudence or caution in these appointments. His choice fell mostly on unworthy favourites whose sole aim, as it became evident later on, was to take the opportunities for making money by oppressing the poor inhabitants, without any regard either for the interests of the Nawab or those of the country. Their cupidity and cruelties at last, were proved to be among the most important causes of his deposition in 1760.

It is to be noted that although this change of government in Bengal was brought about by the Company's officials without any previous notice to their home

authorities, the Court of Directors of the Company had approved it and expressed in their letter to the new Nawab their hearty and sincere congratulations upon his advancement to the Subahship.[61] "It is our ardent wish", they wrote, "that your Excellency may long continue on the throne, to be a blessing to your people in general and that we, the English East India Company in particular, may enjoy the benefit of that protection and favour which we are fully satisfied we shall always meet with from a prince of your amiable character".[62] Further they pledged themselves to promote the welfare and prosperity of the country and to carry on their commerce in his dominions "in such a fair and just manner without injuring your revenues or giving umbrage to your government".[63] As a mark of respect, they also honoured the Nawab with presentations[64] and advised the Bengal Council in the following way: "As we are under high obligations to the present Nawab, we have written him a congratulatory letter

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61. Letter from Court of Directors to Mir Jafar, 8 March 1758. (Vide Add. MSS. 29206).

62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

and accompanied it with a present . . . . consisting of several curiosities and particulars, according to the enclosed account, both which you are to present in such a manner as may be most agreeable and expressive of your real regard and esteem".[65]

Although the crowning ceremony of Mir Jafar was complete with the help of the English, his authority had yet to be firmly established in the capital as well as in the distant districts of the kingdom, where disorders and uncertainty were prevailing since the news of this change of government. From the very morrow of his victory at Plassey, he thought himself as powerful as Aliverdi Khan, to restore order and to manage successfully the state affairs with a strong hand. He was an able general, no doubt, but he was in fact never qualified for the task of governing a kingdom, and Clive soon realised that by placing him on the throne, he now created a difficult situation.[66] Immediately after his accession, the Nawab faced the serious discontent of his adherents, besides those whom he had appointed in various

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65. Letter from Court to Bengal, 8 March 1758.

66. Forrest - Life of Clive, II, p.41.

state departments, who now demanded their rewards as promised by him.[67] But he failed either to provide them with posts in the Government or to reward them in ready money owing to the exhausted state of the treasury.[68] Hence they remained discontented.

In addition, the Nawab faced three rebellions simultaneously, one at Midnapur, headed by Rajah Ram Singh, another at Purnea under Hazyr Ali Khan and Achal Singh, and the third at Patna under Rajah Ramnarain.[69] In all these troubles, the Nawab accused Rai Durlabh of being the prime mover. "The Prime Minister Rai Durlabh Ram", writes Clive to the Secret Committee on 23 December 1757, "who was one of the chief instruments in the Nawab's promotion and had received in return a solemn assurance of continuing his 'diwan', was suspected to be engrossing the power in his own hands and rather to have encouraged the three rebellions than endeavoured to suppress them. It is very certain that Rai Durlabh had a powerful party

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67. Orme, Vol. II, p.195.

68. Forrest, op. cit.

69. Orme MSS., X, p.2536.

in the state and more than probable that he took measures to strengthen it according to the common policy of all 'diwans' "[70] At any rate, it should be admitted, as evidence from the writings of contemporary historians as well as from the official records, that Rai Durlabh had some indirect influence over the above-mentioned rebellions except the rebellion under Rajah Ramnarain. So the Nawab was in some degree correct when he made Rai Durlabh responsible. Naturally, dissension on this question between the Nawab and Rai Durlabh, had begun to arise and "those two men", writes Gulam Husain, "once such fast friends, could not bear an intercourse and had already conceived a mortal dislike to each other".[71] The Nawab's jealousy of him was carried to such an extent that Sirajud-daulah's brother, Mirza Mehdi, a young lad and practically harmless, was suddenly murdered on a rumour that Rai Durlabh intended to make him Nawab.[72] No sooner had Rai Durlabh come to know of this than he became alarmed[73] as he clearly perceived the motive of the Nawab.

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70. Ibid.

71. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 23 December 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2531). Siyar II, p.252.

72. Ibid. Muzaffarnamah, F.186B.

73. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 23 December 1757. (Vide, op. cit. p.2537).

He immediately sought for Clive's protection which was granted to him, and to this effect a notice was given to the Nawab.[74] The Nawab got enraged to a considerable extent, and strongly resented this interference of the English in his domestic policy. He at once sent a strong reply to Clive, protesting that at the time of his accession the Colonel assured him that he would not interfere in his domestic policy, but what he saw now "was just the reverse of it". This granting of protection to Rai Durlabh gave the Nawab sufficient reason to believe that the English had formed a party at his 'darbar' in order to put a check on his independent domestic policy. As Scrafton might well say, "that we were necessitated to strengthen ourselves by forming a party in his own court to be a continual check upon him, a matter by no means difficult in a country where loyalty and gratitude are virtues almost unknown".[75]

Observing the counter-party within the court and rebellions without, the Nawab made the following plans:
(1) To crush the rebellions which broke out at Midnapur

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74. Ibid. Scrafton's Reflections, p.99.

75. Scrafton's Reflections, p.99.

and Purnea and to bring the rebellious heads to severe punishment.

(2) By force or by strategem to get Rajah Ramnarain into power and to give that province to his brother Mir Cazem Khan.

(3) To destroy Rai Durlabh and his associates. Because the experience of the confederacy which had raised him to the throne made him understand "the necessity of first breaking the power of the Gentoos, in whom the English would find the same resources against himself as he with the English had derived from them against Sirajud-daulah. Rai Durlabh, as the head of the Gentoo line, was first to be destroyed".[76] But he was cautious enough to set nothing in motion which might raise suspicion in the mind of Clive with regard to Rai Durlabh, and so, while the Colonel was present at the capital, both the Nawab and his son Miren "carried themselves to him with every appearance of openness and confidence".[77]

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76. Orme, II, p.196. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 23 December 1757 (Vide op. cit.).

77. Orme, II, p.196.

(4) As far as possible, to minimise the power and influence of the English and thereby ultimately to overawe them into relinquishing the remainder of the treaty monies.[78] He was conscious of the fact that he had bought his recent position with the help of the superior strength of the English, but when he came to feel that thereby he had forfeited the submission and respect of his fellow Moslems[79] and that he could only maintain his newly-acquired power with the help of the English army, he became anxious to destroy those through whom he had made his fortunes.[80] Immediately after his accession, he was made to learn the bitter truth, that he was "a tool, a cypher in the hands of the foreigners"[81], and "he was allowed to govern, never to rule".[82] So he began to look upon them as encroachers upon his power, reputation and authority.[83]

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78. Scrafton's Reflections, p.100.

79. Forrest - Life of Clive, II, p.41. Davies - Clive of Plassey, p.256.

80. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 6 March 1758. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2498.)

81. Malleson - The Decisive Battles, etc., p.70.

82. Ibid.

83. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 6 March 1758 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2498).

But the irony of his fate was such that on every important occasion he had to rely on English assistance and no doubt the dangers with which he was confronted due to the outbreak of the rebellions might have had fatal consequences to himself but for the known attachment of the English to him.[84]

Soon after the departure of Clive from the capital, the Nawab felt himself sufficiently strong to pursue his plans.[85] He resolved to employ his strength against those who, though not presuming to question his title, nevertheless showed a reluctancy to acknowledge it.[86] Clive had rightly advised him that "your future happiness depends in a great measure on your exerting yourself at first and showing them that you are in a condition to chastise anyone that shall incur your displeasure".[87]

Accordingly the Nawab first dealt with the case of Rajah Ram Singh of Midnapur. The Rajah was so much

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84, Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2536.

85. Watts' Memoirs, p.125.

86. Clive's letter to the Nawab, 12 August 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.199).

87. Ibid.

attached to Sirajud-daulah that he did not openly acknowledge Mir Jafar as his sovereign, and, in fact, remained averse tp his rule for some time. This did not escape the attention of Mir Jafar, who ordered the Rajah to come down to Murshidabad, though apparently to settle the accounts of his district , which showed a considerable balance due from him,[88] yet in reality to imprison him in the capital and appoint someone else in his place. The Rajah, suspecting the true motive of the Nawab behind this summons, did not dare to present himself in person before him. But Rai Durlabh, with whom the Rajah was in close touch, advised him to obey the command in order to remove the Nawab's suspicion. But Rajah Ram, instead of going personally, sent his brother Narain Singh, and newphew Muttermall, whom the Nawab put into prison immediately.[89] At this behaviour of the Nawab, the Rajah appealed to Clive, stating that he had committed no crime and that he was ever ready to serve the Nawab and had never disobeyed him. He strongly protested against this imprisonment, and requested Clive to

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88. Orme II, p.268.

89. Ibid.

speak to the Nawab on his behalf[90]. Accordingly the Colonel wrote to the Nawab on 2 October 1757 in the following manner, " . . . I would have you make up the matter with Rajah Ram . . . he has wrote me a letter that he is your slave and ready to obey your orders, begs that he may have your favour and protection and enjoy his post as before and will pay you one lakh of rupees"[91]. Before the receipt of this letter, the Nawab had already despatched Khwajah Hadee at the head of 500 horse to take command at Midnapur. Now at this representation of Clive, the Nawab informed him that Rajah Ram had been the enemy of the English, having carried on for Sirajud-daulah correspondence with M. Bussey and M. Law and that he had helped the French fugitives to escape to the south through Orissa[92]. However, he assured the Colonel that if the latter would take upon himself the responsibility that the fine of one lakh of rupees would be forthcoming and that the Rajah would appear

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90. Letter from Rajah Ram to Clive, no date. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.219)

91. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.209. Orme II, p.269.

92. Orme II, p.268.

personally at the 'darbar' then in that case he would release the prisoners.[93] But at the same time, he reminded him that he had already, before the receipt of his letter, granted a 'sanad' and a 'khilat' to Khwajah Hadee who was actually on his march towards Midnapur. "Reflect then Sir" continued the Nawab, "what an affront I should put on him and how displeased he would be with me, should I now displace him and how light my conduct will appear hereafter and he is one from whose conduct I have great expectations in future. But I have a great regard for your opinion and advice".[94] Before he could finish the letter, Miren arrived, and learning of the matter, immediately took the affair upon himself and sent a trustworthy person with an encouraging letter to Rajah Ram.[95] "This may be well", added the Nawab, "for Rajah Ram for present and in future, if under the patronage of the chuta Nawab (Miren), he will come here with you to pay his obedience to me, implore my pardon and give an account to the 'mustasaddees' of all the posts he has had charge for these 10 or 12 years and

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93. Nawab's letter to Clive 24 October 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.219)

94. Ibid.

95. Ibid.

convince me of his being obedient to my commands. If I am then satisfied with him, he may be assured he will have my favours . . . "[96] Clive had also received a letter to the same effect from Miren, who assured him that he had secured a promise on oath from the Nawab on Rajah Ram's affairs, and that he had released Narain Singh and Muttermall. Miren advised the Colonel to write an encouraging letter to Rajah Ram, ensuring his safety if he would come to pay his respects.[97]

Having thus received assurances both from the Nawab and his son, Clive prevailed upon Rajah Ram to come down to him from Midnapur.[98] They went to Murshidabad on 25 November, where Clive introduced the Rajah to Miren, who received him with much courtesy and honour.[99] The next day, the Rajah waited on the Nawab, showed him every respect and presented him with 'nazars'. The Nawab accepted the 'nazars', made the Rajah swear that he would disband his newly recruited troops and would always remain loyal.[100]

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96. Ibid.

97. Miren's letter to Clive, 28 October 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.223).

98. Orme II, p.273.

99. Clive's letter to the Nawab, 26 November 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.241)

100. Clive's letter to Court, 18 February 1758.

Having concluded the affairs of Midnapur satisfactorily, the Nawab then turned his attention towards Purnea where Hazyr Ali Khan, taking advantage of the recent change of government at Murshidabad, conspired with Achal Singh (who had been 'diwan' to Shaukat Jung) and actually confined the reigning Prince of that district.[101] He hesitated for some days to occupy the throne of Purnea in the fear of an immediate advance of the new Nawab in that direction. But as soon as he became sure that there was not any possibility of the Nawab's immediate arrival, he at once marched up to the 'masnad', seated himself upon it and appointed Achal Singh to be his prime minister.[102]

The news of this usurpation startled the Nawab and gave much anxiety to Clive.[103]

Although Hazyr Ali Khan was conscious of his usurpation, he endeavoured to make a settlement with the Nawab, to whom he sent a message requesting him to confirm his position in the Government of Purnea.[104] He promised on his part to remain loyal to him and to pay him the revenues of the

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101. Siyar II, p.249.

102. Ibid. Orme has wrongly said that "they proclaimed a brother of Suyed Muhammad" (Orme II, p.269) It was Hazyr Ali, as mentioned above, who actually usurped the throne.

103. Clive's letter to G. Pocock, 27 November 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2484).

104. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 805, p.122, no date.

district regularly.[105] But the Nawab did not listen to this overture and became determined to expel Hazyr Ali from Purnea. Miren intervened and tried to dissuade the Nawab from sending any army there which in his opinion would not only incur heavy expenses but also make the situation worse. He advised him to accept the proposals of Hazyr Ali for the time being and to march against Patna where his presence was necessary immediately. The Nawab did not approve this proposal, which in his opinion, would exhibit his weakness both to the enemy and to the English. But as a matter of fact, neither did he send an army against Hazyr Ali nor did he accept his overture and remained for some days inactive. And this inactivity no doubt further encouraged Hazyr Ali to amass wealth and to gather round him a considerable body of troops. When the Nawab was acquainted with these activities of Hazyr Ali, he became frightened and sought for Clive's advice, who at once instructed him to take the field as soon as possible and to act with energy and resolution, assuring him of English assistance at all times.[106]

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105. Ibid.

106. Clive's letter to Nawab, 2 October 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.209).

Accordingly the Nawab, without any loss of time, responded to the advice of the Colonel. But the difficulty with which he was soon faced was the need of an able general in the army in whom he could place his confidence. At this juncture there appeared on the scene a tyrannical, rapacious soldier, who was odious to the last degree to the people of Purnea,[107] whose name was Khadem Husain Khan. "He reminded Mir Jafar Khan" quotes Gulam Husain, "of the activity he had exhibited in serving him with his person, in his disputes with Sirajud-daulah, he represented to his friend that now that furtune has bestowed upon him so much power and such extensive dominions, he hoped he would allow him to better his fortune in that little corner of Purnea, favour which after all would not be bestowed on a stranger".[108] This representation was not put forward in vain, because the Nawab who really had been at all times indolent and averse to activity was glad to rid himself of taking on such a distant expedition.[109] Further, he considered it

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107. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 23 December 1757. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2536).

108. Quoted in Siyar II, p.254.

109. Siyar II, p.254.

advisable to oblige his old friend who had been attached to him in adversity.

Therefore, considering Khadem Husain to be a suitable man for that purpose, he bestowed on him the investiture and 'khilat' of Purnea[110] and despatched him at the head of 6,000 horse[111] on 6 October.[112] The Nawab simultaneously advised Clive to send some troops to reinforce the army of Khadem Husain,[113] which was immediately complied with by the Colonel, who despatched a body of 500 to join the expedition.[114]

Thus strengthened, Khadem Husain Khan crossed the Ganges, opposite to Rajmahal, and from thence issued

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110. Ben. Sel. Cons. 8 December 1757.

111. Orme II, p.269.

112. Nawab's letter to Clive, 14 October 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.215).

113. Ibid.

114. Clive's letter to Nawab, 19 October (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.217).
It should be marked here that Clive in his evidence says, "As soon as the rains were over, the Nawab took the field without the company's assistance to quash three rebellions, but when he came seriously to consider his situation, he thought proper to call upon the English for assistance". This statement does not seem to be correct from the face of the evidence, which would amply show that the Nawab every time used to apply to the English for assistance before undertaking any expedition.

circulars to all the principal men and to every civil and military officer in that district. These circulars contained a variety of promises and were calculated to gain the support of everyone.[115] But in fact he had not the courage to face the enemy, and instead of advancing further, he encamped near Purnea and requested the Nawab to send more troops. The Nawab, at this request, became very displeased, because he was under the impression that Khadem Husain, at the head of the army already under his command, would successfully lead the expedition. The request of Khadem Husain at the same time made him suspicious, and he was reported to have told his son Miren to recall that general.[116] However, at last, upon Miren's advice, he agreed to send more help and accordingly ordered Mir Cazem Khan to hasten his march in order to reinforce Khadem Husain,[117] instructing the latter at the same time to wait until Mir Cazem Khan could reach him. This instruction likewise made Khadem Husain suspicious

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115. Siyar II, p.254.

116. Clive's letter to Pigot, 25 December (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 805, p.143).

117. Ibid, Siyar II, p.255.

of his intentions and so, before the arrival of Mir Cazem Khan, he forced an entry into Purnea. Hazyr Ali Khan could not stand against this advance of the Nawab's army and the news of the approach of the English army so terrorised him that he left the battlefield precipitately.[118]

After so easy and so complete a victory, Khadem Husain Khan[119] triumphantly made his entry into Purnea on 9 December, and occupied the palace built by Sayed Ahmad Khan.[120]

The two rebellions of Midnapur and Purnea having been quelled successfully, the Nawab, without any further apprehensions for the tranquility of Bengal, turned his attention towards Patna against Rajah Ramnarain and decided to march thither immediately.[121]

It should be borne in mind that Rajah Ramnarain was/so faithfully attached to his late master, Sirajud-daulah,

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118. Siyar II, p.251.

119. Siyar II, pp.255-256. Scrafton has made a mistake in stating that the Nawab had appointed his 'brother-in-law' Kasim Husain Khan as the ruler of Purnea - Reflections, p.103.

120. Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 December 1757.

121. Ibid.

that even the victory at Plassey did not persuade him to recognise the accession of Mir Jafar. This mark of disobedience and disrespect gave sufficient cause for resentment to the Nawab. Moreover, Major Coote, who was sent in pursuit of M. Law after the battle of Plassey, made a strong complaint against the conduct of the ruler of Patna from whom, he said, "he met with obstruction instead of aid".[122] But in his defence it might be said that Ramnarain was not aware of the purpose of Major Coote's expedition[123] and the moment he received orders both from Clive and the Nawab, he actually despatched a body of his troops in pursuit of the French fugitives, though, of course, it was too late because the French fugitives had by then crossed the border of Bihar and had entered the dominions of the Ruler of Oudh.[124]

However, for this failure of Coote's expedition, Clive made Ramnarain wholly responsible and accordingly he wrote to the Nawab on 12 August, advising him that

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122. Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.333.

123. Ramnarain's letter to Clive, 28 July 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.183)

124. Ibid.

"Ramnarain's conduct must certainly deserve your resentment and I can only repeat what I have so often represented to you that unless you chastise some of these treacherous and turbulent dispositions, every petty Rajah will dare disobedience".[125] The situation was further aggravated when a rumour spread that Ramnarain had invited Shuja-ud-daulah, the Wazir of Oudh, to assist him against the Nawab of Bengal,[126] though there was not any foundation for this rumour.[127] In any case, the rumour had startled the Nawab to a great extent and he immediately undertook preparations for an expedition to Patna, with a view to replacing Ramnarain by his own brother, Mir Cazem Khan in the government of the province. It should be remembered that the Nawab, in order to crush the rebellion of Purnea, had already left his capital on 17 October and remained encamped on the plains of Giria, 6 miles from Murshidabad,[128] from whence he now sent an express message to Clive to come down with his army and meet him at his encampment.[129]

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125. Vide Orme MSS. XI, p.2838. Scrafton's Reflections, p.98.

126. Scrafton's letter to Clive, 7 November 1757. (Vide Ben.Sel. Cons. 18 November 1757).

127. Ben. Sel. Cons. 18 November 1757.

128. Ibid, 8 December 1757.

129. Orme II, p.271.

Ramnarain, as we have already said, was no doubt averse to Mir Jafar's rule[130] and so could not trust himself under the Nawab's power.[131] But the Nawab's present preparations alarmed the Rajah greatly and not knowing what part the English would take in the ensuing[132] conflict between himself and the Nawab, he took measures likewise for his defence. Accordingly he invited the Zamindars of his province, especially Rajah Sunder Singh and Pahalwan Singh, to join him with their troops in a common effort against the Nawab.[133] But having received no favourable response from them, Ramnarain then endeavoured to obtain the support of the English and appealed to Clive to this effect. Gulam Husain writes, "Ramnarain being by this time certain that the Nawab's expedition was solely intended against him, he concluded that his own power and dominion would never subsist upon a solid foundation unless he made an

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130. Ben. Sel. Cons. 18 November 1757.

131. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 16 November 1757. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 18 November 1757).

132. Malcolm, op. cit.

133. Siyar II, p.250.

alliance with the English"[134] Clive could hardly let slip this opportunity to have an alliance with Ramnarain, "most powerful and beloved Governor of Bihar"[135], in order to have control over the Nawab.[136] Therefore, upon receiving the request of Ramnarain, he immediately assured him of English protection and advised him to come down safely to offer his submission and respect to the Nawab.[137]

In the meantime, Clive, accompanied by his troops, marched from Murshidabad on 30 November and arrived at Rajmahal on 3 December. The Nawab visited the Colonel the next day, when the whole English army was drawn up to receive him.[138] The Nawab was pleased, and at once distributed 10,000 rupees among the soldiers with a view[139]

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134. Ibid. p.256.

135. Clive's letter to Pigot, 19 February 1758.

136. "It would be a constant check on the Subah to have the Nawab of Patna devoted to us". Scrafton's Reflections, p.103.

137. Ben. Sel. Cons. 11 January 1758. Muzaffarnamah, F.187B.

138. Orme II, p.275.

139. Scrafton's Reflections, p.102. Ben. Sel. Cons. 8 December 1757. The author of Muzaffarnamah says that "Mir Jafar distributed 5 lakhs of rupees", which seems to be wrong: Muzaffarnamah F.187A.

to displaying his attachment to the English. But Clive was a "man of purpose" and could not be coaxed by this prodigality. He had two particular aims in view, viz. to secure protection for Ramnarain and ensure the satisfaction of the Nawab's treaty obligations. Accordingly in his conference with the Nawab, Clive convinced him of the necessity of confirming Ramnarain in his post, on which the Nawab's honour and interest greatly depended.[140] Mir Jafar was made to believe by him that unless a mutual settlement was effected with Ramnarain, there was the possibility of Ramnarain's being joined by Shuja-ud-daulah of Oudh, which in consequence would endanger the Nawab's 'masnad'.[141] Realising the gravity of the situation should such a union take place, the Nawab requested the Colonel to intervene between him and Ramnarain, promising that if the Rajah would submit himself, his life and property would be secured and his rule maintained.[142]

Thus having carried out one point, the Colonel next turned to the other point, that is the fulfilment of the Nawab's engagement with the English. But the

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140. Clive's letter to Court of Directors, 18 February 1758. Clive 's letter to Secret Comm. 18 February 1758 (Vide Orme MSS X, p.2544)

141. Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 December 1757.

142. Clive's letter to Court, 18 February 1758.

difficulty was that Rai Durlabh "through whose office, as Diwan, all money, bills and patents must pass"[143] happened at that time to be at Murshidabad discontented. So the Colonel represented to the Nawab the absurdity of this variance and proposed a serious reconciliation of which he himself would be the guarantor. The necessity of marching to Patna prevailed,[144] and the Nawab, at least to all appearances, acquiesced, and on being instructed by Clive, Rai Durlabh left the city and arrived in the camp on the 23rd of the month.[145] Clive assured Rai Durlabh of his protection[146] and sent him, accompanied by Watts, to wait on the Nawab. For what ~~reason~~ reason we do not know, the Nawab refused to receive Rai Durlabh, and informed Watts that he could pardon the 'diwan' only on the following conditions;

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143. Orme II, p.276.

144. "After discoursing for some time on the promising prospect of his affairs, the Nawab desired I would march with him to Patna. This I consented to on condition he gave us security for paying the rest of his debts". Clive's letter to Select Comm. 11 January 1757.

145. Orme II, p.276.

146. Clive's letter to Rai Durlabh, 23 December 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.249).

that Rai Durlabh should give sufficient guarantee not to give any direct or indirect encouragement to anybody hostile to the Nawab; and that he should all along stay with him until the present expedition against Ramnarain was over. These conditions having been agreed to by Clive, the Nawab received the 'diwan' on 24 December, with every demonstration of cordiality.[147] Then began a conference among them about the discharge of the Nawab's debts to the English, which we shall discuss in Chapter IX.

After these transactions, the army began to move from Rajmahal on 3 January 1758. At the Nawab's request, the English led the van, Rai Durlabh with his troops and the artillery of the government following next and the Nawab with the main body amounting to about 40,000 bringing up the rear.[148] For the convenience of the allocation of provisions, as well as to prevent the eventuality of quarrels amongst the respective soldiers, it was agreed that the three divisions should always make their halts at the distance of one day's march from each other.[149]

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147. Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 December 1757.

148. Nawab's letter to Clive 13 January 1758 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.259)

149. Orme II, p.277.

The progress of the army under the Nawab himself, had been continually interrupted by halts to bring on their baggage and repair their artillery.[150] The Nawab repeatedly asked the Colonel to wait for him as he disliked the idea of their being far in advance[151] and reaching Patna before him. "I desire", writes the Nawab, "you will likewise halt and then march".[152]

In the meantime, reports arrived from Patna that the Rajah Ramnarain had been taking measures for his defence, and that he had broken down the bridges on the road within 30 miles of Patna and had posted guards between Futtuah and Patna to prevent anyone from passing.[153] He was justified in doing so because he had not yet received any assurance or encouragement from Clive with regard to the English protection, nor the Nawab's expressions of friendship. It might be admitted that he had no reasonable intentions, and that he only required security for his life and continuance in his employment.[154] No sooner had he received that

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150. Nawab's letter to Clive, 2 February. Vide H.M.S., Vol. 193, p.275.

151. Orme II, p.278.

152. 2 February 1758. (Vide op. cit).

153. Vide op. cit, p.257.

154. Malcolm, Life of Clive, I. F.N., p.327.

encouraging letter from Clive, than he assured the latter without any sign of mistrust that he would proceed without delay to present his respects to the Nawab, if only the Colonel would stand as a guarantor.[155] Clive responded to it and upon his request the Nawab sent Govind Mall to Ramnarain with instructions to persuade the Rajah to come down to him.[156] But Ramnarain could not place confidence in the Nawab's promises and was still more mistrustful of his counsellors.[157] So in order to secure adequate protection for himself, Ramnarain won over Govind Mall to his side and sent him as his agent to the Nawab's camp with a view to procuring a letter from him wherein he would agree to invite the Rajah with a promise of confirming him in his government of Patna.

Thus commissioned, Govind Mall waited on the Nawab and falsely advised him that Ramnarain desired to come down to him on the condition of the Colonel's standing guarantor.[158] The Nawab made no objection to this.

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155. Ramnarain's letter to Clive, 13 January 1758. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.259).

156. Nawab's letter to Clive, 15 January 1758 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.261).

157. Ben. Sel. Cons. 11 January 1758.

158. Siyar II, p.258.

Thereupon Govind Mall prevailed upon the Persian Secretary of the Nawab and won him over to his side in obtaining from the Nawab a letter such as he desired and brought it before the Nawab, when "once only seasoned with his dose of 'bhang' he was in capable of attending to business".[159] The Nawab in his state of intoxication did not like to see the draft of the letter himself, but asked him to read out its contents.[160] The secretary, as instructed by Govind Mall, took this opportunity of mentioning to him such purport as differed widely from the real letter, but which suited his plans. Having heard it, the Nawab ordered a letter to be drawn up accordingly, to be sent to Clive. Govind Mall, having carried his point, took the letter and went to see the Colonel. The Colonel took a copy of it, signed and sealed the original and sent it back to the Nawab.[161] This letter contained, quotes Gulam Husain, "an invitation to come over to the English camp, with assurances of his taking it upon himself to have him (Ramnarain) confirmed in his Government and to see him secured as far as his life, property and honour were concerned, without his being

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159. Ibid.

160. Ibid.

161. Ibid.

liable to be called to any account whatever, for either the management of the revenue or any other matter".[162]

Having carried his point in this way, Ramnarain became eased in his mind and visited the Colonel at Hybutgunj on 25 January.[163]

Here it should be noted that a few days before Ramnarain's arrival in the English camp, the Nawab, in his natural aversion to him, and also being sedulously instigated by his counsellors,[164] wrote a letter to Clive on 11 January 1758, falsely accusing the Rajah by stating that "he (Nawab) had received some intelligence that Ramnarain would not accommodate matters or trust his person in his hands without the following conditions, that the Nawab shall recall his two brothers[165] from Patna; send him 300 horse to assist him in collecting the revenues; allow him to appoint a 'faujdar' of Shahbad and that the Nawab himself shall return with his army to Murshidabad".[166] The Colonel could not give any credit to

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162. Ibid, pp.258-259.

163. Ben. Sel. Cons. 4 February 1758. Siyar, II, p.257. Orme, II. p.278.

164. Clive's letter to Court - 18 February 1758.

165. Muhammad Ami Khan and Mir Cazem Khan.

166. Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 January 1758.

this intelligence because two days previously he had received a letter from the Rajah "expressing his earnest desire to obtain the Nawab's favour through our means".[167]

In any event, upon his arrival in the English camp, Clive deputed Watts to introduce Ramnarain to the Nawab, which was accordingly done on 29 January.[168] The Nawab, temporarily concealing his real motives, received the Rajah with much civility and asked him to follow in the rear,[169] though apparently to facilitate their communications, yet in reality to mark his inferiority in the province[170] and to do him injury later on.

Although Ramnarain could not understand the real intention of the Nawab,[171] it did not escape the observation of the English camp where it was apprehended that the Nawab had placed him there out of the reach of English succour in order to destroy him later. Clive himself

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167. Ibid, 24 January, 4 February 1758.

168. Clive's letter to Court, 18 February 1758. Ben. Sel. Cons. 4 February 1758.

169. Scrafton's Reflections, p.104.

170. Orme II, p.278.

171. Ben. Sel. Cons. 18 February 1758. Ramnarain's letter to Clive, 4 February 1758. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.193).

not receiving any intelligence from the Nawab for several days, had the same suspicion and so he wrote to Rai Durlabh and Amir Beg Khan on 3 February, "According to the Nawab's orders I gave encouragement to Ramnarain to come here and delivered him to the Nawab and further I agreed that he should be continued in his post, that he should enjoy his life, his credit and goods, but to this day I know of nothing that has been done which surprises me very much. I therefore desire when you are alone with the Nawab that you will inform yourself how his heart is inclined towards Ramnarain, whether he stands to the treaty and write me of it that I may write accordingly to the Nawab".[172] Clive's anxiety, though to some extent relieved by an intelligence on 4 February to the effect that the Nawab had cordially received Ramnarain, nevertheless still persisted to some extent, on account of his apprehension that the Nawab harboured ill intentions towards Ramnarain in other respects.[173]

There is no doubt that under pressure of circumstances, Mir Jafar had seemingly agreed to confirm Ramnarain in his posts, and was compelled to have the assistance of the English, but during the whole of his expedition he had been

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172. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.275.

173. Orme II, p.278.

waiting for an opportunity to put his schemes into effect to destroy Ramnarain and the English influence altogether, by a single stroke, in order to give his authority a free hand. And this was evident from his subsequent dubious activities.

He now formed a project from which he expected some relief.[174] He ordered Khwajah Hadee, a general, to make a forced entry into the city before the English army[175] and to suffer no troops except his own to enter the gate until the Nawab himself should arrive there.[176] What was his object behind this project? Perhaps he had three objects in view, to give the impression to the people of the province that the English were subservient to him; to destroy Khwajah Hadee, who was suspected by the Nawab of being in close friendship with Ramnarain and Rai Durlabh, by engaging him in a skirmish with the English, whereupon ultimately he expected to create misunderstanding and ill-feeling between Ramnarain, Rai Durlabh, on the one hand, and the English on the other. But this plan did not succeed, because Khwajah Hadee, instead of obstructing the passage of Clive, who was advancing towards the City of

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174. Scrafton's Reflections, p.104.

175. Ibid.

176. Ibid. Orme II, p.279.

Patna from Jafar Khan's garden on 5 February, gladly admitted him into the city.[177] The Nawab no doubt was severely mortified at this failure of his project, and "followed with sullen slowness and enraged to see the Colonel carrying away the glory of this campaign while himself appeared only as his general".[178]

Even though frustrated, the Nawab did not abandon his schemes, and he now endeavoured to separate the English from Ramnarain, so that the latter might not get any direct access to Clive. With this object in view, he posted guards in the camp of the Rajah, with orders to intercept any communications which might pass between the two camps, and advised Clive to march without delay to Bankipur[179], which was accordingly complied with. Still he did not feel satisfaction, and again instructed Clive to move to Dinapur, five miles farther on, because he desired to enter the city on 9 February and would himself encamp at Bankipur.[180]

This design of the Nawab in removing the English troops to such a distance and in keeping his whole army

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177. Orme II, p.279. Scrafton's Reflections, p.104.

178. Scrafton's Reflections, p.105.

179. Nawab's letter to Clive, 6 February 1758. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.279).

180. Ibid, 8 February 1758. (Vide op. cit, p.280).

between them and the city, did not escape the critical observation of Clive, who grew more suspicious, and at once sent Watts to the Nawab to ascertain his real sentiments[181] and to complain severely of his conduct towards Ramnarain, whom he had kept in the camp instead of permitting him to return with commensurate honour and dignity to the city, contrary to his promise at Rajmahal.[182] Watts accordingly waited on the Nawab, with whom he had a long discussion.[183] Of course Watts could not discover any sign of duplicity in the Nawab. Nevertheless, the Nawab did not show any willingness to conclude Ramnarain's affairs until he should see the Colonel, when he would settle the matter.[184]

On 12 February the Nawab entered the city of Patna accompanied by Ramnarain, and kept his army on the eastern side of the city instead of encamping on the west as he

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181. Ben. Sel. Cons, 18 February 1758.

182. Orme II, p.280. Ben. Sel. Cons. 18 February 1758.

183. Ben. Sel. Cons. 18 February 1758.

184. Ibid, 2 March 1758.

had previously proposed, and immediately decided to confer the Governorship of the Province on his brother, Mir Khazem Khan, before the arrival of Clive. So, without any hesitation, he summoned Rajah Ramnarain from his camp and ordered him to render a full account of the management of the revenue of the province. The Rajah was very much amazed at such an unexpected order, and he at once complained to Clive.[185] This move of the Nawab caused the Colonel to realise that his long-standing suspicions against the Nawab were well founded.[186] But he was determined to make him act up to his promises with regard to Ramnarain. Therefore he sent a message to the Nawab advising him to abstain from such intrigue. The message threw the Nawab into a rage, and he was reported to have expressed himself in the following words; "What does mean my Lord? Shall I leave such a Government in the hands of Ramnarain and behold my own brother without employment? What for, pray, and for whom?".[187]

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185. Ramnarain's letter to Clive, 12 February 1758. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.241).

186. Clive's letter to Pigot, 19 February 1758.

187. Clive's letter to Select Comm. 7 February 1758. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons., 18 February 1758).

