MEMOIRS

OF

MAHARAJAH NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.

CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY AND TIME AND PLACE OF BIRTH.

If it is true that the world does not know its greatest men, it is true no less that men do not invariably know their best friends or their greatest benefactors. It is probably as true now as it was in the days of Macaulay that scarcely "one in ten, even among English gentlemen of highly cultivated minds, can tell who won the battle of Buxar, who perpetrated the massacres of Patna, whether Sujah Dowlah ruled in Oude or in Travancore, or whether Holkar was a Hindu or a Mussulman Prince." The great Reviewer regretted that the ordinary Englishman was so little "curious to know how a handful of his countrymen, separated from their home by an immense ocean, subjugated in the course of a few years, one of the greatest empires in the world." There is little reason to wonder, therefore, that Englishmen have even less information and curiosity about those silent and secret, because quiet and unambitious workers, especially if they are of another complexion and denizens of another clime, who furnished the ideas and suggested the steps that led to the establishment of England's great empire in the east. If they know so little of the achievements of Clive and Hastings, what can they know of the counsels of Nubkissen,—the plans he made, the information he gave, the protection he rendered, the dangers he braved or warned
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The light he threw on the designs of Mahomedan kings, the intricacies he unravelled, the peace he maintained, the possibilities of empire that he saw and revealed to a body of merchants, bold and adventurous no doubt, but apparently not yet alive to the grandeur of the prospect before them? The formal Histories are as a rule silent about Nubkissen, or else they retail trivial gossip. Governor Verelst, an unimpeachable authority on the affairs of his own times, does justice in a general way to Nubkissen's services.

"Nubkissen is a Native Hindu who had been extremely zealous in the English cause during the troubles preceding Meer Jaffer's elevation to the Subahdarree. When the war broke out with Meer Cossim, he attended Major Adams and continued with that commander till the Subahdar was driven out of the Provinces. His address and attachment to the English recommended him to Lord Clive, who made him Banian to the Committee, in which he continued three years, likewise of Mr. Verelst's career."

And Lord Thurlow referred to him in the following terms, addressing the House of Lords during the trial of Warren Hastings:

"Nubkissen was the Persian preceptor of Mr. Hastings so far back as the year 1750, when they were both young men, and that he was indebted for his elevation, his present high rank and great fortune, solely to his early connection with Mr. Hastings, during whose administration he only stood inferior in point of emoluments or political consequence to Mahomed Reza Cawn."

Unfortunately, historians have not thought fit to indicate the specific character of his services or to show the nature and sources of his "political consequence." Mill makes no reference to him; Orme does not mention him; his name is absent from the pages of Sir John Malcolm. An acute observer of Indian life has said with truth:

"As Europeans have ever received credit for work really done by natives, it is more than probable that many diplomatic results which go by others' name were really attained by Navakrishna."

It is scarcely possible for a writer to-day, especially where he has little opportunity of access to old and official records,
to supply the gap which historians have left. But he cannot unearth political facts buried in ancient and possibly secret records, he may dissipate some at least of the fictions that time and authority have come to associate with a great name. He may also throw some light on the social and personal history of a distinguished historic character. The attempt that is made in these pages has no other than the modest purpose of piecing together the available facts, political and private, of Maharajah Nubkissen’s career, of calling attention to the sort of evidence on which certain current ideas in regard to his work and character depend, and of presenting a sketch of the man and his times, which shall be, as far as distance of time and the changed lights and shadows of society will allow, real and faithful.

As regards the ancestry of Nubkissen, the one original document that it is possible to discover is a manuscript entitled “An Account of the late Maharajah Nubkissen Bahadoor, required by and delivered to A. Stirling, Esq., Persian Secretary to Government, on the 30th April 1825.” This was written either by Raja Sir Radhakanta Deva Bahadur, K.C.S.I., or by some other person or persons at his instance and under his guidance. It is obviously based on family tradition; possibly it embodies also the traditional gossip of society. How much of it is absolute historical truth it is difficult to say, but there is no reason to reject it except where it is manifestly improbable, self-contradictory, or in conflict with ascertained facts. It is certainly the basis of as much as relates to Maharajah Nubkissen in the Rapid Sketch of the Life of Raja Radhakanta Deva Bahadoor, with some Notices of his Ancestors, by the Editors of the Raja’s Sahdakulpadruma (1859). In this country family history is most generally preserved in the form of tradition; and ordinarily such legends are reliable. A man transmits to his son the story of the family just as he learnt it from his father. Any errors that he may deliberately
or carelessly commit are liable to be corrected by the elders of his society, for a man's family history is often known to many persons besides himself. This Account is the earliest record of the origin of the family of the Sovabazar Rajas. It has all the appearance of a carefully ascertained and honestly accepted narrative; and it must be presumed to have been prepared with a due sense of responsibility as it had to be delivered to Government in response to a requisition. Thirty-four years after its submission to Government, the editors of the Sabdakalpadruma—an encyclopaedia of Sanskrit learning—took the responsibility of publishing the Rapid Sketch, which, for its notice of Nubkissen, was wholly indebted to the Account.

The “founder” of the family, in the sense in which that word is understood by the ghatakas—genealogists or heralds,—that is, the earliest member of it who received a definite social recognition, was Srihari Deva, the twenty-fourth in ascent from Nubkissen. He was settled in a village named Kānsūū near Moorshedabad. Several of his descendants came to be men of wealth and position, but it is not necessary here to mention any of them until we come to Devidas Majmooadar, eighteenth in descent, who was appointed Kanungoe of Pergunna Mooragacha, in the district of 24-Pergunnas, where he came to reside. Rukmini Kantī, one of the sons of Devidas, settled in Panchagram, and was appointed by Mahabat Jung, Nawab of Moorshedabad, manager of the estate of Keshub Ram Ray Chaudhuri, the minor Zemindar of Pergunna Mooragacha. Rukmini Kantī Vyavaharta, for so he was called, was succeeded in the management of the estate by his eldest son Rameswara. Ramchurn, the second son of Rameswara, proceeded to Moorshedabad, introduced himself to the Roy-Royan Chain Roy, and offered to increase the revenue of Pergunna Mooragacha to Rs. 50,000. He was appointed Ohladadar, or Revenue farmer, for that pargonna. He quitted his abode in
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Pergunna Mooragacha and built a house at Govindpore in Calcutta, where, having left his family, he proceeded to Moorshedabad and presented himself to Nawab Mahabat Jung and the Roy-Royan. He was appointed Salt Agent and Collector of Hijli, Tumlook, Mahishadul, and some other places. He appears to have acquitted himself with great credit, for the Nawab afterwards appointed him Dewan of the Province of Cuttack. The Subahdar of the Province, Maniruddin Khan, and Dewan Ram Churn, were sent by the Nawab with a considerable force to oppose a Mahratta incursion. On their way from Midnapore to Cuttack they were caught at a disadvantage, and the Dewan, though he fought bravely, at last fell overpowered. Dewan Ram Churn left three infant sons, says the Account; and his property was lost to the family by the death of Fakhar Tojjar, a wealthy merchant of Hughly, in whose custody it had been kept.

Nubkissen was the youngest of the three sons. They could not all have been literally infants at the time of their father’s death, but they must all have been young, and Nubkissen was in all probability an infant. His eldest brother was Ram Sunder, and his next elder was Manick Chunder. Dewan Ram Churn had not probably had time to acquire any landed property. He had built only a house in Calcutta, and as he had separated from his relatives and was living in Calcutta only with his wife and little children, whom again he had to leave whenever he had to proceed on business, it is very likely that he had left his personal estate with one or more friends whom he trusted. And that estate was liable to be lost to the family either by the death of any of those friends, or by his own death. A trust of which no living person was aware might be betrayed with impunity. Ram Churn’s widow, who, according to a certain tradition, came from the family of the Boses of Sarisa, appears to have had some little property in her possession with which she was able to maintain and educate her children and to build a new
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house in Govindpore, her former residence having been encroached on by the river. When Ram Sunder became fit for business he at first did the duties of Ameen or Supervisor of Pungeote, commonly called Puchet, and some other places, and supported his family (which is to be understood in a Hindu sense) for some years.

The place of Nubkissen’s birth is uncertain. It is not possible to ascertain whether he was born at Mooragacha and was a member of “the family” that was left in the house in Calcutta when his father proceeded to Moorshedabad, or he was born in that house itself after the family had migrated there. Govindpore, it may be added, was the site of the present Fort William, the lines of which were traced by Clive in 1758. The probability is that as Ram Churn held his two last appointments after his removal to Govindpore, the youngest of his “infant sons” was born there. The appointments too could not have been held for any length of time. If Nubkissen was actually born at Govindpore there is a fitness in the decree of destiny that reared a bulwark of England’s empire in the east on the very soil that received the child that was eventually to help in laying the foundations of that empire. What a discovery it would be that would identify the place of Nubkissen’s birth as the very spot where the corner-stone of the Fort was laid!

The date of Nubkissen’s birth is even more uncertain than the place. The Account describes him as “a youth attending school” in 1756 when he is said to have been appointed Munshi to the East India Company. The Rapid Sketch represents him in more precise terms as a “youth of 16” in that year. These statements have to be rejected, for one fact which stands on high authority and is least open to question is that Nubkissen was the Persian preceptor of Mr. Hastings as far back as 1750 when he must have left school and could not certainly be a boy of
ten. Lord Chancellor Thurlow was, in the language of Macaulay, “the most conspicuous champion of Warren Hastings.” It cannot be presumed that the veteran lawyer spoke without book. The statement as to Nubkissen must have been part of his instructions which in the last resort had come from Hastings himself. In view of this well attested fact, the supposition that Nubkissen was born in 1740 cannot be entertained. When was he born then? It is impossible to say. A writer in a Calcutta magazine “assumed” that he was born about the year 1732. The same date is given, upon grounds that are not stated, by a writer in the Hindoo Patriot newspaper,¹ who wrote probably at the bidding or under the supervision of the well-known scholar and antiquarian, Dr. Rajendra Lala Mitra. Let the year of Nubkissen’s birth then be assumed to be 1732, the year in which Warren Hastings saw the light. George II had then reigned for five years; the East India Company, whose Charter had been renewed two years before and who now for the first time began to make up annual accounts, was a body of merchants with no political power or ambition; Clive (born September 29, 1725) was a rowdy boy of seven at Hope Hall.

¹ Oct. 31, 1887.
CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE—SERVICES TO THE COMPANY, 1750-1757.

The first event in Nubkissen's life, of which anything is known, is his appointment as Persian tutor to Warren Hastings. On the 8th of October 1750, eight young men for the Civil Service arrived at Calcutta. Warren Hastings was one of them, and shortly after his arrival, before the close of the year, his tutor was appointed. The writer of a trenchant critique on the *Rapid Sketch*, who refuses to believe any fact not recorded in any published history by a European or a Mahomedan writer, gives himself the liberty to speculate on the way in which Nubkissen got his first appointment. Nubkissen, he tells us, was waiting for a vessel to arrive, and as soon as the eight young men landed in Calcutta, the expectant Bengalee youth was retained as a tutor for Hastings. His account is circumstantial:—

"While he was yet within his teens, his father probably died, and he was reared up with his other (?) brothers by his needy mother. He picked up some knowledge of the Persian, then the fashionable study and the Court language, in his village, which he greatly increased by self-culture. The English settlement at Chutanutty was the nearest town. As he began to grow up towards manhood and as the responsibilities of life began daily to press upon him, he no doubt used to repair to it often in quest of employment from its many native merchants and *shahibs*. In those days, when ships visited Bengal at long intervals, the arrival of one from Europe was anxiously expected by numerous people. Some of the Company's servants expected promotion, others feared degradation. Young cadets, who had ruined themselves by pillows and harems, expected a dull letter from their parents, which they were sure not to read, and a remittance. Native Banians, who had successively equipped newly arrived Europeans, expected fresh batches. Without any definite expectation Navakrishna, with the imagination of an youthful Oriental, could hardly have failed, as he remarked these vessels come one by one, to picture to himself that in one of these was to come the *shahib* who
was destined to make his fortune. If he did indulge in such a fancy he was not deceived."

If the writer was a youthful Oriental at the time he reviewed the Rapid Sketch, his imagination beats even Nubkissen’s. In the absence of an account with any pretensions to authenticity, the safest course is to be silent with regard to the occasion and causes of the appointment.

Nubkissen’s next appointment was that of Moonshee to the East India Company. The circumstances of this appointment, as given in the Account, are definite enough. In consequence of the tyrannical conduct of Nabob Scrajuddowlah, Raja Rajbullabha (who was a Vaidya by caste, of Dacca) fled from Moorshedabad and took refuge at Calcutta. The Nabob issued a perwannah to Mr. Drake, then Governor of Calcutta, directing him to seize and send the Raja to him. Mr. Drake refused to seize and send him, and stated that if the Nabob had any demands against him, he would make the Raja pay immediately on being informed of the particulars. The Nabob, incensed at this answer, addressed to him another perwannah threatening him that if he did not forthwith deliver up the Raja he would send his troops to seize the Raja and drive the English out of Bengal. Mr. Drake, who had not sufficient force to repel an attack, was thrown into perplexity, but Raja Rajbullabha assured him of the sympathy of the Sirdars, with whom evidently he had been in communication. The Ministers and Sirdars of the Nabob, or at least several of them, joined together and sent a Persian letter from Moorshedabad to Mr. Drake by a messenger, who delivered it to Mr. Drake with the instruction that it was a letter which contained important secrets and should not be placed in the hands of a Mahomedan, but must be read and explained by a Hindu. Mr. Drake, without showing that letter to the Company’s Moonshee, Tajuddin, ordered his men to look for a Hindu Moonshee. On that day Nubkissen had gone to Burrabazar in Calcutta, when one of Mr. Drake’s
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men ascertaining that he was acquainted with the Persian language took him to Mr. Drake. Nubkissen read and explained the letter, and wrote out, under instructions of course, an answer to it. He acquitted himself so well, that the Government being pleased with him appointed him to the office of Moonshee of the East India Company, and granted him a palankeen with bearers for his conveyance and 200 rupees for his outfit.

There is nothing improbable in this account, and having regard to the quarter from which it comes it may very well be accepted. Nubkissen became Moonshee of the East India Company in 1756. He had already been for six years Persian tutor to Mr. Warren Hastings; and it is probable that Mr. Drake required his services as interpreter of the letter after he had ascertained the fact of his being a trusted employé of Hastings. That Nubkissen should have been in Burrabazar just at the time when Drake’s men were looking for a Hindu of his qualifications and should have been invited to accompany them to their master, may seem, from a certain point of view, extraordinary. But it has to be remembered that accidents do happen, and have often been the making of great men. The combination of circumstances was, to the anxious youth, no doubt accidental, or, more truly, providential, but there was really nothing extraordinary in the fact that he was in a particular place at a particular time and happened to meet particular men. What to Nubkissen was a lucky accident, happened in the ordinary course of things and had nothing of a sudden or surprising character in it. There is no doubt that Nubkissen did become the Moonshee of the East India Company. He was Moonshee also to Hastings, and afterwards to Lord Clive.

Authentic history gives incidental corroboration of the circumstances, except only as regards one comparatively trivial matter of detail. We have it on the authority of Sir John Malcolm that one of the excuses which Serajuddowlah
made for a quarrel with the English was that they had given protection to one of his subjects who had fled with great treasure.

"The person the Nabob alluded to was Kishendass, the son of the late Dewan [Raja Rajbullabha] of the Nabob of Dacca, who visited Calcutta on his way to Juggernath; and as he was strongly recommended to Mr. Drake, the President of Calcutta, by Mr. Watts, the Chief of Cossimbazar, on account of services rendered by his family to the Company, he was treated with kindness and attention."  

The person of this subject, the Nabob was informed, should be reserved for his pleasure; and proof was offered that the treasure he was supposed to have fled with had no existence. There is other evidence to show that it was not Raja Rajbullabha but his son that took refuge in Calcutta.

Orme gives a detailed account of the circumstances which Serajuddowlah wanted to make out as constituting a causa belli.

"A Gentoo, named Rajabullub, had succeeded Hossein Cooley Khan in the post of Duan or Prime Minister to Newagis [Governor of Dacca]. . . doubtful of the event of the impending contest he determined to place his family and treasures out of the reach of danger; and not deeming them in safety at Dacca, where they had remained for some time, he ordered his son Kissendass to remove them from that city, under pretence of going a pilgrimage to the Pagoda of Juggernath, on the coast of Orixa."

Kissendass left Dacca with several loaded boats, but instead of going through the channels at the bottom of the Delta, proceeded along the Ganges to the Jelingeer river, through which he entered the Hugli. His father, who was at Moorshedabad, requested Mr. Watts, the English Chief at Cossimbazar, to secure for him protection under the presidency of Calcutta for a few days. Mr. Watts had reasons to oblige the Dewan and advised the presidency to comply with the request. His letter to the presidency on

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1 The Life of Robert, Lord Clive [1836], Vol. 1., p. 147.
2 History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Indostan, Vol. II., See i., p. 49.
this subject had scarcely arrived in Calcutta before the boats of Kissendass appeared in sight. The President, Mr. Drake, was not in town, but the rest of the Council admitted Kissendass into Calcutta. The fact of the admission was soon known at Moorshedabad. It wounded the pride of Serajuddowlah and exasperated his mind.

"Surajuddowlah, immediately after the death of Allaverdy, was proclaimed, and prepared to attack the widow of Newagis Mahomed. Not more than one or two days after his accession, he wrote a letter to the President of Calcutta, ordering him to deliver up Kissendass, with his treasures." 1

There is satisfactory evidence also of the existence of a confederacy of Serajuddowlah's officers which was in communication with the Council at Calcutta. History does not pursue to any great length the correspondence between the Nabob and Mr. Drake, but the course of events showed conclusively that Mr. Drake's answers could not have been accommodating. If then history confirms the Account so far, and, for the rest, is silent, there is no reason to presume against the accuracy of its narrative as a whole.

Nubkissen did good service to the Company almost from the moment of his appointment as its Moonshee. The English Government, expelled from Calcutta in 1756, was accommodated on board a schooner near the pestiferous shores of Fulta. They received, however, as the Rev. J. Long assures us, regular and important information respecting the movements at Moorshedabad through Warren Hastings, then Commercial Agent there. It is not too much to assume that Hastings's own informant was Nubkissen. The same writer gives us more direct information as to the services rendered by the invaluable Moonshee. He tells us in another passage and referring to a later date (1757), that when the English, having quitted the Fort, remained for several months on board a ship at Fulta, some of the

1 Ibid. pp. 53, 54.
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Provisions were supplied by Nubkissen at the risk of his life, under penalty of death, for the Nabob had prohibited, one supplying the English. "This led to Warren Hastings taking Nubokissen, as his Moonshee and the subsequent elevation of his family," which probably means that Nubkissen, who had so long been only Persian tutor to Hastings, came now to be trusted with higher and more responsible functions. The same writer observes elsewhere:

"Nabakissen came forward in Clive's time. Living in an obscure village, Panchgay, near Diamond Harbour, he supplied the English refugees there with provisions in spite of the prohibition of the Nabob, and he brought them valuable information relating to the Nabob's movements."

It is easy to see that as early as 1756, that is almost immediately after his connection with the Company, Nubkissen had definitely cast in his lot with the English. He was not merely doing the routine duties of a Moonshee and was certainly not mindful of his personal and immediate interests. He supplied material information to the Company of the Nabob's movements at Moorshedabad, and supplied provision to them at the risk of his own life at a time when their prospects were of the darkest and their power of the feeblest. He was not keeping up appearances or playing fast and loose with his masters. No loyalty to the Company could be deeper than that of Nubkissen's, for it commenced in the hour of their distress and despair. A disaster to the Company would have been death to Nubkissen, but with characteristic courage and sincerity he faced that prospect.