187. Quoted in Siyar II, p.263.

In the meantime, Clive set out from his camp on 14 February to wait on the Nawab and to congratulate him on his peaceful entry into the city.[188] The Nawab, though in his heart averse to the English for their superior position, had at least a high regard for the Colonel.[189] Clive represented to him the impossibility of retracting from the promises he had made through the Colonel to Ramnarain, and also intimated the advantage of trusting the government to a person of moderate and peaceful disposition rather than placing it in imprudent and dangerous hands.[190] Moreover, he showed him the letter of assurance which he had given to Ramnarain through Govind Mall.[191] The Nawab was very much surprised at the comtents of the letter. He at once sent for his Persian secretary and Govind Mall, and reprimanded them on this strange affair. These two men, as we have already seen, being linked together together in this business, gave assurances in such a manner as to

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188. Clive's letter to Court, 18 February 1758.

189. "I must here do the Subah the justice to say that however jealpus of the English power, he has ever shown a sincere regard for the Colonel". Scrafton's Reflections, p.110.

190. Clive's letter to Court, 18 February 1758. Ben. Sel. Cons. 20 March 1758.

191. Siyar II, p.263.

totally confound the Nawab.[192] They observed "that they had brought that minute to him and offered it to his perusal; that he had ordered the contents to be recited to him, had given his consent and had requested that of the Colonel. They added that it was not strange at all, that those contents should have slipped out of his memory in the variety of businesses and ~~associations~~ avocations that crowded upon his princely mind".[193] The Nawab, believing himself to be in the wrong, had no other alternative but to abide by the Colonel's representation with respect to Ramnarain, and so he seemingly agreed to confirm his appointment to the Governorship of Patna. But as he was addicted to astrological predictions and did not generally undertake any work of importance without having first consulted the stars as to a favourable moment, he delayed the matter for some days more, till 22 February, when he wrote to Clive "Tomorrow being Thursday and a lucky day, I shall give the 'khilat' for the Subahdary of Azimabad (Patna) to him who is the

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192. Ibid, p.264.

193. Quoted in Siyar II, p.264.

light of my eyes and dear to me as my life, my son Mir Sadak (alias Miren) Ali Khan Bahadur and the Naib's Khilat, I shall give to the great Rajah Ramnarain Bahadur . . . "[194]

On 23 February, the Nawab, accordingly, in a full 'darbar', performed the ceremony of disposing the Government of Patna, attended by all his courtiers and principal men of the province. Orme writes, "A suit of dress with jewels on a golden plate was laid before him (Nawab) which he ordered to be carried away immediately with an escort to his son Miren at Murshidabad, whom he called Nawab of Patna. Then another suit of the same presents, which he gave with his own hand to Ramnarain, pronouncing him deputy to Miren in the Nawabship. The appointment of Miren was merely nominal, not derogating from the authority of Ramnarain which continued responsible to the Nawab alone, but rendering him liable to some additional presents; and the bargain for Ramnarain's appointment had been settled at seven lakhs of rupees, which were exacted under the pretext of a balance remaining due on the adjustment of the accounts of the province".[195]

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194. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.291.

195. Orme II, p.281. Ben. Sel. Cons 20 March 1758. In the same 'darbar', the Nawab had summoned the dissatisfied Rajahs of the province, of whom (cont.)

There is no doubt that only the presence of Clive compelled the Nawab to settle the Government of Patna in favour of Ramnarain, which he himself did not accept as final. So he planned again to set aside this arrangement by appointing Mir Cazem Khan in the place of Ramnarain, as soon as Clive should leave Patna. But as there was no sign of the Colonel's departure, he resolved to offer his devotions at a famous tomb of a saint near the town of Barh,[196] situated 40 miles to the south-east of Patna, hoping thereby that in the interval the English army under the Colonel would be far advanced on their way, when he would return to Patna and remove Ramnarain. But Clive was too clever for him, and decided not to separate himself from the Rajah until the latter was out of all danger.[197] The Nawab, upon

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195 (cont) mention might be made of Rajah Sunder Singh, Rajah Pahalwan Singh and Kamgar Khan. These Rajahs, on the assurance of Clive, came to pay their homage and to settle their affairs. None came empty-handed and the Nawab received them with pleasure and confirmed them in their respective posts.

196. Nawab's letter to Clive, 21 April 1758 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.340).

197. Orme II, p.284.

his return from Barh, found to his great amazement that his plan was in vain[198] and perhaps he acknowledged the superior intellect of Clive. However, he sent for Ramnarain and Rai Durlabh, whom he apparently treated well, and they then accompanied him on a visit to Clive on 30 April. The Nawab expressed his belief in Ramnarain's integrity and honesty and assured him of his support in the presence of Clive. The Rajah seemed quite satisfied and saluting the Nawab as his "Supreme Lord", he retired to his palace. As he had not any further business in Bihar, the Nawab decided to return to his capital, and ordered Rai Durlabh to accompany him. But Clive, apprehending some evil designs against Rai Durlabh, refused to let him go along with the Nawab, although he assured him that the 'diwan' would start for the capital within a few days and upon his arrival there would definitely show his proper respects to the Nawab.[199] The Nawab agreed to this under strong protest, and ordered his army to march on to Murshidabad. Gulam Husain gives an interesting story of the return march

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198. Scrafton's Reflections, p.108.

199. Clive's letter to Secret Comm. 15 April 1758 (Vide Bengal letters Recd. Vol. 2, p.112).

of the Nawab in the following manner; "It is reported that in advancing towards Murshidabad, he (Nawab) used to beguile the tediousness of the journey by stepping out of the road, with only his guards and friends and by hunting all the way: he at the same time amused himself with listening to the songs and looking at the dances of a number of actresses and singers which he carried with him upon elephants. It was this which he called his 'private parties' and which he had the simplicity to think very private indeed. In these parties, he used often to ask his friends what they thought of his past times and whether this was not the true manner of travelling and hunting? What could be meant by going into the woods, and retiring into shady places? To enjoy life undoubtedly, added the Nawab, in every kind of pleasure"[200] Thus advancing in this fashion with his army, the Nawab arrived at the capital on 30 May.

The Court of Mir Jafar in the meantime continued to be a scene of intrigues in which the Nawab and his son were no less active than their inferiors. And Rai Durlabh became the target of this intrigue. He was a man of great importance[201] both in the state and in the army, which forced

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200. Siyar, II, p.270. Muzaffarnamah, F.188B.

201. Orme II, p.276. Committee Proceedings at Murshidabad 17 September 1757.

Clive to protect him from the hostile designs of the Nawab,[202] who had already, as we have mentioned before, planned to get rid of him by any means. So all his domestic troubles being over, at any rate for the present, the Nawab now turned his jealous eyes towards Rai Durlabh.

While at Patna, the Nawab had confided in his son Miren at Murshidabad regarding his vexation at the favour and protection which Clive had shown and had given to Rai Durlabh. This hint of the Nawab was sufficient for Miren, who endeavoured to implement his father's intention. It should be observed here that Rai Durlabh's importance was not the only cause of the Nawab's jealousy. Rai Durlabh was the only means of ultimately destroying a counter-party in the 'darbar' and thereby minimising the influence and the superior position of the English, which had made both the father and the son so jealous of them.[203] Hence they both became determined to destroy him altogether at the earliest opportunity.

No sooner had Miren learned that Rai Durlabh was accompanying Clive on his return to the capital,[204] than he quitted it with great precipitation, publicly declaring

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202. Clive's letter to Watts, 4 August 1758. Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2567.

203. Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.348.

204. Orme, II, p.353. Beveridge - History of India, I, p.652.

that he had sufficient reason to suspect designs against his own life and had therefore resolved to join his father who was on his way to Murshidabad.[205] About this affair at the capital, Scrafton, the English resident at the 'darbar', in his private letter to Clive on 15 May, observes, "In the morning I was informed the young Nawab's troops were ready for a march and presently Petrus came to me and told me the Nawab (i.e. Miren) had got his cannon loaded and his troops ready. I sent him to know the cause. The Nawab, when he had dismissed his servants, put on a face of importance and Petrus asked him what all these preparations were for. He said Rai Durlabh was not true to him and that he was afraid of Sabut Jung (Clive) that if Sabut Jung would send him his promise and faith to attempt nothing against him, it was well, if not, he would leave the city with those who were faithful to him, and go to his father and if anybody offered to stop him, he would fight his way . . ."[206] Miren's conduct struck terror into the inhabitants and threw the whole city of Murshidabad into consternation.[207] Upon this report, Clive

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205. Clive's letter to Nawab, 18 May 1758 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.347).

206. Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2571.

207. Malcolm, op. cit, p.349. Orme II, p.353.

became annoyed and at once wrote to the Nawab complaining in the sharpest terms of Miren's strange conduct and declaring that he would no longer remain in Bengal if his honesty was to be rewarded with suspicion and distrust.[208] This reproach of the Colonel brought both the Nawab and his son to their senses, and they both apologised in the most submissive terms.[209]

So long as Clive was at Murshidabad, neither the Nawab nor Miren dared to do any harm to Rai Durlabh. But no sooner had he left the capital, than Miren's hostility towards Rai Durlabh again grew in intensity, and on 26 July he was ordered by Miren to make over the charge of his office to Rajballabh,[210] (previously Diwan of Nawazesh Muhammad Khan at Dacca, but appointed Miren's Diwan on 24 July immediately after Clive's departure). To save himself from further insults and injury, Rai Durlabh sought permission from the Nawab to proceed to Calcutta with his family. The Nawab thought it advisable to grant this leave, but he was overpowered by Miren, who refused to grant him permission unless "he (Rai Durlabh) had furnished a sum sufficient to satisfy troops".[211]

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208. Clive's letter to Nawab, 18 May 1758. (Vide op.cit.)

209. Nawab's letter to Clive, 21 May (Vide op. cit.p.354)

210. Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.375.
Orme II, p.357. Siyar II, p.253.

211. Orme II, p.357.

At this juncture, Clive promptly interwened, and in order to prevent the Nawab from committing any excess in the capital against Rai Durlabh, invited the Nawab to come down to Calcutta. The Nawab gladly accepted the invitation with a view to getting rid of Rai Durlabh through his son in his absence, so that he could easily evade the responsibility.[212]

The Nawab left the city on 6 August. After two days, Miren prepared to attack Rai Durlabh, who immediately appealed to the English for protection. Scrafton despatched a body of English troops to his assistance, and took him under his protection.[213] The account of these proceedings was then despatched to Watts, who was accompanying the Nawab to Calcutta. The Nawab thought it prudent and politic to condemn openly the proceedings of his son, but at the same time could not refuse the request of Watts to allow Rai Durlabh to accompany them to Calcutta.[214] Although the Nawab's project did not wholly succeed, he derived some satisfaction at least from dismissing Rai Durlabh from his posts and leaving him at Calcutta, which[215]

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212. Malcolm, op. cit, p.376. Scrafton's Reflections, p.110.

213. Muzaffarnamah, F.189A. Scrafton's Reflections, p.110.

214. Scrafton's Reflections, p.110. Malcolm, op.cit.p.377.

215. Muzaffarnamah, F.189B.

would give him a free hand in his domestic policy at the capital.

It is clear that the Nawab, who personally planned out his own domestic policy, could not successfully give final shape to it, because at every step the master-spirit of Clive prevailed, overpowering him. The interference and intervention of the Colonel had undoubtedly been resented by the Nawab as a serious menace to his rightful authority. But ultimately it proved to be a boon so far as the Nawab was concerned. Bearing in mind the critical situation which the Nawab faced immediately after his accession, it could be said that without Clive's superior intellect and sincere assistance, he could not have suppressed the formidable rebellions which broke out throughout the Kingdom at least when his own armies were in arrears and he had not sufficient treasure to encourage them to fight for him. It was the presence of the English army under Clive which disheartened the rebellious Rajahs and compelled them to succumb to the Nawab without any bloodshed. And Clive might well observe, "All domestic troubles are now happily ended and the Nawab seemed so well fixed in his Government as to be able with a small degree of prudence to maintain himself quietly".[216]

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216. Clive's letter to Court, 18 February 1758.

CHAPTER V

THE GENERAL POLITICAL CONDITION OF MIR JAFAR'S TERRITORIES.

The peace thus restored in the country was in fact temporary. The country needed at that time an intelligent and powerful ruler who could maintain peace within and could strongly protect the frontiers against foreign encroachments. But unfortunately the Nawab was lacking in these qualities. It is true that backed by the superior strength of the English, he had suppressed the uprisings which he encountered immediately upon his accession, yet it must be admitted that he could not earn for himself the respect, or even the sympathy, of his people, strong or weak.[1] His nerveless rule not only deprived him of the loyalty of the principal men in the state, but also caused further rebellions within, thereby encouraging invasions from without.

With the onset of the year 1759, troubles arose in his army. The vast forces which he had always maintained had exhausted his treasury, and large arrears were due to them.[2]

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1. Muzaffarnamah, P.185B.

2. Letter to Court, 10 April 1759.
   Scrafton's Reflections, p.112.

The army appealed to him several times to pay off these dues. The Nawab, instead of satisfying, affronted them by dismissing a number of them from his service. This unwise step precipitated a crisis. The army at once reached a state of open sedition[3] and actually besieged the Nawab in his palace.[4] They were being supported by Dilir Khan and Asaalat Khan, the two eminent generals who had risked their lives in assisting Mir Jafar to the throne. "Even such meritorious men", writes Gulam Husain, "became an eyesore to Miren, even these he wanted to drive from Bengal, unmindful of the many obligations which both himself and his father had owed to these two heroic brothers".[5] The Nawab tried to win them over to his side by offering the prospect of more fame and rewards. But they refused to accept such offer unless the soldiers were satisfied.[6] This rejection so angered the Nawab that he at once determined to expel them, and, says Gulam Husain, "nothing would have prevented the scheme

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3. Muzaffarnamah, F.195A.

4. Clive's letter to Manningham, 10 March 1759 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2610). Siyar, II, p.282.

5. Siyar, II, p.282.

6. Letter to Court, April 10, 1759.

from being put in execution, but a well-grounded apprehension of the extremeties to which resentment might carry two such Herculean men, whenever once their natural prowess and known bravery should have been pushed to despair".[7]

Upon the news of this revolt reaching Clive, he intervened and advised the Nawab to bring the matter to a speedy conclusion lest it might provoke the other troops in the different districts to whom large arrears had likewise fallen due.[8] But the Nawab paid no heed, and the army remained discontented.

The Nawab not only alienated the army, but also, by his maltreatment,[9] drove into rebellion the two principal zamindars of Bihar, namely Rajah Sunder Singh and Rajah Pahalwan Singh. In the previous year, during his sojourn at Patna, the Nawab had made a settlement with these two Rajahs and in the presence of Clive confirmed them in their respective posts. But no sooner

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7. Siyar, II, p.282.

8. Clive's letter to the Nawab - No date. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 95, p.215).

9. Clive's letter to Manningham, 10 March 1759. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2610).

had he returned to Murshidabad than he devised a treacherous plan to divest them of their zamindaries and to put some of his adherents there.[10] As soon as they heard of this, they at once determined to effect the ruin of the Nawab and to "tear his family by the roots".[11] With this object in view, they began to enlist deserters from the Nawab's court and even endeavoured to secure the support of Rajah Ramnarain, one of the most powerful men of the province of Bihar. So far as Ramnarain is concerned, it should be remembered that although a reconciliation had already been effected between him and the Nawab, he hated and despised him. But as he had commitments with the English, he did not like actually to bring himself under suspicion of faithlessness and treason towards the Nawab.[12] Nevertheless the Rajah remained an eyesore to the Nawab who, though under duress confirming him as Governor of Patna, never accepted this as final. The Rajah was quite aware of the Nawab's jealousy of his power and wealth, and he therefore always took every

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10. Muzaffarnamah. F.196 A.

11. Siyar. II. p.282.

12. Ibid.

precaution in his dealings with him. Thus, upon the solicitation of Rajah Sunder Singh and Rajah Pahalwan Singh, he did not respond openly, though, of course, he wished for their success.

Thus on the one side there was the clamour of the army and on the other general disaffection among the principal men of the state.[13] "The general sense of the public, whether amongst the knowing ones or amongst the simple, whether in public or in private"[14] was that there would soon be trouble.

In the beginning of January 1759 danger really gathered with the advance of the Mughal Prince, generally known as Shahzadah, towards Bihar. He was the eldest son of Emperor Alumgir II, who was for all practical purposes a mere instrument in the hands of his Wazir Ghaziuddin. This cruel and ambitious wazir was practically ruling the whole empire to his own advantage, and was bent upon destroying the reigning Emperor and his son, Shahzadah, at an opportune moment. Both the Emperor and his son were under the strict surveillance of the Wazir. Pursued by the Wazir's vulgar ambition

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13. Bem. Sel. Cons, 6 March 1759.

14. Siyar, II, p.283.

and relentless ferocity, the Shah Zadah suddenly fled from the capital in May 1758[15] and sought safety in exile. His first object was emancipation from that thraldom under which his father and his family were kept by the Wazir. He was received by some of the principal chiefs amongst whom Shujaud-daulah of Oudh and Murshid-kulikhan of Allahabad deserve special mention. He listened with pleasure to the many invitations to place himself at the head of an expedition into Bihar, after which he could march down towards the Eastern kingdoms.[16] The political opportunity in Bengal at that time no doubt caught the imagination of the Shah Zadah and his confederates. When he came to know about the disaffection of the principal nobles and zamindars of the country and the shrunken power of the Nawab, he at once determined to take advantage of what he deemed an opportune moment to invade Bengal and to divest Mir Jafar of his kingdom. There is no doubt, as Clive stated in his letter to the Secret Committee of 12 March 1759, that the political turmoils prevailing at that time in the Subah of Bengal

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15. Spear - Twilight of the Mughals, p.14.

16. Siyar, II, p.284. Muzaffarnamah, F.199A.

due to the treacherous behaviour of the Nawab towards his people and the non-payment of the soldiers in his service, "were the principal motives which had encouraged the Shah Zadah"[17], against Bengal. In the beginning of February 1759, the threat materialised. The Shah Zadah had entered Bihar and was on his way to Patna.

The news of the Shah Zadah's alliance with Shujaud-daulah, together with the report of his being joined by a French party under M. Law, had created serious alarm in the mind of the Nawab.[18] To his astonishment, the Nawab found the zamindars of the country beginning to join the invading Prince one by one.[19] He at once employed emissaries to come to terms with the rebellious zamindars and to bring them over to his side,[20] but to no effect.[21] Having shown his weakness and failed in this attempt, the Nawab then conferred with his ministers

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17. Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2610.

18. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 Feb. 1759.

19. Muzaffarnamah, F.199B.

20. Letter to Court, 10 April 1759.

21. Ben. Sel. Cons. 15 March 1759.

and his son upon the course of action. They all advised him to gain the sympathy of the army by distributing a large sum of money amongst them. But the treasury could not stand this,[22] and so the Nawab looked to Jagat Seth for help. To add to these crucial difficulties of the Nawab, Jagat Seth and his brother were on their pilgrimage to 'Parasnath'.[23] taking along with them their whole family and their treasures. The Nawab suspected the Seths to have been at the bottom of the impending invasion of the Shah Zadah. So he at once sent troops to stop them and to bring them back to the capital. The Seths refused. The Nawab's suspicions against them were probably without foundation and indeed, soon afterwards we find them in favour with him.[24] Nevertheless it should be remembered that it was their fear of the Nawab's covetous designs for plundering their fortunes which made them quit Murshodabad for some time and retire to a place of safety. Certainly their immediate refusal put the Nawab in a very awkward position, and at last he had to sell some of his gold and silver plate in order to satisfy the troops.[25]

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22. Ibid.

23. Parasnath is the name given by the Jains to their principal idol.

24. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.25.

25. Letter to Court, 21 December 1759. Abs. P.L.R., 1759-65, p.26.

He paid them a small part of their arrears with the result that for some time their seditious and clamorous activities subsided, leaving the Nawab with some leisure to think of Patna.[26]

We have mentioned before that both the Nawab and his son were averse to Rajah Ramnarain and now the news of the Shah Zadah's advance gave them a chance to deprive him of his office by painting him as treacherous to the English. Ramnarain had, with good reason, taken alarm at the Nawab's apparent intentions, and so at once communicated his apprehensions to Amyatt,[27] the chief of the English factory at Patna. Though there did not appear to be any reason at the time to suspect the Rajah,[28] nevertheless it can be assumed that he was very little attached to the Nawab and was greatly afraid of and averse to the young Nawab in particular.[29] "Clive had", says Forrest, "the difficult task not only of strengthening the resolution of the weak and vacillating Mir Jafar, but had also to secure the fidelity of Ramnarain, whom Mir Jafar was still plotting to remove and plunder".[30]

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26. Siyar, II, p.282.

27. Letter to Amyatt, 29 December 1758. (Vide Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.395).

28. Ben. Sel. Cons, 6 September 1759.

29. Ibid.

30. Life of Clive, II, p.128.

In the meantime the Shah Zadah with his strong army, composed of well-armed troops of Allahabad and Benares, was slowly advancing eastward and collected en route treasures by way of subsidies and presents from the zamindars of the neighbourhood.[31] Considering this expedition to be directed against himself, Rajah Ramnarain became apprehensive and at once gave notice of his suspicions to Amyatt and forwarded the information at the same time to the Nawab.[32] The Shah Zadah in the meantime issued 'farmans' in the name of Ramnarain, calling upon him to come out of Patna and wait upon him as a loyal vassal.[33] The Rajah transmitted these 'farmans' to the Nawab and sought instructions.[34] The Nawab advised Ramnarain to remain firm at Patna till he came to his assistance there.[35] But neither the Nawab nor his son were bold enough to march against such a powerful enemy without the assistance of the English.[36] Accordingly the

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31. Nawab's letter to the President, 5 March 1759. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65. p.25.

32. Ben. Sel. Cons. 25 January 1759. Siyar II. p.290.

33. Ibid. 10 February 1759. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65. p.23.

34. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 February 1759.

35. Ibid.

36. Ibid. Siyar. II. p.291.

Nawab requested Clive to take the field immediately and promised to send him 5,000 horse and 5,000 'barkandasses' if necessary.[37]

While the Shah Zadah was still on his way towards Bihar, the Nawab received a 'farman' from the Emperor to the following effect: "Let the faithful servant Mir Muhammad Jafar Khan Bahadur Mahabat Jung, favoured of the Emperor, know, that at this time some foolish and rash persons have by the persuasion with our dear son Muhammad Ali Gohar, led him that way, as it is the desire of the wicked people to ruin the country. For this reason it is commanded that the servant above-mentioned proceed speedily to Azimabad and by any means secure the person of our dear son, keep him in that place and bring the authors of these troubles to punishment, that it may serve as an example to others. In this affair, think you will obtain esteem and favour".[38] This 'farman' greatly perplexed the Nawab. Timid and vacillating as he was, he did not dare to defy the Emperor's

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37. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.25.

38. Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.134. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.26.

order, while at the same time he did not consider himself strong enough to carry it out by seizing the person of the Shah Zadah. So in order to avoid any extremity, he first thought of buying off his enemy, which would save him from the task of fighting him. With this object in view, he desired the Seths to effect a settlement with the Shah Zadah by offering him any sum of money which they might think necessary.[39] But the Seths refused to advance any further sum in the absence of any security[40] and without the knowledge of the English authorities. Here it should be observed that this plan of the Nawab was not only dangerous to himself but also to the English, because it would have definitely added to the covetous designs of the Shah Zadah and his confederates, which in turn would have deprived him of the government of Patna, and the English of their commerce in that province. As soon as this plan became known to Clive, he immediately rebuked the Nawab, saying, "I have just heard a piece of intelligence which I can scarce give credit to, it is that your Excellency is going to offer a sum of money to the King's son. If you do this, you will have Shujaud-daulah, the

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39. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 February 1759.

40. Muzaffarnamah, F.214 A.

Marathas and many more, come from all parts to the confines of your country, who will bully you out of money till you have none left in your treasury. If Your Excellency should pursue this method, it will be furnishing the King's son with the means to raise forces which indeed may endanger the loss of your country".[41]

There is nothing to question these well-grounded probabilities as stated by Clive, especially at the time when every adventurer with a little courage had been seeking fortune in that disrupted Mughal empire. That any show of apprehension on the part of the Nawab would definitely have encouraged his enemies is further evident from a letter of his agent, Omarkuli Khan, at the court of Shujaud-daulah, wherein he stated that everybody in the camps of Shujaud-daulah and that of the Shah Zadah, assuming the Nawab's weakness and the prevailing discontent in his army, was desirous of divesting him of his kingdom and sharing in the wealth of Bengal.[42] So what was needed was the immediate advance of the Nawab to Patna before the enemy could make an attack upon it.[43]

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41. Quoted in Malcolm, I. p.399. Trans. P.L.I. 1759-65, p.5.

42. Omarkuli Khan's letter to Amir Beg - No date. (Vide Orme MSS. XI, pp.839-40).

43. Ibid.

Although, however, upon the advice of Clive, the Nawab gave up his intention of buying off the Shah Zadah, still he did not venture to march towards Patna without the assistance of the English.[44] But as it was necessary to do something, he recalled Mir Kasim Khan, his son-in-law, from Rangpur and intended sending immediately under his command Rahim Khan and other Jamadars with 5,000 horse and 5,000 'barkandasses' and half of his artillery under the command of the 'Daroghah', towards Patna.[45] At the same time he requested Clive to march immediately and on his part, he promised to join him in ten or twelve days.[46]

Clive was conscious of the gravity of the situation, but had been waiting to ascertain the Nawab's real intention. Now, upon his repeated appeals for assistance, Clive gave him every assurance of support[47] and advised Hastings to encourage the Nawab to take the field without loss of time, which Hastings did.[48]

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44. Scrafton's Reflections, p.112. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 February 1759.

45. Nawab's letter to Clive 15 February 1759. (Vide Bengal Papers Received, Vol. 4).

46. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.25.

47. Ibid, P.5.

48. Clive's letter to Hastings, 4 March 1759. (Quoted in Malcolm, I. p.396).

In the meantime, on 25 February, Clive set out with the English army to meet the Nawab. On 9 March, in the morning, they met at Bumnia and both proceeded to Casimbuzar.[49] In the afternoon of the same day the Nawab conducted Clive to Sadiqbagh two miles from the city, where Miren had been waiting for them. The Nawab requested the Governor to accompany him upon his elephant as it would have a good effect on his people to perceive so friendly an understanding between them, to which Clive agreed.[50]

Arrived at Sadiqbagh, the three of them discussed the situation. Clive reprimanded the Nawab for his shortcomings as a ruler and his treacherous motives against Rajah Ramnarain on whose fidelity depended the safety or loss of Bihar.[51] The Nawab received Clive's reproaches silently. Then they started discussing the measures for repeating successfully the expedition of the Shah Zadah. It was agreed that letters should immediately be sent both by the Nawab and Clive to Rajah Ramnarain.

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49. Clive's letter to Manningham, 10 March 1759 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2610). Ben. Sel. Cons. 13 March 1759.

50. Ibid.

51. Ibid, Letter to Secret Comm. 19 March 1759. Ben. Sel. Cons. 13 March 1759.

encouraging him to remain firm in his post; that Kasim Ali Khan should proceed directly to Shahbad in order to take over the command of the forces there and then should march with great haste to Patna; that Miren should set out immediately to join his forces at Rajmahal and should wait till Clive should meet him.[52]

These arrangements caused some delay in sending an army to assist Ramnarain whose situation was worsening every day. All this time he had received no information whatsoever[53] of the march of the Bengal army, while the enemy was fast approaching the city of Patna. At last in the absence of any information either from the Nawab or from Clive, the Rajah decided on an a temporary truce with the Shah Zadah in order to save himself and the city from being sacked. Accordingly, he waited on the Shah Zadah and his minister Muhammad Kuli Khan at Phulwari, 7 miles west of Patna, his object being to amuse the enemy for some time, till the Bengal army could come up.[54] He presented the Shah Zadah with 901 gold 'mohurs', two elephants[55] and promised "to pay three crores of rupees as

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52. Ibid.

53. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.39.

54. Clive's letter to Manningham, 9 April 1759. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2625). Muzaffarnamah, F.193B.

55. Ben. Sel. Cons. 1 April, 1759.

tribute".[56] For three or four days the Rajah kept up a show of submission, but no sooner was he informed of the near approach of the Bengal army than he turned out the Shah Zadah's agents, with this message: "I acknowledge no master but the Nizam of Bengal"[57], and ordered his men to shut the city gates.[58] The incident awoke the Shah Zadah and his associates to a sense of reality, whereupon they besieged the city, and fighting continued with varying fortune till 5 April, when the news of the approach of the Bengal army struck terror into the hearts of the besiegers, and they subsequently abandoned the siege and retired with the utmost haste.[59]

On April 8, Clive accompanied by Miren made his entry into Patna and having taken the necessary precautions for the defence of the city, pursued the enemy up to Karamnasa,[60] a river which divides Bihar and Oudh.[61] Meanwhile the

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56. Amyatt's letter to Clive, 15 March 1759. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 1 April 1759). Scrafton's Reflections, p.114.

57. Ben. Sel. Cons. 6 April 1759.

58. Quoted in Siyar, II, p.307.

59. Scrafton's Reflections, p.114.

60. Ben. Sel. Cons. 17 April 1759.

61. "The Hindus of old never set their feet in its water, it being their superstition that whoever sets his feet in its water loses all his merit (for good deeds done in life). Hence its name 'Karamnasa or (cont.)

Shah Zadah, having been deserted by his followers, was left a wanderer with a handful of men and with nowhere to rest his head. He sought for Clive's assistance, and his protection, which was refused on the advice of Rajah Ramnarain.[62] The Nawab, who was in a state of constant apprehension, was overjoyed at the news of this success. He was reported to have said that "he owed his government to Colonel Clive before, and this was the second time he was indebted to him for it".[63] He was not ungrateful at least to Clive for his meritorious services and after the Colonel's arrival at Murshidabad, he rewarded him with a 'Jaghir'.

Though for the present moment the danger was over, nevertheless the English apprehended another attempt of the Shah Zadah upon Bihar, where the Nawab's authority was at its weakest, and where some disaffected zamindars, having been frustrated at the recent defeat of the Shah Zadah, had been looking for another expedition which

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61. destroyer of good deeds'. Its water is (cont.) extremely distasteful and disagreeable to the sight". J.B.O.R. S. V. p.598.

62. Clive's letter to Court, 10 April, 1759.

63. Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.424.

would enable them to throw off their nominal allegiance to Mir Jafar and thereby to withhold their revenues.[64] In order to prevent any such recurrence, Hastings insisted that the Nawab should take the field immediately, should stay for four years at Patna and allow 12,000 horse with artillery to be supplied with money from the revenues of Bengal, but the Nawab refused to consent to this proposal.[65] He was averse to undertaking any such precautionary measures at Patna even when he was warned that Bihar happened to be the most important strategic part on which depended the safety of the rest of his kingdom. The reason for the Nawab's indifference is given by Hastings when he states: "I fancy the Nawab is averse to an expedition to the northward from no other reason than his son's obstinate resolution to have the command of it. If he could find means to get over that obstacle, I believe he would be glad to go himself, but this, I fear, he wants spirit to effect".[66] Whether this was the only reason, we do not know, but this much is certain, that there arose

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64. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. ~~29208 and~~ 29209, p.88).

65. Hastings' letter to Clive, 26 December 1759. Vide Forrest, Life of Clive, II, p.166).

66. Ibid, p.167.

a difference of opinion between the father and the son with regard to the command of the army. The Nawab insisted that the command should be entrusted to some other general and that Miren should stay to protect the capital. Miren's view was that on account of the lack of capable and faithful generals in the capital, it would be folly on his part to leave it. But the Nawab remained adamant and his obstinacy provoked his son so much that the latter even threatened not to allow his own troops to take any part in the impending campaign towards Patna. The situation remained in that state for some days, when Clive at last felt the necessity from motives of both policy and expediency to protect the Nawab and his dominions, upon which depended the pre-eminence of the English and to induce him to agree to his son's proposal and to undertake appropriate precautions. So he waited on him, and having effected a reconciliation with Miren, introduced Major Caillaud to him and desired him to take the Major into his confidence.[67] As the Nawab well knew that his interests and those of the English were interdependent, he frankly told Clive that unless the English should assist him with their troops and supply him with a number of cannon free

67. Caillaud's Evidence - Vide First Report, 1772, p.158.

of cost, he would not allow his army to march. Clive seemingly agreed[68] and emphasized the sincere attachment of the English to him.

By the beginning of the year 1760, before the Nawab undertook precautions at Patna, the political situation of his dominions once more became disturbed at the expected return of the Shah Zadah.[69] Having crowned himself as Emperor in December 1759 upon the death of his father, the Shah Zadah now under the title of Shah Alam resumed his march against Bihar with a force more formidable than that of the preceding year.[70] It no doubt created great confusion throughout the length and breadth of the country, and attracted the disaffected zamindars, who flocked to the Imperial standard. To make the situation worse for the Nawab, the Marathas, under their leader Sheobhat, made an incursion into Orissa and the ruler of Purnea, Khadem Husain Khan, rose into open rebellion. Although these events are related, it will be convenient to discuss them separately.

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68. A Narrative of principal events, etc. ~~(Vide First Report, 1772, p.158).~~ (Vide Add. MSS. 29209, p.92).

69. Original Papers, etc., I, p.13.

70. Ibid. Caillaud's evidence, First Report 1772, p.158. Spear - Twilight of the Mughuls, p.14.

The advance of Shah Alam, accompanied by Shujaud-daulah of Oudh, greatly alarmed Rajah Ramnarain.[71] Strong reports were current that the Rajah had joined the enemy with a considerable army.[72] But this rumour was without foundation, as is evident from the 'Narrative' of Major Caillaud as well as from other evidence. What happened was that although Shah Alam's order to him not to oppose his passage and to submit himself as a loyal servant, perplexed the Rajah, yet he expressed his readiness to defend the city at all costs and appealed to the Nawab to come to his assistance with haste.

This report greatly disturbed the weak old Nawab, whose anxiety was increased by the arrival of a 'farman' from the Emperor who "demanded homage and obeisance from the Nawab of Bengal".[73] He had neither sufficient money to finance the expedition against the invader, nor anyone sincerely attached to him on whose fidelity he could depend. Besides, by this time he had made himself and his family so universally hated that "we may justly say there was hardly

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71. Hastings' letter to Caillaud, 20 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.202).

72. Ibid, 24 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.205)

73. Caillaud's Narrative, p.4.

a man in the provinces that did not wish success to the Prince (Shah Alam)".[74] Instead of taking any active steps to arrest the advance of the Emperor on Patna, he was reported to have planned a strange project of trying to effect peace with him by paying him 50 lakhs of rupees.[75] From the substance of the official correspondence, it appears that the Nawab desired a peace with the Emperor, but whether it was at the price of 50 lakhs of rupees, when in fact he had not even such an amount of money to pay his troops, is subject to doubt. Hastings reported "the Nawab told me he intended to send a message to Ali Gohur (Shah Alam) to congratulate him upon his accession to the throne and to make him the customary 'nazars' with an offer of his service".[76] The Nawab's intention to make peace appears to be true, but without this 50 lakhs of rupees. However, with the objective of peace in view, the Nawab began to coin 'sikkahs' in the name of the Emperor and publicly acknowledged him as the lawful king. Then he was reported to have sent Jafar Kuli Khan, one of his lieutenants, to

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74. Original Papers, I, p.13.