The Account describes in a somewhat circumstantial way a service rendered by Nubkissen in 1757, shortly

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before the battle of Plassey. Serajuddowlah carried out his threat and attacked Calcutta with a grand army in 1756. The English had only a small force and made no resistance. The Governor and many other English gentlemen went to Madras. Now was enacted the tragedy of the Black Hole. The Nabob having taken Calcutta, named it Alinagar and appointed one Raja Manick Chunder as its Governor. He then returned to Moorshedabad. Mr. Drake and the other Members of Council having arrived at Madras, brought Colonel Clive on board one of Admiral Watson's ships, who landed with his force at Fulta within six months and took the forts of Budge-Budge, Tana, Magooa and Aligar, defeated the Nabob's army and surprised Raja Manick Chunder, who was then amusing himself at nautches. The Raja fled to Moorshedabad and the English took possession of Calcutta in January 1757, when Nubkissen waited upon Colonel Clive and resumed his office. When Serajuddowlah made preparations for a second attack on Calcutta, he encamped in Amir Chand's garden, now called Halsibag. Colonel Clive deputed Nubkissen and an Engineer to obtain information in regard to the particulars of the Nabob's encampment under the pretence of making proposals of peace and offering presents to the Nabob. They brought with them a detailed account of the situation. Clive marched his forces up to the Nabob's camp at the end of the night and blew up his tent and those of his Sirdars by the first fire from his cannon. The Nabob, however, had already removed to another tent and he remained unhurt. Clive followed his enemy to Plassey, where a decisive battle was fought. There is nothing improbable in this story. The published histories make no reference to it, and their silence is not to be wondered at. A deputation of the sort just described and the kind of information it elicited, are not the things to be made matter of record. They are certainly not the things with regard to which, even if a record existed at some time, any
party could be anxious to preserve evidence. The story of the account ought to receive respectful attention, if only because it is a piece of self-disserving evidence. Sir Raja Radhakanta Deb could not have sought to glorify the founder of his family by investing him with the functions of a spy. If he felt himself compelled to draw upon his imagination for multiplying or magnifying Nubkissen's achievements, this errand of false pretense would very ill suit his purpose. It is a sacred regard for the obligations of truth that could alone have led him to embody such a family tradition in a document meant to be placed in the hands of Government. It is scarcely necessary to discuss the moral aspect of the mission. Nubkissen may have been for once a spy, but he was never an Ephialtes. His mission was not to betray his masters, but to aid them. His acceptance of the mission was an act of courageous loyalty and not of meanness. Nor need Clive answer to posterity for his having ordered the deputation. Scouts and messengers have recognised functions in all military operations, and the record of Clive's achievements would have been materially abridged if he had not been able to profit by the information brought to him by spies deputed or self-constituted.

It was necessary to crush the power of Serajuddowlah for he had been intriguing with the French, or, at any rate, had threatened to support them as against the English. Apparently the only alternatives now open were the ascendancy of the English and that of the French. After the battle of Plassey Serajuddowlah was deposed. In consequence of negotiations carried on by Nubkissen, Mir Jafar or Jafar Ali Khan formed an alliance with Clive, who took possession of Moorshedabad and declared Jafer Ali Khan to be its lawful Nabob. With the sanction of Colonel Clive, Nubkissen settled the terms of the Subahdari agreement with the new Nabob and made arrangements for conducting the affairs of the provinces in concurrence with the
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Naib Subahdar Nabob Mozufferjung, and fixed an annual Nizamut allowance at Rs. 18,00,000 and the expenses of the Subahdari at Rs. 7,00,000, making a total of 25 lakhs of rupees. He returned to Calcutta with Clive having won his highest esteem for the faithful and efficient discharge of the public duties entrusted to him. Clive, when he shortly afterwards left for England, assured Nubkissen that he would return soon and appoint him to a distinguished situation.

Will a little digression be pardoned, if only as an illustration of the part that spies and accidents play in the issues of wars and the fortunes of men and nations? Colonel Malleson, who is one of the latest biographers of Clive and has made a thorough research into the history of his times, writes with reference to the capture of Chandernagore by the English in March 1757:

“If treason and corruption had not intervened, Renault [the Governor of Chandernagore] would have forced Clive to retire. But alas! treason in the first instance had done its work, corruption had completed it in the other. The French Engineer who had deserted to Clive had reported that if the Admiral would carefully sound all around the sunken vessels, he would find that there was still sufficient room [in the channel which Renault believed he had blocked up] for ships to pass the channel singly. Soundings made, during the succeeding days, under a heavy fire, proved this information to be correct.”

The French Engineer, then, ruined Renault by his “treason.” And it has now to be said that it was Nuncomar who betrayed the Governor by his “corruption.” Renault had received from Nuncomar, Governor of Hugli for Serajuddowlah, the fullest assurances of protection, but that unscrupulous person allowed himself to be bribed by Omichund, gave no assistance to Renault and even prevented Raja Dulab Ram, one of Serajuddowlah’s Generals, from coming to his rescue. This was the result of “the successful intrigues which the English had carried on with Nundkumar,” who proved a less reliable friend than Serajuddowlah himself.
A Mahomedan writer, the author of a work called Tarikh-i-Manṣuri, takes occasion to moralise on the events:—

"As the star of the English was in the ascendant, and the unavailing fortunes of the French were beginning to set, the complicated knot unravelled itself in the hands of the English. But if fortune had not favoured the English, not even exertions such as had never been witnessed in India, would have enabled Colonel Clive to take possession of Chandernagore. A French officer of the name of Terraneau, who knew the secret of the passage left in the river, was for some reasons dissatisfied with M. Renault, the then Governor of Chandernagore. Forgetting the obligation under which he lay to his own nation, he went to Colonel Clive and informed him of the existence of the passage."

It is something to be able to say of Nubkissen that in an age of perfidy and under circumstances of what may be called complete moral anarchy in public life, he had an unblemished record. Not the worst of his enemies had charged him with treason or any betrayal of trust.

It is curious to observe that while historians or chroniclers are silent as to the services of Nubkissen, at least one or two of them have thought fit to fasten on him a charge of looting a certain inner treasury of Serajuddowlah. A Mahomedan of the Shiah sect and a friend of the Nabob Nazim of Moorshedabad, Sayyid Ali, writes in the Tarikh-i-Manṣuri:

"After the victory [of Plassey] Colonel Clive met with Mir Mahomed Jafar. They congratulated each other and went together to Moorshedabad. On their arrival at the palace, the nobles of the city and the Government officials were called to a darbar. Colonel Clive took Mir Jafar's hand and led him to the Masnad. At the same time salutes were fired to indicate the transfer of the Subahs of Bengal, Behar and Orissa to Mir Jafar. After the darbar, the new Nabob, Colonel Clive, with a few Englishmen, the Dewan Ram Chand, and Nobokissen, the Colonel's Moonshee, inspected the treasury, where a sum of more than 20 millions of rupees, in silver and gold, was found."

"It is also well known that besides this treasure there existed another in the Harem, which fact Mir Mahomed Jafar concealed from Colonel Clive, at the instigation of the Dewan and Clive's Moonshee."
The value of the gold and silver articles and of the jewels found there was not less than 80 millions of rupees. The whole was divided among Mir Jafar, Ram Chand, Amir Beg and Nobokissen. This transaction is indeed very probable, as Ram Chand left a fortune of 12½ millions of rupees at his death, ten years later, whilst Nobokissen could afford to pay 9,000,000 rupees on the occasion of the death of his mother. Yet both men were in receipt of only 60 rupees per month at the time of the division.  

Before we consider probabilities, let us attend to some facts which historical research has disclosed. With reference to the reported wealth in the treasury of Seraiuddowlah, Sir John Malcolm writes:

"The treasures of Seraiuddowlah had been greatly over estimated by Mr. Watts, who states in one letter that they were computed to amount to 10,000,000£ sterling, a sum so extravagantly beyond what the revenues of the country could have enabled Allaverdy Khan, or his successor, to amass, that it is quite extraordinary how such a belief could have been entertained."

Colonel G. B. Malleson says that the treasury contained all told, rather less than two-thirds of twenty-two millions of rupees. Ten rupees were in those days equivalent to a pound sterling.

As regards probabilities they are altogether against the story of the Mahomedan writer. It is impossible to conceive why Mir Jafar should have concealed from Clive a treasure which he was willing to share with Ram Chand, Amir Beg and Nobkissen. He had something to gain by pleasing Clive; he could have had no reason to please Nobkissen or Ram Chand, both of whom are said to have been holding humble offices, carrying a salary of 60 rupees each. That there was a secret treasury at all in the harem could have been no better known to Nobkissen than it was to Clive.

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1 The Journal of the Asiatic Society (No. II. of 1867) H. Blochmann's translation of a passage from a Persian manuscript of the Tarikh-i-Manṣuṭ.


3 Founders of the Indian Empire: Clive. p. 274.
And from all that is known of the relations between Clive and Nubkissen, it is impossible to believe that Nubkissen could have instigated the concealment. Besides, it would have been a desperate thing for Mir Jafar to have taken three men into confidence in regard to a matter which he chose to keep a secret as against Clive, especially when the "united claims" of several parties "including those of Clive himself" could not be met from the regular treasury. The Mahomedan writer, who retails the scandal gives circumstantial details which would seem to suggest as if he was an eyewitness of the division of the spoil, and the wonder is that anybody should have known a fact of this kind, of which Clive was not aware. There is nothing, in the next place, "to show that Nubkissen spent nine lakhs of rupees on his mother's Sraddha, or what particular amount he did spend on that ceremony. There will be occasion in a subsequent chapter to consider the subject of the Sraddha at some length.

It is enough to state here that the supposition of Nubkissen having spent nine lakhs on the ceremony, though he lived on an income of Rs. 60 per month, has been given currency by only one English writer, the Rev. J. C. Marshman. He made the statement in a little school-book called the History of Bengal. The Mahomedan writer that has been here cited is little known at the present day, though probably he is Mr. Marshman's only authority. There were suspicions prevalent amongst Nubkissen's contemporaries, especially those who were jealous of his wealth and influence. Nubkissen himself by his frank statements and bold challenges silenced the tongue of calumny in his lifetime; but fictions die hard, and it is no wonder the old insinuations are still sometimes indulged in. In a petition, which will hereafter be quoted in full, Nubkissen says:

"My enemies have in vain searched for proofs that I raised my fortune by bribery and undue means, in hopes that by such discovery they might have been enabled to have ruined my character and reputation. Disappointed in this their efforts are now extended to
more base and villainous ends. My life is now what they thirst after."

Nubkissen's salary at this time was, as has already been shown, much more than 60 rupees per month. As Moonshee of the Company he would be entitled to donations like his masters, and such donations, historians tell us, were a legitimate income in those days. Before his mother's death, as will be presently shown, many other sources of income had opened out to him. It has to be remembered that Nubkissen was a man of great ability and accomplishments and might be able to earn money in various ways. He could draft petitions, give legal and political advice, manage estates, act as interpreter, do business as an agent, and render various kinds of assistance to men, literary and practical, for which he could very well claim remuneration. To suppose that such a man, so talented, so versatile, so energetic, would be tied down to his salary as Moonshee and would have no additional source of income, is to exhibit absolute ignorance of life. How much would it have been possible for him to earn only as a conveyancer or an attorney! And he was a great deal besides and no mere clerk. The Rev. Mr. Long writes:—

"Persian was the language of diplomacy and the courts. In it the English transacted business both with the natives and Armenians. Through his skill in it Nabakissen from being Clive's Munshi in 1760 rose to great influence and wealth." ¹

Nubkissen had been Clive's Moonshee even before 1760, but it is perfectly fair to suppose that his knowledge of Persian, coupled of course with his ability, was the main cause of his wealth and influence, just as knowledge of English has been the cause of many a Bengali's advancement in more recent times. The scandal, however, is not without its moral. It is a recognition of the importance which Nubkissen had acquired by this time and of the services he

Peeps into Social Life. p. 18.
had already rendered to the Company. It was probably presumed in the gossip of the day that a man who was of so much service to the conquerors could not but have received a material share of the spoil. But having regard to ascertained facts as well as to probabilities, the story of Nubkissen receiving a share of the treasures stored up in the harem must be dismissed as at best an unfounded presumption.
CHAPTER III.

FROM THE BATTLE OF PLASSEY TO CLIVE'S FINAL DEPARTURE FROM INDIA, 1757-1767.

Clive left for England on the 25th February 1759; he returned to Calcutta on the 3rd May 1765; he finally bade adieu to the country in 1767, sailing from Calcutta on the 29th January. What was the net result of his work in the first period of his career in Bengal, namely, from December 1756 to February 1757? It was, in a word, the removal of all danger to which the English settlement might be exposed. As Colonel Malleson puts it—

"He had determined not to leave Bengal so long as there should remain any danger threatening the English settlement. With the destruction of the last of its European rivals [namely, the Dutch] all danger had disappeared."

The work, therefore, was a wholly defensive one. One hears up to this period, not of English possessions, power or supremacy, but only of the "English settlement," and the safety of that settlement is the greatest work that could be accomplished. What is the work, however, which Clive had done when he finally left the country in 1767? He had laid the foundations of an empire. In the words of Colonel Malleson—

"Clive felt in January, 1767 that he might retire with honour from the country which he had won for England, and on whose soil there now remained for him no new fields to conquer ............ The Calcutta which he saw for the last time on that eventful day [the day of departure] had in ten years been transformed by him from the status of a conquered seat of a ruined commercial agency, occupied by the conqueror, into the flourishing capital of a possession as large as France. Alone he had done it!"

His genius, military, administrative and diplomatic, had, of course, done it, but how is one to account for his change
of policy and aspiration during the second period of his career in Bengal? The historian just quoted says that before his arrival in 1765 Clive had nurtured a scheme for the welding together and the protection of the territories acquired by the British. No evidence is offered, however, for such a conclusion, nor are any circumstances mentioned which might raise any presumption in its favour. There are reasons to believe that the inspiration of empire came from Nubkissen, who practically discharged all the functions of a diplomatic minister, of a Foreign Secretary, and of the Chief Officer of an Intelligence Department.

Nubkissen's chief qualifications for the advice and assistance he gave to Clive were his knowledge of Persian, his knowledge of the country and his knowledge of the temper of the princes and the people of the time. Mr. Richard Barwell in the course of his statement in the trial of Warren Hastings said:—"He [Nubkissen] is profoundly learned in Persian and most of the customs of the Mahomedans are based on the Persian scriptures; besides Raja Narakrishna was a man of vast experience and his repeated intercourse with the Nabobs of Moorschedabad has made him quite a competent man." Governor Johnstone in his explanation to the Select Committee said that Nubkissen was, like a few others, an "able conveyancer," that is, one well versed in the art of drafting treaties. Evidence of a direct kind as to the services rendered by Nubkissen is to be found in a petition addressed by him to the Council of Revenue, Bengal, and dated the 18th November 1777.¹ The petition runs as follows:—

From the year 1756 to the year 1767, an interval during which the welfare and interests of the Hon'ble Company were repeatedly in the most critical and dangerous situations, it is a well known fact that all the most important and secret negotiations and transactions with the Country Powers were conducted through the medium of your

¹ See proceedings of the Council of Revenue, dated Fort William, the 18th November 1777.
petitioner, the success of which he humbly hopes sufficiently marks his fidelity. The particulars of those services are too recent and well known to your Hon’ble Board to need recapitulation here. Your petitioner therefore only craves leave briefly to state a few of the most material heads thereof: viz.:

1. His services under the Right Hon’ble Lord Clive (then Colonel Clive) in the Revolution which happened in consequence of the capture of Calcutta and subsequent defeat of Serajuddoollah, on which occasion your petitioner acted as Persian Secretary and Translator, and was employed in all the most confidential transactions.

2. His services under Major Adams, Commander-in-Chief in the wars of the Nabob Kassimally Cawn, in which your petitioner had the sole management of all such negotiations and transactions with the Country Powers and chief people as fell under the province of the Commander-in-Chief.

3. His services under Lord Clive on his return to India in the year 1764 when your petitioner was the only native entrusted or employed in all the several Treaties which were made with the Mogul or King Shaw Alumi, the late Vizier Shuja-ud-Dowla, the Nabob of Bengal Nudjum-ud-Dowla, etc., when the grant of the Dewani was obtained for the Hon’ble Company.

Lastly.—For the sense which Lord Clive had of your petitioner’s services on the occasions aforesaid he begs leave to refer your Hon’ble Board to the proceedings of the Select Committee of the 16th January 1767 and the proceedings in public of Public Department in Council, the next day, wherein his Lordship is pleased fully to express the sense he entertained of your petitioner’s fidelity and abilities and of his steady attachment to the interests of the Hon’ble Company.

There is no doubt, that Clive appreciated Nubkissen’s services, which were not only political, but personal. Lady Clive wrote to him, years afterwards, the following note:

The kind attentions shewn to Robert May by the worthy Raja Nobokissen Bahadur have very much obliged Lady Clive, the late Lord Clive’s wife. She now, his widow, has an inclination to send Nobokissen a valuable print of her dear late Lord, flattering herself that such a proof of her regard will be very acceptable to him. It is still in his power to give her further proofs of his friendship by
Battle of Plassey—Clive's Departure.

shewing her cousins, Mr. Henry and Mr. Edward Strachey every
civility in Bengal. The children of the late Lord Clive wish happiness
to Nobokissen.

Maharaja Nobokissen Bahadur,

By Mr. Edward Strachey.

Mr. Henry Strachey referred to in this letter introduced
his son to Nubkissen in the following terms.

London, 7th April 1792.

Dear Nabakissen—

My eldest son brings you this letter. He is appointed a writer
and I hope he will be an honest and a good man. As I was so well
acquainted with you when I was with Lord Clive, you would think me
unkind if I did not introduce my son to you. If you can ever be of
use to him I am sure you will. I shall always be glad to hear of
your health and welfare, being

Your Friend,

(Sd.) Henry Strachey.

For Raja Nabakissen.

The letter which Mr. John Knott wrote to him in 1774
shows very clearly the esteem in which Nubkissen was held
and indicates the sort of services which he had rendered
and was capable of rendering.

London, 29th March 1774.

To

Raja Nobkissen,

Mr. Nobkissen,

Though I have not received a letter from you, nor any particular
advice of you from my friends in Calcutta since I left Bengal, yet
you have always had my good wishes for your health and happiness.

The Europe ships that went to Bengal last season would inform
you of the violent disputes that we have lately had in Parliament
and at the East India House here against almost every gentleman
that has returned from Bengal for some years past. Lord Clive
has been more particularly attacked and abused by Mr. Johnson's
Scotch friends and their partizans, and they even carried matters
so far as to endeavour to take away His Lordship's whole fortune.
Cruel and scandalous as such endeavours were, these outrageous
men were happily disappointed, partly by the very sensible and
spirited speeches which Lord Clive made in Parliament in his own
defence and partly by the support of his many active and able friends in that House. His Lordship enjoying but an indifferent state of health every cold season here (which is rather too severe for his constitution, as well as for most gentlemen that come from India) he went to Italy for the benefit of his health about five or six months ago, which is a warmer and healthier climate than England, and Mr. Strachey tells me that his Lordship's health is now so much benefited by his journey, that he will very soon return to England again. Mr. Kelsall and Mr. Beaumont, late of Bengal, accompanied His Lordship to Italy. Lady Clive and all his Lordship's family are well; he has two sons and three daughters, I believe, who are all very fine children.