75. Hastings' letter to Caillaud, 24 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.205).

76. Hastings' letter to Clive, 26 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.206).

the Emperor with an 'arzi'.[77] What the purpose of that 'arzi' was is not known. But Holwell, the officiating Governor at Fort William, stated in his letter to Caillaud of 7 April 1760, that "the old Nawab had sent a trusty person with a submissive 'arzee' to the Shah Zadah (Shah Alam) in which he exculpated himself by throwing the whole blame of the opposition made to his arms on the machinations of the English".[78] While Hastings, who was the first person to acquaint Holwell with the news of the 'arzéḍ', "seemed to think it impossible such a step could have been taken by the Nawab".[79] Moreover, Hastings contradicts his own intimation about the 'arzéḍ' when he absolutely denies its possibility,[80] thereby raising great doubt as to the authenticity of the Nawab's arzéḍ at all. To make the matter more doubtful, Holwell, in another letter to Caillaud of the same date, stated that in order to find out the truth, he employed an agent, the consequence of which "has been a 'farman' from the Shah Zadah, enclosing a copy of the old Nawab's 'arzéḍ' to him, with an apology

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77. Ibid, 27 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.209)

78. First Report, 1772, p.241.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.

for not sending the original".[81] How could it be proved that the copy was genuine?[82] We may suppose that the Emperor was playing a trick on Holwell in order to make him believe in the Nawab's sympathy with himself and thereby prevail upon the English to support his cause. At last, however, Caillaud, in his reply to Holwell's letter, puts an end to such a doubtful accusation against the Nawab, when he says, "In order to come to the truth with regard to the Nawab's 'arzdd' to the Prince, Hastings had recourse to the Nawab's Persian writer, a man who has on many occasions, given him proof of attachment and fidelity. The moment he sets his eyes on the paper, he declares it to be a forgery".[83]

In any case, the Nawab's desire for peace with Shah Alam was not at all appreciated by the English, and they even reproached him for having acknowledged the former as the lawful king, though of course at the time of deposing Mir Jafar, they had endeavoured to make a peace with Shah Alam.[84] Perhaps at the present moment, they apprehended that an understanding between the Emperor

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81. First Report, 1772. p.241.

82. "Copies carried little validity where originals were in being . . . " Original Papers, etc. I.p.15.

83. 15 April 1760. First Report, 1772, p.241.

84. Ben. Sel. Cons., 20 September 1760.

and the Nawab might have gone against their own interests both political and commercial, and so they put pressure on him to give up any thought of peace with the invader and to take the field immediately. The weak and old Nawab had no alternative but to agree.[85]

Accordingly, the English troops under the command of Major Caillaud took the field in conjunction with the Nawab's army under Miren, on 18 January 1760, while the Nawab himself at the head of a considerable army, came out of his capital and remained encamped at Rajmahal.[86] Being advised by the Major, the Nawab despatched a letter to Rajah Ramnarain, instructing him to refrain from battle with Shah Alam till the Bengal army should arrive to give him assistance.[87] But the Rajah, ignoring this instruction, offered the invader battle under the city walls on 9 February, and was consequently defeated.[88] He retired to his palace only with great difficulty.[89] In the meantime, Caillaud arrived and defeated the Imperial army, whereupon they

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85. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS.29209, p.96).

86. Original Papers, etc.,I,p.14 Caillaud's Narrative,p.5. Add. MSS. 29209, p.212.

87. Caillaud's letter to Eyre Coote, 5 May 1760. (Vide Orme MSS. VIII, p.1942).

88. Add. MSS. 29209, p.90. Muzaffarnamah, F.199B.

89. Ibid, Ben. Pub. Cons., 21 February 1760.

retreated. Miren himself had received some wounds on his face and esteeming them to be dangerous, immediately retired to Patna.[90] The Major repeatedly asked him to pursue the enemy, but he would neither do this himself nor allow his army to march with the Major.[91] In the meantime while the Bengal army remained practically motionless in the field, the Emperor collected together his scattered army and "gave out his intention of once more trying his fortune". This compelled Miren to move, and he joined Major Caillaud with his army on 29 February. But both of them were deceived by a sudden change in the enemy's plan of action. Hitherto the war had been confined to the province of Bihar, but the incursions of the Marathas into the province of Orissa, together with the general disaffection of the zamindars of the province, at once transferred the attention of the Emperor to Bengal,[92] which lay unprotected by the absence of the Nawab (who had been at Rajmahal to intercept the progress of Khadem Husain Khan towards joining the Emperor) and "which seemed to promise him sufficient resources in its wealth and the number of fresh malcontents

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90. Muzaffarnamah, F.202A. Original Papers, etc. I, p.14.

91. Caillaud's Narrative, p.17. Original Papers, etc. I, p.14.

92. Muzaffarnamah, F.202B.

who were ready to join his party".[93] There is no doubt that if he could prolong the troubles there as long as he had done in Bihar, the Nawab would ultimately have failed for want of money to carry on the war. So Shah Alam, instead of facing the Bengal army at Patna, made a forced march towards Bengal. Advice of this new movement of the enemy was forwarded to the Nawab at Rajmahal, whereupon he at once came back to defend Murshidabad.[94] Meanwhile the enemy advanced up to Burdwan, but did not dare[95] to move further. This hesitation of the enemy enabled the Nawab to join up with his son's forces on 4 April, near Burdwan.[96] The whole army of the Nawab being thus united, Miren and Caillaud marched against the enemy in order to compel them to retire from Burdwan and if possible to leave the frontiers of the Nawab's dominions entirely. The Emperor did not venture to risk the hazards of a further battle, and so retired from Bengal.

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93. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. 29209, p.93).

94. Muzaffarnamah, F.204B. Caillaud's Narrative, p.23.

95. Caillaud's letter to Eyre Coote, 5 May 1760. (Vide Orme MSS. VIII, p.1973).

96. Caillaud's Narrative, p.23.

Although the danger to the capital had in any case been averted, yet it was conjectured that there was a possibility of the Emperor making a fresh attempt on Patna on his return journey. To prevent it, an army under Captain Knox was despatched and the Nawab went back to take his former position at Rajmahal.[97] Before the Bengal army could reach Patna, Shah Alam had already reached its vicinity and began cannonading with great vigour. The city was about to fall, when the arrival of Captain Knox with his detachment gave energy to the besieged and completely disheartened the enemy, and at last compelled him to retire from the province of Bihar.[98]

Taking advantage of the political turmoils of the country through the first invasion of the Shah Zadah, the Marathas under their leader Sheobhat, made an incursion into Cuttack as early as April 1759.[99] Here it should be remembered that in the time of Nawab Aliverdi Khan, a treaty was concluded (October 1751) with the Marathas by which it was settled that

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97. Ben. Pub. Cons. 13 March 1760.

98. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. 29209, p.97). Caillaud's Narrative, p.27.

99. Ben. Sel. Cons. 2 May 1760.

twelve lakhs of rupees should be paid annually to them from the revenues of Bengal as the 'chouth' on condition that the Marathas would never set their foot again within the dominions of Aliverdi Khan. A nominal jurisdiction of that province and the appointment of a deputy governor were all left to the Nawab of Bengal. On the basis of this agreement, Sheobhat had for some time resided there as a collector of the 'chouth' on behalf of the Maratha chief, Janoji, but had recently been dismissed by the old Nawab at the instigation of Mirza Saleh,[100] the deputy governor of Cuttack. This dismissal made Sheobhat hostile to Mir Jafar and he had been waiting for an opportune moment to avenge his loss.[101] When that moment arrived with the invasion of the Shah Zadah, he at once collected a large force and advanced against Cuttack.

This expedition of Sheobhat has been attributed by the English to the Nawab's invitation to him. It is evident from the records that the first intelligence about this movement came from Hastings, whereupon Governor Clive,

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100. Later known as Musaleh-uddin Muhammad Khan.

101. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. 29209, p.88).

believing the report of the Nawab's invitation to be true, wrote a most severe letter to the Nawab and warned him that "he would bring on his head the wrath of God and curses of his subjects".[102] Let us examine here how far this accusation against the Nawab was true.

Being advised by Clive to take all possible steps to find out the real cause of Sheobhat's expedition, Hastings sent a vakil to the Nawab, whom he informed that the coming of the Marathas was true, but he was reported to have assured the vakil that there was no danger from that, as they were coming to his assistance.[103] "This he repeated to me", wrote Hastings, "when I waited on him at Rajmahal and added that he had sent to forbid the proceedings (of the Marathas) having no longer occasion for their services . . . "[104] After some days, the Nawab was reported to have complained to Hastings about the treacherous conduct of Rai Durlabh, whom he

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102. Scrafton's letter to Hastings, 21 April 1759 (Vide Add. MSS. 29132) Ben. Sel. Cons. 2 May 1759.

103. Hastings' letter to Clive, 27 April 1759. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.142).

104. Ibid.

accused of having supplied Sheobhat with 25 lakhs of rupees.[105] "The Nawab's discourses", wrote Hastings, "greatly surprised me and I told him that I imagined all along from his own declarations that Sheobhat was coming in consequence of his own invitation and as the letter he had written to forbid his proceedings could not have reached him even at that time. I could not see what cause the Nawab had to apprehend that Sheobhat came on any other design than what he had undertaken at his own request, much less could I conceive how Rai Durlabh could have any hand in it".[106] Again it is reported by Hastings that the Nawab absolutely denied that he had ever sent for Sheobhat or for any other forces from that quarter excepting 3,000 men of Mirza Saleh's own regiment.[107] How far the Nawab was responsible for the incursions of the Marathas into Cuttack, cannot be definitely ascertained from the vague statements of Hastings, and when he further admitted that "I was informed that Mirza Saleh had proposed to the Nawab to send for the Marathas but whether he approved

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105. Ibid, Ben. Pub. Cons. 10 May 1759.

106. Hastings' letter to Clive, 27 April 1759. (Vide Op. cit.).

107. Ibid.

of the scheme or declined it, I was not told".[108] Moreover, Hastings in another statement has given sufficient reason to doubt the Nawab's invitation to the Marathas when he stated in the very first paragraph of his letter that "the Nawab upon the receipt of fresh advices confirming the news of the Marathas' approach towards Cuttack, determined immediately to march back (from Rajmahal) to the city".[109] So there is no direct reference on which the Nawab might be held responsible for the expedition of the Marathas. Moreover, this much of course must be said, that he had no reason to invite Sheobhat to come to his assistance when he had already dismissed him from his service.

However, nothing was done to arrest Sheobhat's progress till the beginning of January 1760, when Mir Kasim was sent by the Nawab to march against him at the head of an army. The general marched to Burdwan, but the uncertainty of the success of the war in Bihar and the contradictory orders sent him by the Nawab, prevented him from making any other use of his army than to protect

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108. Ibid.

109. Ibid.

the revenues of Burdwan from being ravaged by the Marathas.[110] Here it should be observed that for the contradictory orders given to Mir Kasim the Nawab was not wholly responsible, because as the troubles broke out in every corner of the country, he sometimes had to send Mir Kasim against the Mughal Prince, sometimes against the Dutch (who had this time created trouble in Bengal) as well as against the Marathas, according to the degree of necessity. Naturally, under these circumstances, Mir Kasim could not effectively oppose the advance of Sheobhat, who consequently, towards the beginning of 1760, entered Midnapur and made himself master of that place. He then threatened the zamindars and chiefs of the adjoining areas[111] and put a total stop to the trade of the district of Midnapur.[112] These incursions had created alarm amongst the common people of Bengal on the one hand, while on the other hand it encouraged some disaffected zamindars, especially the Zamindar of Birbhum, to flock to the standard of the enemy. The Nawab having received the news that Sheobhat was continuing his march, in conjunction with the Birbhum

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110. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. 29209, p.93).

111. Ibid, Hastings' letter to the President, 17 February 1760. (Vide Add. MSS.29096,p.222).

112. Ben. Pub. Cons. 21 February 1760.

Zamindar, into the interior of Bengal, with the object of causing a diversion in favour of Shah Alam,[113] at once requested the English authorities to send a detachment with Major Caillaud in order to go with Mir Kasim against him. He further advised them to keep a strict guard over Rai Durlabh's person and to prevent, if possible, any correspondence passing between him and Sheobhat, as he had considered him to be at the bottom of these Maratha incursions.[114] Accordingly, a strong detachment was sent under Major Caillaud at the approach of which Sheobhat, without hazarding a battle, retreated from the bounds of Bengal.

Thus the two dangers which threatened the very existence of Mir Jafar's Nawabship were at last overcome, but still peace was not wholly restored. There remained another political disturbance, created by Khadem Husain Khan of Purnea. As regards Khadem Husain Khan, it should be borne in mind that he had been appointed Governor of Purnea after driving out Nazyr Ali Khan who rose in

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113. Hastings' letter to the President, 15 February 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.221).

114. Hastings' letter to the President, 17 February 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.222).

rebellion in the year 1757.[115] Khadem Husain was a man of "moderate abilities, very timid and irresolute . . . and equally distrustful of others".[116] Though he was being favoured by the Nawab with the post of Governor, nevertheless he was always suspicious of Miren[117] whose dreadful character filled his mind with constant fear. So from the very beginning of his rule he had been doing his utmost to take necessary precautions against exigencies which undoubtedly incurred the displeasure of both the Nawab and his son. He employed the three years in which he had been in possession of the government in accumulating vast riches and in levying forces. As soon as the political situation of the country became disturbed by the invasion of Shah Alam, Khadem Husain came out of his palace at the head of 10,000 soldiers and lay encamped on the banks of the Ganges. As he was conscious of his ingratitude and treacherous behaviour to the Nawab, so his first object was to secure his person and treasures without actually coming over to[118] the side of the Nawab's enemies.

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115. Vide ante.

116. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. 29207, p.88).

117. Caillaud's Narrative, p.27. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. I, p.235).

118. [illegible]arrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. [illegible] Caillaud's Narrative, p.27.

The news of Khadem Husain's encampment did not impress the Nawab with the gravity of the situation which might follow if Khadem Husain should possibly betray him in favour of Shah Alam. The Nawab's immediate view was to ignore Khadem Husain, considering him "too weak and timid" to do any harm at the present. But being persuaded by Major Caillaud to take effective measures against him from the very beginning, he at last agreed to send an army under Miran along with the English army, which subsequently arrived at Rajmahal on 23 January 1760. The 'faujdar' of Rajmahal communicated to Major Caillaud a message from Khadem Husain signifying his desire for peace with the Nawab and entreating the Major to act as a mediator. The Major thought it prudent to accept such a proposal and accordingly assured Khadem Husain that his life should be protected and that he might remain in the English camp without danger from the Nawab, provided he would submit to the Nawab's authority and resign his Government.[119]

Accordingly negotiations were opened between the Major and Khadem Husain. But when their purport was

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119. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Vide Add. MSS. 29209, p.39).

communicated to Miren, he showed great indignation and expressed great aversion to any treaty with an enemy of so little consequence and, moreover, whose ill-behaviour deserved severe reprimand. At length, being persuaded by Caillaud, Miren reluctantly consented to it. A communication was despatched to Khadem Husain "with offers of pardon upon his submission and with these further terms, that he should resign the government and discharge the arrears of his revenues and that he should be permitted afterwards to live in the same manner and in the same station which he held in the time of Nawab Aliverdi Khan".[120]

These terms were not likely to have been accepted by Khadem Husain, as they were aimed at his total destruction. Nevertheless, in order to avoid any hostility at the time and thereby give him an opportunity to make the necessary preparations to join the Imperial standard, he accepted the terms, and promised to join the Bengal army.

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120. Ibid. Ben. Pub. Cons. 6 February 1760.

Meanwhile, the disturbances prevailing throughout the country were becoming acute at the approach on the one hand of Shah Alam to Patna, and on the other hand of the Marathas to ~~Calcutta~~ Cuttack. Khadem Husain, concluding that the Imperial party was, if not superior, at least formidable enough to divert the attention of the Nawab and the English from himself, at once broke his promise and set out for Patna, communicating to Shah Alam at the same time that "he was attached to the Imperial service and would soon come up with his forces to the Emperor's assistance".[121]

Upon this new move of Khadem Husain, the Nawab took alarm and tried to win him back by even sacrificing his own interests.[122] His weakness encouraged Khadem Husain to demand an indemnity and a solemn engagement from him that the Nawab would never attempt anything to the prejudice of his honour or life, nor dismiss him from the government of Purnea.[123] "You will perceive", wrote Hastings, "how opposite to the Nawab's interests these demands are".[124] However, the Nawab's reconciliation

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121. Quoted in Siyar, II, p.349. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V, p.235).

122. Hastings' letter to Holwell - No date. Muzaffarnamahm F.205A. (Vide Add.MSS.29096,p.225).

123. Hastings' letter to Caillaud, 19 February 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096,p.223).

124. Ibid.

did not materialise and he realised the gravity of the situation when his spies reported to him that Khadem Husain had already crossed the Ganges with the intention of marching towards Patna. The Nawab at once marched back to Sacrigully and requested Hastings to send a detachment to attend his person.[125]

Khadem Husain, by forced marches, arrived at Hazipur. "Had this arrival", writes Gulam Husain, "happened some time before when Azimabad (Patna) was besieged by the Emperor . . . there is no doubt but that he would have possessed himself of that city".[126] The Nawab despatched his artillery to Telliagarhee with a body of his forces under the command of his brother, Mir Cazem Khan, he himself remaining at Sacrigully waiting to be informed of the route that he would take.[127] But as no information was immediately forthcoming, he ordered Miren and Caillaud to resume their march and the Major was particularly directed to pass over the Ganges in

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125. Hastings' letter to Caillaud - No date. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.229).

126. Siyar II, p.357.

127. Hastings' letter to Caillaud - No date. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.229).

order to intercept Khadem Husain. On 16 June, a battle was fought between Khadem Husain and Captain Knox, in which the former was defeated[128] and compelled to retreat to Betiah. On 25 June, the Bengal army under Miren and Major Caillaud, crossed the Ganges in pursuit of Khadem Husain. At their approach, the enemy, considering themselves no match for the Bengal army,[129] began to retreat farther. Had the Bengal army continued the pursuit of the enemy for some days more, the affair would have been decided in their favour. But it so happened that in the midst of this campaign, Miren, as he was lying asleep in his tent at midnight on 3 July was struck dead by lightning. ir consequence of which the whole army marched back to Patna.

Though the enemies, namely Shah Alam, the Marathas and Khadem Husain Khan, were not totally routed, nevertheless it can be said that with their retirement from all the borders, a partial peace was restored in the dominions of Mir Jafar. The exertions of the English throughout these campaigns showed the enemies of Mir Jafar that they were

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128. A Narrative of Principal events, etc. (Add. MSS. 29209, p.97). Muzaffarnamah, F.206B.

129. Siyar, II, p.363. Muzaffarnamah, F.208A.

strong enough to oppose any incursions into his dominions, which undoubtedly enhanced their political prestige. On the other hand, it should be admitted that with the increase of their political prestige and military strength, the Nawab's power and influence were considerably undermined, and henceforth it became clear to all that he was living under the surveillance of the English.

CHAPTER VI

MIR JAFAR'S RELATIONS WITH THE DUTCH

After the elimination of the power and influence of the French from Bengal in March 1757, the only foreign power, besides the English, which still remained, was the Dutch. It should be remembered that the Dutch supported the English and Mir Jafar against Sirajud-daulah in the hope of securing some commercial privileges. But they were soon disillusioned and the elevation of Mir Jafar did not make them hopeful on that account.[1] Because, though Mir Jafar was the de jure ruler of the State, the actual political authority was in the hands of the English and the Dutch found the English gaining extensive commercial privileges. Moreover, the Nawab had neither invited them to attend his crowning ceremonies at Murshidabad, nor showed them any favour on account of their moral support for his elevation. Hence on the one hand they grew extremely jealous of English ascendancy in Bengal and on the other, remained discontented with the Nawab.

For some time they did not recognise Mir Jafar as the Nawab of Bengal[2] and some of them at Chinsura (the Dutch settlement on the bank of the Hugli river) did not even salute him while passing through that place,[3] in the month

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1. Law's Memoirs p.414.
2. Clive's letter to the Dutch Director - 2 October 1758 (vide Orme MSS X p.2880. A Defence of the United Company etc. p.26).
3. Clive's Right Hand Man p.120. A Defence of the United Company etc. p. 26.

of August 1757. At this behaviour, the Nawab became very much displeased and "rightly considered it as a gross affront".[4] He informed the Dutch authorities at Chinsura about this strange behaviour of their nationals and demanded their apology. But the Dutch authorities, instead of doing this, presented a paper to him containing the following demands:

1) that the Nawab should grant them the exclusive privilege of buying salt-petre and opium in his kingdom freely without being subjected to exactions of any kind.

2) that he should confirm their 'farman privileges' by issuing a 'Sanad'.

3) that he should allow them to coin their 'Sikkahs' at Chinsura as well as allow them to have a separate mint at Murshidabad.

4) that the money which had been exacted from them at Patna as a 'Peshkash',[5] should henceforth be pardoned.

5) that he should not obstruct their sending bullion to Patna and should allow them a free passage of their goods "going or coming by land or water".

6) that they should be allowed to erect a new factory at Bankebazar and to fortify their existing factory at Chinsura.

7) that he should return them 5 lakhs of rupees which had been taken from them "for the expenses of the troops and 'darbar charges".[6]

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4. A Defence of the United Company etc. p.26.
5. "Tax, tribute paid to Government, especially on first receiving an appointment". Philips - Handbook p.71.
6. Ben. Pub. Cons. - 11 August 1757.

These extravagant demands threw the Nawab into a transport of rage.[7] He was aware that they had never ventured to demand such extravagant privileges either in the time of Nawab Aliverdi Khan or Siraj - ud - Daulah.[8] He made a complaint to Clive with regard to the audacity of the Dutch and their negligence in not recognising his titles and showing him proper respect. Clive instantly advised him to put an entire stop to their trade and thereby compel them to acknowledge their loyalty to him.

In the meantime, the Dutch sent their Vakil to the Nawab with a petition concerning their demands. This petition also enraged him and instead of giving any reply to it, he threatened them with a total stoppage of their trade.[9] The next day the Dutch Vakil enquired of the Nawab whether he really intended this and received the reply: "I have not yet had my orders published everywhere for the stoppage of their trade but shall instantly do so".[10] Vernet, the Dutch Resident at Murshidabad, thought that the Nawab's reply must have been prompted by someone in the background who had influenced him against them. So he again ordered the Vakil to obtain the facts "with a slight expenditure".[11] Accordingly the Vakil bribed the Nawab's Persian Secretary

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7. Letter to Court - 10 January 1758.
8. Clive's letter to Bisdom - 20 October 1758 (vide Orme (MSS-X p.2680)
9. Vernet's letter to Court of Directors - 21 September 1758. (vide H.M.S. Vol.774 - p.435).
10. Quoted in the above letter.
11. Ibid.

who divulged that Clive had written a reproachful letter to the Nawab for not having stopped the trade of the Dutch.[12] In the meantime, the Nawab actually sent a 'Parwannah' to his officials to put an entire stop to the Dutch trade. This restriction was continued until a few days later the Dutch sent envoys to acknowledge Mir Jafar's titles and paid him the usual compliments.[13]

In understanding the Nawab's relations with the Dutch more clearly, it is prudent to examine the development of his attitude to the English, which encouraged them in turn to challenge the commercial ascendancy of the English.

Some accounts state that about the month of November 1758, a prevailing party at the Nawab's 'darber', headed by Rajan and few officers had prejudiced the Nawab so that he came to regard with an evil and jealous eye the growing power and influence of the English in the provinces, and made him conscious of his dependent position[14] and restricted power[15]. Certainly they appear to have succeeded in fomenting considerably his anti-English feeling[16]. The Nawab at last began to show signs of wishing to restrict their power and if possible to balance it with some other foreign power, particularly the Dutch. With this object in view he began to admit the Dutch into his audience, though he did not reveal his feelings to them or grant them any special concession which might provoke the English.

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12. Ibid.
13. A [illegible]ance of the United Company,etc. - p.26.
14. Memorial of Facts,etc. (vide H.S.B. Vol.95 - p.455).
15. 'Clive's Right Hand Man' - p.122.
16. Clive's evidence - vide,First Report 1772 - p.158.

So far as the Dutch were concerned, we should bear in mind that the commercial concessions granted by the Nawab to the English, together with the right given to them "to search all the Dutch Vessels coming up HUGLI and to prevent the employment of other than English pilots, had caused great exasperation in the Dutch Colony. Their trade likewise had been seriously affected . . . . and they were declining in influence and wealth"[17]. Moreover with the destruction of the French power, they thought themselves to be the next target of the English. Evidence of their apprehension may be found in a letter of Verset to their Court of Directors, dated 25 June 1759, wherein he wrote, "The Nawab's fear of that (English) nation will always cause him to execute whatever the English may order him, nay I should not even be surprised if he were to expel us from the country, were the English to order him to do so, which may happen sooner than one thinks".[18]

So in order to protect their interests they at last resorted to arms, towards the middle of 1759.

This attempt of the Dutch has been construed by the English to be the result of the Nawab's intrigues with them. Law in his Memoir says, "there was a secret pact between the Dutch and Jafar Ali Khan by which it was decided that the Dutch, not being in war with the English, could bring from Batavia a certain number of Europeans and Malayas and upon their arrival in Chinsura, Jafar Ali Khan would take along

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17. Malleson - The Decisive Battles - pp.110-111.
18. Vide, H.M.S. Vol.774 - p.481.

with the Dutch Governor the necessary steps for getting rid of this slavery in which he was being placed".[19] In the "Memorial of Facts relating to the disputes with the Dutch in Bengal", delivered to the Court of Directors on 10 July 1760, it is stated that "it must have been at that period and from this cause, that we imagine a private negotiation was set on foot between the Nawab and the Dutch, that the latter should bring a military force into the provinces to join the former and balance our power and sway; the Dutch . . . . readily embraced the overture and hoped another Plassey affair for themselves, actuated by these golden dreams, ... the Director and his Council at Chinsura forwarded remonstrances to Batavia for this purpose. . .".[20] Holwell also in his 'Memorial', delivered to the Select Committee upon the arrival of VANSITTART, confirms this view. But it would not be safe to rely solely on such evidence for proof that the Nawab was actually implicated in such an intrigue, because, as we have already noted, the Dutch were no doubt afraid of the growing power and influence of the English, and what actually happened was that in their several interviews with the Nawab, they had anticipated a feeling of resentment on his part against the English and his desire to balance their power. The Dutch agent Vernet, accordingly, sought to take advantage of this opportunity of "stepping forward and putting in a claim to some sort of

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19. Law's Memoirs - p.415.
20. Vide, N.M.S. Vol.193 - p.455, A Defence of United Company,etc. - p.9.

power and influence in the Province".[21]

Simultaneously relations were developing at the Murshidabad 'darbar' between the Nawab and the Dutch, a study of which will help us to form a correct judgment as to how far the Nawab was responsible for the introduction of Dutch troops into Bengal in the year 1759.

We have already stated that a petition containing several demands was presented to the Nawab.[22] Now the Dutch pursued lengthy negotiations with him in order to achieve the satisfaction of their demands. Over and above these demands, they presented another 'Arzi' (petition) for the purchase of salt-petre.[23] The Nawab having read the 'Arzi', handed it over to Amir Beg Khan, who was present there. Amir Beg asked the Dutch Vakil (who presented it), how they dared to present such a petition, saying at the same time that they should not be so conceited and not liken themselves to the English who were powerful people".[24] The Vakil answered that it was true that till then they had been conducting their business as merchants, but that if necessary, they would not hesitate to use force against the English.[25] In order to ascertain their strength, Amir Beg was reported to have told the Vakil that "if it were so, the Hollanders would long ago have proved it".[26] At this moment the Nawab, interrupting

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21. Broome - Bengal Army - p.261.
22. Vide Ante.
23. A Defence of the United Company, etc. - p.25.
24. Vernet's letter to Bisdom, 12 August 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol.774. p.467).
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.

Amir Beg Khan, ordered the Vakil to inform his master that he would send a reply to the 'Arzi'.[27] The Dutch Vakil then prevailed upon Rai Durlabh to influence the Nawab to grant their demands. The Nawab, yielding to Rai Durlabh's persuasion, asserted that he would not hear of the restitution of the extorted money, of the claims of Banke-Bihari, nor of a mint of their own, and further that if the annual Peshkash in Patna had long taken effect, it had better continue.[28] At this reply of the Nawab, the Dutch authorities informed him that "if the said four points were refused us, the rest was of little or no importance to us and besides that it was not fair in a gentleman like him, in whose hands it lay, to bring peace and order to the land, to advantage the English so much above us, we having been so much longer in this country and having always been given precedence and preferred to them by all Princes".[29] But the Nawab remained obdurate.[30]

Having been foiled in their attempts to secure commercial privileges, the Dutch devised a new plan. It is evident from the correspondence exchanged between Vernet and Bisdom (the Dutch Chief at Chinsura), that the former took the initiative in calling for an army from Batavia by successfully convincing the authorities there as to the Nawab's supposed desire for it. There is no direct reference anywhere in their correspondence which conclusively proves that the Nawab had ever advised them

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27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid - p.469.
30. Vernet's letter to Director and Council - 4 October 1758. (Vide N.N.S.Vol.774-p.435).

to make an open rupture with the English. On the contrary it was Vernet's desire to extort concessions from the Nawab by force, as he wrote to Batavia on 25 June 1759, "It appears to me that the small power before mentioned, which to my mind is not sufficient to take a brilliant satisfaction for the injury done us, nor with a high hand to compel the Prince to restore us our privileges".[31] Therefore it is easily understandable that he was the first man to instigate the Dutch authorities to send an army, with the help of which "I feel assured", added Vernet, "we shall be able not merely to recover our privileges, to place the Company's affairs on a good footing, but also to be reimbursed all the expenses incurred".[32]

That the Nawab never gave them any encouragement to introduce Dutch forces into Bengal is further evident from the Director's letter to Vernet, wherein he stated, "there is not the least sign that the Nawab or his Son will ever take our part . . . . neither the one nor the other are favourable to our interests and I even suspect that all the representations and instigations of both of them (if any) are only crafty practices to 'pump' us . . . . ".[33]

Vernet went so far as to falsely encourage the authorities regarding the prospects of their success when he again wrote to the Court of Directors on 16 September 1759 that "I have

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31. Vide, H.M.S. Vol.774. p.481.
32. Ibid.
33. 1 June 1759. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.411)

gained over the Nawab and the Murshidabad nobles as well as the chief horsemen to our interest and am now negotiating with the faujdar and diwan of the Moorish fort at Hugli in order to make use of them in the furtherance of our designs . . . . ".[34] But apprehending at the same time that his mentioning the Nawab's actual support and alliance with them might create suspicion in the minds of the authorities, Vernet was intelligent enough to add in the same letter that they might ask, "How can it be possible that the Prince and all those I have mentioned above can be on our side . . . . It must in truth, appear strange to everyone, but it will cease to cause surprise if one but know that the English have gained such a great name, makes every one trouble and no one dare raise his head before they see that we shall have a sufficient force, when they will all put along with us, for the English have incurred much hatred among the natives on account of their imperious behaviour to them . . . . ".[35] The scheme of Vernet, however, was at last approved by the Dutch authorities at Batavia, who promised to despatch vessels on pretence of reinforcing the Dutch garrison in Bengal.[36] So whatever might have been the real intention of Mir Jafar in limiting the power and influence of the English, it is clear from the above correspondence that he never directly associated himself in

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34. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.505.
35. Ibid.
36. Caraccioli - Life of Clive. p.48. Malcolm - Life of Clive -II- p.73.

such aggressive plans with the Dutch.

In July 1759,[37] the English received intelligence from Madras to the effect that there was an embarkation at Batavia of 1,000 Europeans and 1,500 Malayas destined for Bengal.[38] Accordingly Clive advised Hastings, the English Resident at the Murshidabad 'darbar', to acquaint the Nawab with this news, advising the latter to post 200 men at Ballasore to prevent the passage of any Dutch vessel.[39] Hastings waited on the Nawab and acquainted him with the instructions of Clive. The Nawab thereupon replied that Cuttack was not actually within his jurisdiction, but he would take effective measures to guard the border of Midnapor in case the Dutch should attempt to come that way, and would give orders to Amir Beg Khan, the faujdar of Hugli, to follow such directions as would be given by Clive.[40] "The Nawab", wrote Hastings to Clive on 25 July, "seemed to be of opinion that it was very probable the Dutch had formed some design against these provinces . . . .".[41] At the request of Hastings, the Nawab sent a 'parwannah' to Chinsura strictly prohibiting them from bringing troops or ships into Bengal,[42] a copy of which he forwarded to Governor Clive asking, by virtue of the Treaty subsisting

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37. Forrest - Life of Clive - II. p.146.
38. Extracts of letters from John Herbert, Resident at Batavia, 11 May and 16 June 1759.(Vide A Defence of United Company,etc., p.50).
39. Clive's letter to Hastings, 21 July 1759. (Vide Add. MSS. 29131).
40. Hastings' letter to Clive, 25 July 1759. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096).
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.

between them, for his assistance to prevent any foreign troops being brought into this country.[43]

Early in August, the arrival of a Dutch vessel in the Ganges, carrying on board a number of European and Malay troops, gave some support to the rumour.[44] The Nawab became much perplexed at this news and immediately despatched a second 'parwannah' to the Dutch Government at Chinsura, strictly ordering them not to engage in hostilities nor to introduce any additional troops into Bengal.[45] He also asked Amir Beg Khan to bar the passage of the Dutch vessel to their factory by force, and to join and help the English.[46] Amir Beg Khan accordingly disposed his troops, placed a large number of cannons against the Dutch, and cut off their supplies of provisions.[47] At this critical juncture, the Dutch Government at Chinsura replied that they would implicitly obey the Nawab's orders and assured him that the vessel had been driven by stress of weather from Negapatam, which was its destination, and that it would leave the river as soon as possible.[48]. The Nawab forwarded this reply of the Dutch to Clive who, in spite of this assurance,[49] posted troops at Tannah's Fort (five miles below Calcutta on the right bank of Hugli), and Charnock's Battery (opposite to the Tannah's Fort) with orders to stop and search all boats and vessels, and

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43. Memorial of facts,etc. (vide H.M.S. Vol.193. p.456).
44. Ibid. Grose - voyage to the East Indies - II . p.365. Broom - Bengal Army. p.262.
45. Memorial of Facts, etc. p.456.
46. Bisdom's letter to Court of Directors,31 August 1759. (Vide H.M.S., Vol.774. p.468).
47. Ibid.
48. Memorial of Facts, etc. p.456.
49. Ibid.

parties were likewise sent out on each side of the river to prevent any foreign troops advancing by land.[50] The Dutch could not stand against these measures and so their vessel soon sailed away.

But again in the month of October of the same year, six of seven Dutch vessels "crammed with soldiers" arrived at the mouth of the river Hugli.[51] This news was further supported by a letter from Khwajah Wazeed to the Nawab, wherein he stated, "That the Dutch has relinquished all thought of trade for the present and employed themselves day and night solely in repairing their forts".[52] The Nawab became incensed, "as if", wrote Vernet, "we wished to war against him".[53] He was at Calcutta when this news reached him and expressed his desire to oppose the Dutch with great vigour, actually proposing to the President and the Council there that the Dutch should be permanently expelled from his country. But the President and the Council opposed this proposal on the ground that though the behaviour of the Dutch had been in many instances provocative, there was a Peace subsisting between the two nations in Europe. So they advised the Nawab to exercise his influence over the Dutch with a view to maintaining Peace in his country.[54]

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50. Ibid. Grose - op.cit. p.366.
51. Memorial of Facts, etc. p.459,
52. Vide, A Defence of the United Company, etc. p.15.
53. Vernet's letter to Court, 13 November 1759. (Vide, H.M.S. Vol.774. p.511).
54. A Defence of the United Company, etc. p.15.