Mr. Strachey was married, soon after his return to England, to Mr. Kelsall's sister and has one or two children by her; he is in good health and lives very happily; he is a Member of Parliament and will be chosen one of the East India Directors, I believe, next year. Dr. Ingham died soon after his return to England. Mr. Vere lst was married to a very handsome young lady of good family and large fortune about a year after his return to England; he has two children by his wife and would be very happy could he enjoy his health perfectly in this climate. He will be in the Direction again, I believe, next year, as also Mr. Becher. I was married about the same time that Mr. Vere lst was, to a sister of my cousin, Captain George Knott's, whom you must remember in Bengal. I have but one child, my wife being of a tender and weakly constitution. I should be very happy in England, was not my little fortune exposed to so heavy a risk in Bengal by the share I hold in the joint concern in trade there under the direction of the late Mr. Hoissard. Though you were so kind as to buy that share of me, so far as related to my proportion of any profits that might arise on the joint concern, yet I am still responsible for the principal amount of my share of that original stock.

Both Hoissard and Gocul Gosaul have behaved in a most encouraging manner to the other proprietors of that concern by settling and interchanging a private account between themselves wherein they have endeavoured to deprive the joint concern of nearly the sum of two lakhs of rupees by the manner they have settled that account, and which sum (with about two lakhs more) Gocul owed to the concern partly for their goods bought by him of Hoissard as acting agent to the concern (which consulted me upon and had my
approval (?) of one of the principal proprietors a little before I left Bengal and partly for the concern's outstanding debts at the Aurungs, which a letter of Mr. Hoissard's to me tells me Gocul (as banyan to the concern) had given him a written obligation to be responsible to the concern for the full payment of. I know very well that Gocul, long before we left Bengal, lent several large sums of money to Mr. Hoissard (amounting altogether to nearly two lakhs of rupees) for that gentleman's private use and benefit in trade. And this I understand is the money which they transferred in the private account settled between themselves as above mentioned, instead of Gocul paying to the joint concern the full amount of the debt he owed thereto or continuing to be responsible to it for the same till he could pay that debt, and acquainting Mr. Verelst's attorneys and mine in Calcutta with the transaction when proposed by Hoissard. Whatever sums of money Gocul had lent to Mr. Hoissard for his own private use and advantage in trade long before that time, Gocul must be sensible it was very unreasonable and unjust to expect that the property of the joint concern should pay him for this private debt. I am astonished to hear that Gocul is capable of such a conduct, even as much so as to hear that Mr. Hoissard could be guilty of it. If the lawsuit in the Mayor's Court at Calcutta between the Executors of Hoissard's Estate and Gocul Ghosal be determined in Gocul's favor, I hope, Mr. Nobokissen, from the many testimonies I have received of your friendship that you will not think it unreasonable in me if I request your becoming my security for what the Mayor's Court, or Mahomed Reza Cawn (who you know lent three lakhs of Sicca rupees to the joint concern for its first establishment) may demand of the several proprietors for their shares in the concern and consequently of me for my proportion thereof. If you are willing to favor me in this request I shall be obliged if you will be so kind as to call upon Mr. Levett, my acting Attorney in Calcutta, and acquaint him with it. The risk I am exposed to upon this occasion becomes daily so very alarming to me, that I am determined to return to Bengal next season to endeavour if possible to repair the loss. I should have sailed this year, but could not get my concerns in England sufficiently adjusted to enable me to go away. I hope I shall see you in Bengal next summer cheerful and well.

You will be advised long before this reaches you of great changes here in East India affairs, of the appointment of a Governor-General and
four Supreme Councillors to superintend and regulate the Company's affairs at all their settlements in India, and of four Judges to establish a Supreme Court of Judicature in Bengal. Amongst these Judges, and the second in rank, is Robert Chambers, Esq., a gentleman of respectable character and distinguished abilities; upon mentioning to me one day his having a desire to learn both the Persian and Bengalee languages on his arrival in Bengal, and that he wished he could meet with a person there properly qualified to instruct him, I immediately mentioned your name and added, that as you had had almost the sole direction of Lord Clive's Persian correspondence and a great part also of Mr. Verelst's, and acted as Political Banyan to them, both whilst they were Governors of Bengal, I thought no man was fitter to answer his expectations in regard to those languages than yourself, if you were willing to undertake it. Besides, I told him the great advantage your conversation would be to him upon the general politics of Hindustan, as well as the particular provinces thereof from the long and intimate knowledge you have had on those subjects. Mr. Chambers will necessarily want a Banyan when he arrives in Calcutta; from the character I have given him of you, I hope he will not think of engaging any one else, and though you are much better experienced in politics than in trade, yet as I suppose Mr. Chambers will not trade much, if any from your good sense and general knowledge of the country and with the assistance of my old friend Narry Hurry (who I hope is alive and well, and who understands accounts exceedingly well,) you cannot be at any loss to fulfil Mr. Chambers' expectation in those matters. But my chief motive in recommending you to Mr. Chambers is that his protection and friendship may be serviceable to you; and as he is a very sensible and worthy gentleman and may probably very soon become the first Judge in Calcutta, I hope you will find his service answer your expectations, and I shall be happy to have had it in my power to have been in any degree assisting to you on the occasion. Mr. Chambers was lately married here to a very beautiful and accomplished young lady, who accompanies him to India. As Mr. Chambers desired me to give him a letter to you, I send this under his care and hope you will wait upon him as soon after your receipt of it as possible.

Wishing you health and success,

- I am,

MR. NUBEKEDEN.

Your sincere friend,

(Sd.) JOHN KNOY.
Some idea, though only a very meagre one, of the sort of work which Nubkissen used to do for Clive may be formed from the three following short letters:

**Persian Department, Letters written 1764, No. 212.**

_Dated 13th December 1764._

From

R. Clive.

To

The Nabob.

Your Excellency’s letter from Mortagill reached me in a fortunate hour, and the news of your welfare gave me more pleasure than I can express. May it please God to preserve you and your family in health and prosperity and always let me hear of it. Nubkissen Munshee has informed me of all other particulars with which I am satisfied and to whom I refer you.

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**Persian Department, Letters written 1764, No. 213.**

_Dated 22nd December 1764._

From

R. Clive.

To

The Nabob.

You advise me you have safely arrived in Muxadabad than which news nothing could be more agreeable to me. May you always there be happy and rejoice me in the news of it.

In another letter you advise me of the mad proceedings of Shahmull. Sensible of the ill-consequence thereof and to shew my readiness to oblige your Excellency in everything I consistently can, I immediately wrote and sent to you by the hands of Nubkissen Munshee a letter to Major Munro, which I am persuaded will set these matters right. If not I shall take other measures.

You please me much in the last letter wherein you mention that Maharajah Nundo Comar was set down to and attending to the accounts. The speedy adjustment of them will, I hope, soon enable your Excellency to answer all your purposes; it is in attention only to those points that can make these provinces flourish and yourself happy. That you may be always so is my sincere wish. I am well and hope always to have accounts of your welfare.
Maharajah Nubkissen Bahadur.

Persian Department, Letters written 1765, No. 7.

From

R. Clive.

To

The Nabob.

I have received your Excellency's letters which always give me etc.

As to the Batty on the rupees paid at Patna in consequence of your order, I understood, as did the Board, they should be sicca rupees, but I have desired Mr. Billers not to dispute about this there, but leave this matter to be settled between your Excellency and us here. It gives me pleasure to hear from your Excellency that you look upon Reza Khan in so favourable a light. We look upon him as well inclined to you, or he would not have had any countenance from us. Mr. Middleton has wrote me everything proper on that occasion, with which I am satisfied, and I hope you will receive benefit by his service at Dacca. I have wrote him that if he expects my friendship he cannot do better to secure that than to shew himself a faithful and diligent servant to your Excellency. Other particulars of your Excellency's friendly sentiments regarding myself I have understood from the letters of Raja Nund Comor and the representations of Nobkissen Munshee, and which gives me pleasure, who is always ready and diligent in your service.

Always favour me with your letters and make me glad.

These letters constitute a body of circumstantial evidence which goes far to confirm the statements made by Nubkissen in his petition, which, however, it may be confidently observed, hardly stand in need of corroboration, for a person in the position of Nubkissen would not have dreamt of making them if they were not absolutely true, and they would certainly not have passed unchallenged at the time.

That Nubkissen rendered valuable services to Clive and Adams was undisputed history over sixty years ago. A well-informed Anglo-Indian journal wrote:

"Raja Nubukissen was the founder of his own fortunes. He was a man of considerable attainments and great tact; well versed in Persian, and one of the very few natives who at that time knew anything of English. He was a writer in the employ of Clive who never
understood anything of the native languages. Though he occupied
but a very subordinate capacity, he made himself very useful to the
English during the period when they were negotiating with Meer
Jaffer, and acquired par excellence the title of Moonshee. When the
war broke out with Meer Cossim, he accompanied the Army of Major
Adams as his banian. His address and zeal induced Lord Clive to
recommend him to the Select Committee as their banian, at that time
one of the most lucrative offices in Bengal. This laid the foundation
of his great wealth.”¹

Rev. Dr. Hastie has observed with truth that “with more
wisdom and less ambition he [Nubkissen] recognised the
invincibility of the new power” and did not “make the fatal
mistake of the unprincipled and ill-fated Nuncoomar.”²
The fact is, Nubkissen recognised not only the invincibility
of the new power, but the impossibility of improving the old régime or of evoking order out of chaos in
any other way than by the assistance of the English. He
felt that he had to save his country from a disaster by the
establishment of an authority that should be at once just and
strong. Such an authority he found in the English, for,
as Mr. Francis Sykes said in his deposition³ before the
Parliamentary Committee, he had not merely formed a
correct idea of their military power, but he also entertained a
high opinion of their system of Government as well as of
their capacity for administration.

Before this chapter is closed it is necessary to refer to an
inquiry that was held by a Select Committee, with Lord
Clive as president, into the several sums granted by Meer
Jaffer towards restitution and donations. Nuncoomar and
Nubkissen are the principal witnesses that were examined,
and the tale they unfold does little credit to the English
Governors that were concerned. It is a tale of meanness,

¹The Friend of India (5th April 1838).
²Hindu Idolatry, p. 54.
³Fifth Report, p. 544.
RAJA SIR RADHA KANT DEB BAHADUR, K.C.S.I.
fraud and extortion, and poor Meer Jaffer, ignorant and imbecile, comes to be an object of sympathy when he is entrap-
ped, alternately bullied and cajoled, and finally compelled to surrender to the machinations. "Hardly any" comment is needed on the facts disclosed in the following depositions. At the meeting of the Committee held in Fort William on the 26th August 1766, Raja Nuncomar stated:—

"At the time Mr. Vansittart resigned the Government, the fresh demand of eight lakhs for restitution was still in debate. One day Mr. Spencer spoke to me on the subject and told me 'that unless that affair was adjusted he could not give his consent to the Nabob's departure or to mine.' With this I acquainted His Excellency, who said that nothing further could be done before Lord Clive arrived. 'But do you,' says he, 'tell Mr. Spencer that Assun Oula Cawn, an officer of the Government who had charge of the Province of Jessore, has absconded with Rs. 1,80,000\(^1\) of the public money and now takes shelter in Calcutta. If this person is delivered up, I will settle about the eight lakhs.' His Excellency also desired Nobkissen to speak to Mr. Spencer on the same subject, and several messages having passed, Mr. Spencer promised to deliver him to the Nabob, but never did."

Further on in Nuncomar's narrative:—

"After this the Nabob and myself had our discussion, and set out immediately, His Excellency telling me he would return again upon the first advice of Lord Clive's arrival. He left Nobkissen here, and with him two persons who had direction to take charge of Assun Oula Cawn when he should be delivered up; which he never was for Mr. Spencer never performed his promise."

After Nuncomar's evidence was finished, "Nobkissen, Moonshee, being called before the Committee, delivers upon oath the following account of the Treaty of Restitution":—

"During the months of May of June 1764, and soon after Mr. Spencer's arrival, Mr. Vansittart wrote to the Nabob, who was then at Patna, desiring he would come down to Calcutta, which would be the easiest method of settling several affairs that remained to be adjusted. At the same time Mr. Spencer ordered me likewise to write

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\(^1\) It may be Rs. 80,000. The 1 may be a mere slip of the pen, judging from its appearance in the MS.
to the Nabob, desiring he would be under no apprehension, but come down, when Mr. Vansittart and himself would settle everything to his satisfaction. The Nabob not having it in his power so soon as expected, there was a delay of 15 or 20 days, at which Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Spencer were much displeased, and also very angry with me. I told Mr. Spencer ‘that the Nabob was a great man, that I was but a poor man, and that if anything happened to His Excellency, the blame must fall upon those who obliged him to come down.’ Upon which, Mr. Spencer answered ‘that everything should be done at the Board, that no harm would happen, and that a due regard would be had to all the Nabob’s representations.’ In consequence of this declaration, myself and others of the Nabob’s friends wrote five or six letters to His Excellency, acquainting him that Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Spencer had both given the strongest assurances and even engaged to us that no injury should be done him.

"Upon these assurances the Nabob came down, and, upon my waiting upon him, told me he was extremely satisfied with his reception.

"Two or three days afterwards Mr. Vansittart began to make his demand of forty lakhs on account of Restitution. When he spoke upon the subject to the Nabob, His Excellency replied: ‘Did you not before ask me for ten lakhs only, and do you now want forty?’—making use at the same time of some harsh and violent expressions, and speaking so loud that he was overheard by others and myself, who stood without the door. As soon as he had got into his palanquin, ‘Go you to Mr. Spencer,’ says he to me, ‘tell him the usage I have met with, and ask what they can mean by such unreasonable demands.’ I went accordingly as desired, and Mr. Spencer told me ‘that he had sat upon all the Committees for examining the claims of the sufferers, that he had strictly examined the losses, and that they absolutely amounted to the whole sum demanded.’ Adding ‘that he did not mention this before, because he thought ‘it the Nabob was acquainted with it, he would not come down to Calcutta.’ I then said ‘What justice, Sir, is there in this? You first asked for ten lakhs only and now you demand forty.’ To which he replied: ‘The claims were not then brought in nor examined, else the demand would have been made at first.’

"This conversation I reported to the Nabob, who was very angry and said: ‘Why did not you and others give me notice of this before?’ I
should then have been prepared and known how to act, whereas I must now remain in Calcutta.' In this ill temper he continued for several days, and would hearken to no one. From what motive I know not, but all of a sudden he sent for Juggut Chund and told him: 'I conclude from this extraordinary demand of Mr. Vansittart's that he wants something for himself. Do you go and tell him that, as to what relates to him, he shall be satisfied.' Juggut Chund went as desired, but what passed between him and Mr. Vansittart I cannot tell. However, on his return, he delivered Mr. Vansittart's compliments to His Excellency and told the Nabob 'that Mr. Vansittart considered himself as his son, that he entertained no bad intentions towards him, but wished him well, and asked why His Excellency was so angry with him,' concluding with observing 'that forty lakhs must be paid.' The Nabob, perceiving from all that had passed that Mr. Vansittart and Mr. Spencer were of one mind, was very much displeased and remained sullen for some days.

"Myself and others, hearing that Mr. Vansittart intended making application to His Excellency for a large present to Commodore Tinker, went to the Nabob and told him of it; on which he flew into a rage, declaring 'that Mr. Vansittart was the bitterest of enemies to him; that he found he was determined he should not hold the Government; he might therefore send what officers he thought proper to manage the public affairs, for that he (the Nabob) was resolved not to stir from Calcutta.' Accordingly he wrote privately to the city for his women to be sent down, and they came bringing with them 20 or 30 lakhs of treasure in 35 boats.

"In fact, Mr. Vansittart made the above application for a present to Mr. Tinker and the squadron before the treasure and women arrived, upon which the Nabob sent me to Mr. Spencer to acquaint him of the fresh demand Mr. Vansittart had made. 'Tell him,' says he, 'that what with so many demands for indemnification to the 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.' When I acquainted Mr. Spencer with this message, his answer was 'that several of the above demands had been made and agreed to before his arrived; nor was he yet Governor.' That
His Excellency had better comply with the demand for 40 lakhs on account of Restitution, as fresh claims were coming in daily, and this would at once stop any further demands. That by continuing obstinate in his refusal he was obstructing his own interest, for had he consented but ten days ago, Mr. Vansittart would be gone away, he (Mr. Spencer) would then have been in the Government and the Nabob would then have everything done to his satisfaction; but now he could neither go to Moorshedabad nor would Mr. Vansittart resign the Government, nor could he himself come to the chair till the Restitution was settled. That the present desired for Commodore Tinker was neither the Board's act nor his, but as to the forty lakhs for Restitution, he must, as a friend to the Nabob, desire I would go to him with his compliments and tell him it was his advice to him to comply; for then, says he, Mr. Vansittart will resign the chair, I shall be Governor and the Nabob may depend on my showing him every act of kindness.

"All this conversation I repeated to His Excellency, who asked me 'whether these were the real sentiments of Mr. Spencer's heart or words of course only,' and said: 'Why did you not lay greater stress on my determination to quit the Government?' to which I answered that I had urged every argument in my power, but that, as staying two or three months longer in Calcutta must prove extremely injurious to his affairs, I could not help recommending that he would take it into further consideration. 'Upon which the Nabob said: 'I will consult with Nundcomar.'

"It was about this time that Mr. Vansittart delivered with his own hand to the Nabob a paper which His Excellency thought was couched in dark and ambiguous terms implying that unless he agreed to their demands he would not be permitted to leave Calcutta. Although neither he nor myself understood the paper thoroughly, the Nabob was much offended with it, and asked 'how long an answer to a letter would be coming from Europe.' I told him that he might have an answer in about eighteen months, upon which he sat down and wrote a very long letter to the Court of Directors; but before he had finished it he signed the deed for forty lakhs, and then a further demand of eight lakhs was made.

"The Nabob having sent me again to Mr. Spencer, I represented to that gentleman the injustice of this fresh demand after having settled with His Excellency for forty lakhs, to which Mr. Spencer replied: 'I cannot help it.' The accounts really amount to the
sum demanded, and you will inform the Nabob that he must pay it.' On my repeating this to His Excellency, he said. 'They are much akin. Their dispositions are equally good towards me. The one works his end by violence (meaning Mr. Vansittart), the other by cunning.'

"In this manner they went on debating till Mr. Vansittart's departure, after which Mr. Spencer told the Nabob: 'We have been disputing here about a trifle. You had better pay the eight lakhs. I am now Governor, and will support you to the utmost of my power. It will do us both credit that we have so easily settled this affair which could not be adjusted in Mr. Vansittart's Government. I will have no connection with your enemies. I will deliver up Assun Oola Cawn, and I will hold no intercourse with Doolubram, Petruse or Ramchurn.' These words seemed to have influenced the Nabob, who paid 13 lakhs in Mr. Vansittart's time and 10 lakhs in three different payments during Mr. Spencer's Government."

Later on (at the same sitting of the Select Committee) Nuncomar was examined as to the donation to the Army, and then "Nabkissen, being questioned touching the donation to the Army, delivers the following particulars upon oath:"

"I was not present when the agreement for a donation to the Army was made; but I have frequently heard from the Nabob's own mouth that the 25 lakhs which he gave the Army was a free and voluntary gift. There was a halt of the Army for the space of four days at Doodnagur, when a committee composed of the officers assembled to regulate the division of the Nabob's gift. Of this committee, consisting of thirteen officers, Major Adams desired I would acquaint His Excellency requesting he would grant powers to the above gentlemen to make the distribution I went that evening to the Nabob, but it being then his usual hour of eating, I could not see him; of which I informed Major Adams, who ordered me to go back immediately to the Nabob, for that the business was of so urgent a nature as would admit of no delay. I saw the Nabob, and acquainting him with my message, he asked: 'Can any harm be meant me by this Committee?' And I answered: 'No, there cannot' upon which he said: 'Do you draw out a paper such as they want, and I will sign it.' Accordingly I made a foul draft of the powers, which his own moonshee copied fair, and His Excellency signed.'
At the Select Committee next day (27th August 1766), Rajah Nuncomar deposed on oath as to the donation made to the squadron.

"......Upon all the Nabob’s visits to Mr. Vansittart, I accompanied him; but no sooner had we retired than Doolubram came to him. One day Mr. Vansittart sent for me, and told me it was I that prevented the Nabob’s making a suitable present to Mr. Tinker. This I denied, affirming that it proceeded from the Nabob himself, who would not hear of it. When I related what Mr. Vansittart said to the Nabob, ‘This all,’ says he, ‘is the trick and artifice of Doolubram to bring an odium upon your office. Since that is the case, I will execute a steep for ten lakhs of rupees. Do you go and deliver it and let this affair be ended.’ ‘At the same time he sent for Ramchurn and Nobkissen, and told them that he understood they wanted to remove Nundcomar and place Doolubram in his office; but if they did, he would immediately throw up the Government.’

Rajah Nuncomar continued his evidence before the Select Committee on the 29th August. He stated that Mr. Vansittart had observed that "Captain Affleck was soon going away to China, and that he ought to be considered before his departure;" so "Let the Nabob give Captain Affleck Rs. 50,000 and two lakhs to Mr. Tinker in ready money and for the remaining 12½ lakhs he may give a kistbundee."

"......In four or five days, adds the Deponent, the 2½ lakhs were provided and sent by Nobkissen to Mr. Tinker, who deducted about 13,000 rupees for the commission he promised me, which he sent by Nobkissen. Of this I kept 9,000 to myself and gave Nobkissen 4,000 rupees for his trouble."

The next witness (at the same sitting of the Committee) was Nobkissen. The entry is as follows:—

"Nobkisser, Moonshee, is brought before the Committee and duly sworn, after which he declares upon oath as follows:—

"‘In the year 1763 I was with the Army at Doorgothy in the service of Major Adams. There came a letter then from Mr. Vansittart to the Major, who, after perusing it, told me it was to this purpose. ‘That when the squadron was here before with Admiral Watson, the Nabob gave 50 lakhs of rupees for the joint use of the fleet and the army. That Mr. Tinker, a very great man, was now arrived, and
ought to have 25 lakhs, and that he, Mr. Vansittart, requested Major Adams to speak to the Nabob upon the subject. Major Adams desired I would let the Nabob know this, and return to him with his answer. When I told the Nabob the purport of the letter, he replied: 'Who is this Mr. Tinker? He has done me no service. I have already driven Cossim Ally out of the country; if I wanted him, I would have called for him, and gratified him; but now what has he done for me?' I asked what answer should be returned to Mr. Vansittart. 'Do you,' says he, 'tell him plainly that I find he wants to revive our disputes; like a rocket, no sooner immersed in water than it ascends again with unabated and undiminished lustre,' remarking at the same time to me that when he left Calcutta everything had been adjusted. In a word His Excellency was extremely incensed, and I went and informed Major Adams of the issue of my message. What answer the Major sent Mr. Vansittart I don't know; but three or four days after came another letter from Mr. Vansittart to the Major, enclosing one to the Nabob. On receiving them the Major told me: 'Do you carry this letter to the Nabob; tell him I have received another to the same purport as the former, and desire he will consider of an answer and do what he thinks best.' Upon delivering the letter and message to the Nabob, he said: 'How can Major Adams, who is commanding officer on the part of the King of England, ask me to comply with so unjust a request?' I answered that I would acquaint the Major with what His Excellency said. When I told the Major, he said: 'We must be quiet for the present; but take an opportunity of seeing the Nabob again when he is in better humour, and hear then what he will say.' I frequently afterwards mentioned the subject to the Nabob; but he always grew so angry as to refuse hearing me; upon which, I declared as my opinion to Major Adams that it was in vain going any more to His Excellency, for I was certain he never would give anything on this account.

'I know nothing further of this affair till after the Major’s death, when I went to Chandernagore, of which District I was fougedar. While I resided there in the month of May or June 1764, I received a letter from Mr. Tinker’s Banian, desiring me in his master’s name to come down immediately to Calcutta, for he had business with me of very great moment: I came down accordingly and waited on Mr. Tinker, who asked me 'Why I left Calcutta and lived at Chandernagore. Why I did not rather stay with him, for he had a great deal of business for me.' He then told me of the teep for 5 lakhs procured
—Clive's Departure.

I do not receive, 'You must write,' says I, and his friend, that I could live on his 2l. a week, because I choose to have my 10 guineas a week, and to do nothing else. I only say that I know the Nabob has some business to attend to, and I am a much greater man than he, and I will manage the business as well as he will. And he then produced a box filled with a great number of papers, which he said, 'These are the particulars of the affair of the country, which I will lay before the Council.' Within the space of a few days, I will manage the Nabob's affairs that he no longer need attend to the Council.

The next week I managed to miss a day without waiting on the Nabob to call me. I did not, however, write in the manner he desired; but I acquainted Nundcomar with the substance of what passed, and in the letters I wrote to the Nabob, referred to my correspondence with Nundcomar. Mr. Tinker pressed me to write to him every day, which I said I would not do, for, if my letters should be intercepted by Mr. Vansittart, he would be very angry. 'No, no,' says he, 'I will answer for it, he will not be angry; I am now going to him; do you accompany me.'

When we came there, Mr. Vansittart encouraged me and desired I would be under no apprehension, but write as the Commodore directed. To which I answered 'that I could not engage in the affair, for if things went wrong I should be blamed.' Mr. Vansittart then again repeated 'Don't be afraid; I will take care of you,' and spoke very kindly.

Soon after this the Commodore recommended me as Banian to Major Munro; but I did not act in that capacity myself, but performed the business by a deputy. In this interim the Nabob came to Calcutta; and some visits of compliments having passed between His Excellency, Mr. Vansittart, and the Commodore, one day Mr. Tinker called me and said, 'You know there is a certain affair in agitation between the Nabob and me.' I replied: 'This business is conducted by Mr. Vansittart;' and he answered: 'If you imagine the Nabob is averse to having this affair pass through Mr. Vansittart's hands, let me know, and I will go and talk to His Excellency myself.' I told him 'I could not make any reply; but I would let him know in a few days.'
MAHARAJA SIV KRISHNA BAHADUR.
"When first Mr. Vansittart mentioned a present for Mr. Tinker to the Nabob, he was very angry; and told me afterwards: 'I can never do business with Mr. Vansittart with any satisfaction, for he is my enemy,' expressing himself as if he believed Mr. Vansittart's intention was to remove Nundcomar and raise Doolubram to his employment. By which means he would procure the present for Mr. Tinker, adding that he was determined never to admit Doolubram to that station, nor allow of any further donation to the squadron; but rather than submit to such exaction, they should themselves appoint a Subadar under whom they might place Doolubram, and then obtain the donation they wanted.' The Nabob further told me that Mr. Vansittart was continually sending for Nundcomar about this money for the squadron, threatening him and making him carry messages to him (the Nabob); but he was resolved not to hear anything Nundcomar should say on the subject. He also told me and some others of his servants in an angry tone: 'It was in consequence of your letters I came to Calcutta; but unless you can apply some relief to my present necessities, don't speak to me, nor come near me.' Accordingly we kept away for some days, but, being informed that Doolubram was appointed to Nundcomar's office, I then went and told the Nabob that Doolubram was to have his new appointment publicly notified in a few days, and that, unless he consented to the demand on behalf of the squadron, he must expect to see Doolubram in charge of the administration, when neither His Excellency nor Nundcomar would be permitted to leave Calcutta, which must bring inevitable ruin on his affairs.

"It was after this the Nabob told me that Mr. Vansittart had been with him a day or two before, and upon his (the Nabob's) being very angry told him: 'Sir, if you do not consent, we know how to manage it;' with which His Excellency being deeply afflicted, desired me to acquaint Mr. Spencer of what Mr. Vansittart had said, and bring back his answer. I told Mr. Spencer it was the public report that His Excellency and Nundcomar would be kept here and Doolubram be sent to the city to take charge of the administration; and asked him if there were any grounds for the report. Mr. Spencer laughed and said: 'The Nabob's a foolish weak man. He is hurting both us and himself, and I will give him no advice. Had he listened to me before he would have been long since at Moorshedabad.'

"With this I acquainted the Nabob, who said: 'What a distressed situation am I in! I am come to Calcutta where I have not a single friend, and because I love Nundcomar they are his enemies too.
Tell him to come to me this night.' Adding, in a violent rage: 'Let me once but get away from Calcutta and I shall then know how to act."

"Not long after I went to Mr. Tinker, he asked me: 'Have you heard the news, that the Nabob and Nundcomar are to be kept in Calcutta?' Had they been my friends who would have presumed to distress them? The Nabob might then have returned with credit to the city. If he will embrace it, he has good fortune still attending him. My nephew Lord Clive is coming. Colonel Coote is my particular friend. Mr. Spencer consults me in everything. In short, there is nothing done without my approbation: and should Lord Clive know in what manner the Nabob has slighted me, he will be very angry. Should I not stay till his arrival, the Nabob would himself be convinced how much his Lordship esteems me. On my going away I will leave the necessary instructions with Mr. Spencer, and on my arrival in England I will send for Colonel Coote to my house and have some conversation with him. I shall then have an audience of the king, and a few days after I will present to His Majesty all my papers relative to this country. But there is one thing you must do for me, you must get a letter from the Nabob to the King of Great Britain. His Excellency must also give me a dress, with the proper jewels and sword, in which dress I shall wait on His Majesty to deliver the Nabob's letter; let me know the proper hour, and I will wait on the Nabob in person.'

"I went to the Nabob and repeated word for word the above conversation. Mr. Tinker also visited him the next day, and related all these circumstances with his own lips to the Nabob. After he was gone, I remained with His Excellency, who told me: that he found, unless he agreed to the demand for the squadron, Mr. Vansittart would not permit either him or Nundcomar to leave Calcutta; he must therefore submit. 'Mr. Tinker,' says he, 'will manage with the Council. Let us see what he will do.' In consequence, the several deeds were executed; after which Mr. Tinker told me that Mr. Vansittart had applied to the Nabob for a paper acknowledging that his donation to the navy was voluntary and of his own free will. 'Do you,' says he, 'go in my name and tell His Excellency he will much oblige me by giving an acknowledgement to me likewise.' This request I mentioned to the Nabob, but cannot say whether ever it was granted. All I know is that, soon after, Mr. Tinker told me: 'I am the Nabob's and Nundcomar's real friend. Why have they expressed the note in such doubtful and ambiguous terms as render it of no signification? Mr. Vansittart has drawn up another; see and get it signed by the Nabob.'
"Afterwards when I saw the Nabob he desired I would immediately get a letter drawn up from him to the Company, specifying his several grievances, and particularly his heavy sufferings on account of restitution to the merchants and donation to the navy — which letter went home by Major Shirlock. Another letter filled with similar, but still more bitter, complaints went home by Lieutenant Grant, who was Secretary to Colonel Coote."

At a meeting of the Select Committee, August 30, 1766, Ramchurn, late Banian to Mr. Vansittart, was examined as to the donation to the Navy. He said:

"......But as he [Mr. Tinker] conferred much oftener with Juggut Chund and Nobkissen than with me upon this subject these will be able to give you the best account......"

Ramchurn said he took the Nabob's Obligation (for five lakhs) and letter to Mr. Tinker, who declared himself affronted. He said:

"......I find that neither you nor Mr. Vansittart are proper persons to transact my business. You are not upon terms of friendship with the Nabob. I will therefore manage it myself. Nundecamar's son-in-law and Nobkissen, the Nabob's Vakil, are here; I will employ them......"

Ramchurn went on with his evidence up to the Nabob's arrival in Calcutta. Then as to Tinker's affair, he said:

"......How it was concluded I don't know, as it was entirely transacted between the Nabob, Nundecamar, Mr. Tinker, Juggut Chund, and Nobkissen......"

This body of evidence constitutes an unwritten chapter of Indian history, which, as already observed, hardly needs to have its moral pointed. It is the first instance, of which it is possible to discover traces, of the fleecing of a Nabob. Its effect on the mind of the Nabob may be read in the extracts; and very likely the story spread and produced its effects on other minds also.

Mr. Vansittart, so often mentioned in these depositions, had been appointed Governor of Calcutta in 1761. He appointed Ram Churn Roy as his Dewan (or Banian). He sent for Nabob Jafferly Khan, Subadar, and Nabob
Mozufterjung, Naib Subadar, from Moorshedabad to Calcutta and removed them from the munsaf for some faults they had committed. Nabob Kassimaly Khan being appointed Subadar removed from Moorshedabad to Monghyr and treacherously killed all the English gentlemen of Moorshedabad, Patna, Cossimbazar, &c., and despatched almost all the nobles of Bengal, including Royrayan Ommed Roy, Maharaja Rammurain, Raja Rajbullabha and his son, and Jagat Sett and his brother. Jafferaly Khan, Mozufterjung and Maharaja Doolubhram who were then in Calcutta escaped the general fate.

Afterwards Major Adams went to war against Kassimaly Khan. Nubkissen accompanied him. He fought a battle at Oody Nullah, defeated Kassimaly Khan and pursued him across the mullah (ditch or canal). Kassimaly Khan, however, managed to effect his escape. Nubkissen, fatigued with incessant work under the order of Major Adams, was taken ill and confined to his tent. The soldiers of the Nabob plundered his tent and attempted to take his life, but he saved himself by a daring feat. He jumped into the mullah, swam across it and joined the British army. Major Adams also, in consequence of hardships and exertions, fell ill. Nubkissen and Mr. Skinner were bringing him to Calcutta in a boat, but unfortunately he expired on the way.

Mr. Van-ittart embarked for Europe before Lord Clive’s arrival on the 3rd May, 1765. His appointment of Kassimaly Khan as Subadar had proved disastrous and he had not the heart to face Lord Clive. Nubkissen was now employed as the confidential adviser of Lord Clive as before. After consulting him, Clive reinstated Jafferaly Khan as Subadar and Mozufterjung as Naib Subadar. Nubkissen accompanied Clive as far as Allahabad on the occasion that a treaty was concluded with His Majesty Shah Alum and His Highness Nabob Shuja-ud-Dowlah. He obtained from His Majesty on the 2nd Showal 1179 Higree (1765 A.D.) the dignity of
Munsab Punj hazaret, three thousand sowar or horsemen, the title of Raja Bahadoor and a Palkee and many other paraphernalia. He received from His Highness the Nabob valuable Khelats and other marks of honor; and on the same day a Munsab of one thousand five hundred sowar and the title of Roy were conferred on his two elder brothers, Nubkissen proceeded with Lord Clive to Benares and Azimabad. He effected a settlement of the Province of Benares with Maharaja Bulwant Singh, and of the Province of Behar with Maharaja Shitab Roy, and came back to Calcutta with Lord Clive.

One day as Lord Clive was engaged in the Council Chamber in consultation on the subject of rewarding the useful services rendered by Nubkissen, a Persian letter in answer to one of Lord Clive’s arrived from the Subadar of Arcot and his Lordship desired Nubkissen to read and explain it. Nubkissen finding the contents to be adverse to his own interests remained silent for a moment, but was obliged to interpret it, on being pressed. The substance of the letter was as follows: “It is my wish also that the war with the English Company being ended and a treaty concluded with them, both the Powers continue on good terms, but Raja Nobocrishna, who manages the Company’s affairs, being the son of Dewan Ram Churn, the associate of my enemy Moneeruddin Khan, will obstruct the intended negotiations, for which reason it is needless to make mention of peace during the continuance of Raja Nobocrishna.” Clive, on the letter being explained to him, desired Nubkissen to wait in an adjoining room for a short time. Nubkissen’s feelings, at that moment of suspense, may well be imagined. Great was his relief when Clive, after a consultation with his Council, addressed him to the following effect: “Why did you not inform me so long that you were of such a noble family? The Company have derived great benefit from your services and laborious undertakings. Not knowing the rank
of your descent we could not show you the respect due to it. From this day we appoint you Dewan to the Hon’ble Company and title and robe of honour, etc., shall be conferred on you shortly."

In the year 1180 Higeree (1766 A.D.) Lord Clive was pleased to get a Firman or Mandate from His Majesty Shah Alum, granting Nubkissen a dignity of Munsub Shush Hazaree, four thousand sower, and the title of Maharaja. He was pleased also to bestow upon him a Gold Medal with a Persian inscription, as a testimonial to all India of the regard which Lord Clive and the Hon’ble Company had for his faithful and honest services, a Khelat with a precious garland of pearls, a head-dress, a shield, a sword and various other costly paraphernalia, including silver Assa and Sotta,—mace and staff,—still the insignia of the Sovabazar Rajas, borne by their attendants when they go out on formal occasions. His Lordship allowed him a guard of sepoys to watch his gate, and desired to fix for him a monthly salary of Rs. 2,000, upon which Nubkissen represented to Lord Clive that through his Lordship’s benevolence he was not under the necessity of receiving from the Honorable Company such a large sum per mensem, but that a monthly allowance of Rs. 200 might be fixed for him and his heirs in perpetuity to preserve the status of his family. Clive complied with his representation and had the kindness to conduct him to his conveyance on an elephant, and the Maharaja came home in a grand procession, scattering rupees all about him. He received the sum of Rs. 200 every month from the General Treasury, as long as he lived, but the allowance was not continued to any of his heirs. Lord Clive before finally leaving India in 1767 gave the charge of Government to Mr. Verelst, and Maharaja Nubkissen continued in the capacity of Political Dewan or Political Banyan to the Company and discharged his duties to the complete satisfaction of the new Governor.
A reference to the Gold Medal with the Persian inscription will be found in a letter of Mr. Henry Strachey’s, dated 1793, which runs as follows:

**Will Street, London, The 8th May 1793**

DEAR NOBKISSEN,

A few weeks ago, I had the pleasure to receive your letter, by the *Europe*, acknowledging the receipt of mine, and informing me of the kind notice you had taken of my son. Your finding a proper person to instruct him in the Persian language, and sending your own son to him often, are very essential services, and for which I am much obliged to you. But there is one part of your letter which does not meet with my approbation. I mean that part, where you say he shall command your purse. You know it is against the law for him to receive money from any body, and if he borrows it he will be in debt, which occasions the ruin of many young gentlemen in Bengal. If you can teach him economy, and prevent his being cheated or imposed upon by his servants, you will lay both him and me under great and lasting obligations. Although one reason of his going to India was, that he might grow rich, yet I hope he will attain that object by degrees, and by means of his own industry I would rather, he remained poor all his life, than that he should get money in any way that would disgrace himself and his family.

I am very glad that you continue grateful for the favors and honors bestowed upon you by our great and good friend Lord Clive. When I see his son (who is a fine young man) I shall not fail to deliver him your message. Lady Clive is well, but as she lives up the country, I seldom have an opportunity of seeing her. I have sent her your letter to read, as I know it would entertain her.

I remember your medal, with the Persian inscription, and approve much of your preserving it in your family, as a testimony to all India of the regard which Lord Clive and the Company had for your faithful and honest services.

It will always give me pleasure to hear of your health and prosperity. Write to me often, and I will as often send you my answers.

This letter will be delivered to you by my second son, Edward Strachey, whom I hope you will favor with your advice and protection, in the same manner as you do my eldest son.

I pray God to bless you. What can I say more?

Your faithful friend,

(Sd.) HENRY STRACHEY.
if at all
evidence of Clive himself. In a Minute by John Johnstone, dated June 17, 1765, there was an insinuation that Clive had received bribes through some subordinates, one of whom was Nubkissen. He wrote:

"The Select Committee have been pleased to lay before the Board several narratives of Mahomed Reza Cawn and Juggut Seat touching presents that have been made to sundry gentlemen by the Nabob. We appeal to the world if Ramchurn Roy, who his Lordship certified served him entirely to his satisfaction—if Coja-Petruse, Nubkissen Munshy, Nundecmar, or any other of those able conveyancers were to be seized and confined close prisoners and made to answer, whether they willed or not, on oath to every question that a future Committee or Governor and Council should put to them as to the money their masters received."......