Accordingly Mir Jafar[55] left Calcutta on 19 October assuring the English that he would admit the Dutch to an audience and listen to their grievances.[56] Instead of going to his own Fort at Hugli, the Nawab took up residence at Khwajah Waseed's garden, halfway between Hugli and Chinsura, where he received the Dutch Agents in the most gracious manner.[57] In connection with this interview with the Dutch Agents, Hastings wrote to Clive, "This evening the visit was made in great form and state. The persons who formed the procession were Vernet with four of the Council, four Officers, two diwans and the Vakil, preceded by one hundred soldiers, one hundred and eight Sepoys and a multitude of 'burkandases', and peons following in the rear. The Nawab received them very graciously, seated on a chair and embraced the five gentlemen, whilst Shibu Babu stands behind him, acquainted him with the name of each as they approached, together with their several appointments".[58] The Dutch Agents then congratulated the Nawab with 'nazarana', making other presentations equal to his rank and dignity.[59] The Nawab seemed to be very satisfied. Observing this, Vernet, boldly and by means of artful insinuations, endeavoured to prejudice his mind against the English. He left no stone unturned in magnifying the

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55. The author of the Muzaffarnamah however mentions the name of Sadack Ali Khan in place of Mir Jafar, apparently by mistake. See Muzaffarnamah - 196 B.
56. A Defence of the United Company, etc., p.15.
57. Memorial of Facts, etc. (Vide. H.M.S. 193. p.459).
58. 12 November 1759 (Vide. Add. MSS. 29076. p.190).
59. Vernet's letter to Court, 14 November 1759. (Vide H.M.S. Vol.774. p.509).

influence of the English and attributing to them his difficulties in raising money for his troops. He contended that the English were the cause of the general poverty and distress of his country, and that if he would favour them (Dutch) in this instance, they would ever be at his command.[60] The Nawab gave no reply. Being encouraged by his silence, Vernet then presented to him a letter from Bisdom, which read, "I was extremely surprised that Your Excellency, during your residence at Calcutta, entered into an agreement that you would strengthen the Fort of Tannah in order to prevent the Dutch troops from coming this way and also gave a note to the English directing them to oppose the coming of our army. All these things considered, it seems plain to us that Your Excellency did not enter the agreement or give this order from any ill opinion of us, but it is all to be imputed to the over-bearing spirit of the English, But if any one enters into an agreement through force or distress and afterwards does not abide by it, he will stand justified by the Laws of God and of his country and the prosperity of his people. I am therefore in hope through your justice and favour that you will recede from your agreement and order, and that we shall obtain an order from Your Excellency for the bringing up of our army; and also that a positive order may be given to the English on no account to molest them for we sent for the said army to this country in consequence of your directions. . ".[61]

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60. A Defence of the United Company, etc. p.15.

61. Vide, A Defence of the United Company, etc. p.54.

This letter, the purport of which was to make him accept responsibility for bringing the Dutch vessels into the country, enraged him.[62] He at once raised objections.[63] Thus instead of getting any encouragement from him, the Dutch representatives received a peremptory refusal. Then they pacified him by repeating their promise that the vessels and troops would depart as soon as the season would permit.[64] The Nawab accepted this assurance and, "told them", wrote Hastings to Clive, "to carry on their business as formerly, promising them upon every occasion his favour and protection. To Vernet he gave a dress and Serpache, to the other gentlemen of the Council, the Officers, Diwans and Vakils, he gave each a dress, and dismissed them".[65]. After 3 or 4 days the Nawab wrote to Clive that he had granted "some indulgence" to the Dutch in their trade and they had promised to leave the river with their ships and troops as soon as the season would permit.

With regard to this arrival of the Dutch troops in Bengal, Holwell asserts that they came at the invitation of the Nawab, who was involved in a secret conspiracy with them. "The (Dutch) armament", he writes in his Memorial, "arrived during his (Mir Jafar's) visit; his stay after that was short, his mind much embarrassed and his whole subsequent conduct gave most undoubted proofs that the Dutch forces were arrived by his

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62. Ibid.
63. Varnet's letter to Court, 14 November 1759.(Vide,H.M.S. Vol.774. p.509).
64. A Defence of the United Company,etc. p.55.
65. 12 November 1759. (Vide. Add. MSS. 29096. p.190).
A Defence of the United Company,etc. p.16.

invitation . . . . that the Nawab's real intentions never were to distress effectually that people but on the contrary, were only aimed to amuse and deceive us . . . ".[66] Warren Hastings believed that the Nawab never intended to chastise but to favour the Dutch. He wrote to Clive, "Every day's transactions confirm me more and more in the opinion that the Nawab is acting a treacherous part with you".[67] Colonel Lionel Forde says, "Mir Jafar had originally given countenance to an intrigue with the Dutch".[68] Arthur Broome also accuses Mir Jafar of double dealing in this matter.[69] Malleson writes " of the secret understanding between the Dutch and the Nawab, there can be no doubt whatever".[70] Forrest emphatically says, "He had invited the Dutch but on hearing of their arrival he assumed an Oriental air of indifference which Western Diplomats can not imitate with success".[71] So there is a unanimous opinion amongst contemporary and modern English writers that Mir Jafar had secretly invited the Dutch to introduce troops into Bengal against the English.

But the English Council at Calcutta, which was no doubt intimately acquainted with the day-to-day State affairs in Bengal, gave a different account. In their letter to the Court of Directors, dated 22 October 1759, they observed, "We think it necessary to inform you, the Dutch are attempting to

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66. Holwell's Memorial Vide Original Papers, - I. pp.8-13. Holwell - India Tracts. p.11.
67. 12 November 1759 (Vide Add. MSS. 29096).
68. 'Lord Clive's Right Hand Man'. p.141.
69. Bengal Army. p.263.
70. The Decisive Battles. p.122.
71. Life of Clive, - II. p.153.

disturb the tranquility of this Province by introducing into this country a considerable body of Europeans and Buggoses (Malay soldiers) unknown to the Subah (Nawab), this ill-judged step has exasperated him against them and we have reason to believe that matters will shortly be accommodated by those forces being obliged to leave the river". It is clear from this letter that the Council did not consider the Nawab guilty of forming any anti-English conspiracy with the Dutch. Moreover Clive and Sumner in their evidences before the Committee of the House of Commons, could not give any definite proof of Mir Jafar's secret plot with the Dutch. Sumner in his evidence said that some letters of the Dutch Governor were found in Mir Jafar's cabinet, but "they were not entered upon the public proceedings and he does not recollect that the Committee made any remonstrance or memorial to Mir Jafar upon the subject of their suspicions with respect to the Dutch".[72]

Here it may be asked why if there were sufficient grounds to suspect Mir Jafar's treachery, the Committee at Calcutta had not remonstrated with him? Further Clive in his evidence on this matter said, "he had no proof for what he was going to offer to the Committee".[73] We may, therefore, conclude from what we have said that Mir Jafar was not guilty of connivance with the Dutch.

As we have already said, the Nawab, assuring the Dutch of his protection and favour upon every occasion, left Hugli, and

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72. First Report - 1772. p.162.
73. First Report - 1772. p.158.

came back to his Capital. No sooner had the Nawab gone than the Dutch Council pretended that they had succeeded in persuading him to allow them to bring up their vessels and soldiers and even expected his assistance against the English.[74] Thus the Dutch miscalculated the true intention of the Nawab and thereby brought fatal consequences upon themselves on the one hand and made the Nawab more suspected by the English. But it should be noted that with regard to their intended hostilities, they were rather encouraged by Rajah Ramnarain. "If we are able", wrote Vernet to the Court of Directors on 19 November 1759, "to fight the British, he (Ramnarain) advises us to begin to act immediately against them . . . . He has also sent me word that it was now high time and that if we mastered the English, we should be able to get all we wanted, but if we were not able to do so, it were better to listen to the Prince . . . . The Britons have given us reason enough to justify us on resorting to acts of hostility against them and if we do not, they will not forbear doing so later on".[75]

Having concluded thus, they began to move up the river with their vessels and engaged themselves in enlisting soldiers at Chinsura, Cassimbazar and Patna.[76] This news of their advance made Clive suspicious of Mir Jafar and he at once sent a strong protest to him "declaring severance of all

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74. A Defence of the United Company, etc. p.16.
Muzaffarnamah - F. 195 B.
75. Vide. H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.524.
76. Memorial of Facts, etc. p. 459.

future connections with him unless he changed his course of action".[77] The Nawab was astonished, and apprehending a breach with his English allies, he expressed his willingness to give every proof that Clive would require of his friendship and sincerity.[78] He excused himself to Hastings, who was directed by Clive to wait upon him, by saying that he was not to be blamed if the Dutch after their solemn declaration had deceived him.[79] At any rate, upon Hastings' advice, the Nawab posted chowkeys (guards) to intercept the Dutch vessels.[80] It is strange indeed that Hastings could altogether deny these precautionary measures of the Nawab, when he said, "I saw no chowkeys though I passed by land through the places appointed for them and I think any thing of that nature could hardly have escaped my observation".[81] But it is clearly evident from a letter of Vernet to the Court of Directors, dated 3 December 1759, wherein he pointed out the difficulties of getting supplies for the passages being barred by the Nawab's chowkeys.[82] In the meantime Clive instructed the Nawab to join him with his troops if the latter had any regard for the former's friendship.[83] But the Nawab replied that he was still fatigued with his latest journeys, and so instead of coming himself, he assured Clive that he would send his son withthe necessary orders on the 18 November.[84]

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77. Malcolm - Life of Clive - II. p.92.
78. Hastings' letter to Clive, 19 November 1759. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096 p.193)
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid
82. Vide, H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.529.
83. Muzaffarnamah - 196 A. Vernet's letter to Court, 11 November 1759. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.509).
84. Vernet's letter to Court, 11 November 1759. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.509).

Meanwhile matters came to a crisis at the capture of seven English ships by the Dutch. And upon their landing at Fulta and Raipur, the Dutch tore down the English flags and burnt the houses and effects of the Company's servants.[85] Their insolent behaviour led the Colonel to believe that they would not have dared to take such drastic steps unless they had some assurance from the Nawab that he would join them or remain neutral. So he immediately asked the Nawab to desist from sending either his son or any part of his army to their assistance,[86] but that if he wanted to "show his sincerity and attachment, he should surround their subordinates and distress them in the country to the utmost".[87]

The Nawab declared that he would immediately put a stop to their activities and actually sent instructions, in the presence of Hastings, to Rajah Ramnarain to surround the Dutch factory at Patna and to molest them severely.[88] At this juncture, some of his Counsellors, who were "swayed either by natural interests or by bribes from the Dutch",[89] did their utmost to prevent the Nawab from taking such drastic steps against the Dutch, but all in vain. In his eagerness to exhibit his faithful attachment to the English, the Nawab further issued 'parwannahs' to Amir Beg Khan to put a stop to the Dutch trade in Hugli.[90]

When these orders of the Nawab came to the knowledge of

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85. Forrest - Life of Clive - II. p.155.
86. Memorial of Facts, etc. p.462.
87. Ibid.
88. Hastings' letter to Clive, 19 November 1759. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096. p.194)
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.

the Dutch, they at once endeavoured to pacify his resentment, Bisdom, soliciting his favour and protection, put the entire blame for the troubles upon the English and appealed to him to interfere on behalf of the Dutch.[91] But this appeal failed to influence the Nawab, who on the contrary, despatched a large army to bar all the entrances to their factory at Chinsura.[92] "The Nawab", wrote Hastings on 21 November, "appears as zealous to the cause as he was before Remiss in it, nor I hope, he will give you any further cause for complaint at least in that affair".[93]

The Dutch who had been vainly hoping for the Nawab's co-operation, or at least his sympathy, now became desperate at his contrary behaviour. It had been frankly admitted by Vernet in his letter to the Court of Directors that "no reliance could be placed on the Nawab and the little Nawab (Miran) could not at all be trusted for his policy seemed to fish in troubled waters".[94] In the meantime, upon the capture of their factory at Baranagore[95] on the 20 November by the English, the Dutch again strongly remonstrated with the Nawab and sought for his justice, but to no effect. Hence they became determined to repel the violence of the English by force without any longer relying on the favour of the Nawab,[96] who seemed to them partial and irresolute.

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91. A Defence of the United Company, etc. p.55.
92. Hastings' letter to Clive, 21 November 1759.(Vide op.cit. p.196)
93. Ibid.
94. Vide. H.M.S. Vol 774. p.519.
95. Malcolm - Life of Clive - II. p.84.
96. H.M.S. Vol.774. p.519.

Accordingly on 21 November, the Dutch vessels cast anchor in Sankeral Reach within cannon shot of the English batteries.[97] They landed their troops, comprising 700 Europeans and about 800 Malayas, on the opposite shore. This intelligence prompted Clive to attack them immediately and he ordered Colonel Forde to march against them. Early in the morning of the 25th, Forde met the Dutch on the plains of Bedara (midway between Chandernagore and Chinsura). Then began a deadly contest between the two rival European Powers and it was, as Clive stated, "short, bloody and decisive".[98] The Dutch were now "as abject in their submission as they had been insolent in their supposed superiority".[99] They wrote to Forde and likewise to the Council at Calcutta, requesting the cessation of hostilities and terms of peace".[100]

What part did the Nawab play in this contest? Caraccioli accused him of neutrality and treachery. "During this contest", he writes, "the Nawab at the head of a considerable army, observed a suspicious neutrality and in all likelihood would have declared for the Dutch, had they proved victorious as he had reason to believe they would, from their great majority in number. But fortune no sooner determined in favour of the English than he made a tender of his services to the victor . . .".[101] Colonel Forde says that

97. Muzaffarnamah - 197 A.
98. Clive's Right Hand Man. p.138.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid. Muzaffarnamah - 197 A.
101. Life of Clive. p.50.

"seeing the effect produced that the Dutch now fairly broken, the Cavalry of the Nawab which had not responded to the invitation to accompany their European comrades in the first charge, dashed forward . . . ".[102] The same supposition of treachery on his part has also been mentioned by Malleson.[103] But Clive in his evidence admitted that 800 soldiers of the Nawab co-operated with the English in the attack upon the Dutch and that the Nawab's Cavalry were very useful in pursuing the fugitives after Colonel Forde's victory.[104] Further it is evident from a letter to the Court that the Nawab's troops actually co-operated with Colonel Forde in that contest and thereby contributed much to his victory at Bedara.[105].

Three days after the battle of Bedara, the Dutch had to face a new menace. The Nawab,[106] ordered his son, Miran, to march at the head of six or seven thousand horse against the Dutch, in order to totally exterminate them. The Dutch at once appealed to the English for protection. Clive intervened and went direct to the French Garden so that he might be a check[107] upon the impetuosity of the young Nawab by his presence and use his influence in their favour.[108]

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102. Clive's Right Hand Man. p.132.
103. The Decisive Battles. p.137. Law's Memoirs. p.417.
104. First Report - 1772. p.158.
105. Letter from the Governor and Council of St.Helena to the Court, 14 April 1760.(Vide H.M.S. Vol.95. p.451)
106. Muzaffarnamah - 196 B. Law's Memoirs. p.417.
107. Memorial of Facts, etc. p.466.
108. A Defence of United Company,etc. p.34.

But Miren flatly refused to come to any terms with the ~~with~~ Dutch and requested Clive not to interfere in "his State business". Whereupon Clive sent immediately one Dutch Agent accompanied by one of his own, to the Nawab requesting him to intervene. The Nawab accordingly instructed Miren to accommodate the affairs according to the desire of Clive. Miren gave way. He received their deputies, forgave them for their insolent behaviour and promised them ample protection in their trade and privileges on the following terms: that they would never conspire for war, introduce troops or raise fortifications in the country: that they would be allowed to keep not more than 125 European soldiers for the service of their factories at Chinsura, Cassimmuzar and Patna: that they should immediately send their ships and the remaining troops out of the country and that violation of any of these terms would render them subject to complete expulsion.[109]

Though ~~for the present~~, the Treaty of 5 December 1759, produced some sort of peace between the Nawab and the Dutch, nevertheless it failed to promote a cordial relationship. The Dutch must have harboured feelings of discontent and resentment at the partial treatment of the Nawab. For the time being, of course, they endeavoured to secure the Nawab's favour for the development of their salt-petre trade. They prevailed upon Miren to influence the Nawab to allow them to purchase salt-petre in the country, but to no effect. Miren

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109. Memorial of Facts, etc. p.467.

told them, "My father has given the salt-petre trade to the English, whenceI have from 4 to 5 lakhs of rupees annual profit, where shall I get that from the Hollanders?".[110] Then they made a direct approach to the Nawab and having paid him the necessary 'nazaranah', presented a petition. The Nawab granted it, but still they had little faith in his generosity, as Vernet might well say, "The great Nawab having given order thereunto in my presence, but I find it necessary to bring under your notice that the esteem in which they hold us has grown less than ever and that were they to draw up a thousand 'parwannah's', it would avail nought".[111] This remark of Vernet was by no means groundless, because though the Nawab granted their petition, he did not, in fact, enforce it when opposition came from the English, who made him understand that no concessions whatsoever could be granted to any foreign company without their sanction. The Nawab silently resented this assertion of the English Company and advised the Dutch to appeal to them henceforth for any concession.

Upon their failure to obtain any kind of commercial privileges the Dutch then determined to do direct injury to him. And the opportunity soon appeared. By this time both the Nawab and the English had become involved in hostilities with Shah Alam, who had invaded Bihar for the second time in the beginning of January 1760. The Dutch in Bengal at once

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110. Quoted in Vernet's letter to Court, 10 December 1759. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 774. p.531).

111. Ibid.

took the occasion to co-operate with the Prince-invader, who himself was then being driven off.

Although the Nawab sometimes apparently seemed friendly to the Dutch, nevertheless at this juncture, he had reason to suspect them of being engaged "in a private correspondence with his known and public enemies",[112] and of having "tendered and promised their assistance to the Mughal Prince".[113] Two letters[114] show that the Nawab's accusations against them were not groundless. He declared himself ready to make use of whatever methods should be most effective towards the frustrating of their designs, and asked Hastings's advice on this affair. Hastings suggested sending a large force against Chinsura, with orders to dispossess them of all their soldiers, to seize all their guns and ammunitions, and to demolish their new fortifications.[115] Accordingly the Nawab despatched a body of 15,000 horse and foot under the command of Mir Kasim on 26 January 1760, with the necessary instructions against the Dutch at Chinsura.[116] Kasim Ali Khan invested their Fort Gustavas in such a way as to make it difficult for them to get provisions of any kind from outside.[117] The General then ordered all the outworks of the Fort to be destroyed and demanded of them a considerable sum of money by way of penalty and to indemnify him for the trouble he had taken for the expedition.[118] After many altercations the Dutch at last

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112. Bm. Pub. Cons. 12 May 1760.
113. A Fresh Complaint, etc. p.7.
114. One written by Ramnarain and the other by Shah Alam. (Vide. Ben. Pub. Cons. 5 August 1760).
115. Hastings' letter to Clive, 20 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096. p.204). Letter to Court, 3 March 1760.
116. Hastings' letter to Clive, 24 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096. p.215). Letter to Court, 3 March 1760.
117. A Fresh Complaint, etc. p.7.
118. Ibid.

were compelled to "raze the outworks of the Fort and to buy off further acts of violence by paying him 50,000 florins".[119]

In the meantime, while Kasim Ali Khan was engaged with the Dutch at Chinsura, a rumour became current that the Nawab had deputed Suleman Beg to settle matters with them and to prevent their destruction.[120] But we cannot accept a mere rumour in the absence of any other evidence.

Since the return of Kasim Ali Khan from Chinsura, nothing extraordinary happened till April of the same year, when the Nawab again accused the Dutch Company of enlisting troops at Chinsura and of making many other military preparations.[121] "Notwithstanding the solemn treaties and engagements", wrote the Nawab to Holwell, the Acting Governor at Fort William, "in which we have lately entered with the Dutch and which we on our parts have faithfully adhered to and kept, they without any just cause and contrary to their faith and word have broke . . . . by keeping up a much larger force than we thought proper to allow them by the late Treaty (5 December 1759) and which they themselves agreed to and also by repairing the works to be pulled down at their factory of Chinsura, in which place they are now employed in making quantities of powder and many other military preparations which but too plainly show the wickedness of their designs and intention against my honour, the Peace and safety of my Kingdom".[122] Therefore he resolved

119. Ibid. p.8.
120. Hastings' letter to Clive, 27 January 1760. (Vide Add. MSS.29096. p.208).
121. A Fresh Complaint, etc. p.8.
122. Vide. Ben. Pub. Cons. 12 May 1760.

to send a large force against them and assured the Governor that he would definitely prevent in time their plots and wicked designs with a view "to secure the quiet of my country from their evil attempts".[123]

But the Nawab did not remain content with despatching this note. He also sent for the Chief of the Dutch factory at Cassimbazar for explanations.[124] The Chief was ill and unable to go to the Court and so De Wilde, the Second of that factory in rank, went to the Nawab, who on admitting him into his presence, repeated the above mentioned accusations.[125] Consequently he demanded of the Dutch Company, by way of contribution, an immense sum of fifty lakhs of rupees, threatening if this sum was not immediately paid, to level with the ground the Company's settlements.[126] How far the Nawab's present accusations against them were correct, is subject to doubt, but it can be assumed as the Dutch assert that the accusations were a "device to supply the Nawab's want of money at the expense of the Company",[127] This assumption is not altogether groundless, because at this time the Nawab was in dire need of money to satisfy the demands of the English, to pay off the long arrears of his soldiers and to finance the heavy expenses of the war with Shah Alam. De Wilde left no stone unturned to prove the falsity of these

123. Ibid.
124. A Fresh Complaint, etc. p.8.
125. Ibid.
126. Ibid.
127. Ibid.

accusations,[128] and argued that the Sepoys in the Company's service, were taken in to pay to secure the Company's effects against the threatened inroads of the Marathas. But his arguments produced no effect and the Nawab put him under arrest and caused the factory at Cassimbuzar to be invested by his troops. However, the Dutch prevented the destruction of their factory by paying a large sum of money and promising to discharge the above mentioned Sepoys.[129] The Dutch performed their promise fully, but their factory still remained invested by the Nawab's troops. Upon their complaint, the Nawab replied that "it was not in the Prince's breast but in that of the English".[130]

In the meantime, Holwell was succeeded by Vansittart as the Governor, through whose intercession a convention was at last arrived at between the Nawab and the Dutch on 23 August 1760.[131] The Nawab on his part promised that their trade, subject to the fulfilment of the conditions of the Convention, "shall be carried on free and unmolested in all points whatever except the salt-petre trade",[132] which would remain exclusively in the hands of the English, and that "they shall not be aggrieved with any new or unusual extortions of money under what pretence so ever".[133] Immediately on the conclusion of this Convention, the Nawab withdrew his troops from Cassimbuzar

128. Ben. Sel.Cons. 18 August 1760.
129. A Fresh Complaint, etc. p.9.
130. Ibid.
131. Ben. Sel. Cons. 25 August 1760.
132. Ben. Sel. Cons. 25 August 1760.
133. Ibid.

and for the rest of his reign, a friendly relationship was maintained between them.

From the above it is clear that Mir Jafar would have preferred to balance the Dutch military strength against the English, but the hold of the latter over him was too strong.

CHAPTER VII

THE DEPOSITION OF MIR JAFAR - 1760

The death of Miren came as a great shock to the old Nawab. To forget it, he spent some weeks in drinking and amusement. He seldom attended the 'darbar' to transact business and as a result, disorder crept into the state machinery and some of the important state functions passed into the hands of his avaricious and rapacious counsellors,[1] such as Kanaram, Munilal and Chunilal. Knowing that a government so ill-managed could not last long, they in their turn, sought only to make themselves rich quickly by the oppression of all sorts of people in the country,[2] as a result further disorder and confusion ensued in the capital. Besides this, the increase in military expenditure caused financial difficulties and the Nawab's carelessness resulted in misappropriation and defalcations which assumed "huge proportions".[3] The Nawab, we may remember, was still in debt to the English although the sum was only 3½ lakhs,[4] while the army remained discontented on account of the arrears of their pay, which assumed large amounts.[5] The Nawab could neither stem the tide of corruption by holding

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1. Ben. Sel. Cons. - 10 November 1760.
2. Ibid.
3. Khulasat (vide J.B.O.R.S. V p.345).
4. See Chapter IX.
5. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 November 1760.

his evil counsellors in check, nor find the means to discharge his obligations to the English as well as to his army. Hence the situation in the capital worsened every day.

This critical state of the Nawab's affairs did not escape the attention of the English officials. Some of them became encouraged at the prospect of a possible change in the government which would facilitate fresh acquisitions of money both for themselves and for the Company on the one hand and a stronger hold over the country and its Government on the other. "Intoxicated by their late extraordinary success," writes one of them, Debrit, "and overwhelmed by the vast torrent of wealth which increasingly flowed in upon them, the speculations, the projects and the desires of fresh acquisitions which agitated the minds of these men knew no bounds."[6] Besides these hopes, there was another thing much in their minds. The English Council at Calcutta all along remained very critical of Mir Jafar and, apprehending his secret design to sever connections with the English altogether, they formed a party with his disaffected officials in the 'darbar' in order to keep him in check[7] and even increased the number of their soldiers with a view to facing any such attempt of the Nawab.[8] As

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6. Transactions in India etc. (Debrit) p.39.
7. vide ante.
8. Clive's letter to Pitt - 7 January 1759 (vide Malcolm II pp. 119-120).

Clive said, "... but Mussalmans are so little influenced by gratitude that should he ever think it his interest to break with us, the obligations he owes us would prove no restraint ..."[9] These considerations together with the present critical situation of the Nawab, at once opened their eyes to the feasibility of a change of Government at Murshidabad by deposing Mir Jafar and either replacing him by a person more suited to themselves, or of taking into their own hands the sovereignty of the country. Here it should be observed that this idea of deposition was not a new one, but had its origin longago in the mind of Clive, as is evident from his letter to Prime Minister Pitt, dated 7 January 1759, wherein he stated, "There will be the less difficulty in bringing about such an event as the natives themselves have no attachment whatever to particular Princes and as under the present Government they have no security for their lives or properties, they would rejoice in so happy an exchange as that of a mild for a despotic Government, and there is little room to doubt our easily obtaining the Mughal's 'Sanad' in confirmation thereof, provided we agreed to pay him the stipulated allotment out of the revenues, viz, fifty lakhs annually."[10] Clive went on to seek the Prime Minister's approval to that scheme, "I have

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9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

therefore presumed, Sir, to represent this matter to you and submit it to your consideration, whether the execution of a design that may hereafter be still carried to greater lengths, be worthy of the Government's taking it into hand. I flatter myself, I have made it pretty clear to you that there will be little or no difficulty in obtaining the absolute possession of these rich Kingdoms ..."[11] Therefor it is clear that Clive was at this time toying with the idea of taking the sovereignty of Bengal by deposing Mir Jafar.[12] The idea of deposition was earnestly taken up by the next Governor Holwell and finally carried into execution by Governor Vansittart.

Upon the departure of Clive for England in February 1760, Holwell succeeded him temporarily as the Governor of Fort William. He had a natural animosity towards Mir Jafar because the latter had taken a prominent part in the siege of Calcutta[13] under Nawab Sirajud-daulah. To this hatred was added his greed for money. It should be remembered that in the year 1757, he had received one lakh of rupees as his reward which he did not deem to be sufficient. Now with his appointment as the Governor he sought to make

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11. Ibid - p.122.

12. It is further evident from a letter of Cailland to Holwell, dated 29 May 1759 that the former had some knowledge of this intention of Clive, First Report 1772 p.160.

13. Forrest - Life of Clive II p.210. Cailland's evidence (vide First Report 1772 p.161).

good his wishes[14] before the arrival of Vansittart.

Holwell began in various ways to blacken the character of the old Nawab and thereby to accuse him in the eyes of the Council at Calcutta.[15] The Nawab's weak character provided many opportunities for Holwell to point out his faults and criticise his measures,[16] and he left no stone unturned to publicise his allegations, real or imaginary. He would not miss an opportunity to depose the Nawab and to sell the 'masnad' of Bengal to the highest bidder.

That opportunity soon appeared in the open rebellion of the army at Murshidabad.[17] We have already seen the unfortunate situation of the Nawab after the sudden death of his son Miren. Now this rebellion of the army at once brought that situation to a crisis. Hastings gives a vivid picture of this mutiny in his letter to the Select Committee (25 July), "... to compel the Nawab to pay their long arrears, they accordingly encompassed his palace on the 14 July in a clamorous manner, but proceeded no further than to insult the treasurer and the 'Mutasadddees', whom they

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14. "Reflections on the Present State of our East Indian Affairs" - p.37. (Anonymous). Dodwell - Dupleix and Clive p.202.

15. "His private conduct was exposed and blackened by libels of grossest enormity" - Debrit - Transactions etc. p.39.

16. Caillaud's evidence (vide First Report 1772 p.161). Holwell's letter to Caillaud - 24 May 1760 (vide Observations on Vansittart's Narrative p.12).

17. Ben. Sel. Cons. 28 July 1760. Riyaz p.380. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.346). Muzaffarnamah F214A.

pulled out of their palankeens and treated with other indignities ... on the 16th they assembled in a large body and stopped up the doors of the palace, suffering none to enter or come out from it, numbers mounted on every wall not excepting the places held most sacred, and loaded the Nawab with the most opprobrious language, threatening him with death if their demands were not complied with. Such of his courtiers or attendants as made their appearance were assaulted by fragments broke off from the walls ..."[18] The Nawab appealed to the Setts to supply him with necessary funds, but they no longer had any reliance upon his agreement and hence refused.[19] At last he turned to his son-in-law Mir Kasim for help,[20] who accordingly by his interposition put a stop to this tumult of the army and brought on an accommodation by paying them three lakhs of rupees from his own treasury.[21] The Nawab on his part, promised to pay the full arrears "from the sixth sun and two half months of the present year as soon as it should appear from the account what was due to them."[22]

This incident at the capital at once provided Holwell with further strong pretexts to discredit the Government of

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18. Vide, Ben. Sel. Cons. 28 July 1760.
19. Muzaffarnamah F214A.
29. Siyar II p.375. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.345).
21. Ben. Sel. Cons. 28 July 1760.
22. Ibid.

Mir Jafar and thereby to depose him altogether. Mir Kasim, ambitious, and cunning young man, who had so long been watching the strained relations between the English Governor and the Nawab, now became aware of the former's intentions. Ambitious as he was, he could not miss the chance to replace his father-in-law and so he secretly instigated Holwell to effect another 'coup' at the capital in his favour and promised to reward him amply.[23] Holwell made up his mind to support Mir Kasim's pretensions and at once brought influence to bear on some of the English Counsellors, especially Major Caillaud, the Commander-in-Chief of the English army in Bengal. But Holwell could not execute this plan because in the meantime, Vansittart arrived from Madras (27 July) to replace him.

The new Governor was faced with an exhausted English treasury and the complete suspension of their trade. And further he was aware that "the man who had been placed on the throne of Bengal by the arms of the British ..., was surrounded by enemies, secret and avowed".[24] So the situation was not at all happy for him. Holwell, who had already planned to depose Mir Jafar, delivered to Vansittart a

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23. H. Beveridge - History of India I, p.670.

24. Thornton - History of British Empire I, p.402.

'Memorial' wherein he framed specific charges against the Nawab of faithlessness and treason.[25] Without going into details, it sufficies to say that in his Memorial', Holwell laid at the door of the Nawab all the evils under which the country had been suffering. He accused him[26] of treacherous dealing with the Dutch in the previous year, although Major Caillaud pointed out to the Governor that it was never clearly proved,[27] and even Clive in his evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, said that "he had no proof".[28] He charged him with secret correspondence with Shah Alam, although Warren Hastings declared that the "document was a forgery".[29] He even accused the Nawab of the murder of persons who were still alive when the Nawab himself was dead.[30] It is clear from this 'Memorial' that Holwell did his best to incite the new Governor against the Nawab and at last advised him to "divest this family (of Mir Jafar) of the Government altogether."[31] But Vansittart was opposed to this at least at the beginning of his Governorship. Nevertheless there is evidence to show that the financial position of the Company[32] which was apparent in the mind of the Governor,

25. Holwell's Memorial - vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 4 August 1760.
26. Ibid.
27. First Report, 1772 p.160.
28. Ibid p.158.
29. Vide Ante.
30. Long Selections p.428.
31. Ben. Sel. Cons. 4 August 1760.
32. Ibid - 11 September 1760.

was exploited both by Holwell and his protégé (Mir Kasim) and which at last compelled him to accept the suggestions as proposed by Holwell.[33]

However at the present moment, when Vansittart was not sure of the Nawab's further payments and was in a fix as to how to meet the Company's financial exigencies,[34] the Committee at Calcutta desired him "to press Kasim Ali Khan on the subject of our expenses and our great distress for money, so as to draw from him some proposals of means for removing these difficulties by which possibly we may be able /whether he might not be brought to join to form a judgment,/in this negotiation."[35] Holwell supported this proposal and induced the Governor to invite Mir Kasim on some convenient plea.[36] But the difficulty was that such an invitation might raise suspicion in the mind of the old Nawab, who had always been averse to his son-in-law. At length, after much deliberation, it was decided to ask the Nawab to send Mir Kasim to Calcutta, although apparently to adjust the operations of the next campaign against Shah Alam and to settle the accounts of the assigned lands, yet in reality to be sure of Mir Kasim's attachment to the English as well as his sentiments towards the Nawab.[37]

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33. Smith - Observation on the Present State etc. (vide Tract Vol. 84 p.8).
34. Ben. Sel. Cons. 7 August 1760.
35. Ibid 15 September 1760.
36. Holwell's India Tract p.89.
37. Ibid. Ben. Sel. Cons. 15 September 1760.

This plan of the Committee reminds us of the manoeuvre which Clive had planned a few years before to keep Sirajuddaulah under perfect security by his "secret letter" just on the eve of the battle of Plassey, in order to secure Mir Jafar's approval of the treaty of 1757.[38] However, upon the receipt of the Committee's advice, the Nawab became perplexed, not knowing what to do under the circumstances.[39] He had already begun to suspect the designs of Mir Kasim to succeed to the position of his deceased son Miren and so was unwilling to let him go to Calcutta,[40] although really he had no reasonable grounds to prevent his going.[41] He at once conferred with his counsellors and at last permitted him to go there.[42]

Upon his arrival at Calcutta, Mir Kasim had an interview with Vansittart, to whom he made a strong representation against the Nawab. "He (Mir Kasim) pointed out to the Council," writes Kalyan Singh, "that Mir Jafar Khan was utterly incapable and that his habits were such that it was impossible for him to carry on the administration of the country. Mir Kasim took this opportunity of dwelling,

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38. vide ante.

39. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.346.)

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. Muzaffarnamah F214B. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.346). Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.27.

incidentally as it were, on the friendship he entertained towards the Company, the unwillingness of Mir Jafar Khan to pay up the dues of the Company and of the military as well as the advances he had made to him..."[43] At this representation, the Governor became hopeful as to his attachment to the English and at once put forward the demands of the Company without disclosing "anything of our designs."[44] Mir Kasim agreed to comply with the demands "if we could undertake to give him the general management of the country by taking it out of the hands of those who are now entrusted with it by the Nawab, he would then make such assignments in favour of the Company as should be perfectly to our satisfaction."[45] This made a profound impression upon the Governor[46] who put it before the Council which approved it, although a minor group in the Council, hostile to the Governor, was neither consulted nor aware of it.[47] Without loss of time, a secret treaty[48] was accordingly concluded with Mir Kasim on 27 September 1760 by which he was to be invested with the 'diwani' or control of the exchequer; he was to exercise

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43. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.346). Holwell's India Tracts p.90. Siyar II p.379.

44. Ben. Sel. Cons. - 16 September 1760.

45. Ibid. Muzaffarnamah - F214B.

46. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.347).

47. Both Gulam Husain (Siyar II p.380) and Kalyan Singh (Khulasat V p.347) mention that the minority group represented by Amyatt and others, were consulted along with other members but they were not aware of it which is admitted by Vansittart himself in his Narrative I p.150.

48. Aitchison - Treaties etc. II p.230.

all the executive authority but Mir Jafar was to continue in the Nawabship; all affairs of the Government were to be transacted in Mir Jafar's name and under his Seal and a suitable allowance was to be allotted commensurate with his dignity and standard of maintenance. From the English side, an article was stipulated for the possession of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong as a means of defraying the Company's expenses in maintaining the 'masnad' of Bengal.[49] Mir Kasim, having assured the English Council of his sincere attachment to them, hastened back to Murshidabad and informed the Nawab that the Governor would shortly be coming to the capital when all the affairs would be settled to his entire satisfaction. The Nawab was duly pleased and thanked his son-in-law for his tactful service.[50] Upon the return of Mir Kasim from Calcutta, the Council decided to execute the plan immediately. But they at the same time apprehended that as the Nawab was being kept quite ignorant of all these secret transactions, serious opposition would come from that quarter[51] and "the Nawab will be extremely alarmed at the first news of it, and those who now rule him will use their influence to increase

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49. Ben. Sel. Cons. 25 September 1760. Muzaffarnamah F214B. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.347).

50. Muzaffarnamah F215A. Abs. P.L.I. 1759-65 p.27.

51. Ben. Sel. Cons. 27 September 1760. Thornton - History of the British Empire II p.397.

his fears and suspicions and to make him as averse as possible to acquiescing in the measures we propose to adopt and to which Kasim Ali Khan has acceded".[52] Therefore it was resolved to commission some persons with a view to keeping Mir Kasim firm to the agreement he had entered into and even to assist him with military power against the Nawab if occasion required.[53]

As desired by the Committee,[54] Vansittart and Major Caillaud "on the pretext of a visit to the Nawab"[55] left Calcutta on 2 October, accompanied by two companies of Europeans, a company of artillery and a battalion of sepoys. In order to remove any suspicions that the Nawab might entertain, it was represented to him[56] beforehand that the force under the Major "were going up to Patna to reinforce the army there."[57]

Having reached Moradbagh on 14 October, the Governor sent an invitation to the Nawab, asking him to come over to that place when his affairs would be settled to his entire satisfaction.[58] Being thus assured, the Nawab the next morning

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52. Ben. Sel. Cons. 27 September 1760. Original Papers etc. I p.40.
53. Ben. Sel. Cons. 27 September 1760. Vansittart's Narrative I p.108. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.347).
54. Ben. Sel. Cons. 27 September 1760.
55. A letter to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762 (vide First Report 1772 p.252).
56. Ibid. Abs. P.L.I. 1759-65 p.37.
57. A letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762, First Report 1772 p.252.
58. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.347). Vansittart's Narrative I p.110.

set out and reached Moradbagh in the same afternoon.[59] After the usual ceremonies were over, Vansittart told him the reason of his coming down[60] and the resolutions passed in the Council[61] together with the expedients he had devised for re-establishing order in his Government and finances.[62] Without giving the Nawab any chance to speak, he then continued to narrate the generally distressed condition of his Government "occasioned not so much by the want of means in the country, as by the abuse and evil administration of those to whom he (Mir Jafar) had entrusted the management".[63] In order to convince the Nawab of his critical situation, however real or fancied it might be, there is no doubt that the Governor exaggerated those evils, when he himself frankly admits, "I described everything in the worst light I could, hoping that by magnifying his difficulties, I might bring him more easily to consent to those measures which we have resolved upon."[64] The Nawab became astonished at this exaggeration of the real facts and "pleaded not guilty and

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59. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.348).

60. Siyar - II p.382.

61. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760. (vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760). Khulasat - (J.B.O.R.S. V p.348).

62. vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760. Siyar II p.382.

63. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 15 October 1760. (vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 20 October 1760). Original Papers etc. I p.42.

64. Ibid.

said that as he had firmly kept all the promises made by him after Sirajud-daulah's defeat, he was not prepared to make any departure from that which had been agreed upon."[65] However, in order to honour his new guest, the Nawab assured the Governor that he would gladly follow any sincere advice for reformation in the Government, but requested him to pay him a return visit at his camp.[66]

Accordingly Vansittart visited the Nawab on 16 October, but the conversation between them was purely formal.[67] On 18 October the Governor again waited on the Nawab and without any introduction[68] delivered to him three letters.[69] The first letter[70] referred to the following main points:-

1) The English forces in the service and support of the Nawab's Government at Patna were kept without their pay;

2) The Nawab's troops, stationed in those parts, were discontented and disaffected for want of their pay;

3) The sepoys at Murshidabad had lately surrounded his palace

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65. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.348). Siyar II p.382.

66. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 15 October 1760 (vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 20 October 1760.)

67. Vansittart's Narrative I p.115.

68. A letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762, vide First Report 1772 p.252.

69. vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760. Vansittart's Narrative I pp. 125-34.

70. A Persian copy of this letter is found in the "official Persian Letters". (MSS).

in a most tumultuous manner and threatened the life and safety of the Nawab for want of their pay;

4) His ministers, who had absolute power in the state, were covetous, rapacious and oppressing his subjects to the utter detriment of the peace of the country.

5) Due to this bad management, there was an acute scarcity of provisions which had affected all classes of the population.

6) The Sikkahs issued at Calcutta with the sanction of the Nawab were not being allowed by his officers to pass current without payment of a battah.

7) The presence of Shah Alam II (Shahzadah) on the Bihar border, strengthened by a number of disaffected Rajahs and Zamindars, was a serious menace to his Government and this threat could not be defeated owing to the lack of proper co-operation on the part of his officers.

In conclusion, Vansittart strongly declared "I would make one vigorous trial immediately to remedy all those evils,"[71] and it should be borne in mind that the "one vigorous trial" as declared by him was the appointment of Mir Kasim with full powers over the management of the State. He stated this openly, "... It is proper that you appoint some capable person from among your children in the place and dignity of your son (Miren) who may take charge of all these

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71. Vansittart's letter to the Nawab 18 October 1760 (vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760).

affairs, regulate the business of the country and remove all these difficulties that your Excellency, be freed from all the troubles and fatigues of these transactions and the shadow of your protection overspread the whole."[72]

The abruptness with which these letters were presented to the Nawab, one close upon the other, and the unexpected proposals contained therein, at once terrified him, and he had no prompt answer, but asked for time to consider them. His answer did not satisfy the Governor, as the latter apprehended that the former's returning in the midst of his counsellors would spoil all these endeavours. So he prevailed upon him to send for Mir Kasim in order to complete the intended scheme. But "the old Nawab", writes Vansittart, "was so extremely fatigued in such a state of anxiety that we could not refuse his returning home to take his rest."[73] The Nawab went back to his quarters and acquainted his counsellors with the proposals of the Governor and sought their advice. They gave him to understand that if Mir Kasim be invested with absolute authority in the state, it would not only be a menace to his own power and influence but also to his life. He clearly realised this and told them that under

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72. Ibid.

73. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760. vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760.

the present circumstances, only money could save him from the impending danger. But his counsellors neither offered the necessary funds, nor indicated the means to get the same for him.[74]

In the meantime, upon the Nawab's departure, Mir Kasim met the Governor in a conference where the details of the scheme were again discussed. The Governor concluded that the Nawab would never consent to his proposals without some sort of force[75] and so determined to act immediately without giving the Nawab time to gather strength.[76]

The night of 19 October, being the conclusion of a Hindu festival, when all the principal people of that caste were expected to be too fatigued with their ceremonies to create any trouble against the English, gave the Governor the opportune moment to execute the scheme by force.[77] The necessary preparations being made with great secrecy, Major Caillaud, at the head of a considerable army, was despatched along with Mir Kasim. They marched towards the Nawab's palace and surrounded it just at day break.[78] The gates of

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74. Muzaffarnamah F216A.

75. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.349)

76. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760. Caillaud's Narrative p.45.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid, Clive's address to the Proprietors of East India Stock, (vide, Tracts vol. 220 p.38). First Report 1772 p.252.

the ~~inner~~ inner court being shut, the Major formed his men in the outer yard of the palace[79] and posted guards with orders to suffer none to come in or out.[80] He then delivered a letter of the Governor to the Nawab, demanding his immediate compliance with what had been already proposed to him.[81] This transaction happened so quickly that the Nawab found himself a prisoner.[82] He was shocked and enraged at the same time and he replied, "that such usage was what he never expected from the English; that whilst a force was at his gates, he would enter into no terms and that it was his desire our (English) troops might be returned to Moradbagh."[83] He was within his rights in demanding the withdrawal of the English troops because he considered it as a slur upon his dignity. The Governor instead of complying, declared to his followers that he did not like "to spill the blood of a man whom he raised to such dignities but that the affair must be finished before sunset".[84] Accordingly another message was sent,

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79. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.349) Caillaud's Narrative p.45.

80. Ibid.

81. Translation of the 4th letter presented to the Nawab 19 October 1760 (vide Original Papers etc. I pp. 53-55).

82. "A glance from the window of his palace showed him the red-coated English soldiers rallying round the standard of his kinsman in revolt against him." Malleson's Decisive Battles p.140.

83. Quoted in the letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762, vide First Report 1772 p.252. Lushington's letter to Clive 3 December 1760. (vide Malcolm - Life of Clive II p.267)F.N.

84. Lushington's letter to Clive - 3 December 1760.

warning the Nawab that if he did not instantly comply with the English demands, they would be obliged to storm the palace,[85] Actually what happened was that the English troops approached the gate and the cannon was posted against it.[86] The small force kept by the Nawab to guard his palace became panic-stricken and without making any resistance, left their posts.[87] Terrified at this, the Nawab at last ordered the gates to be opened, exclaiming, "that he was betrayed; that the English were guilty of perjury and breach of faith; that he perceived their designs against his Government; that he had friends enough to hazard at least one battle in his defence, but although no oaths were sacred enough to bind the English, yet as he had sworn to be their faithful friend, he would never swerve from his engagement and rather suffer death than draw his sword against them."[88]

Thus the Nawab had to surrender before that storm which had the possibility of either turning him out forcibly from his palace in the presence of his servants, or depriving him of his life by the hand of Mir Kasim who had once proposed to Holwell that this should be done.[89] In the afternoon of

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85. First Report 1772 p.252.
86. Siyar II p.384.
87. Ibid.
88. Quoted in the letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762 (vide First Report 1772 p.252). Caillaud's Narrative p.46.
89. Holwell's Indian Tracts p.90. Scrafton's Observations (vide Tract vol. 378 p.28).

20 October, he sent a message to Mir Kasim informing him that he was ready to send him the Seals and other ensigns of dignity and to order the large drums to be beaten in his name provided he would agree to take the whole charge of the Government upon himself, to discharge all the arrears due to the troops, to save his life and honour[90] and to grant him a monthly allowance of Rs. 25,000 for his maintenance.[91] These conditions were accepted by Vansittart and Mir Kasim was accordingly proclaimed Nawab. The deposed old Nawab then came out of his palace and met the Governor, to whom he made the following speech, "The English placed me on the 'Masnad', you may depose me if you please. You have thought proper to break your engagements, I would not mine. Had I such designs, I could have raised 20,000 men and fought you if I pleased. My son chuta Nawab (Miren) forewarned me of all this."[92] This speech of the Nawab was no doubt pathetic. At this critical stage of his destiny, he was no doubt reminded of his crime against Sirajud-daulah. When he was asked by the Governor as to where he would like to reside, the old Nawab answered, fearing his life to be in constant danger under Mir Kasim, "I desire you will either send me to Sabut

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90. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760 (vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760) Lushington's letter to Clive 3 December 1760.

91. Abs. P.L.I. 1759-65 p.7. Mir Kasim never paid this sum of Rs. 25,000 as agreed upon, but being pressed by Vansittart, he at last agreed to pay Rs. 10,000 (Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.11.)

92. Quoted in Lushington's letter to Clive 3 December 1760.

Jung (Clive) for he will do me justice, or let me go to Mecca, if not,let me go to Calcutta for I will not stay in this palace."[93] The Governor acceded to his request and made the necessary arrangements to his departure to Calcutta.

The next day, the 22 October, Mir Kasim supplied him with boats and allowed him to take "as many of his women as he desired" and a reasonable quantity of jewels and other movables.[94] "Mir Jafar Khan", writes Kalyan Singh, "took all the valuables, jewellery, gold mohurs, silver and gold utensils and other valuable and fancy articles from the inside of his palace and such things from the outside as he could get, had boats laden with these, took the employees of the 'mahal' e.g. Bano Begam and her family, some male personal attendants, some trustworthy soldiers and confidential servants and started for Calcutta,"[95] under an escort of Europeans and sepoys. He arrived there on 29 October where he was received by a deputation from the Council who treated him with every mark of respect.[96]

The Governor has curiously observed that the old Nawab was calm and seemed to be reconciled to the loss of a power which "he owns to have been rather a burthen than a pleasure."[97]

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93. Quoted in Lushington's letter to Clive 3 December 1760. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 21 October 1760. Caillaud's Narrative p.47, Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.349).

94. Ibid.

95. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.350) This corroborates the statement also given by the author of Siyar (II p.388).

96. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 November 1760.

97, vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 October 1760. Original Papers etc. I p.66.

How far this observation is correct, we do not know, but this much can be assumed that if the Nawab was really so intelligent as to realise that the power which he held as being more burdensome than pleasant, he could easily have transferred that power to his son-in-law willingly and without a single word of resentment. Moreover, it is evident from his letter to the Company that "he was very unwilling to part with his Government and that he greatly regrets the deprivation of it."[98]

We may ask, how far this deposition of Mir Jafar was justified. On this issue, his contemporaries and other writers have differed. We may examine[(a)] the charges brought by the English authorities against him in suppat of his deposition and[(b)] how far those charges were substantiated by the actual reading of the facts.

The worst which Vansittart could speak of Mir Jafar has been stated in his 'Memorial' of 10 November 1760,[99] and of all these charges, the Governor laid special stress on Mir Jafar's cruelties and oppressions, the distracted state of the country due to his rule, his treachery and violation of the treaty subsisting between the English and himself.

The Governor closes his 'Memorial' with a long list of persons cut off during the reign of Mir Jafar, the victims being Ghassety Begam, Ameena Begam, Murada-daulah, an adopted

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98. A letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762. vide First Report 1772 p.254.

99. vide, Original Papers etc. I p.63.

son of Shahmat Jung, nephew of Aliverdi Khan, Lutf-en-nessa, the widow of Sirajud-daulah and her infant daughter. This account seems to be incorrect as it is evident from the official letter of the English Council to the Court of Directors, dated 1 October 1765, wherein they stated, "In justice to the memory of the late Nawab Mir Jafar Khan, we think it incumbent on us to acquaint you that the horrible massacres wherewith he is charged by Holwell in his 'Address to the Proprietors of East India Stock', are cruel aspersions on the character of that Prince which have not the least foundations in truth. The several persons there affirmed and who have been gnnerally thought to have been murdered by his order, are all now living except two[100] who are put to death by Miren without Nawab's consent or knowledge." It seems probable that Vansittart accepted the horrible story of crimes and bloodshed as narrated by Holwell to be true without endeavouring to enquire into the matter.

In order to justify his proceedings, Mir Jafar has been accused by the Governor, of his misdeeds and his incapacity to rule the country. But it is strange that in the letters presented to the Nawab, there is nowhere any mention of such misdeeds on the part of the Nawab except the mention of those of his counsellors. To remove bad counsellors from a Prince is no doubt worth attempting and everybody except the Governor

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100. Ghasseti Begam and Ameena Begam.

himself and his supporters, was under the impression that Vansittart was going "to remove some of the Subah's ministers and to consult with him on the means of restoring his affairs".[101] But it appears from the whole of the transactions that his sole design was to deprive Mir Jafar of his power and influence once and for all, instead of devising any means enabling him to deal with his counsellors with a strong hand. Mir Jafar was not obstinate against good advice, as is evident from the extraordinary influence that Clive used to exercise over him. "Had there been the least attempt to convince him in a friendly manner of any errors in his administration or of the necessity of dismissing from his presence those who ill advised him, it is not to be doubted he would have hearkened to reason."[102] It can be said without the least doubt that if the Governor had rendered his whole-hearted support to the deposed Nawab, he could easily have restored peace and order in the country. But unfortunately neither did he discuss his scheme, if any, of reforming the Nawab's Government in the Council, nor did he care to know the Nawab's sentiments thereon, before or even after concluding the secret treaty with Mir Kasim.

Again Mir Jafar has been accused of violating his treaty with the English. But it is evident from the whole transactions that the violations of that treaty were effected

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101. Scrafton's Observations on Vansittart's Narrative - vide Tract vol. 378 p.27.

102. Ibid, A letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762 (vide First Report 1772 p.254).

by the English authorities themselves. It should be remembered that in his conference with the old Nawab at Moradbagh, Vansittart did not dare to cite any instance of such violation nor is there any such mention of it in all his letters presented to the Nawab, on the contrary, the secret treaty concluded with Mir Kasim is sufficient proof of the violation of the treaty subsisting already[103] between the Nawab and the English. It is rather surprising to find in an agreement with a private person such a clause as the following:- "Betwixt us," the English and Mir Kasim Khan, "a firm friendship and union is established; his enemies are our enemies and his friends are our friends." From the very beginning of his Governorship to the last moment of Mir Jafar's deposition, Vansittart all along had acted with duplicity without giving him any hint of his true intentions.[104] Moreover Mir Jafar had a specific assurance of the friendship and support of the English which is evident from a letter of the Court of Directors wherein they declared, "As it is our most earnest desire to keep up a perfect harmony with your Excellency, we give such directions to our esteemed Governor H. Vansittart - and the rest of our servants at Calcutta for cultivating and

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103. Beveridge - History of India I p.669. A letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762, (vide First Report 1772 p.252)

104. Transactions in India etc. (Debrit) p.39. Scrafton's Observations on Vansittart's Narrative. (vide Tract vol. 378 p.27,)The East India Observer -(Anonymous) - vide, Orme MSS. vol. J p.70.

preserving the same, that we flatter ourselves the loss your Excellency has sustained on Colonel Clive's returning to his native country, will be fully made up by his and their endeavours to serve your Excellency with equal zeal and success."[105] Besides this, Vansittart had likewise received a special order from that Court that "the best understanding with the Nawab on your part is so essentially necessary at all times that we shall depend upon your cultivating and preserving it by every method that prudence can suggest."[106] In fact, Vansittart ignored this solemn charge, thereby taking upon himself the responsibility of violating the treaty with the old Nawab.[107]

It must be said that the country and Government at that time needed a thorough reformation, but that could have been easily done in conjunction with the old Nawab if the English Governor had been more tactful. That the old Mir Jafar was a weak and timid man is unquestionably true and "his failings and crimes after his good fortune triumphed, had been many." And he was not equal to the task of Government. But nevertheless he could have easily been prevailed upon to effect necessary reforms in his Government[108] if the Governor had possessed

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105. Letter from the Court of Directors to Mir Jafar - 13 March 1760. (vide Bengal Despatches II 1760).

106. Letter to Vansittart 23 March 1760.

107. Law's Mémoire - p.454.

108. A letter etc. to Secret Comm. 11 March 1762 (vide First Report 1772 p.253).

something of the masterful personality of Clive. Vansittart himself has admitted that the Nawab in the conference with him at Moradbagh, agreed to follow any advice that "I should propose to him."[109] But unfortunately no such advice ever came from his side. On the other hand, the Governor made a great mistake in overestimating the sincerity and zeal of his protege Mir Kasim, who ultimately proved to be more tyrannical and oppressive than Mir Jafar and the consequence was that within a short time, the country was again thrown into chaos and confusion.

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109. Vansittart's letter to Select Comm. 15 October 1760. (vide Ben. Sel. Cons. - 20 October 1760).

CHAPTER VIII

THE RESTORATION OF MIR JAFAR - 1763

In installing Mir Kasim on the throne of Bengal, the main object of the English Governor was to bolster up the finances of the Company,[1] which had been suffering acutely from the maintenance of armies and expensive fortifications and also from the diminution of its trade. But within a short space of time, Vansittart realised his mistake in entertaining an exaggerated idea of Mir Kasim's importance and attachment to the English. It should be admitted that unlike Mir Jafar, Mir Kasim was not only ambitious, but also a man of great personality.[2] Naturally he was not likely to remain under the control of the English. He had closely watched the two changes of Government, one under Mir Jafar in 1757 and the other under himself in 1760, and had witnessed the utter subordination and helplessness of his predecessor. Moreover the above-mentioned 'coups' had shown him also the inconsistencies of the English with regard to their solemn undertakings to the Nawabs. So from the very beginning of his reign, Mir Kasim was bent on emancipating himself from the English, either by diplomacy or war.[3]

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1. Letter to Court - 16 January 1761.
2. Malleson - The Decisive Battles p. 133.
3. Ben. Sel. Cons. 17 January 1763, 15 February 1763, 12 April1763 and 4 July 1763.

Without going into details it suffices to say that the question of private inland trade at last brought about the crisis and the inevitable clash between the new Nawab and the English. On the one hand there was a vigorous campaign by the English officials and their agents for unlimited freedom of inland trade, with all the likely ill effects on the Nawab's revenues and the trade of the Indian merchants, while on the other hand, Mir Kasim was determined to put a specific limit on that trade and to assume independence of English control.[4] The strained relations which developed could not last long and eventually the attack of the English on Patna and the subsequent murder of Amyatt[5] by the Nawab, brought about the final rupture.

This murder could not fail to excite a great ferment in Calcutta. All the members of the Council, except the Governor himself and Hastings, at once assembled with a hostile attitude and discussed the matter with the Governor whom they thought to be in sympathy with Mir Kasim.[6] After a heated discussion, it was decided by the majority of the Council, with the exception of Vansittart and Hastings,

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4. Vansittart's letter to Court - 29 April 1764. Riyaz p.388.

5. Amyatt was sent on a peace mission to Mir Kasim in the month of April 1763. On his return from Murshidabad to Calcutta, he was attacked and killed by the Nawab's sepoys on 3 July.

6. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. Vol. V p. 615). Siyar II p. 477.

that war should be immediately declared against Mir Kasim. But a problem soon arose as to what was to be the fate of the 'masnad' of Bengal in the event of the subsequent defeat of the reigning Nawab. Was it to pass over to the Company or to some other person? As to the former, the Directors definitely would not have liked to see the Company as Sovereign because the Government, in their view, was not the function of a body of traders.[7] But the difficulty confronting the Council was that so long as Mir Kasim should hold the reins of Government, it would not be possible either to gain their own ends or to gain the support of the people in general and that of the nobles in particular. Therefore it was thought prudent to depose him and simultaneously to appoint somebody else in his stead. The question then arose as to who should succeed Mir Kasim. With one voice the members of the Council proposed the name of Mir Jafar. Supporting Mir Jafar's restoration, Major Carnac observed that in doing so they should perform "an atonement which he (Carnac) looks upon as due to him (Mir Jafar) for the injustice he thinks was done him in deposing him."[8] He opined that Mir Jafar should be proclaimed at Calcutta and taken up with Major Adams to Murshidabad and placed on the 'masnad'.[9] At the same time, he advised the

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7. R. Muir - Making of British India p. 4.

8. vide Vansittart's Narrative III p. 321.

9. Ibid.

Board to publish a manifesto setting forth the reasons for the change of Government. He believed that Mir Jafar would be the most suitable person to succeed as "from the consideration in which he has for many years been held, must have a number of friends, several of the most considerable persons in the country will flock to his standard."[10] Batson, another member of the Council also supported Mir Jafar's restoration. "We reinstate the old Nawab," he opined, "in his government of which he has been unjustly deprived, hereby, I think, we shall attain the desirable end of establishing the Company's affairs on a solid foundation and clear ourselves of the imputation of a breach of faith which ... has been cast on the nation in general."[11] The Governor being in the minority, had no alternative but to accept the proposal of the Council and from the beginning to the end of this transaction, he merely carried out the wishes of the majortiy.[12]

Having resolved upon the restoration of Mir Jafar,[13] a committee was then appointed to draw up the articles of the treaty to be concluded with him, and on 6 July, the committee submitted a draft of the treaty with the following articles:-[14]

i) that Mir Jafar should confirm to the Company the cession

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10. Ibid
11. Ibid p. 324
12. Vansittart's letter to Court - 29 April 1764
13. Ben. Sel. Cons. 4 July 1763.
14. Ibid, 6 July 1763. Vansittart's Narrative III pp.336-40.

of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur and Chittagong, made by Mir Kasim, for ever.

2) that he should confirm to the English the privilege of carrying on their trade by means of their own 'dastaks' free from all duties in all parts of the country, excepting the commodity of salt, on which a duty of 2½ percent should be paid to the restored Nawab.

3) that he should grant the Company the exclusive right of purchasing the salt-petre of Purnea and the right, for a period of five years, of making 'chunam' in the district of Sylhet, half of which should be delivered to the Nawab.

4) that he should not maintain more than 6000 horse and 12000 foot for the protection of his frontiers and collection of his revenues.

5) that he should agree to a body of English troops being always posted near his person, and that a Company's servant should reside at his Court to transact affairs between the Company and the Nawab's Government.

6) that he should revoke the late 'parwannahs' issued by Mir Kasim, granting to all merchants the exemptions of duties, as they were highly destructive of the immunities enjoyed by the Company.

7) that he should agree to cause the rupees coined in Calcutta to pass in every respect throughout his Government without any deduction.

8) that he should pay 30 lakhs of rupees to the Company for

the losses they might sustain from the impending war, and 10 lakhs of rupees to all private persons for the losses they might sustain in their trade.

9) that all sums of money which might exceed the losses sustained by the Company and the private persons, would be faithfully restored to the Nawab.

10) that whatever treasures or effects belonging to Mir Kasim might be seized at Monghyr or elsewhere, would be put in the possession of the Nawab to enable him to make good the stipulation proposed in article 8.

11) That if the Company failed to seize Mir Kasim's treasures and effects, the Nawab in that case should assign the revenues of certain lands towards making good the sums stipulated.

12) that he should renew the treaty which had been concluded with the Dutch in the year 1760, but with regard to the French, he should promise not to permit them to build forts or hold any lands whatever exclusive of their trading factories.

The Council proposed to include these articles in a public treaty to be ratified between the Company and Mir Jafar.

A close study of these articles, shows that they were to the distinct advantage of the Company and its servants without the slightest consideration either for the restored Nawab or for the interests of the country in general.

Naturally they could not lose sight of the two important members of the Council, namely Vansittart and Hastings. The former, though he approved the articles in general, could not help but raise objections to article 2, which, in his opinion, "extends the privilege of our private trade beyond the true intent and meaning of our 'farmans', beyond what is consistent with the English reputation in the country and with a good understanding with the Nawab and this without any benefit to the Company."[15] Hastings likewise objecting to some of the articles, observed that as a neutral member, what he proposes for an alteration in the articles "would be for the good of the country whose interests may be essentially affected by them."[16] But their objections were not supported by the Council.

Having completed these transactions, it was agreed that Major Adams, Major Carnac, Batson and Cartier should be appointed to a deputation to wait on Mir Jafar in order to acquaint him with the resulutions of the Council in favour of his restoration, together with the substance of these articles and to report immediately his answers to the Council. Further if he seemed likely to accept the Government on the terms mentioned above, they should recommend to him that he should use his influence in seeking the

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15. Vansittart's Narrative III, p.342.

16. Ibid.

support of such of the country people as might be attached to his cause and particularly to appoint strong officers for collecting the revenues of the Provinces by force.[17]

Here it should be borne in mind that Mir Jafar was kept in the dark until the deputation of English officials waited on him at his Chitpur palace and acquainted him with the resolution of the Council. Though it came to him as a great surprise, nevertheless he was not the man to miss the opportunity. So he agreed to resume the Government, but before he would enter upon business, he desired to have delivered to him a copy of the articles in the Persian language[18] and made two requests to be complied with immediately, viz. to allow him to take Khwajah Petrus along with the army and to allow him to take into his service Maharajah Nandakumar as his 'mutasaddee' in order to assist him in starting and carrying on the business.[19] The deputation did not give him an immediate reply, but reported the matter to the Council.

Upon the strength of this report, the English Council became sure of Mir Jafar's readiness to accept the throne and hence they immediately issued the Proclamation in his favour[20] without doing anything to satisfy his requests.

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17. Ibid. Third Report 1773 p. 358.

18. Ben. Sel. Cons. 6 July 1763. Vansittart's Narrative III p. 347.

19. Ibid.

20. Ben. Sel. Cons. 7. July 1763. Third Report 1773 p.357. Vansittart's Narrative III p.327. Trans. P.L.J 1762 p.63.

The proclamation ran "The Nawab Mir Muhammad Kasim Khan having entered upon and committed acts of open hostility against the English nation and the interest of the English United East India Company, we, on their behalf are reduced to the necessity of declaring war against him and having come to a resolution of placing the Nawab Mir Muhammad Jafar Ali Khan Bahadur again in the Government, we now proclaim and acknowledge him as 'Subahdar' of the Provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa ... we do hereby require all manner of persons under our jurisdiction and also invite all other officers and inhabitants of the country to repair to the standard of Mir Muhammad Jafar Khan Bahadur, to assist him in defeating the designs of the said Kasim Ali Khan and finally establishing himself in the Subahdary."

The Council then considered Mir Jafar's request with regard to Khwajah Petrus and agreed to allow him to take the Khwajah along with the army.[21] Then they took into consideration his other request with regard to Nandakumar. Here we notice a division of opinions. The Governor and Hastings objected to Nandakumar's appointment as 'mutasaddee' because they both considered him "a dangerous man and not fit to be trusted."[22] But other members, while supporting

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21. Ben. Sel. Cons. 7 July 1763. Vansittart's Narrative III, p.351.

22. Ben. Sel. Cons. 7 July 1763. Vansittart's Narrative III pp. 347-49.

Vansittart's opinion of Nandakumar, were of the opinion that "if Mir Jafar should be still desirous of appointing Nandakumar as his 'mutasaddee', it shall be admitted him."[23]

Having concluded these debates, the deputation was again sent to present to Mir Jafar the articles of the new treaty written in the Persian language. He examined them with Nandakumar and made the following alterations. In Article I, Mir Jafar objected to the words that the three Provinces should be invested in "the Company for ever," alleging that it would amount to a complete cession of territory which he had no right to make, and that it might be objected to by the Emperor when the latter would be established at Delhi, and therefore he "desires the articles may run as formerly for defraying the expenses of the English army."[24] In Article 3, he "desires he may have half the produce of the Purnea salt-petre" for his own use. In Article 4, he insisted on increasing the number of his forces to 12000 horse and 12000 foot on account of the addition of territory by the reduction of Bhojpur and Betiah and added that in case of trouble, he should be allowed to "take more into his service with the consent of the Governor and the Council."[26] In Article 5, he refused to stipulate

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23. Ibid. Vansittart's Narrative III p.351.

24. Ibid. Vansittart's Narrative III p.356.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

that a body of English troops should always attend him, alleging that it would imply a suspicion of his friendship and good intentions toward the English and therefore insisted that "such a number of troops as he, at any time, should desire, should be sent to attend him."[27] In Article 8, he agreed to pay 30 lakhs of rupees to the Company but expressed his inability to pay 10 lakhs to private individuals.[28]

The Council unanimously admitted the first four alterations to be "very just" and they raised no objection to Mir Jafar's inability to pay 10 lakhs of rupees to private individuals. Apparently they were in a hurry because the state of affairs (which made his presence at Murshidabad as soon as possible absolutely necessary) would not admit of time being wasted in discussing them further.[29]

At last on 10 July, the new treaty[30] was concluded. On the part of the Company, the Council promised to reinstate Mir Jafar in the Government of the three provinces, Bengal, Bihar and Orissa by the deposing of Mir Kasim and such effects, treasures, jewels etc. belonging to Mir Kasim which might fall into their hands were to be delivered up to Mir Jafar.[31]

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27. Ibid.

28. Evidence of Nandakumar 19 August 1766. (vide, H.M.S. vol. 196 p.136).

29. Ben. Sel. Cons. 7 July 1763. Vansittart's Narrative III p.358.

30. Aitchison - Treaties etc. II p.233.

31. Ibid.

On his part, Mir Jafar promised to respect all the articles presented to him by the Council as altered by him. But in view of his previous experience, he now appeared to adopt a more cautious and intelligent attitude as he put forward a note demanding certain assurances in order to safeguard his interests and position. He wrote to the Council in clear terms that "(1) I formerly acquainted the Company with the particulars of my own affairs and received from them repeated letters of encouragement and kindness with presents. I now make this request that you will write in a proper manner to the Company and also to the King of England, the particulars of our friendship and union and procure for me writings and encouragements that my mind may be assured from that quarter that no breach may ever happen between me and the English, and that every Governor, Counsellor and chief of the English that is here or may come hereafter, may be well disposed and attached to me."[32] Among other things he wrote that "(2) whatever I may at any time write, they will give their credit and assent, nor regard the stories of designing men to my prejudice, that all my affairs may go on with success and no occasion may arise for jealousy or ill will between us. (3) "Let no protection be given by any of the English gentlemen to any of my dependents who may fly for shelter to Calcutta, or other of your districts, but let them be delivered up to

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32. Ibid - p.235.

me on demand. (4) "From the neighbourhood of Calcutta to Hugli and many of their 'parganahs' bordering upon each other, it happens that on complaints being made, people got against the 'talukdars', ryots and tenants of my town, to the prejudice of the business of the 'circar', whereof let strict orders be given that no peons be sent from Calcutta on the complaint of anyone, upon my 'talukdars' or tenants, but on such occasions let application be made to me or to the 'naibs' of the faujdary of Hugli that the country may be subject to no loss or devastations .... (5) "Whenever I may demand any forces from the Governor and the Council for my assistance, let them be immediately sent to me and no demand made on me for their expenses."[33]

It can be presumed that Mir Jafar intended to remove the possibility of any recurrence of those misunderstandings from which he had suffered during his previous reign. As the very existence of the English was at stake at this juncture, in the event of war with Mir Kasim, they apparently agreed to these requests and assured him accordingly.[34]

Thus came Mir Jafar to the 'masnad' again. And once again the Company, saluting him as the Subahdar, hastened to the battlefield. Just as previously they deposed Sirajud-daulah on the strength of a secret treaty with Mir

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33. Ibid p.236.

34. Ben. Sel. Cons. 10 July 1763. Siyar II p.479. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.615).

Jafar, now for the same reason they had joined hands to depose Mir Kasim, the independence-loving Nawab of Bengal. The only material difference was that in the former case the English came forward at the instigation of the Bengalees, while in the latter case, the Bengalees were being spurred and invited by the English.