Clive's answer is worthy of note. 2

"With regard to Mr. Johnstone's observation concerning Ramchurn, Petruse, Nundocquar and Nubkissen, the first was dismissed my service, the second turned out of my house and the third put under confinement with a guard. All of them I look upon as villains and I defy all or either of them to produce a circumstance to my dishonour. As to the last, he was a man of no consequence at that time and never entrusted with matters of the least confidence."

The admissions contained in the accusation and the defence merit attention. Johnstone refers to Nubkissen as an able conveyancer, and Clive has not a word to say against his honesty.

Nubkissen stated in one of his depositions already quoted that he was Foujedar of Chandernagore in 1764. There is official evidence that in 1766 Nubkissen had come to be recognised as one of the "persons most responsible and whose characters and services merit consideration," as the following document will show:

At Select Committee, November 4, 1766.

"Advertisements having been already published that the Hon'ble Company's Pergunnahs were now to be let upon first leases, pursuant to a Resolution of this Committee, bearing date the 2nd of December

1 Appendix to the Proceedings of the Select Committee. 1765, No. 7.
2 Same Appendix, No. 8.
RAJA BAHADUR KALI KRISHNA -- (KNIGHT OF THE GURKHA STAR)
last, 'that the leases of the present farmers should expire on the 1st day of November, 1766; that the present renters should in future be excluded, and that the benefit of the lands should be diffused in the most extensive and equitable manner possible amongst all the reputable Baniars and black inhabitants of Calcutta, and divers petitions for lands being now presented to the Committee,

"Agreed that the following list be selected from the great number of petitioners as persons the most responsible and whose characters and services merit consideration, and that they be desired to attend next Tuesday in order the lands may be divided into lots and the rents adjusted by the most equitable valuation."

A list of 40 names is given, Nubkissen standing at the head.

During Clive's second visit to India Nubkissen materially assisted him in purifying the administration. That work of Clive's is described by Macaulay as 'one of the most extensive, difficult and salutary reforms that ever was accomplished by any statesman.' And there are reasons for presuming that Nubkissen rendered to him great services in the accomplishment of that noble work. He accompanied Clive to Allahabad when the Dewanny was obtained, presumably on his advice or suggestion. Naturally, honours came thick and fast on him. The Emperor Shah Alum was apparently more pleased with the recognition of his paramount title by Clive's application for a grant of the Dewanny than sorry for the virtual loss of his empire. As Macaulay puts it: "The Mogul was absolutely helpless; and, though he murmured, had reason to be well pleased that the English were disposed to give solid rupees, which he never could have extorted from them, in exchange for a few Persian characters which cost him nothing. A bargain was speedily struck; and the titular sovereign of Hindostan issued a warrant, empowering the Company to collect and administer the revenues of Bengal, Orissa and Behar." The Emperor was pleased to confer on Nubkissen the honours and rewards already mentioned, obviously in recognition of the part played by him in conducting the negotiations. The title of Maharaja Bahadur was not,
however, assumed by Nubkissen before the 25th January 1776.

The position and influence of Nubkissen were now assured. To crown his distinctions, he was, on the recommendation of Clive, appointed Political Banian to the East India Company on the 16th January 1767. The following is a copy of the official paper with reference to the appointment:

Fort William, Jan. 16, 1767, at a Select Committee:

"Lord Clive (President) recommending Nobkissen Moonshee to the protection of the Committee.

"Resolved that, in consideration of his faithful and diligent services, Nobkissen be appointed the Hon'ble Company's Political Banyan, with a salary annexed of 200 rupees per mensem, the same to commence from this date."

This was the last meeting of the Select Committee that Lord Clive presided at before his return to Europe.

Nubkissen secured for the Nuddea Rajas their title. The fact is worthy of attention as a proof not only of his absence of jealousy towards men highly placed, but of his appreciation of them and his desire to help and advance them. Evidence of this fact is to be found in the following petition:

To

THE HON'BLE THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL,
THE HUMBLE PETITION OF RAJAH NOBKISSEN.

That at the time Lord Clive went to Illiabad to visit the King, Mr. Sumner applied to him to obtain the title and Jalurdar palanquin, etc., for the Rajah of Burdwan, at which opportunity your petitioner requested the same title, etc., might be also obtained for the Nuddea Rajah and did accordingly pay the Nuzzurannah of ten thousand rupees for the service of the latter; and Lord Clive on his return to Calcutta favoured both the Rajahs with the above titles, etc. When the Nuddea Rajah mentioned that as your petitioner was not at all benefited by the said title, etc., which is to continue to his descendants, he thought proper to give your petitioner the little village or mohutron land called Serampore or Moolajore; but your petitioner made

then an objection to expect a gift of the Rajah, because he was a Brahmin, and therefore proposed that he would not take it without the Rajah's acknowledging the above ten thousand rupees to be looked upon as an acknowledgment for such mohuttyon; and it was settled accordingly to the satisfaction of the Rajah; your petitioner obtained the Sunnud in the Bengal year 1173 for the said village which in the Bengal year 1171 was rated at no more than 625 rupees for the annual jummah.

(Sd.) Nobkissen.

In a book called "The Nomenclature" deposited in the Record Department of the Government of India, Nobkissen is described as having been "Lord Clive's Dewan at the time of the elevation of Jafur Ulee Khan to the Musnud of Bengal. He amassed an immense fortune on that occasion and subsequently upon the acquisition of the Dewancee was placed by Lord Clive in the most confidential situations." There is no doubt that at this time Nobkissen was, if ever man was, a pluralist. He had charge of the following Government offices which he used to hold in his Sovabazar buildings: The Munshi Daftar (Persian Secretary's Office), Arzhegi Daftar (Petition receiving office), Jatimāla Kachari (Tribunal for hearing and deciding cases relative to caste), the Money Godown (or Company's Treasury), the Mal Adalat (Financial Court) of the 24-Parganas, Tahsil Daftar (Office of Collector) of the 24-Parganas. As a humorous writer has it: "It is not the length, breadth, and depth of his titles, it is not the outward signs of honor by which the importance of Nobkissen can be correctly estimated. Rather the multitudinous and onerous official duties which belonged to him defined his proper position. At one and the same time he held seven offices. The Banian to the Committee or Political Dewan, he was the Persian Secretary, the Receiver of Petitions, the President of the Caste Tribunal, the Keeper of the Treasury, the Head of the Revenue Court of the 24-Parganas, the Collector of the 24-Parganas, and what not. With other years he filled other posts, but whether they were added to the old ones, or whether
he had to relinquish some, is unknown. This we know that over and above his regular duties he was frequently called on to execute jobs. Besides his ordinary offices, he may be said to have been a minister without a portfolio. What an index these duties and more to the capacity of a single individual and to the confidence reposed in him by his masters! This man was half the Government! How this Brobdignagian official stalked amidst the puny administrators, including his superiors, who divided among themselves the other half and seemed ready to break down under its weight."

In illustration of the influence and position of Nubkissen at this period, the following letters may be incidentally referred to:

*Persian Department Proceedings, Letters Received, 1767 and 1768.*

From

RAJAH DIARAM PUNDI

To

MR. VELLIS

Your servant has at this time received 3 hundred gold mohurs from the Nabob Syfe-ul-Dowlah, 100 from Mr. Sykes, 200 from the Nawab Mahomed Reza Khan, and 50 from Mahah Rajah Mihindur as a Nazar for the sacred presence. This I write for your Excellency's information. Mr. Sykes and the Nabob Mahomed Reza Khan ordered your servants to provide a string of pearls agreeable to established custom for Mahah Rajah Mihindur, which having got in readiness I delivered to them, who presented it to the aforesaid Mahah Rajah. Your servant has been favoured with no Nazar for sacred presence on account of your Excellency, nor have any of the other gentlemen delivered him any. Whatever Nazar your Excellency shall think proper to present to His Majesty you will put in a purse under your own seal, after the manner, of the Nabob Syfe-ul-Dowlah and direct the other gentlemen that they deliver their Nazars for His Majesty to your servants after the example of your Excellency. When the Nazar shall arrive in the presence from the Nabob Syfe-ul-Dowlah, Mr. Sykes, Mahomed Reza Khan and Mahah Rajah Mihindur and no Nazar shall appear from your Excellency, your own superior judgment will point out you, what ideas will enter into His

*Mookajar's Magazine, April 1861, pages 146, 147.*
Majesty's breast. A shukah from the sacred presence addressed to your Excellency arrived with me some days since, and I transmitted it to your presence accompanied with a letter from the Nabob Minere-ut-Dowlah through the hands of Raja Nobkissen 2nd shukah is at this time arrived with me accompanied by another letter from the Nabob and I now transmit it to you enclosed.

Persion Department Proceedings, Letters Received 1767 and 1768
No. 32.
From
THE NAWAB MENEN I DOWLAH
To
VOL.
On the 16th January I arrived at Allahabad and paid the duties of allegiance to His Majesty. God is witness how heavy the hours of absence have sat upon your friend and how incessantly your praises hung upon his tongue. May the Almighty soon raise a conjuncture and create a cause which may again restore me to the society of your Excellencies. My gracious Lord I have written you five several times without having yet been favoured with a single answer. I entreat that my addresses may be honoured with your immediate notice, and that you will order timely answer to be written.

I particularly request your strongest injunctions to Maha Rajah Nobkissen for this purpose.

This letter is corroborative evidence that Nobkissen had already been made a Maharaja.

Influence never fails to excite jealousy, and one is not surprised to find that the eminent position and commanding influence of Nobkissen at this time made him many enemies. Men whose ill-feeling and designs of active hostility had so long been latent, felt themselves encouraged to throw aside all reserve after Nobkissen's friend, patron and protector had left the country. Within three months after Clive had left India complaints were preferred against Nobkissen to the Select Committee. One Ram Nath Das complained of extortion practised on him by Nobkissen, and two men, Ram Sunar Ghose and Nemoo Gangoolee, charged him with having violated the wife of a Brahmin. The Select Committee
caused both the charges to be thoroughly enquired into. They were found to be false, Nubkissen was acquitted, and the complainants and their abettors were ordered to be punished. It transpired in the course of the inquiry that at least one of the complaints, that of outrage on a woman, had been instigated by Nuncomar. Nubkissen had already been brought into relations with Nuncomar, but it will be convenient to reserve for separate notice all facts concerning Nuncomar and his trial (which had not yet come) that may be relevant to this biography. Concerning the charges just referred to, the enquiry held and the decision arrived at, the best that can be done is to let the following original documents speak for themselves:

At Select Committee on April 18, 1767.

The Hon'ble the President lays before the Committee the following petition presented to him by Nobkissen Moonshy.

To

The Hon'ble Harry Verelst, Esq.,
President and Governor, &c., &c., of Fort William.

The Memorial of Nobkissen of Calcutta.

Humbly Sheweth,

That it is with the utmost difficulty and reluctance your Petitioner is reduced to the disagreeable necessity of begging your Honour's patience for the perusal of the following, which nothing but the most dear and valuable of all earthly privileges, the defence of his character, could have made him thus presume to trouble you with, at the same time hopes his conduct has been and ever shall be, blameless before your eyes.

Your Memorialist, the first time Lord Clive was in Bengal during the Government of the Nabob Surajah Doulah, was employed and entrusted with all private engagements made between the Nabob Jaffer Ally Cawn and his Lordship, also during the war with Cossim Ally Cawn, he was from the beginning to the end attending on Major Adams, and executed such services as caused his Lordship on his return to this country to take him again into his service; and as his Lordship found him desirous of no other employment than that of the public, and constant and faithful in the discharge of his duty, he was graciously pleased to raise him to great honours.
Before his Lordship’s departure for England, believing him to be sufficiently experienced he [Lord Clive], made him principal Banyan for the affairs of the Government and as a farther testimony and approbation of his conduct, presented him with an elephant and a medal.

These marks of his Lordship’s favour and esteem, together with the countenance he has since met with from your Honour, by taking him into your service, he has too great reason to fear has [? have] drawn on him the resentment and jealousy of wicked and envious minds, as the following facts will certainly evince, as they are only calculated to depreciate and wound the man whose good fortune, under the auspices of his Lordship and your Honor, has raised him above the common and usual advances in life, and not, as they pretend, to punish the guilty.

My enemies have in vain searched for proofs that I raised my fortune by bribery and undue means, in hopes that by a discovery they might have been able to have ruined my character and reputation; disappointed in this, their efforts are now extended to more base and villainous ends, my life is now what they thirst after and altogether indifferent about the means by which it may be accomplished; for I can at this present [moment?] prove that two men, the one named Ram Sunnar Ghose, the other Nemoo Gangollee have, either as principals or employed by others, been tampering with a Bramin’s wife of Calcutta to accuse me of violating her; that this was the most favourable time that could offer, and promised her a sum of money for her compliance; the Bramin used his utmost endeavours to engage his wife in this wickedness; but happy for me she absolutely refused, although her life was threatened to accomplish the design.

The present diabolical accusation against me is as follows: One Ram, a goldsmith, complained to me that his mother and brother-in-law forcibly withheld his wife from him in their house, and not only refused him admittance to her, but permitted another man to visit her, which circumstance if known he would be in danger of losing his caste; therefore entreated me, as I had the charge of the Caste Cutcherry, to call the parties together before me and settle the affair. I complied with his request, and after a hearing, the matter was compromised to the apparent satisfaction of all concerned; but to my great astonishment and surprise, near twenty days after, I found Gočul, a brother-in-law of Ram, had presented a petition to your honour, complaining that I endeavoured to take his sister by force from his house.
You, Sir, referred the affairs to Mr. Floyer, the then Zemindar, and directed me to go to him for a clearing up of this matter. I obeyed and found Mr. Bolts with Gocul and Kissen, the two brothers-in-law of Ram, there.

Mr. Floyer entered upon the business, when Gocul gave him a paper written in English containing an account of the complaint made against me, which Mr. Bolts declared was a true translation he had made from the Bengal [i]. Mr. Floyer having read it aloud, Gocul swore to it, and signed it. Mr. Floyer then asked Gocul if he had any witnesses, telling him now is the proper time for their evidence. Gocul replied His brother Kissen. Accordingly, Kissen was called in and sworn. Mr. Floyer was desirous of interrogating Kissen, but Mr. Bolts interrupted him by saying Kissen was ready to swear what was contained in the written paper already subscribed and sworn to by Gocul. Upon my requesting Mr. Bolts might not interfere, he bade me hold my tongue, nor desisted till the Zemindar ordered us both to be silent. Mr. Floyer then took Kissen’s evidence and wrote the particulars with his own hand. Afterwards I delivered my account: it being read, I swore to and signed it: also my witnesses for the truth of every particular gave their depositions and swore to them.

When it shall be known to your Honour that there is a very essential difference in the depositions given by Gocul and Kissen, notwithstanding they live in the same house and had concocted the whole affair together, and that Kissen, at the instigation of Mr. Bolts, would have signed and swore to the deposition given by his brother, Gocul, had he not been prevented by my protesting against such proceedings as unfair: also that the tenor of the petition presented to you, Honble Sir, and the written depositions delivered to Mr. Floyer are very far from agreeing with the pretended facts alleged against me, it surely will, I hope, be a sufficient proof of my innocence. But should this prove insufficient for your satisfaction, I am ready and willing at any time to subscribe to the most solemn oath, according to the rites and customs of my religion, that I never, to the best of my knowledge, from the hour of my birth to this day, spoke with, saw, or have had any connection with either of the three sisters of Gocul and Kissen, nor did I know that there were such persons in being, till this affair was trumped up against me.

One thing more I beg leave to observe: that it should have been the particular business of the woman injured to have immediately complained and applied for justice, as the offence was of so heinous a nature, and not have done it by my avowed enemy, Mr. Bolts.
nor have suffered so much time to elapse, contrary to the methods in such cases; nor do I as yet know positively who the woman is that is said to be injured by me.

All which I humbly submit to your Honour's consideration.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray

(Signed) Nobkissen

CALCUTTA, the 10th March 1863:

The above Petition being read, the President also lays before the Committee a memorial to the Council from Ramnaut, late baniyan to Mr. George Gray, the subject of which the President thinks comes more properly under consideration of the Select Committee than of the Board.

To

THE HON. HARRY VEEREST, Esq.,
President and Gentleman of Council at

Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,

I take the liberty of presenting you with this humble address for two purposes, both which, I hope, will be esteemed to merit the consideration of your Hon'ble Board. One is, in order to put a stop to the corrupt practices of a man who has been entrusted with the management of transactions of the highest trust and of the greatest importance to the affairs of the Hon'ble Company. And the other is, in order to obtain justice of restitution for the oppression and damage done me in particular.

The grievance complained of is my having to the amount of thirty-six thousand rupees extensively exacted and taken from me by Nobkissen Munsby, during my late confinement, cuius officio, availing himself of my ignorance of the English laws and customs. He used to visit me in my confinement, and there by threats and under various scandalous, villainous, and false pretences did demand and receive from me.

In the month of Ograhm

Pous . 500 Gold Mohurs.
Choytro . 100 do.
Badro . 500 do.

Total 1,400, Value = Rs. 20,000

With 2 Pgs. of Bootedars and sundry other things given by his order to his people, value . 2,000

Total . 32,000
The pretences he made use of were that he would preserve me, or get me excused, from taking my oath on the Ganges water before the Select Committee that I might have the greater latitude for what I was to declare verbally; that he would procure my release; that he would give me a Khelat and send me away again Dewan to Mauldah, and that he would save my life, which I was to be deprived of when he found it necessary to threaten me.

I acknowledge my ignorance of the salutary laws of Great Britain in suffering myself to be thus imposed upon, as well as my folly in having ever supposed him to be of such consequence to the Hon'ble the Select Committee. Yet as the well-being of the Hon'ble Company's affairs in a great measure depends upon the impartiality and integrity of those whose office does in any way concern the administration and execution of justice, or the common good of the subject, I humbly hope still to obtain redress, and as I have heard much of the justice of the English laws and am informed that the Hon'ble Court of Directors have been pleased to order that "If a Native chooses the decision of his grievances, by English laws, those and those only must be pursued, and pursued according to the directions in the Charter." I am very desirous of laying my case before the juries at the next sessions, where I am informed it is only cognizable; but lest the preferring in that manner my complaint against him while in office should be of any detriment to the affairs of the Hon'ble Company under his management, I hereby first humbly beg the permission of the Hon'ble Board. And as the grievances I do complain of tend manifestly to the evil example of all others the Company's Kanyans in office, as well as to the great oppression and detriment of the Native inhabitants in general, I humbly hope, Hon'ble Sir and Sirs, that you will please to grant me the permission required, that I may be enabled to obtain redress and restitution of my property.

I am, with the greatest respect,
Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,
Your most faithful and obedient Servant,

Fort William,
The 10th April 1767.

(Sd.) Ram Naut Dass.

Rammaut's memorial being read, the President observes that the charge of venality and corruption contained in Rammaut's complaint against Nobkissen deserves the serious attention and immediate consideration of the Committee. That the strictest inquiry, he thinks, should be made into the truth of the facts alleged, in order the Committee may have the most satisfactory proofs of the guilt or
innocence of a person who, in quality a political Banyan, is necessarily entrusted with the Company's most important affairs. That Nobkissen being likewise the President's Moonsby, it becomes his indispensable duty to be well satisfied of the integrity of a man in whom he unavoidably repose much confidence, and that any reluctance to hear complaints against Nobkissen, or backwardness to redress the grievances of those who have been injured by him, will deeply reflect upon the honour and justice of the President and Committee. For this reason it was that he sent for Rammunt and examined him upon the facts set forth in his memorial, not one of which he finds Rammunt can support by a single proof or evidence, the whole charge resting upon his single assertion.

The President further acquaints the Committee it was with the same view he made inquiry into the other charges brought against Nobkissen, although they did not so immediately affect his character in a public station; since conviction of his guilt in one instance would serve to corroborate the facts urged by Rammunt, and render Nobkissen unworthy of the Committee's protection. That he has the greatest reason to believe that the whole story of Nobkissen's having violated the wife of a Brahmin has been maliciously forged by Nobkissen's enemies with intention to ruin him.

That the other charges brought against Nobkissen of his having forcibly carried off the wife of Ram, a goldsmith, appears to be equally void of truth, and to spring from the same principle of jealousy and resentment, as the Committee will perceive from the Zemindar's report of this transaction, which he now submits to the consideration of the Board:

"Sir,—Herewith I send you the information and deposition of the several persons who appeared before me in consequence of a complaint made against Nobkissen. On perusal of them, I daresay you will be of opinion with me that it is an accusation maliciously invented to depreciate his character and to entail a general odium upon him, as there is not a single circumstance in the said depositions that can even create a suspicion of his having had the informant's sister at his house.

"As I am not now Zemindar, I have no longer the power to officiate as such in the punishment I think is due to the informant and his brother; but I will explain the case to Mr. Aldersoy, the present Zemindar, that he may proceed therein as he thinks proper.

"After you have done, Sir, with the information and depositions, I shall be obliged to you if you would be pleased to return them to
me, that they may be given to the present Zemindar. The information and Nobkissen's deposition were both brought to me written in the English language, which after having been read and explained to the informant and deponent, they both took their oaths to and signed. The others were taken in my presence.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient, humble Servant,

Charles Floyer.

17th February 1761.

The President further observes that, whatever his own sentiments may be, he thinks it necessary the Committee should make the strictest inquiry into the facts above represented, by calling before them Rammaut and the other accusers, that, if Nobkissen should appear to them guilty of any part of so heinous a charge, he may be immediately dismissed from his employments, and otherwise punished with the most exemplary severity. But that, if on the contrary his innocence should become manifest and his reputation be cleared to the entire satisfaction of the Committee, they would then take the necessary measures for his protection, and the punishment not only of the infamous accusers themselves, but of all who shall appear to have assisted, instigated, promoted and encouraged so villainous an attempt against the life and character of a servant of the Honourable Company acting in so high and important a station.

The President concludes with acquainting the Committee that having reason to believe Rammaut, the Bramin, and other accusers upon this occasion, are the tools and instruments of a concealed faction, he had ordered them under a guard, to prevent their being tampered with and instructed in their evidence, until they could be examined by the Committee.

Upon this representation from the President, the Committee judge it necessary to their own honour that Nobkissen's accusers should be examined before them.

Accordingly, Rammaut, being called upon, had the following questions proposed to him by the President:--

Q.—In your memorial to the Council you accuse Nobkissen of taking and extorting from you money and effects to the amount of 36,200 rupees. In what manner, and for what purposes, was this sum taken from you?

A.—When I was first under confinement, Nobkissen sent to me, and told me to give him something and he would procure my release. To which I answered by desiring three days to consider of it, and at the end of that time I consented to give him 25,000 rupees.
Q.—Who brought you the message from Nobkissen?

A.—He was a light coloured man; but I did not know him, nor have I seen him since this transaction happened.

Q.—By whom did you return the answer that you would give him 25,000 rupees?

A.—By the same man who brought the message.

Q.—Did that man stay with you for the three days which you took to consider your answer?

A.—No; he came three days successively.

Q.—Did you ever ask the man his name?

A.—I believe I did; but I do not recollect what it was.

Q.—Did you enquire his employment?

A.—Yes; it was that of a Sircar.

Q.—You say in your memorial that Nobkissen took from you a ring worth 14,200 rupees. In what manner was this ring taken, and to whom did you deliver it?

A.—One day that Nobkissen came to me, he embraced me in a friendly manner, and sat down with me, and desired I would bring complaints and accusations against Mr. Gray. He likewise asked if I received and understood the message he had sent. I replied that I did, and agreed to give him 25,000 rupees. Upon which, he said “give it me.” I told him I had not the money at that time, but I went to my escatome and took out the ring, which I gave him, with a nizar of two gold mohurs, telling him that I valued the ring at 14,200 rupees.

Q.—Who was present at this transaction?

A.—Nobody. I was then confined under a guard.

Q.—How came you by a ring of so great value?

A.—I got it near Benaras, having purchased it from Curram Beg.

Q.—Who is that Curram Beg, and where is he?

A.—I believe he is gone to Delhi.

Q.—You likewise declare in your memorial that in the month of December 1765 he took from you 500 gold mohurs. In what manner were these mohurs taken, and for what purpose?

A.—That was also when I was confined. I desired to have the guards removed. Nobkissen answered that I had not yet paid the sum I promised him: to which I replied that I had only 500 gold mohurs in cash, which I was ready to pay, and accordingly then gave to him.

Q.—Was there anyone present when you gave the money?

A.—No; there was no one present. The people were all sent away, and I gave the mohurs into his own hands.
Q.—You also say in your complaint that in the month of March 1766 you had a further sum of 400 gold mohurs taken from you by Nobkissen, who was present when this money was taken?

A.—I gave these mohurs after my release. Some of my relations being then confined, I gave the money in consideration of their freedom. I went to Nobkissen's house, and Jaggamoan, my Kismagar, [Kitmutgar?] went with me, and carried the mohurs; but, upon my entering on conversation with Nobkissen he retired to a private room and did not see me deliver the money.

Q.—Where is Jaggamoan?

A.—He is gone to Maulda.

Q.—You further allege that Nobkissen took 500 gold mohurs from you in the month of August last, where, for what purpose, and who was present when this money was given?

A.—When Nobkissen returned from Patna in August, I visited him and he told me that he understood I was turned a great merchant and had bought a quantity of cotton and other goods. A few days after this conversation, peons were placed upon my house; and in two or three days after I was conveyed to the Governor's house and kept there till 8 o'clock at night. Another day I was carried there and detained till 12 in the forenoon. Upon this I offered 500 gold mohurs for my liberty, upon which Nobkissen sent to order away the peons from my house.

Q.—Did you ever acquaint any person of the sums extorted from you by Nobkissen?

A. Yes; I informed my own servants and several other persons.

Q.—Can you name any one to whom you gave information?

A.—I cannot recollect any person in particular.

Q.—You say you were ordered by Nobkissen to give presents to the amount of 2,000 rupees to his servants. Was it by his order?

A.—No, it was not by his orders; but I gave presents to his people in value 2,000 rupees.

Q.—You say you gave the ring in the month of November 1765. Why did you not complain sooner of the money and effects extorted from you?

A.—I was confined the greatest part of the time since, which was the reason I did not complain.

Q.—Did you not in the month of August come to Mr. Verelst for leave to return to Maulda? Did not you then owe him money for goods formerly bought of him, and for payment of which you were pressed, and did you not excuse yourself by pleading poverty?
RAJAH DEBI KRISHNA.
Why did you then complain of these corrections by which you were impoverished and prevented from discharging your just debts?

A. I was afraid of Nobkissen.

Q. You know that Nobkissen is still in the same employment. Why are you disposed of him now as well as then?

A. I am in hopes of obtaining justice from the Governor, who acts under God.

Q. Have you been advised by anyone to prefer this complaint?

A. No, it is voluntary, but, entering the last day of this month into the service of Mr. Bolts, I brought my case to him. He said it was very hard, advised me to complain to the Governor of Council, and drew up my paper of complaint.

Q. In what particular station do you serve Mr. Bolts?

A. I was entertained to collect outstanding balances in Pooneh and other places, on promise of being paid 100 rupees per month; but I have not yet received any wages.

Q. Have you yet done any business for Mr. Bolts?

A. No, I have not. I have only gone to his office to make my compliments.

Q. Have you anything further to allege against Nobkissen?

A. No, I have not.

Nobkissen was then called in, and the above evidence being distinctly read to him and Ramnaut, he is desired to speak what he has to offer in his own defence. Nobkissen accordingly confesses that when he went by Lord Clive’s order to Ramnaut about the money he was directed by the Governor and Council to refund to the inhabitants of Maulda, he then received from Ramnaut a nizar of two gold Mohurs. He also received from him at another time a nizar of two or three pieces of cloth. That as to the ring, he calls upon Ramnaut to produce a single proof that he ever had or was seen to have such a ring in his possession. The names of all the servants of his family at that time stand registered in his books. He desires they may all be called upon to declare whether they ever saw the ring mentioned or whether they, or any of them, ever carried any demands for money from him upon Ramnaut; or whether they knew that he had received such sums, or had ever seen an entry in his books of such presents as Ramnaut alleges. Further offers to give a restitution bond to the Committee to the amount of 36,200 rupees—nay, of his whole fortune, should Ramnaut be able to prove that he ever received or obtained from him by presents or otherwise to the value of a single rupee more than the 2 Mohurs and pieces of cloth already mentioned; and he
very justly remarks the inconsistency that appears in Rammaut’s complaint. Rammaut was directed by the Council to refund 27,000 rupees. This was in November. He was confined until he could give security for that sum. There was no other cause, nor can he (Rammaut) mention another cause assigned for his confinement. He must acknowledge that he could not either pay or give security for the payment of 27,000 rupees, which would have procured his freedom; and yet he now alleges that he gave Nobkissen to the amount of 36,200 rupees only to intercede for his release. Nobkissen concludes his defence with these words: “After he had corrupted me with more than the sum he was ordered to refund, he was still subject to the demand; whereas by a proper application of his money he might have served every purpose without assistance from me. What probability, gentlemen, is there in this story? you are the judges.”

Nobkissen having finished his defence, Rammath is told that every particular of his accusation being flatly denied by Nobkissen and rendered very improbable by some circumstances pointed out by the defendant, it now becomes necessary he should produce some proofs of the truth of his charge, which he might bring with as much appearance of truth against any other man as Nobkissen. And, being asked whether he had any proofs, he answers that he has none, for that the whole transaction was carried on with the greatest privacy.

Rammath was then ordered to retire.

Nobkissen desiring that Coneytacoor [Kanai Thakur?] the Bramin, his wife, and the evidences mentioned in his petition, might be examined by the Committee, before they came to any Resolution, they were accordingly called in, and the Bramin, being asked if he had any matter of complaint against Nobkissen, replies no, that he has nothing himself to allege, but that he had been much pressed and solicited by Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee to accuse Nobkissen of violating his wife. That he had been sent for by Nundecomar, who desired he would complain of Nobkissen to the Board, and said he would assist him with money in the meantime, and when the affair was over, give him 25,000 rupees to compensate him for losing caste. He further declares that, wrought upon by Nundecomar’s promises and the persuasions of Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee, he used his utmost endeavour to prevail on his wife to accuse Nobkissen; but she would never give her consent to be the instrument of ruining an innocent man, and that, when he asked Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee for what purpose they would have him accuse Nobkissen,
their answer was that he would be sued for carrying away the gold-smith’s wife, and this fresh charge would add a link to the chain.

The Bramin having finished his declaration, Ramsannor Gose was called in, and being informed of the particulars of the Bramin’s declaration, was asked what he had to reply in his own defence. Accordingly he confesses that he has been to the Bramin’s house, that he knew of Nemo Gongolee’s attempt to bring the Bramin’s wife to accuse Nobkissen, but that he himself never interfered in the business or spoke upon the subject to the Bramin or his wife.

To confront Ramsannor Gose the Bramin’s wife is called in. She declares that she never was any way injured by Nobkissen; but that Ramsannor Gose and Nemo Gongolee had used every endeavour to persuade her and her husband to accuse him. That Nemo Gongolee offered to give her 500 rupees in joya [jewels?] and 2,000 rupees in money if she would consent, and that Nundcomar and Nemo Gongolee had worked so much upon the mind of her husband by large promises and offers of money that he (the Bramin) even threatened her life if she refused to comply. However, that she still persisted in declaring that she would never ruin an innocent person, and at last finding there was no end to persecuting her, she sent privately to acquaint Nobkissen with the designs formed against him by his enemies.

Kissandebuss declares before the Committee that he heard Nemo Gongolee soliciting the Bramin’s wife to accuse Nobkissen and assuring her that Nundcomar would give her joya and 2,000 rupees in money if she would consent.

The same is also confirmed by Carteram, who relates the same circumstances as the Bramin’s wife and Kissandebuss of the share Nundcomar has in this transaction.

The several evidences being now dismissed, the Select Committee proceed to the following Resolution, viz.:

That the charge brought against Nobkissen by Ramnaut is neither confirmed by proofs nor corroborated by circumstances, and that it rests entirely upon the bare assertion of a man already convicted of avowed perjury before the Council, and who appears to be instigated by a faction and impelled by resentment to make this daring attack on the character of a person countenanced and protected by the Government.

That, therefore, Ramnaut, as a just punishment for his having forged and published a false, scandalous, and malicious libel, be sent
out of Calcutta and delivered over to the Country Government to make good to the inhabitants of Maulda the several sums he extorted from them, agreeably to the following Resolution of the Council the 30th day of December 1765: "The Board, having perused and considered the several proceedings already taken and recorded, are of opinion that Rammatt appears to be a notorious villain, having certainly taken several sums of money from many people in the Province of Bengal by extortion and violence, and committed crimes for which he deserves the most exemplary punishment. This circumstance, however, the Board refer for further consideration and for the present Resolve that he shall refund to the different people the whole that he had collected from them.

That Mr. William Bolts appears from many circumstances to be deeply concerned in the conspiracy to ruin Nobkissen's character and attempt his life: in which opinion the Committee are confirmed by his violent and declared resentment to Nobkissen by the share he took in stirring up and instigating a prosecution against him in the Zemindary Court upon an imaginary and false accusation: and particularly from his taking at this juncture into his service Rammatt, a man who stands publicly convicted of perjury, with a view of forging and publishing further aspersions upon Nobkissen's character.

That Mr. Bolts, having on this and many other occasions endeavoured to draw an odium upon the administration, and to promote faction and discontent in the settlement, has rendered himself unworthy of any further indulgence from the Committee and of the Company's protection. That, therefore, he be directed to quit Bengal and proceed to Madras on the first ship that shall sail for that Presidency in the month of July next in order to take his passage from thence to Europe in September.

That Sundaram, appearing to have promoted, instigated, and forged accusations against Nobkissen by large promises of money and presents, with a view of gratifying his personal resentment and indulging an intriguing disposition, shall be ordered by the President strictly to confine himself to his own house, and in future to avoid such practices, on pain of forfeiting the Company's protection and being delivered over to the Government for such punishment as his crimes may be thought to deserve.

That the zemindar be desired by the President to inflict such punishment upon Ram the goldsmith, and the other evidence upon that
Occasion, as he shall think due to the base attempt to ruin the character and take away the life of an innocent person.

And lastly, that Ramsonmar Gose, Nemo Gongolee, and the other instruments and agents employed by Nundcomar to stir up and carry on this prosecution, shall be publicly flogged and then turned out of the settlement."

Incidental testimony, of a striking kind, of the influence of Nubkissen and of the jealousy roused by it, is to be found in a letter alleged to have been written by Nawab Nudjum-ul-Dowlah to Nundcomar, dated April 1766.

Translation of Letter from the Nabob Nudjum-ul-Dowlah to Maharajah Nund Goomar, dated the 27th of Shoual of the 7th year (the 8th of April, 1776). Appendix to the Fifth Report 42.

I had the pleasure to receive your letter and rejoice to hear of your welfare. Thank God I am also well. I met Lord (the Nabob Ameer-el-Momahik Sabut Jung Bahadoor) and General Carnar (Munsoor-ul-Muluk General Bahadoor) at Plassey and they received me very kindly. On the 24th instant (the 5th of April) his Lordship the General and Mr. Sykes arrived at the Killa. The Begun, my mother, sent Hajee Samaudut to call those gentlemen to her, and after much solicitation prevailed on them to accept from her a paper under her seal for five lacks of rupees in jewels, rupees and gold mehurs; this I have written for your information. With regard to what you write me, that I should make known my requests to his Lordship through the General, I will follow your advice, but Nubkissen Moon-sheer, having waited on me about business, made many professions of fidelity and attachment to me and then came in a roundabout manner to the point and spoke much of the great confidence reposed in him by his Lordship. In short, from the tenor of his conversation, it appears that there is no one in greater credit with his Lordship than he is, accordingly he said to me: "Such of the English Counsellors and gentlemen of rank as were my friends have caused to be raised to dignity and reputation by his Lordship, and Mr. George Gray and others, who, through their pride and self-sufficiency, did not consider me but bore an enmity towards me, them I have caused to be in such a manner disgraced and debased that they have been turned out of their employments and are gone to Europe. In like manner, Mr. Sumner, who was my enemy, I have caused to be totally disregarded and neglected. As his late Excellency looked upon me as a faithful dependent of his own, and showed me much favour,
so do you also regard me as one of your servants and well-wishers, and freely acquaint me with all your wants and by the blessing of God 'I will accomplish them. I am your well-wisher and I will do for you what is not in the power of any one else.'

As you, my friend, are much better acquainted than I am with the situation and circumstances of persons in Calcutta, I beg you will speedily inform me, whether what Nobekissen has been telling me of his own consequence and relative to Mr. Sumner and Mr. Gray, etc., is really true or not and speedily give me your advice in what manner I should behave to him and what presents I should make him. Although he professes attachment for me and desires me to employ him in the management of my concerns; yet as I am credibly informed that he is closely connected with the "Naib (Mohamed Reza Khan) that the Naib has paid him very handsomely and is often sending him various kinds of goods and he is in consequence sincerely attached to him and is frequently engaged night and day in consultation with him, I therefore do not give any credit to the professions he makes me, nor will I knowingly suffer myself to be imposed upon. Consider this matter maturely, and write me your advice concerning it and I will act accordingly.

The substance of the letter and the tainted source from which it comes, namely Nuncomar, make it doubtful if it is genuine, and, assuming that it is genuine, if it is veracious. It was enquired into by the Committee appointed to inquire into the nature, state, and condition of the East India Company, and the Fifth Report sets forth the depositions of Mr. Francis Sykes and Lord Clive. It is best to quote the *ipsissima verba* of the distinguished deponents.

*June 18, 1773, Evidence of Francis Sykes, Esq.*

"Was you present with Lord Clive and General Carnac, the 8th of April 1766 at any visit paid to the mother of Nudjun-ul-Dowlah?"

"I was there upon a visit with Lord Clive; cannot recollect whether General Carnac was there or not there was a third person."

"What passed there?"

"After the usual compliments, the mother presented to his Lordship a teep for the sum of (I think) five lakhs of rupees, declaring at the same time that she had reserved it for his Lordship's own use by the particular request of Meer Jaflier before his decease, and that the
Nabob had intended to have presented it himself in case he had survived till his Lordship's arrival."

"Did you speak the language sufficient to understand all that was said?"

"I did; and was the person myself that interpreted; there was another person present, who understood English as well as Persian; his name was Nobokissen...."

*Fifth Report, etc.*: Evidence of Captain Swinton (p. 546).--

"Do you believe this letter, upon viewing it with all its circumstances, to be a genuine letter from the Nabob Nudjum-ul-Dowlah to Nundocomar?"

"I have some doubts about it, but wish to consider it more at leisure before I give an opinion. I think it unlikely that the Nabob would write to Nundocomar in the style he does concerning Nobokissen as giving him information, which I should suppose he was well acquainted with before, Nobokissen having been long in Nundocomar's service."

"Was Nobokissen made a Raj?

"I have heard so, and believe he was."

If the issues as to the genuineness and the truthfulness of the letter are left undecided, the fact can only be regretted. A certain conclusion is possible only on certain evidence, and if the available evidence is indecisive, the idea of a definite verdict must be abandoned.