Here it should be remembered that as at the time of the two former changes of Governments in 1757 and 1760, the Council at Calcutta took upon themselves the responsibility of action without securing the approval of the Court of Directors beforehand, similarly in the present case, the Council carried through the whole transaction and did not inform the Court of Directors until 9 May 1763, when the Directors for the first time came to know the intended resolution of the Council to effect a change of Government in favour of Mir Jafar. This no doubt, astonished them because it was in total disregard of their injunctions.[35] It is evident from a study of the records that the Directors were not at all in favour of any such change of Government in the country at that time. So in their letters of 30 December 1763 and that of 9 February 1764, they specifically advised their servants to arrange the matter amicably with Mir Kasim and avoid taking any extreme action. But in the

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35. Letters from Court to Bengal - 30 December 1763. 9 February 1764, 9 May 1764.

event of their failure to do so, they were advised to select somebody else other than Mir Jafar to succeed. "If a change in the Government," emphatically wrote the Court of Directors,"should have become unavoidable, that some other, not Jafar Ali Khan may have been appointed Mir Kasim's successor."[36] But long before this advice of the Court reached Bengal, the restoration of Mir Jafar was completed. However, as soon as they were acquainted with this fact,[37] the Court of Directors finally approved it and specifically advised their servants in Bengal to make it permanent and prevent any further disturbances in the country.[38]

After the preliminaries of the restoration were over, Nawab Mir Jafar Khan set out to join the English army under Major Adams which was then on its march towards Murshidabad.[39] Thus war was virtually declared against Mir Kasim. On 24 July, the old Nawab accompanied by the English army entered the city without serious opposition and occupied the Palace.[40] This incident at once filled the city with commotion and disorder, in consequence of which, an unruly mob found means to commit acts of violence and to seize booty.[41] In order to

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36. Ibid 9 February 1764.
37. Letter to Court 29 September 1763. Vansittart's letter to Court 8 October 1763. Vansittart's letter to Secret Comm 24 December 1763.
38. Letter to Bengal - 1 June 1764.
39. Letter to Court - 1 April 1764. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.615)
40. Muzaffarnamah F 275A, Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.616.)
41. Siyar II p.486.

restore peace and order, Major Adams without loss of time, established Mir Jafar on the throne in the proper style[42] and proclaimed his accession throughout the Capital by the beating of drums.[43] It is difficult to judge whether the population of the Capital were happy at this accession of Mir Jafar, but this much is evident that his restoration had been welcomed by the well-to-do citizens and nobles who had been passing their days in suspense and fear. They appeared in the Palace, made presents and congratulated him.[44] Many of the adherents of Mir Kasim at Murshidabad, opportunists as they were, now flocked to his standard in order to secure themselves. The Old Nawab issued 'parwannahs' to the several Rajahs and Zamindars, calling upon them to stop paying any further revenues to Mir Kasim and new officers were appointed to restore order and to collect the revenues on his behalf.[45] The Governor of Purnea, Mir Ruhuddin Husain Khan, acknowledged Mir Jafar as his sovereign, proclaimed his accession throughout the district and sent presents to Murshidabad. The old Nawab

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42. Letters to Court - 29 September 1763. 1 April 1764.

43. Ibid, Muzaffarnahah F 275A. Trans. P.L.J. July - December 1763 p. 6.

44. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. V p.616). Broome, Bengal Army I p.375.

45. Ben. Pub. Cons. 16 August 1763. Trans. P.L.J. 1759-65 p.22.

was pleased with the course of events and he extolled Mir Muhuddin and confirmed his authority over his Government at Purnea.[46] In the meantime, the Nawab despatched a small body of his troops towards Dacca which was easily captured and he appointed Muhammad Reza Khan as his 'naib' there.[47] Thus with Mir Jafar's restoration and the consolidation of his power at Murshidabad, a parallel Government was set up which weakened the foundation of Mir Kasim's authority in the province of Bengal.

Having made the necessary preparations for the ensuing campaign, the old Nawab came out of the city and marched towards Monghyr accompanied by an English army. Throughout the campaigns against Mir Kasim, the old Nawab played a minor part militarily. He was a mere camp-follower of the English, accompanying them from Murshidabad to Monghyr and thence to Patna.

Without going into details, it is enough to say that the combined strength of the old Nawab and the English resulted in successive victories over Mir Kasim at Katwa, Murshibabad, Giria, Sooty, Udanala and Monghyr.[48] Mir Kasim could nowhere make a firm stand and was driven at last to Patna. Meanwhile Mir Jafar took possession of the fort of

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46. SiyarII p.516.

47. Muzaffarnamah F275B. Trans. P.L.I. 1759-65 p.28.

48. Ben. Pub. Cons. 5, 18, 19 September 1763.

Monghyr and having appointed a deputy there, he marched with his English allies to Patna[49] where a severe engagement took place on 6 November. Mir Kasim's army was totally routed and the fort was occupied. With the loss of Patna, vanished the last hope of Mir Kasim and he took refuge in Oudh and there sought the assistance of Shujaud-daulah, the ruler of that country.[50]

After the expulsion of Mir Kasim from Patna, the old Nawab, with the help of the English Commanders, at once busied himself with the settlement and administration of the Province of Bihar. He first sent a number of officials to take charge of the different districts in that Province and to collect revenues.[51] He dismissed some of the officials who were the most trusted adherents of Mir Kasim at Patna and appointed his own brother, Mir Kazem Khan, as the Governor of the Province. To assist him, Maharajah Dhiraj-narain was nominated as his deputy.[52] Mir Jafar knew quite well that Maharajah Dhiraj-narain was not worthy of that high rank, and we may wonder why he was so appointed? Gulam Husain, in answer, might well

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49. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. VI p.129). Trans P.L.I. July-December 1763 p. 63.

50. Ben. Pub. Cons. 8 November 1763.

51. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. VI p.132). Trans. P.L.I. July-December 1763 p. 62.

52. Ibid. Siyar II p. 555. Muzaffarnahah - F275A. Trans. P.L.R. July - December 1763 pp. 37-39, Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p. 29.

say, "that he was possessed of the merit of having had a brother drowned by Mir Kasim and of the greater one of being himself in disgrace with that prince, for it had become a standing rule of Mir Jafar Khan's politics to depress to the utmost every one of those that might have been in favour with his rival, although ever so worthy of promotion and likewise so remarkable for abilities and on the contrary, to raise and promote all those that had been in disgrace with him although ever so unworthy or so incapable ... Any one that had proved a traitor to Mir Kasim, never failed whether at Azimabad or at Murshidabad, to become an object of regard to be promoted to offices and to enjoy the old man's confidence."[53] Having settled the Governmental affairs at Patna and placing a strong force at the disposal of his brother Mir Kazem Khan, the old Nawab, accompanied by the English Commanders, left Patna[54] in pursuit of Mir Kasim and remained encamped on the banks of the Karamnasa.

Mir Jafar knew well that although his authority had been re-established over the Provinces, yet he could not expect to keep the obedience of his subjects permanently unless he could secure the royal 'farman' for holding the 'masnad'.[55] Hence he became anxious at this stage to secure

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53. Siyar II p.556.

54. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. VI p.132). Muzaffarnarmah F275B.

55. Carnac's letter to the Council 14 June 1764. (vide Third Report 1773 p.379).

this which he could easily have done if Mir Kasim had not fallen into the hands of the ambitious 'wazir' of Oudh, Nawab Shujaud-daulah, whose aim was to fish in troubled waters and possibly to annex the whole or at least a part of the Province of Bengal to his dominions. Here it should be remembered that upon Mir Kasim's arrival in Oudh and at his subsequent appeal for assistance, Shujaud-daulah became more hopeful of the fulfilment of his cherished ambition and so he immediately hastened with the wondering Emperor Shah Alam, whose prospect of securing the throne of Delhi was depending on the wazir, to Allahabad in order to get in touch with Mir Kasim.

Seeing the possibility of this cohesion between Shujaud-daulah and Mir Kasim, Shitab Rai[56] a well-wisher of both Mir Jafar and the English at once exerted himself to thwart the designs of Mir Kasim. He sent a letter to Mir Jafar, through his agent Sadhuram, advising him to apply formally to the Emperor and Shujaud-daulah to issue a 'Sanad' in his name for holding the three provinces. Sadhuram was most cordially received by the old Nawab and the English upon his arrival at Karamnasa.[57] The letter of Shitab Rai

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56. Shitab Rai had been serving under Maharajah Beni Bahadur, the Prime Minister of Shujaud-daulah.

57. Shitab Rai being the father of Kalyan Singh, the latter's narrative is of special value. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. VI p.133).

impressed Mir Jafar who considered the influential position of Shitab Rai at the 'darbar' of Shujaud-daulah, to be the most suitable opportunity for enlisting the sympathy of the wazir and influencing him to expel Mir Kasim from his military camp.[58] As he was upheld in his opinion by the English general Major Adams, it was at last decided by them that Shitab Rai should exert himself to secure three things; that the Government of Bengal should be conferred on Mir Jafar; that its administration should be vested in the hands of the English council; and that Mir Kasim, Samroo and the English deserters should be delivered up into the hands of the English or be expelled from Shujaud-daulah's dominions.[59] Along with his letter to Shitab Rai, the Nawab presented an address to the Emperor and the wazir, duly sealed and signed and a cheque for 5 lakhs of rupees as a fee for patents of appointment.[60]

Upon the receipt of this representation from Mir Jafar, the wazir, in the hope of extracting a handsome amount of money from him, demanded the arrears of the Emperor's 'peskash', the wazir's 'nazaranah' in ready money. Further he demanded that the English should stand as security for

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58. Ibid.

59. Ibid p.134.

60. Kalyan Singh (p.134) gives 6 lakhs, while Ben. Sec. Comm's letter to Carnac, dated 2 February 1764, gives 5 lakhs, which is more likely to be correct. (vide, Ben. Sec. Cons. 2 February 1764).

the payment of the Emperor's revenues in future in return for the Subahdary 'Sanads' to be granted to Mir Jafar.[61] On being acquainted with these demands the English authorities at Calcutta refused to approve them. "Neither do we think," wrote the Council to Major Adams, "considering the King's present situation and the state of the Empire that these 'Sanads' are of any such consequence as to make the Nawab anxious for obtaining them at the great expense ..."[62] So they advised the Major to acquaint the Nawab with their sentiments and to recommend to him not to make any promise of money on that account, pointing out to him at the same time that the "weight and security he derives from our protection is greatly superior to any that can be conveyed him by these 'Sanads' and that all the money he can collect will be wanted to pay his own troops and fulfil his agreement with the Company."[63] Besides this the Council thought that the Nawab's independent negotiations with the Wazir and the Emperor, would make it difficult to get Mir Kasim, Samroo and the English deserters punished or delivered up into their hands.[64]

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61. Ben. Sec. Cons. - 8 December 1763.

62. vide, Ben. Sec. Cons. 8 December 1763.

63. Ibid, 2 February 1764. Third Report 1773 p.564.

64. Ibid, 30 December 1763.

Although Mir Jafar knew that he had the support of the English yet he could not be sure of his 'Subahdary' until he got the Emperor's confirmation. So notwithstanding the Council's advice, he continued negotiating independently with the Wazir and executed an agreement to pay to the Emperor 28 lakhs of rupees (of which 2 lakhs were annually payable to the Wazir) annually and a 'peskash' of 5 lakhs with a view to obtaining the 'Sanads'. He then endeavoured in secret to remit one half of the above sum to the Court,[65] but for some reason or other he could not do so immediately.

In the meantime upon the receipt of Mir Jafar's agreement to pay the above-mentioned sums to the Emperor, the Wazir prepared the 'Sanads' and answers to the petitions from him and the English. He then handed them over to Kalyan Singh (the author of the Khulasat) together with robes of honour for the Nawab as well as for the English officials. Having journeyed for two days, Kalyan Singh reached the camp of Mir Jafar (23 March 1764) on the other side of the Karamnasa. Sadhuram who was present at that time in the camp of the old Nawab, at once acquainted him with this good news. What followed next may be related here in Kalyan Singh's own words: "In the afternoon I got up, dressed, mounted my elephant, took up my men and associates with me and proceeded to the camp of Mir Jafar Khan..

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65. Ben. Sec. Cons. - 2 February 1764, Third Report 1773 p.364.

As soon as I arrived near the Nawab's carpet, I made a very respectful bow and made a present of 5 gold 'mohurs'. His Excellency embraced me and made a sign that I should interview the English officials. I turned towards them. Major Carnac, Major Adams, Major Fletcher, Major Knox and two or three other English officials ... stood up and one after another came to my side ... I stated that under the direction of my father, I had brought with me all the necessary orders and papers. The Nawab then made a sign and all the courtiers except the English officials and Rai Sadhuram retired, whereupon under His Excellency's order I related the facts from the beginning to the end ... Both the Nawab and the English officials thanked me for what I had done ... and they expressed their greatest pleasure when they saw the agreement ... and especially the costumes bestowed by His Majesty."[66] It was then decided that according to the Emperor's orders, Kalyan Singh should publicly read the 'farman' and put the costumes bestowed by the Emperor on the Nawab and the English officials.

About the crowning ceremony of Mir Jafar, Kalyan Singh writes, "In the morning (24 March) I put the King's 'Khilat' on one elephant and myself rode on another elephant and proceeded in state towards the camp ... At about 9 or 10 a.m.

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66. Khulasat (J.B.O.R.S. Vi pp. 141-142) This narration is substantially supported by letters in C.P.C. I. The author of Muzaffarnamah says that Shitab Rai came with these robes of honour for Mir Jafar which seems to be wrong. See Muzaffarnamah F276A.

both the Nawab and the English officials arrived near the camp in full state ... The Nawab and the English officials got down and with some selected attendants got into the camp. According to the custom prevailing among Kings and the great Wazirs, I dressed the Nawab with the 'Khilat' and tied the sword to his waist. In just the same manner, I put on the dresses on the persons of the English recipients of honour and fastened the swords to their waists. All the recipients of honour then turned in the direction of the camp of the King and made obeisances to him. Mir Jafar Khan made a present of 1001 gold 'mohurs' and each of the six English officials presents of 101 gold 'mohurs'. These presents were made to His Majesty ... I then read aloud the 'Sanad' of Subahdarship which was granted in the name of Nawab Mir Jafar Khan and the Sanad of Diwanship which was granted in the name of the East India Company, as well as the treaty. These proceedings allayed the public excitement.[67] Mir Jafar was very much pleased with the ability of Kalyan Singh and so out of gratitude, he bestowed upon him a reward of one lakh of rupees in cash and some other valuable articles.[68]

This confirmation of Mir Jafar in the Subahdari was not approved by the English authorities because the sum mentioned

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67. Ibid pp. 142-143. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.56.

68. Ibid.

in the agreement seemed to them too much for the Nawab to supply in the present circumstances and besides, nothing was decided by that agreement for the punishment of Mir Kasim, Sambroo and the English deserters.[69] However, the Nawab might have persuaded them to acquiesce in this settlement with the Emperor but it was set to naught very shortly by the Wazir himself, who, on a fresh promise of Mir Kasim, to pay him a huge sum of money for his participation on his behalf, took up his cause and pledged his support.[70]

The situation became very critical for the Nawab and, instead of taking a firm stand in support of the English, he began to temporize with the Wazir with a view to defending his newly acquired confirmation. So he again opened fresh negotiations which encouraged Shujaud-daulah to write him under the guise of friendship, promising his attachment to the old Nawab and asked him to act as a manager of the three provinces which had been bestowed by the Emperor upon his son Assafud-daulah.[71] It should be borne in mind that in these negotiations the Wazir's main objects were to sow seeds of discord between Mir Jafar and the English, to win over the former to his side, or if possible, to carry him off by

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69. Letter to Court - 20 March 1764.

70. Ben. Sec. Cons. 3 April 1764.

71. Shujaud-daulah's letter to Mir Jafar - no date. (vide Third Report 1773 p.373.)

some treacherous means[72] and thereby finally to compel the English to grant him territorial concessions.[73] Instead of understanding the true intentions of the Wazir, the Nawab actually became hopeful of holding his Subahdary with the help of the Wazir. But he was quite aware of the fact at the same time that unless the demands of the English were complied with, they would never approve any arrangement with the Wazir and the Emperor. Therefore advocating the friendship and attachment of the English, he requested the Wazir to do them justice by punishing Mir Kasim and the other deserters, whereby, both his and their "attachment and hearty obedience would daily increase."[74]

Being confirmed of Mir Jafar's attachment and his absolute reliance upon him, the Wazir at once instructed his adherent, Assad Ali Khan, to put before the Nawab the following demand, "Let the province of Bihar be resigned, the authority rests with us, we will appoint whomsoever we please to the 'Niabat' of the province. When this point is agreed to, we will consider about punishing the enemy and doing justice to the English, otherwise they must be rooted out and destroyed."[75] This demand doubtless at first

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72. Carnac's letter to the President, 1 June 1764 (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 11 June 1764).

73. Third Report 1773 p.375.

74. The Nawab's letter to the Wazir - no date. (vide Third Report 1773 p.373). Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65. pp. 57-58.

75. Assad Ali Khan's letter to Mir Jafar 15 May 1764. (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 29 May 1764) Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.83.

amazed the Nawab and as he had no power to grant any sort of concessions to anybody without the sanction of the Council, he wrote to Assad Ali Khan in reply on 15 May, "What shall I write to so unjust and unreasonable a demand? How can I consent to a proposal so foreign to my own inclinations and so contrary to the rules of friendship? ... I have by no means neglected the duties of obedience and fidelity, I placed my whole dependence upon the Wazir and not to any one else and now this is the reward I reap ... If you think it unjust and improper to inflect due punishment upon such a tyrant and murderer (Mir Kasim) on account of his having put himself under the protection of the King and the Wazir, with what right do you order me to give up the province of Bihar which has so lately been confirmed to my by "farmans" and 'Sanads' under their seals? In case I now consent to this demand, what remains for me to do hereafter?"[76] After despatching this letter, the old Nawab appeared to be in a dilemma because he neither desired to part with an inch of his territory,[77] nor did he wish to displease the Wazir by such a refusal.[78] He then consulted his Prime Minister, Maharajah Nandakumar and the other English officials present in his

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76. vide, Third Report 1773 p.376.

77. Ben. Sec. Cons. 12 July 1764.

78. Third Report 1773 p.367.

camp on the course to be taken. They advised him to acquaint the English President at Calcutta with the details of his correspondence with the Wazir and to seek his necessary instructions, which the Nawab did accordingly.[79]

The exchange of these communications between the Nawab and the enemy was viewed with great suspicion by the English authorities. So they decided not to allow the Nawab to carry on any further correspondence of this nature with the enemy without Major Carnac's knowledge, and accordingly instructed the Major that "the Nawab must be ruled by him while the war continued."[80] Besides, they appointed Batson as their agent at the Nawab's 'darbar' in order that he might acquaint them with every transaction.[81] The English authorities, however, could not prevent the Nawab from carrying on secret correspondence. Although he refused to cede the province of Bihar, as already stated, he was still bent upon an understanding with the Wazir instead of depending upon the English support and hence started fresh negotiations.[82] This did not escape the watchful eyes of the English resident, who at once asked the Nawab to show him

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79. The Nawab's letter to the President, 15 May 1764. (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 29 May 1764).

80. Letter to Carnac - 21 May 1764 (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 21 May 1764, Third Report 1773 p.214.)

81. Letter to Batson - 29 May 1764 (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 29 May 1764, Third Report 1773 p.376).

82. Batson's letter to Council - 9 June 1764 (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 21 June 1764).

the latest correspondence. But the Nawab expressed his inability to do so as his 'munshee' had mislaid and lost them.[83] His evasive answer, no doubt, raised suspicion in the mind of Batson which was further strengthened by the arrival of Shitab Rai and the Nawab's deliberate attempt to keep his conversation with Shitab Rai secret from the English agent. When, being pressed to acquaint the agent with the details of the conversation, the Nawab expressed his great dissatisfaction and seemingly answered that Shitab Rai was not charged with any message from the enemy but came through mere friendship to offer his advice regarding future proceedings. But at the same time he did not forget to mention that "the events of war are uncertain and what may be done for one lakh of rupees at present, could not be obtained for 20, if we should happen to receive a check from the enemy."[84] The double-dealings of the Nawab caused Batson to be exceedingly suspicious of him and he so acquainted the Council.[85] Upon hearing his report, the Council at once decided to remove Mir Jafar from Patna. In doing so they had two main objects in view, firstly, the Nawab's presence at Patna and his protracted negotiations with the Wazir, would prevent any effective hostility against the enemy and secondly, the uncertainty

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83. Ibid - 4 July 1764 (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 24 July 1764)

84. Batson's letter to the Council - 13 July (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 24 July 1764).

85. Ibid.

of the situation would prove a heavy burden on the finances of the Company in maintaining a large body of troops in the field for a long time.[86] Besides these considerations, the Council had many other material points to settle with regard to the treaty monies (which we shall discuss in our following chapter) payable by the Nawab. Hence they directed the English resident to ask the Nawab to come down to Calcutta, leaving with Major Carnac the whole body of his cavalry only, and discharging the useless troops of his army.[87]

When the old Nawab was acquainted with the request of the Council he clearly understood the real intentions of the Council and first tried to avoid it by pointing out to the English agent the insecure position of the Province of Bihar at the closer approach of the enemy.[88] He further tried to excuse himself when he told the agent that Major Carnac had been ordered by the Council to leave Patna, and therefore he could not think of leaving Patna at the same time, "since it may be attended with dangerous consequences, the enemy being actually cantoned within 80 miles."[89] However at last the Nawab fell in with the wishes of the Council and set out for Calcutta on 27 July accompanied by Maharajah Nanda,umar

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86. Ben. Sec. Cons. 24 July 1764.

87. Ibid - 11 June 1764.

88. Batson's letter to the Council 22 June (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 2 July 1764)

89. Ibid (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 24 July 1764).

and a few attendants. He duly left his cavalry at Patna.[90] On the eve of his departure, the English resident waited on him and assured him of the Company's intentions to support him in his Government against all odds. The Nawab seemed to be very pleased and expressed his readiness to do anything that might contribute to their mutual interests.[91] After a slow journey of about a month, the Nawab reached Calcutta via Murshidabad in the evening of 3 September, where he was received with great respect by the English officials.[92]

The Nawab remained in Calcutta for three months and a half, during which period he had to endure constant trouble in settling the much-vexed problems of the treaty monies and the private inland trade of the Company's officials and their agents (which we shall discuss in our last chapter). His constant state of irritation and the indignities he suffered[93] at the hands of the English counsellors brought on a serious illness. He repeatedly requested the Council to permit him to retire to his capital but they paid no attention and pressed him to discharge in full his treaty obligations. This had fatal consequences,[94] and after languishing for a few weeks, he was at last on 9 December 1764[95] allowed to return to

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90. Ibid (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 30 July 1764). Siyar II p.556.
91. Ben. Sec. Cons. 6 August 1764.
92. Ibid 4 September 1764. Muzaffarnamah F285B.
93. Serafton's Observations on Vansittart's Narrative (vide Tract Vol. 378 p.50).
94. Muzaffarnamah F285B. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64 pp. 509-12.
95. Ben. Sec. Cons. 6 December 1764.

Murshidabad.[96]

Upon his arrival at the capital, he continued in perfect health for some time.[97] His physicians advised him to continue to rest. But the old Nawab paid no attention and again busied himself in dealing with the Governmental affairs at the capital which had fallen into disorder due to his long absence. He ordered Maharajah Nandakumar to manage the business of the country and the revenues and to sit in the 'darbar' regularly along with him. He then summoned all the principal officials of the Government to render their proper accounts relating to the collection of the revenues, and to discharge the arrears which had assumed a huge sum.[98] All did so except Muhammad Reza Khan, the 'naib' of Dacca, who even refused to pay his visit to the Nawab. The Nawab could not tolerate this disregard of the 'naib' and decided to send a body of his troops to bring him from Dacca by force. But he was prevented by Nandakumar who made him understand that any such action against Reza Khan, a close friend of the English, would displease the English Governor and the Council. The Nawab strongly represented to the Governor that on examining the papers relating to Dacca, he found that in the time of Mir Kasim, Mirza Muhammad Ali had agreed to pay for

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96. Ibid. Muzaffarnamah F285B.

97. Najmud-daulah's letter to Clive - 1 June 1765 (vide Add. MSS. 29070). Trans. P.L.R. 1765 pp. 17-18. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.107.

98. Trans. P.L.R. 1765-64 p.579. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.62.

the 'chakla' of Dacca Rs. 38, 86, 242 of which only Rs. 29, 63, 181 were received. Now Muhammad Reza Khan was desirous of paying as the revenue of the above 'chakla' only Rs. 26, 19, 178, i.e. Rs. 12, 67, 064 less than the sum originally agreed upon. In all Reza Khan had paid Rs. 3, 82, 105 and was indebted to his Government for the remainder. "Perhaps some one at Calcutta," he added, "has made the same Khan easy by telling him that no-one will trouble him about the balances and that is why he has been so remiss in the payment thereof. If he settles the matters with His Excellency, it is well, otherwise whatever may be conducive to the realisation of the money, will be done."[99] As soon as Reza Khan came to know of this attack, he at once made an apparently false complaint to the Governor that the Nawab had treated him very badly by confining him in the fort and stationing a guard of 'harkarrahs' at his house for some days, till Middleton, the English resident, intervened and released him.[100] The Governor, without ascertaining the truth of this accusation, became displeased and sent a strong protest to the Nawab. This strange accusation astonished the Nawab, who replied that "He, (Reza Khan) is at ease in his own house, and if anything to the contrary has been reported to the Governor, it is utterly

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99. Nawab's letter to the Governor - 30 December 1764. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-65 pp.592-93.

100. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65. p.97.

false. He hopes that such talk should not be given credit to, for His Excellency has no desire beyond promoting the good and welfare of his friends. As the above Khan is one of his dependants and an old friend, how he can think of doing anything to his prejudice?"[101] At last, however, upon the Governor's intervention, the matter was settled and Reza Khan agreed to pay Rs. 26, 86, 000 on account of the present year and Rs. 1, 30, 000 on account of the arrears of the last year.[102]

Having concluded these affairs at the capital, the old Nawab once more endeavoured to secure the confirmation for his Government from the Emperor. We have already discussed how he managed to secure it and how ultimately it was turned down by the machinations of the ambitious Wazir. Now the defeat of the Wazir in the battle of Buxor (October 1764) encouraged the Nawab to apply directly to the Emperor who had separated himself from the Wazir and was residing at this time in Benaras. It should be borne in mind that the Wazir, although defeated, did not give up his hopes, and again tried his best to regain the friendship of Mir Jafar and to adjust the affairs with him independently of the Emperor and the English,[103] but to no effect, because the Nawab had had enough

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101. Nawab's letter to the Governor - 10 January 1765. Trans. P.L.R. 1765 pp. 8-9. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.91.

102. Trans. P.L.R. 1765 pp. 5-6.

103. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64 p.591. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.83.

of the Wazir's 'friendly gestures'. So being advised by the English, he sent an envoy to the Emperor with an 'arzi'[104] asking to be confirmed in his Subahship. The Emperor then confirmed the Nawab in his Government and sent the necessary 'Khilats' and robes of honour to him, which the Nawab received in the last week of January 1765.[105]

But he did not enjoy his position for long. The strain of state business proved too heavy for him, and he again fell seriously ill. Realising the fatal and irrecoverable state of his health,[106] he became anxious to settle the succession of his son Najmud-daulah, a boy of 16 years.[107] With this object in view, he delivered to Najmud-daulah, the 'Khilat' (which he had lately received from the Emperor) and several other presents. He recommended Maharajah Nandakumar to act as 'diwan' to his minor son and ordered him to send for Middleton (the English resident) and other English officials as well as his own principal officials, in the presence of whom he placed Najmud-daulah on the 'masnad'. He then invited the principal citizens of the city and requested them to offer their congratulations to the minor Nawab and

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104. Nawab's letter to Governor - 26 December 1764. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.62.

105. Nawab's letter to Governor - 26 January 1765. Trans. P.L.R. 1765 pp.13-14.

106. Najmud-daulah's letter to Clive - 1 June 1765. (vide Add. MSS. 29070) Trans. P.L.R. 1765 pp.17-18. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.107. Ben. Sec. Cons. 21 January 1765.

107. Letter to Court 8 January, 1765. Trans. P.L.R. 1765 pp. 19-20.

to obey him in every respect.[108] In the meantime, his condition grew worse and at last, on 5 February 1765[109] at the age of 74[110] he expired, leaving behind him three children including Najmud-daulah and three Begams. It is reported and affirmed by "several persons of credit," writes Gulam Husain, "that some moments before his demise, he (Nawab) had, on Nandakumar's persuasion, ordered to be brought to him some water that had been poured in libation over the idol at 'Kyrit-konah' (a famous temple of the Hindus in the neighbourhood of Murshidabad) and that some drops of it were poured down the dying man's throat, this being the last water which he tasted."[111]

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108. Najmud-daulah's letter to Clive - 1 June 1765 (vide Add. MSS. 29070). Ben. Sec. Cons. 4 February 1765. Najmud-daulah's letter to Governor - 7 February 1765 (vide, Ben. Sec. Cons - 8 February 1765).

109. Ibid. Middleton's letter to the Council - 5 February 1765. (vide, Ben. Sel. Cons. 8 February 1765). Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.107.

110. Siyar II p.558.

111. Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

MIR JAFAR'S FINANCIAL RELATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH.

On two important occasions, respectively in 1757 and 1763, Mir Jafar got the throne of Bengal on a promise of various privileges and grants both to the Company and to the individual English officials. Each time the English opened up the glittering prospect of the throne of Bengal to Mir Jafar, thereby squeezing out tremendous material advantages exclusively both to their immediate and future interests. In this chapter we shall make an attempt to treat the whole financial transactions between the Nawab and the English in two distinct periods, 1757 - 1760 and 1763 - 1765. On each of these occasions, both public and private treaties were concluded by which the Nawab placed himself under various obligations both to the Company and to the individuals. Over and above these engagements, fresh demands were being put forward from time to time which, in fact, did not fail to create feelings of mistrust and resentment in the Nawab on the one hand, and to confuse his real financial obligations to the English on the other hand.

It is evident from the face of both public and private treaties of 1757 that the Nawab had incurred obligations to the amount of Rs.22,900,000, besides which he had to reward the English officials with huge presents in cash amounting to Rs.58,70,000, whereas his treasury, if drained to its last resources, could yield only 150 lakhs of rupees. There is no doubt that the treasury had been greatly over-rated by the English[1] and the truth seems to have been that Mir Jafar in his eagerness to ascend the throne, had promised a great deal more than the condition of his treasury could afford.[2] So far as the Public treaty is concerned, there is nothing to question the legality of the Nawab's obligations to the Company or to the sufferers. But the Private treaty by which he was placed under an obligation to pay a donation of 52 lakhs of rupees to the Company's army, the navy, as well as to the members of the Committee, is rather subject to criticism, because it was never duly entered in the Committee's proceedings and moreover, it is curious to note that Clive, in his letter to the Secret Committee (26 July 1757), gave a detailed account of the money which

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1. Malcolm - Life of Clive, I, p.276. Thornton - History of British Empire I, p.247. It is to be noted that the Nawab's annual revenue amounted to only Rs.2,54.00,000.
2. Gleig - Memoirs of W. Hastings, I, p.48.

the Nawab promised to pay under the Public treaty, but nowhere in that letter did he mention anything of the Private treaty. This leaves sufficient grounds to suspect whether the Nawab voluntarily promised to donate such a huge sum to the army, the navy and to the Committee, or whether he was so compelled, bearing in mind further that this particular engagement was abruptly made with the Nawab after the Public treaty had already been concluded.

However, as we have already said in Chapter IV, upon examination of the treasury, it was agreed that the Nawab should pay one half of the treaty monies immediately, two-thirds in money and one-third in jewels and goods, and the remainder in three equal yearly payments.[3] Accordingly the payments received in cash were on the following accounts:-[4]

The Company in part of 100 lakhs	...	Rs.33,33,333
The European 'Sufferers' in part of 50 lakhs.	...	Rs.16,66,666
The native 'sufferers' in part of 20 lakhs.	...	Rs. 6,66,666
The Armenian 'sufferers' in part of 7 lakhs.	...	Rs. 2,93,333

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3. Ben. Sel. Cons, 6 July 1757.

4. Clive's letter to the Council, 5 July 1757 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2468).

At further instalments on the same half, the Nawab discharged a sum of Rs. 22,58,778 in cash, Rs.4,30,000 in jewels and plates[5] and 119 bales of cloth and other goods amounting to Rs.21,28,705, to the account of the company and the 'sufferers' in Calcutta.[6] As to the army and the navy, he paid a sum of Rs.20,33,485 by two instalments.[7]

This mode of part payments by the Nawab did not satisfy the authorities at Calcutta. They demanded of the Nawab either to pay the whole amount he had promised by his agreements immediately or to mortgage the revenues of such lands contiguous to Calcutta as would equal the debts to be collected by them till the whole of their demands were discharged.[8] At the same time they instructed Clive to take over the assignments of the lands to be ceded by the Nawab as proposed in Articles 8 and 9 of the Public treaty.[9] Accordingly Clive acquainted the

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5. Letter from Watts and Manningham to the Council, 9 August 1757 (Vide Orme OSS. X, p.2471). Ben. Pub. Cons. 3 September 1757.

6. Ben. Pub. Cons. 24 October 1757.

7. Clive's letters to the Army and Navy Officers, 5 July and 9 August 1757 (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2471)

8. Letter to Court, 10 January 1758.

9. Letter from the Council to Clive, 15 September 1757. (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.185).

Nawab with these instructions and represented to him strongly to pay 25 lakhs of rupees on account for the army and the navy. The Nawab was conscious of the fact that he was under an obligation to settle the lands on the company according to the terms of the treaty, but a further demand for 25 lakhs of rupees, at least at that time when he himself was in great need of it, troubled him much, and so in his reply he told Clive, "It gives me great concern that I have it not in my power to comply with your demands after having received so many favours from you . . . When the treaty was made and the articles relating to the donations agreed on, I then told Watts I was unacquainted with the amount of treasures that might be in the treasury. What is not in my power to do cannot be expected from me, so it is no fault of mine. You and Watts are well satisfied there was not in the treasury effects sufficient to discharge in full the payments agreed on within the time prefixed . . . . It was agreed that the one half should be discharged in full of which I have paid 2 large parts in ready cash and the small part in goods and I am really not able to pay the remainder at present as my own armies are in arrear; the chouth to be paid to the Marathas and a present to the Emperor with the 'Peshkash'

must be sent without delay. However, by God's blessing I hope the first year's payment shall be made one half in the month of October and the remainder in the month of March following; further I cannot offer as it is not in my power. But provided you and your people are content to take jewels etc. in payment, I can then comply or as in the company's treasury you have much money, if you could from thence advance what may be due to the sea and land forces, I will by the help of God punctually repay the same . . . . ."[10]

It is evident from this letter that the Nawab almost paid off the first half of the treaty monies by the month of September and the balance still outstanding was made good by the payments of 16 lakhs of rupees in cash, jewels worth 3 lakhs, silver worth 2 lakhs and fine 'muslins' and other piece-goods worth 4 lakhs.[11] In addition he made a specific promise to discharge the first two instalments of the second half by October 1757 and the March following.

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10. 20 September 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.205) Letter to Court 10 January 1758.

11. Clive's letter to the Secret Comm. 26 September 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.236).

Here it should be remembered that the first half of the whole treaty monies was Rs.11450000 and the Nawab paid on that account both in ready money and in jewels and goods a sum of Rs.1,53,10,966. These various payments within such a short space of time, no doubt, proved a heavy drain on the exchequer of the Nawab which was further reduced by the outbreak of a series of internal rebellions which greatly hampered the proper collection of revenues. The Nawab clearly understood that so long as he took the assistance of the English in quelling the internal turmoils, he would have to provide them with additional sums over and above his original debts. So for some time he determined to face these internal risings without calling the English to his assistance. But at length the seriousness of the position compelled him to appeal to Clive for help. The critical situation of the Nawab,[12] offered Clive an opportunity to realise from him the outstanding debts. So he refused to come to the Nawab's assistance till all the pecuniary claims, that is the payment of the first moiety of the second half of the stipulated monies[13] as well as the dues to the Army abd Navy

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12. Ben. Sel. Cons. 30 November 1757.

13. Ibid, 30 November 1757, 8 December 1757.

were discharged[14] and one lakh of rupees was paid in advance to meet the monthly expenses of the Army. "When I hear", writes Clive to the Nawab on 4 November 1757, "you have done this, I shall set out to join you".[15] The style of this letter shocked the Nawab and he wrote in reply, "You never spoke to me before on this subject and your writing that when you heard I had advanced the money you would march, is very far from being wrote in a friendly manner".[16] But he had no option but to pay instantly Rs.50,000 on account of the treaty monies and a sum of Rs.10,000 for the expenses of the English Army.[17] At the same time he assured Clive that upon the latter's arrival everything would be settled according to his instructions and desire.[18]

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14. Ibid.

15. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.232.

16. 13 November 1757, Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.237.

17. Scrafton's letter to Clive, 15 November 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.240).

18. Ben. Sel. Cons. 8 November 1757.

In the meantime, upon the Council's insistence on assigning the lands to the Company as proposed in the agreement, the Nawab sent his officers to survey the lands and requested the Council to assist them, which they did.[19][20] As soon as the survey was complete, the Council applied to the Nawab to issue 'parwannahs' and 'sanads' for holding these lands. But he did not comply with this immediately, and his dilly-dallying made the Council suspicious of his real intentions. Further they were made to believe by Clive that "avarice has taken such deep root in the Nawab's mind", that it would be difficult if not impossible to take possession of the stipulated lands without using force.[21] Nevertheless they concluded that "it would be prudent to defer doing that till we find that the Nawab will not execute the regular 'sanads' and 'parwannahs' for our holding these lands conformable to the treaty, as we think a step of that kind would exasperate the Nawab and probably be the means of losing his assistance in case we should be under necessity to demand it ".[22] Hence the Council advised

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19. Ibid, 1 August 1757.

20. Ibid, 4 August 1757.

21. Ibid, 8 November 1757.

22. Ibid, 12 November 1757.

Clive to take advantage of his presence and the influence he enjoyed at the 'darbar' to procure a speedy grant of the lands in due form and to press the Nawab to make good the stipulated monies in specie if possible. But if the Nawab's present circumstances should be proved not at all conducive to the satisfaction of their demands, then in that case the Colonel was further advised to urge him to mortgage such 'Rajadary' and zamindary the revenues of which would be collected and paid to them until the whole of his debts were discharged.[23]

Upon his arrival at the Nawab's camp, Clive acquainted him with the Council's instructions and expressed his determination not to accompany him against Rajah Ramnarain till he should procure 'parwannahs' and sanads for the stipulated lands and sufficient assignments on the revenues of some lands near Calcutta for the annual payment of the money still due, together with confirmation from the zamindars of such lands for the regular discharge of the same.[24][25]

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23. Ibid, 30 November, 8 December, 19 December, 1757.

24. Ibid, 26 December 1757.

25. Clive's letter to the Court, 23 December 1757.
Clive's letters to Rai Durlabh, 10 and 11 December 1757 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, pp.245-247)
Clive's evidence (Vide First Report 1772, p.156)

At this the Nawab took alarm and at last issued the following 'tankhas' and 'parwannahs':-

(1) A 'tankha' upon Rajah Tilokchand of Burdwan for 26 lakhs of rupees to be paid to the English Company within the year 1758.[26]

(2) Two 'parwannahs' to Amir Beg Khan, faujdar of Hugli, for the payment of Rs.2,83,333 to the Company.[27]

(3) A 'sanad' empowering the Company to take possession of the ceded lands south of Calcutta with the authority of Zamindary, but subject to a payment of a revenue of Rs.20,101 to be paid to the Nawab annually. Another special 'sanad' was issued for a free tenure of the city of Calcutta.[28]

(4) A parwannah for the twenty-four 'parganahs' to be governed and the revenues thereof to be collected by the Company.[29]

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26. Vide H.M.S. Vol. 193, p.265.

27. Ibid.

28. Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 December 1757, 4 January 1759, 26 February 1759. Letter to Court 10 January 1758.

29. Aitchison - Treaties, etc., Vol. II, p.204.

(5) A 'parwannah' empowering the Company to coin two hundred and fifty thousand rupees in the mint of Dacca.[30]

Although these were issued to the entire satisfaction of the Company, they were soon faced with certain difficulties in collecting the amount specified. So during the Nawab's sojourn at Patna, Clive again approached him with similar demands. The Nawab seemed to be sincere and faithful in his promise of complying punctually with his contract,[31] and hence he at once issued strong orders on the Rajah of Burdwan, the faujdar of Hugli and the Zamindar of Hijli for the immediate payment of the whole portion of the first year's money. Accordingly 10 lakhs of rupees were received by the Company immediately and the Nawab promised to pay off the balance from his own treasury in the month of April or May 1758.[32] This part payment did not satisfy the Council and upon their insistence on receiving sufficient security against the balance which remained unpaid of the first year's dues, the Nawab at last

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30. Ibid, Hastings' letter to R. Drake, 21 February 1758 (Vide Add.MSS. 29076, p.9).

31. Ben. Sel. Cons. 24 January 1758.

32. Letter to Secret Comm. 23 January 1758.
Ben. Sel. Cons. 11 January 1758, 24 January 1758.

assigned the revenue of Burdwan, Nadia and Hugli to the Company.[33] This arrangement of the Nawab pleased Clive so much that he wrote to the Court of Directors on 18 February 1758, "The discharge of the debt is now become independent of the Nawab, which precaution is become absolutely necessary, as his calls for money are greater than he can answer. Nothing but a total revolution in government can well interrupt your payments".[34] Further in this connection, Clive in his evidence before the Select Committee said, "The Nawab made assignments of lands for fulfilling all the articles of the treaty and also for the Committee money and that there were other lands assigned likewise in the nature of a mortgage".[35] Over and above these grants to the Company, a 'tankha' for a further sum of 5 lakhs of rupees was given upon Rajah Ramnarain to be paid to the Company. This amount was partly paid at Patna and partly at Murshidabad.[36]

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33. Letters to Court, 26 August 1758, 22 October 1759. Clive's letter to Select Comm. of January 9, 1758. (Vide Orme MSS. X, p.2490).

34. Vide Malcolm - Life of Clive, Vol. I, p.338.

35. First Report 1772, p.155.

36. Letter to Court, 31 December 1758.

By these various payments, the Nawab paid off the whole dues of the first year, and it is admitted by the Council in writing to the Court of Directors that "the first year's payment has been settled by the Nawab and most part of the money for which 'tankhas' were given us, received".[37] Moreover, for the discharge of the money still due for the second year, the Nawab issued further 'perwannahs' upon the Rajahs of Burdwan, Nadia and the faujdar of Hugli , "which there is not the least doubt of our being punctually paid".[38]

From the account given above, it is obvious that the Nawab had been faithful, if tardy, in discharging his treaty obligations to the English, but it should be borne in mind that the English on their part did not remain content only with their stipulated demands, and new demands were being put forward on the Nawab from time to time. We have already seen that the lands south of Calcutta had been parcelled out to the Company with the rights of zamindary according to the treaty. Upon this grant, Frankland had

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37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

been instructed to take possession of the lands in the company's name and to plant English flags in the villages and the market places within the boundary.[39] Having completed his survey, Frankland strongly recommended to the authorities to procure the zamindary of the lands to the northward of Calcutta as far as Bankebazar. The Council accordingly directed Hastings (the English agent at the darbar in place of Scrafton) to persuade the Nawab to include the above-mentioned land in his 'sanad' which the Nawab agreed to do.[40] In addition to this, a further tract of land to the north-east of Calcutta, belonging to the 'pargannah' of Amirpur, had likewise been demanded of the Nawab "in order to square the company's boundaries".[41] To this demand the Nawab expressed his objections "alleging that the lands obtained by the company greatly exceeded his agreement".[42] Moreover, he declared that he knew of no limits agreed upon and that he had only promised to grant the company a tract of land the revenues whereof amounted to

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39. Letters to Court, 27 February, 31 December 1758.

40. Hastings' letter to the Council, 1 December 1758. (Vide letter to Court, 31 December 1758)

41. Letter to Court, 31 December 1758.

42. Ibid.

one lakh of rupees, but if it was otherwise expressed in the treaty, "it was owing to the treachery of Rai Durlabh who had deceived him in it".[43] Another reason behind the objections of the Nawab to grant any more land not stipulated in the treaty, was his acute financial difficulties,[44] owing to the irregular collection of revenues, as well as the clamours of the Army for their arrears which had been growing too insistent to ignore.[45] Nevertheless, apprehending the risk of losing the future assistance of the English, he at length agreed to give them the 'wadadary' or farm of the 'parganah' of Amirpur instead of zamindary rights and ordered his 'motasaddee' to draw up the 'sanad' accordingly.[46]

Among other things demanded of the Nawab were the revenues of the Lakhipur 'parganah',[47] a large tract of land

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43. Ibid.

44. Hastings' letter to Clive, 7 September 1757 (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, p.179).

45. Letter to Court, 31 December 1758.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid, 31 December, 10 January 1758.

in Baharampur for erecting a new factory,[48] the faujdari of Chittagong and the monopoly of purchasing salt petre in Bihar.[49] It should be remembered that all these demands were in excess of the terms of the treaty. Naturally he expressed his resentment at these demands, but ultimately as observed by the Council, "his fear of the English and the assistance he might have occasion to demand of us (in case of any exigency) induced him to comply with our petitions"[50], except the grant of the faujdari of Chittagong which was the only place where the Nawab had been carrying on his own trade.[51]

Broadly, this comprised the whole of the financial transactions of the Nawab with the English company during the first period of his government. In conclusion, a question might be asked as to whether the Nawab actually discharged his treaty obligations during that period. The answer might be found in the official records of the company. Regarding the Nawab's attachment to the English

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48. Hastings' letters to R. Drake, 21 February, 7 May 1758. (Vide Add. MSS. 29096, pp.9-13).

49. Letter to Court, 31 December 1759. Ben. Pub. Cons. 1 September 1760.

50. Letter to Court, 31 December 1758.

51. Ben. Sel. Cons. 4 August 1759.
Hastings' letter to Verelst, 8 November 1758.
(Vide add. MSS. 29096, p.35).

and the punctuality of his payments, the Council at Calcutta observed, "We are at the present on the best terms with the Nawab and have no reason to complain of his want of punctuality in the performance of his agreement with us . . . We are allowed to collect the revenues of Burdwan, Nadia and other places without any intervention of the government's officers till the balance of what is due to us is discharged in full".[52] Another two letters from Bengal, dated 22 October and 10 November 1758, further confirm the Nawab's attachment to the English and as regards his debts the Council might well write, "The greater part of the Nawab's debt being already collected and little doubt left of having the balance punctually paid".[53] So it can be said with some amount of certainty that the Nawab paid off the greater part of his debts and the balance which still remained outstanding towards the close of his reign, was a sum of Rs. 1607512 - 14 annas and 8 pice[54] for which he gave three chests of jewels to the amount of 12½ lakhs of rupees, as security.[55] It should be noted that although the Nawab

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52. Letter to Court, 26 August 1758.

53. Letter to Court, 29 December 1759.

54. Ben. Pub. Cons. 1 September 1760, 8 November 1760.

55. Ibid, 8 November 1760. Letter to Court, 16 January 1761.

discharged his treaty obligations to the English and remained all along attached to them, still he never enjoyed their confidence. From the very beginning of his reign, the Council at Calcutta had been continually accusing him of having violated the treaty obligations and at last in 1760, deposed him on the grounds of faithlessness and non-payment of his debts, which we have already discussed. There is, of course, no doubt that he could not discharge his debts in time according to his engagements with the English and sometimes attempted to evade payments, but on the whole and as it becomes evident from the narration given above, he not only paid off his whole debt (the only balance which remained was a sum of 3 lakhs and 50 thousand rupees) but in addition granted many other concessions to the company, not mentioned in the treaty.

Let us now turn our attention to the second period of Mir Jafar's government. A new treaty was concluded in 1763 by which the Nawab was again put under certain financial obligations.[56] So far as the company itself was concerned, the Nawab promised to pay 30 lakhs of rupees

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56. Vide ante.

to indemnify them against any damages which might accrue from the war with Mir Kasim. He did not pay anything on this account till January 1764 when he made a small advance of 4 lakhs of rupees.[57] Observing his delaying tactics, the Council strongly represented to him that the company's affairs had been suffering so much that if the Nawab did not pay the stipulated money, it would be impossible for them to assist him against his enemies.[58] The Nawab in reply tried to explain to them the low state of the revenues from Bengal and Bihar as well as the huge expenses and various charges which were to be provided for out of these revenues. And so he desired them to give him sufficient time in order to "discharge it leisurely and by degrees".[59] But his complaint of want of money appeared to the Council to be very extraordinary, and they again demanded that he should pay 18 lakhs of rupees immediately,[60] which the Nawab at last had to comply with.[61] The only balance still remaining outstanding on

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57. Letter to Court, 20 February 1764.

58. Ben. Sec. Cons., 3 April 1764.

59. Ibid, 3 April, 10 September 1764.

60. Ben. Sec. Cons., 3 April 1764. Trans. P.L.I. 1763-64, p.67. Abs. P.L.I. 1759-65, p.93.

61. Ibid, 17 May 1764.

that account was a sum of 8 lakhs of rupees and with regard to which the Nawab assured the company that he would very shortly pay off that amount. The Council seemed quite satisfied at this assurance.[62]

While this transaction had been going on with the Nawab, the Council at Calcutta, in the meantime, put forward another demand. They decided that as they had taken the entire responsibility for the defence of the three provinces upon themselves, the Nawab must pay for the extraordinary expenses of the English Army.[63] Accordingly they demanded of the Nawab 5 lakhs of rupees per month which was to commence from 1 August 1764, and in order to make themselves independent of his goodwill to pay that amount, they at the same time desired him to assign to the company the revenues of some districts.[64] The Nawab raised objections to this extraordinary demand and argued that "in the treaty made between us, at the time of my appointment to the subahdary, that besides the assigned lands, you will not make any other demands for the expenses of your army and that you must furnish me with as

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62. Ibid, 24 July 1764.

63. Ibid, 10 September 1764. Letter to Court, 27 September 1764.

64. Ibid, 24 July 1764. Letter to Court, 27 September 1764.

many troops as I may want".[65] The Nawab was right in his argument according to the terms of the treaty of 10 July 1763, but the English authorities did not pay any heed to it and upon their forceful insistence,[66] the Nawab at last delivered to the English Governor an order on the 'naibs' of Murshidabad and Patna for the payment of 3 lakhs of rupees at Cassimbuzar factory and 2 lakhs at Patna factory,[67] and issued a 'parwannah' on them to continue the payment of that sum per month regularly till the war with the Wazir was over.[68] The authorities at Calcutta might well write to the Court of Directors on 26 November 1764 that "The Nawab has paid up the full money agreeable to his treaty of the last year and has since granted further assignments for defraying the increased military expenses".

Besides the Company's demand for 30 lakhs of rupees as compensation for their losses, there was another like demand upon the Nawab to compensate the losses of private

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65. Vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 10 September 1764. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.61.

66. Ben. Sec. Cons., 10 September 1764.

67. Ibid, 15 September 1764.

68. Ibid, 16 September 1764. Letter to Court, 26 November 1764. Aitchison - Treaties, etc. II, p.237.

individuals which they might sustain in their trade.[69] It should be borne in mind that Article 10 of the treaty does not mention any specific amount to be paid by the Nawab and this omission now became a source of severe contention between him and the company. This omission also left the Nawab open to pressure to pay a huge sum for indemnification. We have already discussed in our preceding chapter that originally there was a demand of 10 lakhs of rupees for compensating the private sufferers. But the Nawab refused to pay that amount. The English authorities instead of clarifying that point at that time, left it to be settled later and assured the Nawab accordingly,[70] who signed the final treaty under the supposition that he would not be required to pay even 10 lakhs of rupees.[71]

When the Nawab was at Patna, the Council advised Major Carnac to apply to the Nawab for 20 lakhs of rupees on account of the restitution,[72] which he accordingly did. The Nawab replied, "I know not the amount of losses. A large sum is demanded of which I have no account", and he asked for a proper

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69. Aitchison - Treaties, etc. II, p.234.

70. Vide ante. Letter from Court to Bengal, 26 April 1765. (Vide Fourth Report, 1773, p.124).

71. Ben. Sec. Cons., 10 November 1764. Evidence of Nandakumar (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766).

72. Ben. Sec. Cons., 17 May, 24 July, 1764. Trans. P.L.I., 1763-64, p.143).

account of the losses upon which he would fix such sums to be paid in part thereof monthly as his finances would enable him.[73] The Council promised to provide him with an account shortly, but asked him in the meantime to pay 20 lakhs in advance. At the same time they advised Batson, the English resident, to represent this affair in the strongest terms in order to secure the money.[74] But the Nawab did not pay any heed to this representation and again asked for an account. Having failed to secure any amount on account of restitution, the Council at last invited the Nawab to Calcutta in order to regulate these affairs and Spencer, an English Counsellor, advised Nabakrishna, the Nawab's 'munshee', to assure the Nawab that he need have no apprehension about coming down when everything would be settled to his satisfaction.[75] But the Nawab, from his past experience, became suspicious of the real intentions of the English officials, and hence at first hesitated to comply with their invitation. However, being repeatedly assured by the English authorities

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73. Ibid, 24 July 1764.

74. Ibid, Abs. P.L.I. 1759-65, p.94.

75. Evidence of Nabakrishna - (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766). Letters to Court, 20 February, 27 September 1764.

that nothing would be done against his wishes,[76] he at last came down to Calcutta on 3 September 1764, whereupon negotiations were opened between the Nawab and his two associates Maharajah Nandakumar and Nabakrishna on the one side and Vansittart and Spencer on the other.

On the second day after the Nawab's arrival, Vansittart requested him to send Maharajah Nandakumar to him with a view to discussing the restitution affairs. Accordingly Nandakumar was sent by him, whom Vansittart told, "I have been under a mistake in the affair of the sufferers, for I now find their losses amount to 40 lakhs".[77] This unexpected amount made the Nawab very much annoyed and he was reported to have said, "What! Before Vansittart only mentioned 10 lakhs to which I could not agree and now he had raised the demand to 40 lakhs?"[78] Next morning he himself went to Vansittart, who again repeated the demand for 40 lakhs of rupees. "What do you say", replied the Nawab. "I was much astonished that after first asking 10 lakhs to which I could not agree, you should now

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76. Evidence of Nabakrishna. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766).

77. Quoted in Nandakumar's evidence. (Vide Ben.Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766).
Ben. Sec. Cons. 4 September 1764.

78. Quoted in Nandakumar's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August). Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64, pp.451-457).

increase your demand to 40 lakhs. Do you imagine it rains rupees?"[79] The Nawab spoke so loudly in a state of anger that he was overheard by others who had been standing outside the door of the hall.[80] Far from giving his consent to this demand, he got up abruptly and went away, instructing Nabakrishna "Go you to Spencer, tell him the usage I have met with and ask what they can mean by such unreasonable demands".[81] When Spencer was acquainted with this incident he was reported to have said that "He (Spencer) did not mention this before because he thought that if the Nawab was acquainted with it, he would not come down to Calcutta".[82] Aware of the firm intention of the English officials to get 40 lakhs of rupees, the Nawab at last cooled down and presented the following note through his officials: "I am at all time ready to act agreeably to your pleasure and comply with your inclinations to the utmost of my power. You are well acquainted with the state of the country and know that I have not been able to recover any of my effects from Mir Kasim. It is

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79. Ibid.

80. Evidence of Nabakrishna (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766). Ben. Sel. Cons. 17 August 1766.

81. Ibid (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 August 1766).

82. Quoted in the evidence of Nabakrishna (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 August 1766).

requisite that you should duly consider my representations that I may have it in my power to comply with your desires and there may be no room for accusing me hereafter of neglect".[83] He then ordered Nandakumar to draw up a paper of agreement for 40 lakhs of rupees and advised him to inform Vansittart that he would discharge the whole amount in the following order:[84]

To be paid in ready money at Calcutta	-	Rs.7 lakhs
After his arrival at Murshidabad	-	Rs.3 lakhs
In the month of March next	-	Rs.10 lakhs
" " " " September	-	Rs.10 lakhs
" " " " March (1766)	-	Rs.10 lakhs

But the Council did not consider this form of payment sufficient either to satisfy the merchants or to assist them in their present distress for money. Therefore they resolved that the Nawab must agree to the following terms:-[85]

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83. Vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 10 September 1764.
Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.61.
It should be noted that 600 pieces of broadcloth and 600 maunds of lead belonging to Mir Kasim were seized and delivered to the Nawab.

84. Ibid, 17 September 1764. Evidence of Nandakumar (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766).

85. Ben. Sec. Cons. 17 September 1764.

To be paid immediately at Calcutta in ready money	-	Rs. 20 lakhs.
In the month of December	-	Rs. 5 lakhs.
" " " " March (1765)	-	Rs. 5 lakhs.
" " " " July	-	Rs. 5 lakhs.
" " " " September	-	Rs. 5 lakhs.

The Nawab had to comply with this arrangement, but as his treasury at Calcutta was not sufficient to discharge the first instalment, he ordered Mirza Kraj Khan at Murshidabad to send 20 lakhs of rupees immediately. Kraj Khan sent 13 lakhs to Calcutta which were paid into the hands of the agents for restitution.[86]

It should be remembered that the Nawab agreed to pay 40 lakhs on account of the restitution on the condition that it should stop there, and the Council assured him accordingly.[87] But no sooner had 13 lakhs of rupees been paid than a fresh demand was put forward. Spencer told Nandakumar that the agreement to pay 40 lakhs signified nothing, for there must be an addition of 8 lakhs more. He was supported by Vansittart who likewise told Nandakumar, "you must let the Nawab know that his agreement to pay 40 lakhs signifies nothing. There must be a fresh

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86. Ibid, 21 November 1764. Evidence of Nandakumar. (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766).

87. Letter from Court to Bengal, 24 December 1765. (Vide Fourth Report 1773, p.125).

agreement for 48 lakhs".[88] This increased demand for another 8 lakhs astonished the Nawab, and he could not imagine where it would all end. The repeated demands of the English officials made it appear that the Nawab was in fact no more than a banker for the company's servants who could draw upon him as often and for as large an amount as they wished. Once more he reminded the English officials of their violation of the agreement and requested them to leave this matter to be finally settled on Lord Clive's arrival from England,[89] assuring them at the same time that "I will give my assent to whatsoever he (Clive) with the advice of your gentlemen may determine upon".[90] The Council did not approve this proposal and demanded the satisfaction of the first half of the restitution money fully together with his agreement for the additional sum of 8 lakhs.[91] Spencer, the acting Governor, accordingly told Nandakumar "you must get the affair of 8 lakhs settled . . . . carry back the deed for 40 lakhs and have another executed for 48 lakhs".[92] The Nawab at last executed a

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88. Quoted in Nandakumar's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 19 August 1766). Ben. Sec. Cons. 1 November 1764, 21 November 1764.

89. Vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 10 November, 12 November 1764.

90. Ibid, Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64, pp.516-518. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.61).

91. Ibid.

92. Quoted in Nandakumar's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 August 1766).

fresh deed as required for 48 lakhs of rupees, and requested Spencer to grant him leave to quit Calcutta.[93] But Spencer answered "there still remains due a balance of 7 lakhs of the first payment of 20 lakhs and this must be first settled".[94] The Nawab was notified that unless and until he satisfied the English with the full payment of 20 lakhs of rupees, he would not be permitted to leave Calcutta.[95] So he paid a further sum of 5 lakhs of rupees from his treasury at Calcutta[96] and sent the dues of 2 lakhs of rupees from Murshidabad.[97] The Council might well write, "The payment of the first accounts have been hitherto continued pretty regularly and 20 lakhs on account of the restitution fund have been also completed".[98]

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93. Ibid. Ben. Sec. Cons. 6 December 1764. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65, p.61.

94. Evidence of Nandakumar (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 August 1766).

95. Ben. Sec. Cons. 21 November 1764. Nabakrishna's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 28 August 1766).

96. Ibid. 13 December 1764. Nandakumar's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 August 1766).

97. Nawab's letter to the Governor, 26 December 1764. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64, p.580.

98. Letter to Court, 6 February 1765. Ben. Sec. Cons. 6 December 1764.

Though the Nawab, under duress, had to satisfy the demands of the company which had no mention in the treaty, still there was no end of it from that quarter. Along with the demands already discussed, they put forward another demand in the form of donations to the Navy. It should be remembered here that besides the Public treaty of 1763, there was a private agreement by which the Nawab was made to agree to donate a large sum for the Army, as was being done in 1757.[99] With regard to this donation to the Army, Vansittart writes, "I spoke to the Nawab myself at the instance of Major Carnac and the Council, for though I was always of opinion that such gratuities to the military would be productive of bad consequences and was aware of the ill effects which had accrued from the gratuity of the year 1757, yet it was impossible for me, in my situation at that juncture, to break through a precedent which the whole Army was informed of . . ."[100] After making various objections,[101]

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99. Vansittart's letter to Court, 7 October 1767 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 196).

100. Ibid, Letter from Court to Bengal, 24 December 1765. (Vide Fourth Report 1773, p.125).

101. Vansittart's letter to Court, 7 October 1767 (Vide H.M.S. Vol. 196).

the Nawab at first consented to give 5 lakhs and then he himself increased it to 10 lakhs. But the Council argued that the Army then taking the field for his service was in no way inferior to that which raised him to the Government in 1757 and therefore "it would not be proper to offer them a less favour than he had conferred on the former".[102] At this strong representation, the Nawab at last agreed to give them 25 lakhs of rupees on condition that whatever money be taken in any of the cities and fortresses should be delivered up and accounted for properly to him.[103] Although he got very little of Mir Kasim's treasures,[104] he discharged this amount to the Army.[105] No sooner was this payment complete than Vansittart demanded another donation for the Navy. This demand enraged the Nawab. He sent his 'munshee' Nabakrishna to Spenser with the following message, "Tell him that with so many demands for indemnification to the

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102. Ibid.

103. Vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 10 September 1764. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64, p.457.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid, 24 July, 10 September 1764.

company, donation to the Army, restitution to the sufferers, the monthly payment exacted for the troops and what with the still unsettled, exhausted state of the country, it is absolutely out of my power to comply with this new demand for the squadron. I am therefore resolved to resign the Government if they go on in this manner and let him and the Council appoint whom they please to manage the public affairs".[106] But Vansittart was determined to have a donation for the Navy and he was reported to have told the Nawab, "Sir, if you do not consent, we know how to manage it".[107] The Governor then took the help of Rai Durlabh and influenced him to persuade the Nawab, assuring him that "his success in his application to the Nawab would greatly increase his own interests".[108] The Nawab, apprehending a league between Rai Durlabh and the English, voluntarily agreed to give Commodore Tinker a 'tip' for 5 lakhs of rupees. But this 'tip' was rejected both by Vansittart and Tinker and they declared that nothing less then 25 lakhs would be

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106. Quoted in Nabakrishna's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 August 1766). It also corroborates the evidences of Nandakumar as well as of Jagat Chund).

107. Ibid.

108. Evidence of Nandakumar (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 27 August 1766).

acceptable. When the Nawab was acquainted with this refusal, he exclaimed, "What battles had Tinker fought? What service had he done? It was only to oblige Vansittart that I consented to give so much".[109] He was perfectly right in his observation because the Commodore had really never rendered service to him.[110] This is moreover admitted by Vansittart himself in his minute wherein he states, "The land forces had gone through very severe campaigns, which the sea forces . . . could not share in".[111] However, at the persuasion of Nandakumar, the Nawab agreed to give 10 lakhs. But this also failed to satisfy both the Governor and Tinker, and the latter was reported to have told Nandakumar that the Commodore had a great influence over the members of the English Council and nothing would be done without his approval. Further, he warned him that should Lord Clive know in what manner the Nawab had slighted him, he would be very angry.[112] At length, the Council decided

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109. Ibid.

110. Letter from Court to Bengal, 24 December 1765. (Vide Fourth Report 1773, p.126).

111. Vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 24 July 1764.

112. Evidence of Nabakrishna (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 28 August 1766).

that the Nawab should pay 5 lakhs immediately in ready money and 10 lakhs by instalments. But upon the Nawab's refusal to pay 5 lakhs in cash, it was agreed that he should pay 50 thousand rupees to Captain Affleck, 2 lakhs to Tinker in ready money and for the balance of 12½ lakhs he should give a 'kistbundee'. After four or five days the Nawab discharged 2 lakhs and 50 thousand rupees.[113] It is interesting to note that having concluded this affair, Vansittart then endeavoured to turn this compulsive and aggressive method of obtaining the donation from the Nawab into a voluntary act of the latter, when he ~~asked~~ told Nandakumar "You must procure from the Nawab a note acknowledging that this donation to the squadron was his own voluntary act and deed".[114] Being acquainted with this desire of the Governor, the Nawab replied, "Since the affair is now over, I may as well give the acknowledgment he desires",[115] and accordingly he carried this out.[116] It can be said without the least doubt that the letter which the Nawab subsequently wrote

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113. Ben. Sec. Cons. 15 November 1764. Evidence of Nandakumar, ~~Fourth Report 1773, p.126.~~ (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 29 August 1766).

114. Quoted in Nandakumar's evidence (Vide Ben. Sel. Cons. 29 August 1766).

115. Ibid.

116. Ibid.

to Commodore Tinker on 8 October 1764, wherein he made mention of 12½ lakhs as the donation, was the outcome of this scheme.[117] It is amazing that the English authorities at Calcutta kept their masters entirely ignorant of this transaction. Indeed, the Court subsequently observed, "No mention of this demand appears in the copy of your letters in the country correspondence . . . . The evident result is that the copies sent home are unfaithful registers".[118] So from the above narrative it seems obvious that the donation to the Navy was obtained from the Nawab forcibly rather than voluntarily. "The donation for the Navy", observed the Bengal Council a few years later, "was never voluntarily made but obtained by force from Mir Jafar by dint of solicitations and other means which never had his entire approbation".[119] However, upon his return to Murshidabad, the Nawab lived only for a short time, and hence could no longer discharge his debts.

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117. Vide Ben. Sec. Cons., 15 November 1764.

118. Letter from Court to Bengal, 24 December 1765. (Vide Fourth Report, 1773, p.126).

119. Letter to Court, 1 October 1767.

In conclusion, it may be noted that the proceedings of the English officials with regard to the financial transactions with the Nawab during his second Government, as well as their supplying of unfaithful accounts to their masters, were severely criticised and condemned by the Court of Directors, who observed: firstly, that the English officials at Calcutta did not furnish them with the correct intelligence of their proceedings nor ever sought for their approval under the apprehension that their demands upon the Nawab would never be supported by their masters. On the contrary, they had the serious intention of keeping them in the dark by false representation of the facts.[120] Secondly - that the circumstances which brought about the battle of Plassey in 1757 did not exist in the present case. At that time the treasury was supposed to be very rich and the Nawab in a condition to satisfy the Company's demands. But in the present case the English were but to restore the same man as they had before deposed, and they could expect only an empty treasury when the country was involved in devastating warfare. Therefore, their fresh demands upon the Nawab's restoration were nothing

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120. Letters from Court to Bengal, 26 April 1765, 24 December 1765. (Vide Fourth Report 1773, p.125).

more than forced extortion.[121] Thirdly - Mir Jafar was not the cause of the war between Mir Kasim and the English, therefore how could he be expected to indemnify the losses of the Company? Moreover, "upon what principles the present Nawab could be expected, persuaded or required to make good the losses sustained by individuals in carrying on a most illicit and unwarrantable, although to them a most lucrative trade, in the articles of salt, betelnut and tobacco".[122] Fourthly - "When we consider the circumstances of the Nawab and the company at the period the demand was made for the Army, we cannot consider this other than an act of the most violent oppression".[123] Moreover, how could the services rendered to the Nawab deserve so exorbitant a consideration to be given to those who were only doing their duty in the service of the company and the country?[124]

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121. Ibid.

122. Ibid, 26 April 1765. Extract of the Resolution of the Court, 22 December 1767 (Vide H.M.S. Vol.196)

123. Letter from Court to Bengal, 24 December 1765. (Vide Fourth Report, 1773, p.125).

124. Ibid, 26 April 1765 (Vide Fourth Report 1773,p.125).

The views of the Court of Directors no doubt form a fair summary of the proceedings of the Bengal Council. But it is curious to note that although the Court of Directors were aware of the activities of the Council in superimposing subsidiary demands upon the Nawab from time to time over and above the terms of the main treaty, they never, perhaps either from negligence or through misjudgment, prevented the Council by issuing strong injunctions, from taking any further sum outside the main treaty provisions.

APPENDIX A.

PAYMENTS BY MIR JAFAR UNDER THE TREATY OF 5 JUNE 1757

TO WHOM	PROMISED TO PAY Date	PROMISED TO PAY Amount Rs.	ACTUALLY PAID Date	ACTUALLY PAID Amount Rs.	
The Company	5 June	100,00,000	5 July	33,33,333	
European 'Sufferers'	"	50,00,000	"	16,66,666	
Native 'Sufferers'	"	20,00,000	"	6,66,666	
Armenian 'Sufferers'	"	7,00,000	"	2,93,333	
The Company's Army, Navy and the Committee.	"	52,00,000			
			9 Aug.	26,88,778	
			"	20,33,485	
			26 Sept.	25,00,000	
* Maintenance of the English troops. No definite amount agreed in the Treaty.	"		24 Oct.	21,28,705	
			15 Nov.	50,000	
			1758 6 Jan.	28,83,333	
			23 "	10,00,000	
			31 Dec.	5,00,000	
			1760 8 Nov.	12,50,000	
				15,55,701	Amount appears to have been paid by assigning land revenues.
				225,50,000.	Total amount paid
				3,50,000.	Balance not paid
		Rs.229,00,000		Rs.229,00,000	

* Payments had been made in cash by Mir Jafar from time to time.

APPENDIX B.