Ten years before Nundocomar's case, another Hindu, not a Brahmin, however, but a *kayasth*, had been tried for forgery, convicted and sentenced to death. The Native inhabitants of Calcutta submitted two petitions praying that the prisoner might be recommended to His Majesty for mercy. The first, signed by 91 persons, is evidenced by the following record:

*At a consultation (Public Department), March 14th, 1765.*

"The principal black inhabitants of the place send in the following petition in favour of Radachurn Metre under sentence of death for forgery, soliciting we would defer the execution of the same and recommend the delinquent to His Majesty for mercy."
To the Hon'ble John Spencer, Esq.,
President, &c., Council at Fort William, Bengal

The Humble Petition of the Native inhabitants of Calcutta together with Merchants, Banians, and others whose estates, interests, or habitations are in any part of the Kingdoms of Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, within the jurisdiction of the English

SPEWETH

That Your Petitioners, being informed of the condemnation to death of Radachurn Metre, grandson of Golamam Metre, formerly Zemindar of Calcutta and a faithful servant of the English, for having been instrumental in writing a paper to procure him a sum of money from Coja Solomon, deceased, being under the most inexpressible affliction and grief, beg leave to throw themselves at your feet to intreat you will show mercy to the unhappy delinquent by using whatever means may occur to your goodness and humanity to save his life.

Your Petitioners humbly represent that the unhappy delinquent is one of the best families of the place who have filled confidential employ in the Honourable Company's service with fidelity to the Honourable Company and credit to themselves, that this family is numerous and connected with many considerable families in the country, that such an ignominious punishment as that to which the delinquent is now sentenced being inflicted upon him will draw ruin on all connected with him by the disgrace it will bring upon them, and there is the greatest reason to apprehend the most dreadful consequences to them from the despaun which from the maxims of our religion, they must be thrown into—so that in truth the punishment will not fall heavier on the delinquent than on all his friends and relations.

Your Petitioners further beg leave to remonstrate that, although the delinquent has been convicted of a great crime, yet such punishment was never known to have been inflicted for an offence of that nature in this settlement before. According to the laws of our country, his crime is never punished with death, but with a fine. The delinquent was therefore ignorant of the heinousness of the offence. Having been brought up in the religion and opinions of Hindoos, he could form no other notions of things but from their maxims and customs. These rendered his offence not mortal, and no instance had
before occurred to inform him of the severity of the English law, of
the tenor and form of which the delinquent was so totally ignorant
that he did not avail himself of circumstances which your Petitioners
are informed would have made greatly in his favour.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly entreat that this Honourable
Board will take the unhappy case of the delinquent into a merci-
ful consideration; and that they will intercede for the delinquent with
His Majesty the King of Great Britain, respecting the execution of the
sentence until His Majesty’s gracious pleasure is known.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray
[94 signatures are appended, the 71st being “Nubkissen Munsie
(Munsil)]]

The second, signed by 95 persons, runs as follows:

| January 29th, 1765 |

“The Humble Petition of the Native
Inhabitants of Calcuta, together
with the Merchants, Banyans, and
others whose estates, interests, or
habitations are in any part of the
Kingdoms of Bengal, Bahar, Orra,
within the jurisdiction of the

SHEWETH:—

That whereas on or about the 27th day of February last past,
Radachurn Metre, grandson of Golunderam Metre, heretofore of
Calcutta, Jemmuctan (whose steady attachment and services to the
English are too eminent to be so soon forgot) was condemned to
death at the General Quarter Sessions for the Town of Calcutta then
held on the day and date aforesaid, being indicted for and convicted of
a crime of which he is entirely innocent, but for want of being
acquainted with the law by which he was tried, as well as the manner
of defending himself and proving his innocence is now fallen a victim
to the malice of his prosecutor and his own ignorance.

Your Petitioners therefore beg leave to set forth the general
consternation, astonishment, and even panic with which the Natives
in all parts under the domination of the English are seized by this
example of Radachurn Metre.

[Here follows a long Argument on the case]

. . . . .Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray this Honourable Board to
grant them a reversal of the said sentence, as it was pronounced out of
time, and grant the prisoner a rehearal, or if that cannot be obtained,
that they will at least respite the execution of the unhappy condemmed creature till report be made thereof to His Majesty of Great Britain and his most gracious pleasure known therein. And, further, your Petitioners pray that the laws to which they are to be subject may be translated into the Bengally tongue, that they may be enabled to know what will make them obnoxious thereunto.

Signed by 95 of the principal native inhabitants.

["Nubkissen Moorsey signs. The list seems substantially the same as in the previous Petition, and Nubkissen occupies practically the same position, if indeed anything depends on that.]

The petitions have a value of their own as illustrating the life and sentiments of those days, and they are also relevant as they are both signed by Nubkissen. The petitions were successful. The record proceeds:

"In order to give these people the fullest conviction of our lenity as well as justice, and in hopes that this man's condemnation will alone be a sufficient example to deter others from the commission of the like offence, which is not held so heinous in their eyes,

It is agreed to comply with their application, and that he be accordingly respited till the King's pleasure is known.

Ordered therefore that the Secretary do require from the Clerk of the Peace a copy of the proceedings of the Sessions and transmit the same together with a copy of the petition of the inhabitants in order to be laid before His Majesty.'"

Some idea of Nubkissen's pecuniary condition, of the extent of his revenue juris-diction and of his general position in the country from 1766 to 1772 may be gathered from the following items of account and remarks gleaned from official records:

Accounts of Denagepoor Districts (April 11, 1765 to April 10, 1766).

"By Charges General ... ... ... Sunat Rupees.

Nobkissen, &c. ... ... ... 1,806-1-10"

"By money, borrowed at interest and paid to the following people, &c.: ... ... ... ... ... Sunat Rupees.

Nobokissen ... ... ... 4,000 ... "
PUBLIC CONSULTATION, January 20, 1767.

Lord Clive's statement of "Expenses General of my voyage to India."

*Inter alia.*

Received from Nob Kissan for 10 horses sold him ... 3,000
Do. for the following nazer jewels and dresses sold, *c. i.* sundry dresses, small jewels and pearls ... 3,000
1 pallanqueen received from the Nabob of Muradabad ... 3,000
1 pallanqueen received from the Nabob of Arcot ... 1,500

... 10,500
... 840

Rs. 11,340

[Probably, however, it is only the 10 horses that are meant to go to Nobkissen.]

PUBLIC CONSULTATION, August 26, 1768.

"Cash Account of the Province of Calcutta and 15 Dhees."

On the creditor side is this entry:

"Paid Nobkissen the amount of sundry disbursements made by him whilst the collections were in his hands ... ... 4,904 1 6

(Sicca Rs.)

The account is dated Fort William, 30th April 1768.
The Collector General of the time was Richard Becher.

AT SELECT COMMITTEE, April 28, 1770.

Was submitted "Chelat account for the Bengal year 1773 or from 11th April 1766 to the 10th April 1767, being the amount of a cess collected for defraying the Annual Charge of Dresses presented to the people in public employment at the time of the Poomiah and on their receiving any new appointment." Transmitted to the Select Committee by Mr. Richard Becher, Resident at the Durbar, with other documents, Becher's covering letter being dated Moidepore, March 28, 1770.

One heading is

"Nobkissen, Cawntoo, and people belonging to Lord Clive and Mr. Sykes:

Nobkissen ... ... 750 [Sicca rupees]."
Like Account for Bengal year 1174 (April 10, 1767 to April 11, 1768).

Nobkissen and sundry people in the service of the Resident [Mr. Sykes].

Nobkissen ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 1,500 (Sicca rupees).
Gocul Gosaun ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 1,500
Pedum Lachen, [Padma Lochun '] Nobkissen's Paishkar ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 125

Nobkissen's and Gocul Gosaun's Munchys 562

Like amount for Bengal year 1175 (April 11, 1768, to April 10, 1769).

Nobkissen does not appear under the heading of "Public Servants of Mr. Cartier and the Resident," but his naib does. Thus

Baboo Ram Pault ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 1,500 (Sicca rupees).
Pedum Lachen, [Padma Lochun '] Naib of Nobkissen ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 644 rupees).

Like amount for Bengal year 1176 (April 11, 1769, to April 10, 1770).

"Public Servants of the Governor and Resident"

Rajah Nobkissen ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 1,200 (Sicca rupees).
Gocul Gosaun, etc ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ ⋆ 1,200 rupees).

At Select Committee, June 9, 1770.

Was read letter from Mr. Richard Beecher, Resident at the Durbar, dated Moidepur, June 2, 1770.

Refering to outstanding balances, Mr. Beecher writes:—"...The sum of two lakhs and twenty-five thousand rupees remains to be settled by the Rajah of Nuddea and Nobkissen, &c., farmers, when it should be paid by one party or other....."

At Select Committee, September 15, 1770.

Read letter from Mr. Beecher (date missing) enclosing certain (15) accounts, which, Mr. Beecher says, "Will exhibit as clear and distinct a representation of the collections of the year 1176 [1769-70] as it has been in my power to procure." He says:

"...... Besides the sums that have absolutely been remitted and the extra charges that have been incurred, you will see the large sum of 6,41,291-7-19-3 remain as a balance. Of this sum two lakhs and

1 Mr. Richard Beecher succeeded Mr. Sykes on January 4, 1769.
twenty-five thousand rupees is from the Province of Ahwals or Nuddea, which the Rajah asserts was collected by Nobkissen and the other farmers whilst they had the management of the collections. Hitherto Nobkissen and the farmers have given no satisfactory answer, nor produced accounts of what they really did collect. This they certainly should be obliged to do, and to pay whatever balance may appear justly due from them, so that I flatter myself at least a great part of this sum may be recovered.

Statement of Revenues of the Petty Mahals for the Bengal year 1177 (1770 71), showing also the collection of the foregoing year.

Opposite the district "Iissapoor," "Rajah Nobkissen" is entered in the column headed "Names of the Talookdars and Proprietors of the lands."

1 Rupee rupees

"Net Revenue settled to be received for 1176... 4,463-13-5-0"

"Collected for the year... 4,015-11-10-0"

"Remission granted on account of the famine and dreadful calamity of the season... 47-11-15-0"

"Balance to... 4,463-13-5-0"

"Net Revenue settled to be received in 1177... 4,463-13-5-0"

At a Constilution, August 29, 1772.

Extract from the Proceedings of the Committee of Circuit at Casimibazar, the 20th August 1772.

That the following Districts and Mahals, being in the hands of responsible people, shall continue to pay their rents at the Khalsa, but subject to the Provincial Courts of Adawlut established at Moorshedabad, c.

Budharpore, &c.,

Heckapore (or Hechapore), &c., &c., &c.

Raja Gourdass.

Nobkissen.
CHAPTER V.

ACQUISITION OF SQOTTANUTTY.

It appears from a petition of Raja Nubkissen, dated July 1773, that he had already been appointed Talukdar of Nowpara and some other villages. On the occasion of a resistance to the exercise of his rights as such he submitted a petition as will appear from the following proceedings:

Extract of the Proceedings of the Khalsa of the 26th July 1773.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen:—

To the Worshipful Richard Barwell, Esq., Superintendent of the Khalsa.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF RAJAH NOBKISSEN.

SHEWETH:—

That one Mullick Abdul Wayad lately complained against your Petitioner at the Khalsa, setting forth that your Petitioner was only a Waddadar, but not a Talukdar, of Noparah, &c., villages, whereupon Philip Milner Dacres, Esq., then Superintendent, summoned your Petitioner to appear at the Khalsa and make his answer. Your Petitioner accordingly waited there, and proved by the Nabob's summons that he really was the present Talukdar of the said villages, and accordingly on the 7th June last a decree was given in his (your Petitioner's) favour, since which your Petitioner received a Perwannah from the said Khalsa to make the New Year's Pooneah. He dispatched the same with his people to the said villages to put it in execution. Your Petitioner's people arrived at the different villages and made the Pooneah, but at the principal village of the said Taluk the said Mullick and his people would not permit them to make the Pooneah, pretending that the said village was his the said Mullick's (Connah Barry) or dwelling-house, which surprised your Petitioner to find that he should make a dwelling-house of a village or market, the rent of which your Petitioner regularly paid to Government yearly ever since he has had the said Taluk, besides the assistance he has repeatedly given to the said Mullick, by which he is a sufferer of no less than seven or eight thousand rupees. Your Petitioner most humbly begs your Worship will be so gracious as to order the said Mullick together with his people to be brought to the Khalsa, where they may be made an example for disobeying the Perwannah and preventing your Petitioner's people from making the Pooneah.
And your petitioner is in duty bound shall ever pray, and so forth.

After Superintendent referring to the Raylayan and digesting sentiments upon it and the decree passed in the country, and the usage of such occasions, he delivered them the following words—

Maha Rajah Nobkissen represented to the Ruler for the time being at Moorthshahar in the year 1178 to the following effect: That it was desirable having a Taccoor Shewah, and thus the means for the support of it were wanting. He therefore solicited to be granted a Talook in some place or other, the revenue of which he would pay and through such a channel should attend with content to his religious duties. The Ruler for the time, considering his representation as tending to a commendable end, favoured him with a annaund for the Talukdarry of Noparah, &c. Three years are now elapsed since this happened, during which period the aforesaid Rajah has annually superintended the revenue without a single claimant appearing. But at this time Mullick Abdul Wahab makes pretensions to the said Taluk and sets forth that Maha Rajah Nobkissen has forcibly dispossessed him. Whereas the usages of the country admit not the reversing of the orders of Rulers, Mr. Dacres having this in view, decreed Nobkissen to continue in the Talook. If the abovementioned Mullick reflects on his former right to the Talookdarry, I submit it to you, Sir, whether the sum of 10 per cent. on the Jumma of the Malgezarry shall be fixed on him or not, and whether his houses and gardens on which there are no ryots, but simply trees, should not remain in his possession.

Upon this Report the Superintendent came to the following conclusion:

The Superintendent observes that, whatever irregularity there may have been in the first grants, yet the length of time which has passed since those were issued, and the usages of the country in the above sentiments delivered by the Raylayan, render it necessary in established rights throughout the country not to make any deviation or alteration, but upon the most mature consideration and under the most weighty circumstances. It likewise appears that the grant obtained of this Talook has not proceeded from any particular or private views of the person who solicited them: but merely for the support of the religious and the institution of a Taccoor Shewah; an
RAJAH APURBA KRISHNA.
Maharajah Nubkissen Bahadur.

application to such an end evidently points out that no private emolument has been the object. Having premised this, the Superintendent proceeds to observe upon the other part of the Maharajah's sentiments, that under rights so confirmed it is usual for persons who hold them to make an allowance to such as are obliged to yield to the orders of Government—such an allowance as is estimated sufficient for their support; and that the criterion at which it is usually fixed throughout the country is 10 per cent. on the Jumma of the lands granted away, and to continue to them small allotments of ground, ten and twenty bighas, with their houses. That the Jumma of No-parrah, etc., is rupees 1,332-12-11. As this stipend, though agreeable to the custom of the country, from the smallness of the Taluck affords but a mean support and will scarcely preserve the late Talukdar above the distresses of want, it is judged but equitable, as the Talook is an improving one, instead of 10 to allow 20 per cent., equal to 360 rupees per annum. Further, that whatever ground may be Kauridge, and for which he can produce proper and authenticated munuds under the Government seal, shall remain to him; and, to render his situation further easy, that the ground that may be specified in these munuds shall altogether be increased to 100 bighas; that an abstract of this proceeding be transmitted to Rajah Nubkissen:—Mullick Abdul Wahed, being called upon to answer to the complaint on account of his raising disturbance and opposing the order of Government to make the Bundabust of the ensuing year and hold the Mofussul Puneah in the village of Mullick Bung, replies that it is a separation that took place long since, and does not appertain to the Talook. Being asked to whom it pays its rents, he replies: to himself. It appears too obvious from this that he would willingly evade a compliance with the orders of Government and deprive the Taluck of a part of its rights by dividing them from the other parts. The Superintendent remarks that this is obvious, because no private collections are allowed to be made in any place without the particular order from Government; that, without he can produce some order of this nature, he cannot be entitled in any respect to the pretended right he advances of a separate collection.

On the 5th November 1777 the Board [Warren Hastings and Council] resolved: “that Raja Nubkissen possesses no legal right to the villages of Nowparah, Chundaleah and Baugmullick and decreed that they are the legal inheritance of Mullick Abdul Wahed” who was to be put in possession of them. The petition of Raja Nubkissen complaining of this
order is a remarkable document. It exhibits his intelligence and capacity of reasoning, and has special interest as an autobiographical record. The petition runs as follows:—

FORT WILLIAM, the 18th November 1777.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AND COUNCIL OF REVENUE.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF

MAHARAJA NABKISSEN BAHADOOR

SHEWETH:—

That on the 6th instant your petitioner received a verbal message by his Vakeel from the Superintendent of the Khalsa acquainting him that your Hon’ble Board had come to a determination to dispossess your petitioner of his Talook of Nowapara and to reinstate the former possessor, Mullick Abdul Wahed, therein.

That your petitioner wholly unacquainted with the reasons or grounds whereon such determination is founded and not conscious either of any defect in his original title or of having done any act whatsoever to vitiate or avoid the same, humbly craves leave to represent the very great hardship and severity, though he submits it, undeserved reflection such determination if carried into execution would be on him, and draw the attention of your Honorable Board to the following brief state of facts which he humbly hopes and doubts not will prevent the same:—

That your petitioner derives his title to the Talook in question under a sunnud from Government in the Bengal year one thousand one hundred and seventy-six or English year 1769, which sunnud was duly granted to him according to the established custom of the country in consideration of his long and faithful public services as per note at the foot hereof (Reference A) and of his relinquishing at the desire of Government a grant, he had before obtained of the Pergannahs Roymungal, &c., which the Hon’ble Company were about that time desirous of taking into their own hands.

That the said sunnud was afterwards, on a suit being instituted by the present claimant to set aside the same, fully recognized and examined, and duly and judicially confirmed, by two successive decrees of the Superintendents of the Khalsa, the first pronounced by Philip Milner Dacres, Esq., the 7th of June 1773, and the second by Richard
Barwell, Esq. (now a member of your Hon'ble Board) on the 26th July following, men whose abilities and experience in the laws and customs of the country, your petitioner humbly presumes, cannot be called in question; and who were then, in virtue of their offices, invested with competent authority, and the only proper judges to act and determine in the premises.

That ever since the granting of the said sunnud your petitioner hath been in possession of the said Talook, hath duly exercised every act of ownership therein, and regularly paid all demands and revenues due in respect thereof, and confiding in the faith and justice of Government hath been at considerable expenses in improving the same and in making purchases contiguous thereto, &c.

That the granting of the said sunnud was the sole and voluntary act of Government for the good and valuable considerations aforesaid, and in conformity to the established custom of the country in similar cases, for time immemorial used, and approved (many instances hereof among numberless others which might be enumerated, your petitioner hath put down at the foot hereof Reference B); wherefore, and as in the obtaining the said sunnud no imposition, fraud or undue practice whatsoever either has been or can be imputed to your petitioner, and as your petitioner has ever since complied with the terms thereof, and of the said two decrees, he humbly submits to your Hon'ble Board that his right to the Talook in question is no ways impeachable, And

Humbly prays that your Hon'ble Board, taking the foregoing circumstances into consideration, will be pleased to revise and reconsider your proceedings aforesaid, and communicate to your petitioner in writing such things (if any) as may be alleged against his right, and afford him an opportunity of answering the same and more fully elucidating and establishing the justice of the case if it shall be thought necessary, and that in the meantime the said order of your Hon'ble Board for the dipossession of your petitioner be either suspended or annulled, as may be most consistent with justice, and as to your Hon'ble Board shall seem meet.