PAYMENTS BY MIR JAFAR UNDER THE TREATY OF 10 JULY 1763

TO WHOM	PROMISED TO PAY		ACTUALLY PAID	
	Date	Amount	Date	Amount
	1763	Rs.	1764	Rs.
The Company	10 July	30,00,000	17 Jan.	4,00,000
			3 April	18,00,000
			26 Nov.	8,00,000
The Company's Army.	"	25,00,000	24 July	25,00,000
The 'Sufferers' (Amount notmentioned but provisionally demanded).	"	10,00,000		X
Additional demands:	1764			
The Company's Army.	24 July	5,00,000	16 Sept.	5,00,000
			21 Nov.	13,00,000
The 'Sufferers'	4 Sept.& 1 Nov.	48,00,000	13 Dec.	5,00,000
			26 Dec.	2,00,000
			15 Nov.	2,50,000
The Company's Navy	24 July	15,00,000		
		Rs.68,00,000	Rs.27,50,000	- Total amount paid
			Rs.40,50,000	- Balance not paid

CHAPTER X

THE PRIVATE INLAND TRADE OF BENGAL - 1757-65

The victory at Plassey in 1757 not only made the Company predominant politically and commercially, but also opened the way to fortune for its officials and their underlings through the inland trade of the country. We must trace in what way this trade, originally belonging to the local people, passed gradually into the hands of the English nationals to the commercial detriment of the former. And we shall also outline the half-hearted attempts made both by the Nawab and the Company to rectify the abuses from which the trade suffered during the period under review.

As early as 1717, the East India Company obtained a 'farman' from the Emperor Farrukhsiyar, confirming their privileges to trade in Bengal free of customs in return for an annual sum of 3000 rupees. They were granted the 'dastaks' or pass, to cover all their own goods whether imported or purchased in the country for export. A question then arose as to whether the Company's 'dastaks' could be used in the internal trade of the country. It was answered in the negative by Nawab Murshidkulikhan, who insisted that they could only be used on such goods as were either imported or intended to be exported by sea.

He argued that if the English were permitted to use 'dastaks' in the inland trade of the country, it would not only ruin the indigenous merchants, but also deprive the Government of its revenues. The Company, in order to avoid any hostility, had accepted the interpretation given by Murshidkulikhan and confined themselves to the import and export trade. But within a short space of time, its servants began to carry on private trade within the country. As the Company used to pay them low salaries, they were allowed to improve their fortunes by means of private trade under the close supervision of the Company. They were allowed to use the Company's 'dastaks' to cover their goods from duties in their transit down the rivers. It is doubtful, as we have already said, whether Farrukhsiyar's 'farman' gave them any such rights to use the Company's 'dastaks', though of course this use was apparently recognised by the country Government so long as it did not obviously affect the trade of the country merchants. "All the time," writes W. Bolts, "those privileges were granted and for some years afterwards the Indian Government could scarce feel the loss or inconvenience arising from these general exemptions of the trade of the English from the payment of those duties which the natives were subject to, as while no other undue influence could be used, it only occasioned a loss in the duties upon the English trade, which was then inconsiderable and

had only been extended to a few articles. The goods also which the English then used to buy in the inland country passed through a variety of hands before they received them, so that an industrious and intelligent native, who went about his own business at first-hand, could even after paying duties, bring his goods down to market at the English settlement as cheap as those the English received with the 'dastak' ..."[1]

Till the victory at Plassey the trade of the Company's servants went on smoothly under the garb of the Company. But the victory at once offered them an opportunity to extend their trade far and wide in commodities formerly prohibited, which in consequence did not fail to create troubles and confusions affecting the people seriously. On 15 July 1757, the new Nawab Mir Jafar Khan, by issuing a general 'Sanad', confirmed and granted more privileges to the Company in definite and emphatic terms, and passed strict orders to the following effect:, "Know, that by the royal 'farman' and 'hasbulhukums', the English Company are pardoned from all duties. Therefore I write that whatever goods the Company's 'gomastahs' (Indian agents) may bring or carry to or from their factories, the 'aurungs' (places of manufacture) or other places by land or by water, with a 'dastak' from any of the chiefs of their

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1. Bolts - Considerations etc. - I p. 64.

factories, you shall neither ask nor receive any sum, however trifling, for the same. Know they have full power to levy and sell, you are by no means to oppose it ... the Company's 'gomastahs' shall levy and sell the Company's goods without the intervention of 'dallals' (commission agents) unless the 'gomastahs' are satisfied to employ them, you are to assist them on all occasions wherever they buy or sell. Whoever acts contrary to these orders, the English have power to punish them. If any of the Company's goods are stolen, you are to recover the very effects stolen or make good this amount. Any merchants or others on whom the Company have any lawful demands, you are to see that the same by paid to their 'gomastahs'. Take care that no one wrong or oppress the Company's 'gomastahs'. You are not to require or stop their boats on pretence of the 'katbarra' or other duties on boats, whether they be the Company's own boats or boats hired by their 'gomastahs'. You are to give credit to the copies of all the 'Sanads' to the Company under the Kazi's seal without requiring their original..."[2]

On the strength of this extensive power given by the Nawab, the Company besides its own trade, began to issue 'dastaks' on a large scale to its covenanted servants in order to enable them to carry on their private trade duty free. But it should be borne in mind that the

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2. vide, Aitchison Treaties etc. II p. 203.

increased prestige and influence of the Company also encouraged their underlings (who were not in the service of the Company) to carry on, duty free, the inland trade in the commodities of the country (specially in salt, betel nut and tobacco) formerly prohibited. "However our influence," writes Vansittart, "over the country was no sooner felt than many innovations were practised by some of the Company's servants or people employed under their authority."[3] The entering into inland trade by the Company's servants has been seriously criticised and condemned by contemporary English historians as well as the English authorities. Clive in his evidence declared, "The Company never carried on any inland trade. Their commerce has been confined to exports and imports only. It is impossible that its servants should have a more extensive right than the Company on an inland trade duty free. The absurdity of a privilege so ruinous to the natives and so prejudicial to the revenues of the country is obvious."[4] Orme writes, "... but as it is the nature of man to err with great changes of fortune, many, not content with the undisputed advantages accruing from the revolution, immediately began to trade in salt and other

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3. Vansittart's Narrative - I p. 24.

4. Clive's Speech before the House of Commons - 30 March 1772 (vide Sinha's Economic Annals of Bengal, p.68) F.N.

articles which had hitherto been prohibited to all Europeans ..."[5] Even the Court of Directors in their several letters to Bengal, under dates, 3 March 1758, 8 February 1764, 15 February 1765, absolutely disapproved this inland trade carried on by the Company's servants and their agents, and emphatically declared their sentiment in the following way; "Treaties of Commerce are understood to be for the mutual benefit of the contracting parties. Is it then possible to suppose that the Court of Delhi, by conferring the privilege of trading free of customs, could mean an inland trade in the commodities of their own country at that period unpractised or unthought of by the English, to the detriment of their revenues and the ruin of their own merchants? We do not find such a construction was ever heard of until our own servants first invented it and afterwards supported it by violence."[6] The English authorities in Bengal, as well as in England, argued that neither the 'farman' of Emperor Farrukhsiyar, nor the 'Sanad' of Mir Jafar ever intended to throw open the inland trade of Bengal to the servants of the Company to the detriment of the interests of the country merchants as well as of the Nawab's revenues.

However it can be said that Mir Jafar's reign saw the

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5. Orme - II p. 189.

6. Letter from Court to Bengal - 26 April 1765 (vide Fourth Report - 1773, p. 189)

general adoption of the inland trade both by covenanted and un-covenanted English servants. Their 'gomastahs' began to carry all kinds of merchandise without an exception from one port of the Province to another duty free, while the goods of the indigenous merchants were taxed heavily by the Nawab's Government. "For Europeans," writes Monckton Jones," merely to enter this trade was in itself an abuse, but not content to compete in the open market they used their privileged position under the English flag to procure a practical monopoly. Few natives dared to dispute the trade with them, and those who did were soon worsted, for the 'dastak' enabled the Europeans to procure supplies at half the cost incurred by his rival. In many cases the price of the commodities depended less on the cost of production than on the high rates paid in transit at the innumerable 'chowkies'. As the number of merchants liable to pay decreased, the rate of the tolls was often raised to make up the usual 'farm' and thus the native was doubly mulcted, while the European's wares passed free."[7] The situation further deteriorated by the competition of the 'free merchants'[8] who now

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7. Warren Hastings in Bengal, p. 50. Vansittart, Verelst, Bolts etc. speak of the same things in their respective writings.

8. They were not the servants of the Company though of course they were allowed by the company to trade in Bengal.

penetrated to all parts of the country and followed the inland trade of the Company's servants. It should be remembered that 'dastaks' were not generally issued to them by the Company, but they managed to secure them from the Company's servants and hence began a serious abuse of the 'dastaks'.[9]

As soon as the Company became aware of the abuse of the 'dastaks' by their servants, they immediately established a number of 'dastak' Peons with badges carrying a Persian inscription signifying their being the Company's servants. With every 'dastak' one of those Peons was sent, who was held responsible for the goods passing free of all customs and impositions, and after the delivery of the goods, the Peon was instructed to return the 'dastak' to the English Governor in Calcutta, to be cancelled by him so that no further use might be made of it. A special fee of 5 rupees was charged for that service.[10] Such restrictions," writes the Bengal Council, "are laid on the privilege as it is hoped will prevent the Company's servants carrying the property of others, and defrauding the Government of its just duties".[11] It should be borne

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9. Letter to the President from Clive and Watts - 3 August 175
(vide Orme MSS. X p. 2451).

10. Letter to Court - 16 January 1758

11. Ibid.

in mind that along with the abovementioned inland traders, the Captains and officers of the English ships as well used to carry on a large private trade to the detriment of the Nawab's treasury, as well as the Company's interests. So, in order to prevent this, the Company further advertised that "no persons residing in the Settlements are to purchase woollen goods, copper, lead or iron from the commanders or officers of the Company's ships without permission from the Import Warehouse Keeper for the time being, upon pain of losing the Company's protection and being expelled the Settlement." [12]

These measures of the Company however, could not prevent the abuses in the inland trade. On 12 December 1758, Hastings complained to W.B. Sumner, Chief at Dacca, that "An English gentleman (Chevalier, I suppose) has carried on a large cargo of salt to Chilmaree, which is an unprivileged trade and that he has taken 'muchalkas' (written bonds) from all the other traders in the same article by which they are not allowed to sell any salt till his shall be disposed of."[13] Chevalier not only acted in a very violent manner at Chilmaree and Kurigram and oppressed the merchants of those places,[14] but also

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12. Ibid - 27 February 1758

13. vide, Vansittart's Narrative - I p. 28.

14. Hastings' letter to Sumner - no date (vide Vansittart's Narrative - I p. 28.

challenged the authority of the 'wadadar'[15] of the Baharbond 'Parganah' to stop his cargo carrying salt and on request even refused to show him any 'dastak'.[16] When the Nawab was informed of this insolence of the English gentleman, he expressed his resentment and solicited Hastings to deal with this affair. Accordingly Hastings wrote to Sumner "Many complaints have been laid before the Nawab against Chevalier .... I desire you will make the strictest enquiry into this and take effectual care to prevent such complaints for the future ... I shall make only this remark, that the magistrates and officers of the Government have an undoubted right to see the Company's 'dastak', having no other way to distinguish between the agents of the Company and others usurping the English name, nor the Company any means besides to secure their own privileges. It cannot, therefore, but appear

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15. "One who is bound by an engagement, a Contractor, a Government officer responsible for the Collections of a Zamindari, a farmer of the revenue". Wilson's Glossary p. 553.

16. ".. you write that if I belong to the English, I must have the English Sanad, and desire a copy of it to be sent to you. In answer, I ask, who are you that I should send you a copy of the Sanad? If you want to be informed who I am, and who sent me, send a man to the chief who will answer you. If the People of your Parganah are guilty of any insolence to mine, I shall chastise them handsomely for it. Forbid your people that they enter into no quarrels with mine, if they do without reason, they shall be punished ..". Chevalier's letter to Mir Ataullah, Wadadar of Baharbond Parganah. - No date. vide Vansittart's Narrative, I p. 31.

strange in any person employed by the English that they should make any difficulty to show by what power they are commissioned, unless they are conscious, they are guilty of practices which ought to be concealed; at least such abrupt behaviour cannot but tend to create ill will against the English and aggravate every complaint made against them."[17] Like Chevalier, another English merchant, John Clarke, violently took possession of 2 or 3 'gunges' at Bakhergunj and set up English flags. He made use of the English name in order to carry on the illicit inland trade and even interfered with the Government officials in the collection of revenues and customs. The Nawab complained to the English resident[18] but no step was taken immediately to stop the insolent behaviour of John Clarke.

Besides the oppressions and ill behaviour of some of the English merchants, both upon the indigenous merchants as well as on the Government officials, there are several other instances where boats of the English servants were found without 'dastaks' under the protection of English flags and attempts were made to evade the payment of duties.[19]

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17. Vide, Ibid pp. 28-30 - no date.

18. Hastings' letter to Clive - no date (vide Add. MSS. 29096 p.108).

19. Hastings' letter to R. Pearkes - 1 April 1758 (vide Add. MSS. 29096 p.10). Amir Beg Khan's letter to Clive, 10 September 1757, (vide Orme MSS. XI p. 2841) Letter from Clive and Watts to the Governor 27 August 1757 (vide Orme MSS. X p.2456).

Although the Nawab never put any obstruction substantially against the carrying of the inland trade by the Company's servants, yet sometimes he used to murmur against their attempts to pass their boats in the transit forcibly without 'dastaks' or without paying the customs.[20] On 13 January 1759, Hastings told Sumner, "I have received a long letter from the Shahzada in which he complains that you have begun to carry on a large trade in salt and betel nut and refuse to pay the duties on those articles, which has likewise encouraged others to do the same in your name; which practice, if continued, will oblige him (Shahzada) to throw up his post of Shahbunder 'Darogah'. We have not, I believe, any right to trade in salt and betel nut, at least it was never (that I know of) stipulated in our favour with the Nawab, and with respect to the salt trade, I myself know that none of the Company's servants nor the Colonel himself has engaged in it without the Nawab's 'Parwannah'.[21] It should be remembered in this connection, that like many other Company's servants, Hastings himself used to carry on a large trade in salt and sometimes attempted to use invalid dastaks in order to pass his goods duty free.[22]

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20. Letter from Clive and Watts to the Governor 3 August 1787 (vide Orme MSS. X p. 2451) Hastings' letter to Sumner 25 October 1758 (vide Add MSS 29096 p.47)

21. vide Add. MSS. 29096 p. 112.

22. For details see Add MSS. 29096 pp. 45-47.

All these complaints regarding the inland trade, did not, however, bring any improvement upon the situation. In the meantime, the sudden death of Miren and the mutiny of the soldiers made the Nawab's position extremely critical, so much so, that he could not stem the tide of anomalies and abuses in the inland trade which, as a result went on increasing every day.

It has been a fashion to condemn the English servants (both covenanted and uncovenanted) for the abuse in the inland trade which, in the opinion of both the English and Indian historians, consequently destroyed the general commercial prosperity of the country. Some modification of this view is necessary, because we do not know definitely whether the introduction of the English traders really brought about any such destructions. What seems to have been happening was that one class of merchants had been benefitting at the expense of another. The English officials no doubt, were responsible for the abuse of the trade to some extent, but at the same time, there were also certain other factors which should critically be observed:-

Firstly - The Company's covenanted servants were less responsible than the local 'gomastahs' employed by them, both for the abuse of the trade and the oppression of the poor ryots (cultivators and agriculturists generally) Bolts has observed that "... these 'gomastahs' as well availed themselves of this new acquired power, that after

the Company by their substitutes, had made their first Nawab Mir Jafar Ali Khan in the year 1757, their black 'gomastahs' in every district assumed a jurisdiction which even the authority of the 'Rajahs' and Zamindars in the country durst not withstand."[23] These 'gomastahs' flagrantly abused the authority of their inexperienced and ignorant masters and even disposed of their masters' goods to other traders. They habitually forced contracts upon the poor ryots against their will, consequently bringing about their destruction.[24] In fact, the 'gomastahs' were generally a set of rascals whose oppressive conduct was an open scandal. Their masters usually supported their ferocious character under the impression that their agents perhaps had to use violence in their self-defence against the opposition of the Nawab's officials. They had generally at their disposal the armed sepoys of the factories and thus dared to defy the Nawab's officials or the officials of the local Zamindars.[25] Their daring reached to such an extent that they often refused to show the 'dastaks' to the Nawab's officials and tried to evade payments of duties by force.[26]

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23. Considerations etc. I p.191.

24. G.W. Forrest - Warren Hastings 'Administration' p.15.

25. Letter from the Faujdar of Dacca - Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p. 37.
Gleig's Memoir - I p.108.

26. Letter to Court 31 December 1758. Trans. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.81.

Secondly - The situation was further complicated by the trade of the free merchants, who often acted in league with the Company's servants and thereby deprived the country Government of its revenues. They used to cover their goods under the 'dastaks' issued to the Company's bonafide agents and the public officials could not very well discriminate between these two classes of traders. The Company had neither any control over these free merchants, nor over the 'gomastahs' of the English agents.

Thirdly - It should be noted that not only the English servants or the free merchants used to abuse the 'dastaks' and to evade customs, but also the indigenous merchants followed suit. A number of them, taking advantage of the situation, used to carry on considerable trade without 'dastaks' under English flags, which the Nawab's officials, in order to prevent uneasiness and dispute, took no notice of them and chose rather to acquaint the English authorities of this procedure.[27]

Lastly, throughout this period from 1757-60, the Nawab never exerted himself to check the abuses and malpractices in the inland trade, as he did during his Second Government. There are few instances of his mild

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27. Clive's letter to the Governor and the Council - 27 August, 1757, (vide Orme MSS. X p.2456). Letter to Court - 10 January 1758.

demonstrations to the Company which he ought to have done strongly as the Sovereign of the country. The absence of complaints in that period is more likely to have been due to his inability and reluctance to represent them properly to the Company. Naturally when the Sovereign himself was weak and reluctant to protest against the malpractices, his officials could not be expected, in that situation, to work with zeal on his behalf.

In order to prevent the misuse of the 'dastaks' as well as the attempt to defraud the Nawab's revenues, the Court of Directors at last instructed the English authorities at Calcutta, "that the Custom Master do in future keep the register of 'dastaks' and no 'dastak' granted but on oath made by the party demanding the same that the goods or merchandise specified be and are on his own proper account, and that he does no directly or indirectly therein cover the property of any of the natives of Bengal, free merchants, or any others ... so that the King or Moors Government be not defrauded of their just duties and revenues ..."[28]
Although the English Council in Bengal gave effect to this regulation,[29] nevertheless the misuse of the 'dastaks' as well as the oppression of the local 'gomastahs' continued

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28. Letter from Court to Bengal - 3 March 1758.

29. Ben. Sel. Cons. 26 July 1759 (vide H.M.S. vol. 196 p.41).

to grow and which reached its climax in the time of Nawab Mir Kasim Khan. Without going into details, it would suffice to say that over this problem of the inland trade, the Nawab Mir Kasim Khan and the Company at last came into a serious clash which ultimately resulted in the defeat and expulsion of Mir Kasim from Bengal.

Mir Jafar was re-installed in the Government of Bengal, and the Council in Calcutta again concluded a treaty with him on 10 July 1763 by which it was agreed, among other things, that, the English shall be allowed to carry on their trade by means of their own 'dastaks' free from all duties, taxes and impositions in all parts of the country "excepting the salt, on which a duty of 2½ percent is to be levied on the rowana or Hugli market price;" this stipulation like that of the year 1757 bears certain loopholes which became a source of trouble. By this present engagement, only salt was thrown open to trade on paying a duty of 2½ percent. But whether the other two commodities, viz. betel nut and tobacco were likewise thrown open to the English traders duty free, or still prohibited, is not specifically mentioned. Secondly, it is mentioned that "the 'gomastahs' of the Company" would get every assistance in the trade of the Company's factories, from the Nawab's officials. But there is no mention of the 'gomastahs' of the English servants. What should be their privileges with regard

to the inland trade, and to whom should they be held responsible for their acts of violence and abuses in carrying on the trade? The treaty of 1763 is silent over this question.

Therefore, the absence of these particulars again left the country open for the oppressions and plunderings of the 'gomastahs' (both employed by the Company as well as by its agents) to the acute sufferings of its inhabitants and small merchants. Speaking of the extraordinary character of the treaty in general and the vagueness of the articles regarding the trade, the Court of Directors might well observe, "These are the terms which appear to be so very injurious to the Nawab and to the natives that they cannot, in the very nature of them, tend to anything but the producing of general heart-burning and disaffection, and consequently there can be little reason to expect the tranquility of the country can be permanent."[30]

Hardly had a few months elapsed since his re-instation than the Nawab realised, notwithstanding the consent which he was obliged to give with regard to the inland trade by the treaty of 1763, the inconveniences of it, and hence desired that some particular limitations should be put to that trade.[31] This time he seemed to be stronger in

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30. Letter from Court to Bengal - 1 June 1764.

31. Vansittart's letter to the Printer of the Public Advertiser 9 April 1766, (vide Orme MSS. vol.J p.95)

attitude than he had been during his first Government, and so did not hesitate to present his complaints properly to the English authorities.[32] In order to prevent the abuse of 'dastaks', the oppression over the ryots by the sepoys and 'gomastahs' of the English agents and the unwarrantable seizure of lands and establishing an independent authority by the English agents and their 'gomastahs', the Nawab suggested the following measures; that (i) as there were factories of the English Company at Cassimbuzar, Dacca, Patna and other places under their chiefs and counsellors, whatever 'dastaks' might be issued for trade, "let them be established under the seal of the English Company and let them not interfere nor grant recommendations in the affairs of the revenues of the country, as it is a means of weakening the authority of my officers."[33]

(ii) The sepoys of the English agents were sometimes found oppressing the ryots and the local merchants in the name of the Company, in the 'muffusil." If they were at all sent for the Company's business, "let them have with them a certificate under the seal of the English counsellors, and if they go into the country without a certificate and

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32. Ben. Sec. Cons. 30 December 1763. Vansittart's Narrative III p. 410.

33. Ben Sec. Cons. 2 January 1764. Trans. P.L.E. July-December 1763 pp. 45-46.

make any disturbance, let them be punished."[34]

(iii) The English 'gomastahs' by this time had taken possession of, and set up, their authority in some of the Zamindarees or 'milky lands' granted by the Emperor rent free, and were giving protection to the defaulting merchants and ryots which was injurious both to the Nawab's revenues and authority. Hence the Nawab desired that "whoever has taken possession of any lands, let him relinquish them and let not protection be granted to the dependents of the State."[35]

The Council at Calcutta considered these suggestions to be "very just" and they accordingly instructed the chiefs of their factories all over the country to be henceforth very strict in issuing the 'dastaks' and in sending their sepoys into the 'maffusil.'[36] But this attempt, however, proved ineffective in preventing the abuses in the trade. What shocked the Nawab much were the oppressions and acts of violence committed by the English agents and their 'gomastahs' all over the country in carrying out their most extensive and lucrative trade.[37]

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34. Ibid

35. Ibid

36. Ibid - 19 January 1764. Vansittart's letter to Secret Comm. 24 December 1764.

37. Vansittart's Narrative III p. 413. Letter from Senior Chief at Cassimbuzar to the Governor, 23 March 1764. (vide Vansittart's Narrative III p. 413)

It is evident from the official correspondence that the people were labouring under "unlawful proceedings of many private European agents and their 'gomastahs",[38] especially at Dacca, Cassimbuza, Dinajpur and Rangpur. The following papers would further amply bear the truth about the high-handedness of the English traders and their 'gomastahs' in carrying out their trade:-

The 'vakil' (representative) of the Zamindar of Buzzoorgomepur (?), in his petition to the Council, gives a true picture of the condition to which the inland trade of the country had been reduced, "the 'parganah' of Buzzoorgomepure is in the Zamindary of my master. By reason of the oppressions of the factories of the Company and many other English traders ... all inhabitants are fled. The people of the factories take from the markets what they please at half-price, cut down bamboos and trees belonging to the inhabitants and take them away by force; if anyone complains, they punish him for it. They press the inhabitants and carry them into the woods of Sundarban, paying them only half their wages. They take possession of lands in the Sundarban and make salt for which they pay no rents ... they force the inhabitants to take tobacco, salt and other articles and refuse to pay the legal duties on the trade which they carry on. If we demand a sight of

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38. Ben. Sec. Cons. 30 April 1764.

the Company's 'dastaks', they beat us with bamboos. Some of them pretend that they have been robbed and insist on our making restitution, placing Peon upon us and putting us to great expense. They impose and exact fines. They send Peons and seize the 'naib' of the parganah, taking for a 'tullubana' (Peon's fees) one rupee every day. They grant guards to many of the 'talookdars' (holders of talooks) and 'mollungees' in the country, by which means we are prevented from collecting the King's revenues and many of the inhabitants take shelter in the factories, and thereby avoid paying the rents ... Mr. Dobbins has established two factories within my 'parganah', committing every species of injury and oppressing and violating the women of the inhabitants, and erecting factories in places where none were ever before ... I request that you will grant me a 'parwannah' that no one may be allowed to oppress the inhabitants, that whosoever has not the Company's 'dastaks' may be obliged to pay duties and orders be sent to the people of the factories that they do not send out peons into the country without the knowledge of the Zamindar and whatever affairs they transact, that they give the 'naib' Zamindar a copy of the 'dastak' by which they are authorised and that for such for which they have no 'dastak', they pay the King's revenues accruing from them."[39]

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39. vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 7 May 1764.

Sitaram Das, a merchant of Shahpur, writes to the Council on 6 March 1764, "Mohon Shah, Mr. Jekyll's 'gomastah', has again been here from Rangpur and has seized Kushi Shah and carried him to Rangpur, taking a 'muchalka' (written bond) from him in which he has made him oblige himself, under a penalty, not to sell goods next year to anybody else. The said 'gomastah' has also put a guard of four Peons upon me, wanting me to give an obligation of the same nature as Kushi Shah has done. He makes me pay two rupees per day Peon's charges. What shall I do?"[40]

George Gray, Chief at Malda, observes in his letter to the Governor, dated 7 January 1764, "Since my arrival here, I have had an opportunity of seeing the villanous practices used by the Calcutta 'gomastahs' in carrying on their business. The Government have certainly too much reason to complain of their want of influence in the country, which is torn to pieces by a set of rascals, who, in Calcutta walk about in rags, but when they are set out on 'gomastahships', lord it over the country, imprisoning the ryots and merchants and writing and talking in the most insolent domineering manner to the faujdars and officers."[41]

Indeed, almost every page of the Company's correspondence

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40. vide, Ibid 17 May 1764. More similar complaints are found in this consultation.

41. vide, Vansittart's Narrative III p. 412.

during this period bears evidence to the facts that the English agents and more particularly their local 'gomastahs' were in the habit of oppressing the poor inhabitants and merchants of the country and thereby causing detriment, not only to the revenues of the Nawab's Government, but also to the business of the Company. No wonder that the Select Committee in 1767 described the situation of Bengal in 1765 in the following language, "we beheld a Presidency, divided, headstrong and licentious, a Government without nerves, a Treasury without money and service without a subordination, a discipline or public spirit. We may add that ... individuals were accumulating immense riches which they had ravished from the insulted Prince and his helpless people who groaned under the united pressure of discontent, poverty and oppression."[42]

The loss of revenue to the Company, as well as the Nawab's Government, together with the rapacious character of the 'gomastahs' made a profound impression on the Court of Directors, who were not at all prepared, as it is evident from the records, to allow the 'much-vexed' inland trade of the country to continue any longer in that fashion. Hence in their letter of 8 February 1764, they positively ordered the Governor and the Council in Bengal that "from the receipt of this letter, a final and effectual end be

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42. vide, H.M.S. vol. 196.

forthwith put to the inland trade in salt, betel nut, tobacco and in all other articles whatsoever produced and consumed in the country, and that all European and other agents be immediately ordered down to Calcutta and not suffered to return or be replaced as such by any other persons.

"That as our 'farman' privileges of being duty free are certainly confined to the Company's export and import trade only, you are to have recourse to, and keep within, the liberty therein stipulated and given as nearly as can possibly be done. But as by the connivance of the Bengal Government and constant usage, the Company's Government servants have had the same benefit as the Company, with respect to their export and import trade, we are willing they should enjoy the same, and 'dastaks' be granted accordingly, but herein the most effectual care is to be taken that no excess or abuses are suffered upon any account whatsoever, nor 'dastaks' granted to any other than our Government servants as aforesaid ... Free merchants and others are not entitled to have the benefit of the Company's 'dastaks' but are to pay the usual duties.

"As no agents or 'gomastahs' are to reside, on account of private trade, at any of the inland parts of the country, all business on account of licensed private trade is to be carried on by and through the means of the Company's covenanted servants residing at the several subordinate factories as

has been usual ... we are under the necessity of giving the before-going orders in order to preserve the tranquility of the country and harmony with the Nawab.."[43]

Before these instructions reached Bengal,[44] the Council at Calcutta became determined to put some restraint "upon those excesses which either ignorance or passion or self-interest had led the English agents to commit in the country."[45] They decided that "all the European, Portuguese, native and Armenian agents which are now up the country shall have notice given them to settle their concerns, so as to return to Calcutta by 30 November next, and that after that time no European shall be permitted to go up the country under any pretence whatsoever, or any other agents he employed in our trade but Bengal natives. With respect to the practice of carrying on the inland trade by force (called Barja and Guchavat) it is a practice which we entirely disapprove and in order to put a stop to it as soon as possible, it is agreed to send directions to Dacca, Rangpur and Malda to prohibit it in the districts under the factory..."[46]

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43. vide Fourth Report - 1773 p.189. The Court of Directors wrote another two important letters, dated 15 Febru ry and 1 June 1764 in this connection. In their letter of 1 June 1764, they positively instructed the Governor and his Council to regulate the trade to the entire satisfaction of the Nawab, both with respect to his revenues and the proper support of his Government. For details see Fourth Report 1773 p.189 and the Bengal despatches II pp.954-57.

44. This letter reached Bengal on 13 July 1764.
45. Ben. Sec. Cons. 3 May 1764.
46. Ibid.

The members of the Council, however, were not unanimous in their opinion as to the appointment of local 'gomastahs' in place of Europeans or other agents. They argued that the local 'gomastahs' were generally of a tyrannical and arbitrary disposition, and where they had any authority, they would exert it to the utmost in their power for their own interests.[47] This argument seems to be partially correct in view of the fact that there were many such complaints against them. But at the same time, it should be borne in mind that the European agents were no less harmless, and the Nawab himself had several times lodged complaints against the violent activities of both these classes of agents. At any rate, as the majority of the Council was in favour of introducing their resolutions, it was at last decided that all European agents should be in Calcutta by 31 December,[48] and in the meantime a scheme should be prepared for restraining and carrying on the inland trade agreeably to the spirit of the Company's orders of 8 February.[49]

But before any such scheme was actually prepared, fresh complaints were again lodged by the Nawab. Among other

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47. For details about the opinions of the members - see Ben. Sec. Cons. - 21 July 1764.

48. Ben. Sec. Cons. - 21 July 1764.

49. Ibid.

things, he represented strongly that,

(i) "The English 'gomastahs' in the districts of Dacca, Rangamutty, Chilmaree and Bakhergunj, force tobacco and other goods upon the ryots, whereby the country is desolated and a very heavy loss falls upon the Government. It is proper that a stop should be everywhere put to this oppression that the country may flourish ...

(ii) "The sepoys who are sent from the factories into di ferent parts of the country, in consequence of complaints, desolate the villages and put the ryots to flight by their disorders and oppressions, whereby my revenues are injured. Let strict orders be given that no sepoys should be sent into the country without previous notice to me or to my officers.

(iii) "The poor of the country, who used always to deal in salt, betel nut and tobacco, are now deprived of their daily bread by the trade of the Europeans, whereby no kind of advantage accrues to the Company and the Government's revenues are greatly injured."[50]

Upon this representation, the Council proposed at once that (i) the inland trade should in general be prohibited with the exception that the Company's servants might be permitted to send salt and betel nut for sale to the factories

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50. A Paper of request presented by the Nawab to the Council 14 September (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 17 September 1764) A similar representation was made by the Nawab on 23 October (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 1 November 1764)

of Patna, Cassimbuzar and Dacca or the capital cities of Patna, Murshidabad and Dacca, paying to the country Government on the article of salt, the duties agreed on with the Nawab by the last treaty, and on the article of betel nut, a similar duty of 2½ percent and a Company's 'dastak' should be given along with the Nawab's.

(2) the Company's servants who would trade in salt at the above-mentioned places, should take the greatest care to deliver up the 'dastaks' to the Company's chief, and the rowana to the 'naib' of the country Government, on the salt being landed at the factory or the city to which it was consigned.

(3) Strict orders should be given to the factories not to send sepoys into the 'maffusil' on any account, excepting as an escort to the Company's treasures and effects.[51]

These resolutions, however, were never put into effect and hence the position of the inland trade remained in that confused state as late as February 1773, when Hastings made some definite improvements upon the situation by abolishing the privileges of 'dastaks' and thereby making the trade freer than before.

Thus so far we have discussed the reasons for the abuses in the inland trade, together with the obstructions which the Nawab's Government often used to get from the

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51. Ben. Sec. Cons. 17 October 1764.

Company's officials and their 'gomastahs'. But in conclusion it should be observed that the Nawab himself and his officials were no less responsible for those abuses and for obstructing likewise the trade of the Company and its servants. There is no doubt that the Nawab now and again protested, and even resented very strongly the unlawful and oppressive dealings of the Company's underlings relating to trade, with the sole object that his revenues might not be injured.[52] But on the other hand, so far as his own officials were concerned, there is ample evidence to show that they often obstructed likewise the trade of the Company[53] by sending sepoys and Peons into the Company's factories in the 'maffusil', who used forcibly to seize and carry away their 'gomastahs' and put them under confinement.[54] The high-handedness of the Nawab's officials should not in any way be minimised[55] and even the Nawab admitted in his letter to the Council that he was aware of the extortionate and rapacious nature of his officials and their neglect of duty, but he excused himself by observing that at the time of his arrival at Murshedabad, there was a scarcity of men,

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52. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-4 - pp.503-504. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-95 p.61.

53. For details see Ben. Sec. Cons. 22 February, 7 March, 12 November 1764, Vansittart's letter to Court - 29 April 1764.

54. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64 p. 186. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 - p.95.

55. Trans. P.L.R. 1763-64 pp.202-203. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.106.

Mir Kasim having murdered most of the principal and able officials. He therefore appointed whomsoever he could find to manage the affairs of the Government, without scrutinising their abilities and knowledge of business.[56] Besides these unwarrantable activities of his officials, the Nawab himself often issued 'dastaks' to Englishmen to trade in salt, betel nut and tobacco, duty free. Here it should be borne in mind that this practice of granting 'dastaks' was contrary to his agreement with the Company, by which it was arranged that 'dastaks' should be issued concurrently by the Nawab and the Company. The Company, though "desirous of maintaining a good correspondence with the Nawab",[57] felt at last necessary to protest against this practice, because in their opinion it was hampering the business of its covenanted servants, whereupon he repealed these 'dastaks'.[58] So it is clear that wrong was done from both sides and it was quite natural under a system of undefined dual authority, where everybody's business was nobody's business and in consequence of which the community suffered.

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56. Nawab's letter to the Council 15 November (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 21 November 1764. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p. 61).

57. Ben. Sec. Cons. 2 February 1764.

58. Nawab's letter to the Council 23 October (vide Ben. Sec. Cons. 1 November 1764. Abs. P.L.R. 1759-65 p.61).

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A G R A
Territories of the MAHARATTAS
E L L A H A B A D
BENARES
NIZAMSHAW
BOGLEPOUR
country of BEMARES
A MAP
shewing as much of the Provinces of
BENGAL, BAHAR AND
ELLAHABAD
1779
THIBET
Chota NAGPOUR
BAY OF BENGAL
BHOOTAN
Part of ASSAM
ROSHAAN
RECCAN
ARACAN