And your petitioner shall ever pray &c.

Note.—Your petitioner's Sunnud and the two decrees above-mentioned are herewith left for the inspection of your Hon'ble Board.

[REFERENCE A.]

[This statement of services rendered by Nubkissen to the Company from the year 1756 to the year 1767 has already been quoted and need not be here repeated.]
Acquisition of Sootanutty.

Reference B.

Old Instances.

Under Jaffier Cawn (not the late Nobab of that name).—Chackla Batorea, etc., Parganna Cattah, and Tegutchy, Radshy, Sawojal, granted to Ram Jeeban Rai. All the then proprietors turned out.

Under Nabob Mahatab Jung.—Parganna Arzah, now part of Burdwan, granted to Manick Chand.

Under ditto.—Parganna of Burdah Chunder Chack, and Salimabad granted to Rajah Kerrill Chand and Raja Kissnaram, Burdwan Rajahs. Former possessors turned out.

Ditto.—Parganna Buzergomeidpoor (under Dacca), granted to Raja Rajebulleb, Sahamut Jung's Dewan.

Modern Instances.

Under Meer Jaffar's first Government.—Cooloorah, &c., villages and Talooks granted to Ram Charan Rai. The then possessor turned out, his representative still living.

Under ditto.—Four annas of the Jassore Pergannahs granted to Sala Odein Cawn, who remained in quiet possession during his life, and his widow now enjoys it. Former proprietors dispossessed.

Under ditto.—Parganna Gumgurrah, &c., granted to Anandolal, Zeminder of Mysadal. Anandolal since dead, his widow now enjoys it. The former proprietors dispossessed.

Under Meer Jaffar's first Government.—Twenty-four Pargannahs granted to the Hon'ble Company, and the former proprietors all dispossessed.

Under Kassim Ally Cawn's Government.—Grant to Colonel Coote of the proprietorship of Gheretti, &c., as a Jaghir. Possession thereof ordered to be delivered to Raja Nobkissen to whom he sold it, by Company's general letter of this year.

Under ditto.—Talooks of Bassai and Barbutpoor granted to Saum Ghose, and, the then proprietors, refusing to quit possession, Mr. Vansittart, the then Governor, gave his own Perwannah and sent sepoys forcibly to turn them out, pursuant to the grant, which was done accordingly. Mr. Vansittart's original Perwannah is herewith left.

Under ditto.—Perwanna Beerah, &c., granted to Ram Charn Rai. The then possessors turned out, and Ram Charn's son now in possession.

Under ditto.—Mauncunda, &c., villages, granted to Sanker Dutt, Madan Dutt's brother. Former possessors turned out.
Maharajah Nukkissen Bahadur.

Meer Jaffar's second Government.—Badoor, &c., Parganna granted to Raja Nun Coomer. The then possessor turned out.

Nobob Seiful Dowlah. — Natpoor villages, &c. (part of Jessore) and Talook Meergodai, granted to Hari Kissen Tecoor, and the then possessors turned out.

Nundo Coomar was turned out by Lord Clive, and Sankar Dutt by Becher — both reinstated, &c., Nundo Coomar by Mr. Verelst, and Sankar Dutt by Mr. Cartier, and now remaining in possession.

(Sd.) Nobkissen

The discussion of the petition and the resolution on it will show that Nubkissen's honour was saved. It was decided to reverse an irregular act of Government, but it was also declared that this decision was not to be taken as a judgment passed against Nubkissen for any oppression or other malpractice. It was determined also to grant a compensation to the Raja for the deprivation of the grant which had been made to him. The following papers embody the result:-

Governor-General

I am sensible of the justice of Mr. Barwell's arguments so far as they respect Raja Nobkissen, and the formal act of Government passed in his favour: but I cannot admit of it in competition with positive justice. The injustice done to Raja Nobokissen originated with the grant which it was not in the power of Government to secure to him, because it was against law. It was an infringement of the rights of property confirmed by a possession of 125 years, as I am well informed, and could exist no longer than the duration of the influence which gave rise to it. It is therefore my opinion, in which I persuade myself Mr. Barwell will concur, that the decree of the 5th November do stand confirmed, but that at the same time a declaration be given in writing under the order of the Board by the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records, to both the parties, that this act is the reversal of an irregular act of Government, not a judgment passed against Raja Nobkissen in consequence of any oppression which may be imputed to him for it; and if it shall be the sense of the Board that a compensation should be made to Raja Nobkissen for the deprivation of the grant which was made to him and intended as the reward of the public services, that this Declaration be made to him at the same time.
Acquisition of Soctanutty.

Mr. Francis.

I think that the Resolution of the 5th November must stand confirmed, and that the Talookdar must have his right if he insists on it. I acquiesce in the declarations proposed to be made to Raja Nobkissen, and as I understand the property is very inconsiderable, I suppose it would not be difficult to give him a compensation for it. But I do not admit of this as a precedent, and shall invariably consider every case as it comes before us on its own merits.

Mr. Barwell.

I entirely concur in the sentiments delivered by Mr. Francis.

Resolution.

Resolved that the Decree of the 5th of November do stand confirmed, but that at the same time a declaration be given in writing under the order of the Board by the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records, to both the parties that this act is the reversal of an irregular act of Government, not a judgment passed against Raja Nobkissen, in consequence of any oppression, which may be imputed to him for it, and that a compensation will be made to Raja Nobkissen for the deprivation of the grant which was made him and intended as the reward of his public services.

Order of the Khalsa.

Ordered that the Superintendent of the Khalsa be advised accordingly and that he be directed to report, if any, and what compensation can be made and accepted by either of the parties and the justice of Government vindicated to both.

This was naturally followed by a petition from Nubkissen asking for a valuation of the property he had lost and for the grant of adequate compensation.

Fort William, the 5th December 1777.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen: --

To

The Hon'ble Warren Hastings, Esq.,
Governor-General, and Members of the Council of Revenue.

The Humble Petition of Rajah Nobokissen.

Sheweth: --

Your petitioner humbly begs leave to represent that on being favored with the Hon'ble Board's Decree of the 18th November he presumed to prefer a petition to your Honours requesting a valuation to be made of the Talook of Nowparah. The reason for
this request was that your justice might determine on a compensation equivalent to the present value of the said Talook, and that at the same time the execution of your Decree might be complete, in all its parts, both in what related to your petitioner's yielding up the said Talook, and to his receiving an equivalent from Government.

As that part of your Decree which relates to his yielding up the Talook has taken effect, and your petitioner has received the orders of the gentlemen of the Calcutta Committee, he now humbly prays you may, consonant to the justice of your decision, be further pleased to send a peremptory order to the gentlemen of the Committee to put him in possession of some parcel of the Company's own lands; and that no difficulty may arise in the execution of your commands, your petitioner begs the indulgence for pointing out Sootalutty, its Haut and Bazar, and Baug Bazar and its Sayr; as a just and equitable compensation at the same rate of revenue of 1,832 rupees per annum, which is the Sudder Jumma of the said Talook.

Your petitioner humbly hopes the Hon'ble Board will consider the circumstances of his case, that while one part of their decision operates against him, if the other part which is to operate in his favor is not now enforced, their justice will be incomplete, and that in the eyes of the whole country he will appear under their displeasure, for the act of taking from him a gift the Government had once made will be notorious, and his fair name will suffer, unless it is vindicated by an immediate and similar gift from 'the rulers.'

For these reasons your humble petitioner has ventured to point out what he will willingly and gratefully receive as an equivalent for that gift your honours are pleased to change, though the value of it may be rather under what he drew from Nowparah in the improved state to which he brought it, yet if on a Jeriff of Nowparah your Honours may conceive he has rated it too high, he hereby agrees to pay such additional revenue for the land he requests as shall make it a bare compensation for the lands he yields up. This he engages to do that no obstacles may arise to his being put into immediate possession or to the drawing out the necessary annud should your Honours be so pleased.

And Your Petitioner, as in duty bound, shall ever pray,

(Sd.) Nobkissen.

The following papers set forth the deliberations and the conclusion:

Read again the Board's Resolution of the 18th November regarding Rajah Nobkissen.
ACQUISITION OF SOOTANUTTY.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL.

As the Board are bound by a promise very solemnly made to Nobkissen to grant him an equivalent for the land of which he has been deprived by a judicial Decree, I myself shall very readily agree to his proposal, because it cannot affect the property or rights of others, but as I understand that Rajah Nobkissen still retains possession of the Talooks of Nawporrah, &c., I hope that whatever may be the Resolution of the Board respecting the compensation which is to be made to him, the execution and even the notification of it may remain suspended, until justice shall have had its course and he shall have yielded up the possession of these Talooks of Nowporrah, &c., to the lawful owner. Upon this occasion I think it necessary to remark that the Resolution of the Board of the 18th November expresses a meaning in some respect different from mine, although in justice to the Secretary I must add that to the best of my recollection it was dictated by me, and the error I am willing to take upon myself. The words are: "Ordered that the Superintendent of the Khalsa be advised accordingly and that he be directed to report if any and what compensation can be made and accepted by either of the parties and the justice of Government vindicated to both." This implies that a proposal should be made to each party to yield up his right of possession. I had no idea of prevailing upon Abdul Wahed to resign his right, nor that anything more was necessary than to make a compensation to Raja Nobkissen for his loss. This is not material, but I hope I shall be excused in having taken up so much of the time of the Board in this explanation, as in a judicial question I would wish that nothing may appear as my opinion which is not strictly conformable to it.

MR. FRANCIS:

The Resolution of the Board of the 18th November is right, but the order to the Superintendent of the Khalsa goes beyond the terms of the Resolution. I do not think it material.

MR. BARWELL

I understand from the petition before us that the decision, so far as it relates to the establishing the former Talukdar in his rights has taken effect, and is now in course of execution. If this is so, I think the Committee should be ordered to put Nobkissen in possession, but not otherwise as proposed by the Governor.

Resolved that the Committee of Revenue be directed to put Rajah Nobkissen in possession of Sootalutty, its Haut and Bazar and Baug Bazar and its Sayr at the rate of rupees 1,832, the Sudder Jumma
of the Talook of Nawparah decreed to Mullick Abdul Wahed on the 5th November 1777, and if on a Zeriff of the Talook it shall be found that the grant exceeds the value of the Talook, in such case Raja Nobkissen stands engaged for, and is to pay, such additional Revenue as shall make the said Grant a bare equivalent for the lands of which he is dispossessed.

Agreed that this Resolution be transmitted to the Calcutta Committee with the following Letter :-

To

MR. JOHN HOLME,
President, etc., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta

GENTLEMEN,

We herewith transmit you a copy of our Resolution passed on this day, on a petition which has been presented to us on behalf of Rajah Nobkissen, which we direct you to carry into execution as soon as he shall have yielded up the possession of the Talook of Nowparah, etc., to the lawful owner, until which time the execution, and even the notification of it, is to remain suspended.

We are, Gentlemen,

Your most obedient Servants,

FORT WILLIAM,
The 5th December 1777.

(Sd.) WARREN HASTINGS,
(Sd.) RCHD. BARWELL,
(Sd.) P. FRANCIS.

On the 6th of January 1778 Raja Nobkissen submitted a petition praying for a sunnud for the mouzah of Sootanutty, &c., possession of which had been decreed to him in lieu of mauzah Nowparah. After some correspondence the sunnud was granted. Details of the proceedings are set forth in the following papers:

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), January 6th, 1778.
Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen :—
Translation of a Petition from Rajah Nobkissen.

"As I have not yet received a sunnud from the Committee for the Mouzah of Sootalutty, &c., which the Council were pleased to grant me in lieu of Mouzah Nowaparah, and as I am apprehensive of further difficulties arising to prevent me from obtaining one, I pray that fresh orders may be given to the Committee to grant me the Sunnud, as also that they may be desired not to give Pattahs for any ground within the said Mahals, that disputes may not be occasioned hereafter."
Acquisition of Sootanutty.

Agreed that a copy thereof with the following letter be transmitted to the Calcutta Committee:

To

MR. JOHN HOLME,
President, &c., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta.

Gentlemen,

We herewith transmit you the copy of a Petition which has been presented to us by Rajah Nobekissen and desire you will not give Pattahs for any ground within the Mahals granted to Rajah Nobkissen.

" Fort William,
6th January 1778.

AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), 16TH JANUARY 1778.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S MINUTE.

"I observe the draft of Sunnud to Rajah Nobkissen, laid before the Board last Council day, is not drawn out agreeably to form, as it includes his engagement to make good any overplus which may appear to be thereby given him on a valuation of the villages of Nowparrah, &c., before held by him. I am of opinion and move that the Sunnud be granted according to the accompanying form, in which the above clause is omitted, and that a Muchulka may be taken that if the present grant exceed the rents of Nowparrah, he will make up the difference.

[Form of Sunnud.]

Be it known to all Mutsuddies in present employ, or who hereafter may be Canongoes, Ryotts, Husbandmen, &c., &c., &c., of the Mal and Syer of the village Sootalootie and Baug Bazar and Hogulkoondee, that the Talookdarry of the above villages, their Mal and Syer, according to the particulars hereunto annexed, are in exchange for the villages Nopoorah, &c., granted to the high and powerful Mahah Rajah Nobkissen Bahadre, to take place from the beginning of the Bengal year 1184, and the said Rajah Nobkissen on his part shall do whatever shall be necessary and proper and customary for the benefit of the said Talookdarry, conducting himself upon the principles of justice, and in no wise neglect to give his attention and care in this respect; and he shall so behave himself as to secure the satisfaction and content of the Ryotts and other inhabitants, and by his good management cause a daily increase of husbandry and prosperity, and shall regularly and punctually pay a fixed annual jumma for the same (excepting Ram Bazar and Roy Bazar) of 1,237-13-10 exclusive of the Chowkidary Tax.
MAHARAJAH NUBKISSEN BAHADUR.

And the abovementioned Mutsuddies, Ryots, &c., &c., &c., shall acknowledge him as the proper Talookdar, and not deviate in the least instance from his proper and legal orders or counsels, nor require of him a new Sunnud every year, and in this respect they must be attentive and obey.

Original Jumma ... 1,832 0 0
Jumma of Ram Bazar, &c., to be deducted ... 594 2 10, =.
Ram Bazar 441 2 10
Raja Bazar 159 0 0
Jumma of Sootalooty, &c. 1,237 13 10

Particulars.
The whole village of Sootalooty, &c., 5 Mahals, =:
Mal ... 1 Mahal
Haut Sootalooty ...
Bazar do. ...
Soobah Bazar ...
Charles Bazar ...
Baug Bazar, &c. ...
Baug Bazar ...
Hoogulkoondee ...

Ordered that the Sunnud be granted, and that Rajah Nobkissen be required to execute a Muchulka.

Agreed therefore that the following letter be written to the Calcutta Committee.

TO
MR. JOHN HOLME,
President, &c., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta.

Gentlemen,

Enclosed we transmit you a copy of the Sunnud which we have this day granted to Maharajah Nobkissen, and desire you will see that the same has its full effect; taking from him a Muchulka that if the present grant exceeds the rents of Nowparrah, &c., he will make up the difference.

FORT WILLIAM,
16th January 1778.

Sootanutty at the present day is only a name, and it is worth while inquiring what it meant and included at the time it was granted to Nubkissen. The Committee having called upon the “Duan” [Dewan or Accountant] to report
ACQUISITION OF SOOTANUTTY.

"what particular Mahals and Bazars fall within Sootanuttty Mahal, its Haut and Bazar, Baug Bazar and Syer, specifying the annual Jumma of each for the preceding 5 years and the present year," an elaborate report was submitted. The following may be left to speak for itself:


The Accompant lay before the Committee a Jumma Wasil Bakey Account of the Hauts and Bazars of Calcutta for the present year, agreeable to their orders of the 24th instant, and the Committee proceed to examine the state thereof.

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<tr>
<th>Sootanutty Etmondar</th>
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<th>Collected</th>
<th>Balance</th>
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<tr>
<td>Becharam Mundle</td>
<td>16,689 14 9</td>
<td>8,345 0 0</td>
<td>3,521 0</td>
<td>4,821 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bogbuzar do. [Baug Bazar]</td>
<td>1,112 9 4</td>
<td>556 4 0</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>376 4 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Bazar Ezardar</td>
<td>800 0 0</td>
<td>533 8 0</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>459 8 0</td>
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<td>Hauts Sootanutty do.</td>
<td>2,510 0 0</td>
<td>1,693 1 0</td>
<td>914</td>
<td>779 4 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ram Buzar do. Nalnab Bahu</td>
<td>701 0 0</td>
<td>467 0 0</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>58 0 0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sobah Buzar do. Rajah Subkissen</td>
<td>500 0 0</td>
<td>333 8 0</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>85 8 0</td>
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Same day the Accompant lay before the Committee Jumma Wasil Bakey Account of the Land Rents and Chowkeydarry Tax of the Town of Calcutta for the Bengal years 1179-1184.

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<th>MAHALS</th>
<th>Etmondars</th>
<th>Cazannah or Rent.</th>
<th>Chowkeydarry Tax.</th>
<th>Total Balance.</th>
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<td>Bog-Buzar</td>
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SHARK:

| Haut Sootanutty | Jogornaut Can. | 62 15 10 | ...... | 62 15 10 |
| Charles Buzar | Do. Do. | 93 0 0 | 139 14 0 | 232 14 0 |
| Sobah Buzar | Ke-nouhun Bel-cottah | 108 0 0 | 66 6 10 | 234 6 10 |
### MAHALS.

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<th>Chowkeydarry Tax.</th>
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<td>Ottaram Metre</td>
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<td>52 7 15</td>
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<td>Bag-Bazar, &amp;c.</td>
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<td>10 13 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charles Bazar</td>
<td>Sereyadhur Tagore</td>
<td>450 7 10</td>
<td>134 11 10</td>
<td>585 3 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobah Bazar</td>
<td>Rajah Nubkissen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1183</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soottanutty</td>
<td>Becharam Mundle</td>
<td>487 15 1</td>
<td>1499 11 8</td>
<td>1951 1 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag-Bazar</td>
<td>Ottaram Metre</td>
<td>81 6 1</td>
<td>168 5 8</td>
<td>192 6 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHAIR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobah Bazar</td>
<td>Rajah Nubkissen</td>
<td>85 12 15</td>
<td>46 3 5</td>
<td>132 0 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A further Report submitted by the same officer is embodied in the following proceedings:

**AT A COMMITTEE (CALCUTTA REVENUE COMMITTEE CONSULTATIONS.)**

*December 30th, 1777*

The President acquaints the Committee that he attended at the Council-House this morning by order from the Secretary of the Revenue Department, and was directed to draw out the sumud authenticating the grant made to Rajah Nubkissen in compensation for Nowparrah immediately and to include therein the Bazars, &c., appertaining to Soottanutty, except Ram Bazar and Radge Bazar, the rent whereof are by the Board's orders of the 19th instant to be paid direct to the Huzzoor. Agreeable thereto, the President now lays
ACQUISITION OF SOOTANUTTY.

before the Committee the form of the grant which the Naib Duan has prepared, which, if they approve, he will direct to be issued to Nubkissen forthwith.

The Duan being also called upon for his Report, ordered yesterday, respecting these Bazars, now lays it before the Committee, and observes that the lands of Soubah Bazar, Ram Bazar, Haut Sootanuty, and Charles Bazar, are included in the Districts or Village of Sootanuty.

Jumma of Sootanuty, &c., for the following years:—

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sootanuty Tosiil</th>
<th>1179.</th>
<th>1880.</th>
<th>1881.</th>
<th>1882.</th>
<th>1883.</th>
<th>Total.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atmamadar</td>
<td>6,930</td>
<td>6,921</td>
<td>6,926</td>
<td>6,933</td>
<td>7,177</td>
<td>34,880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sobazar Tosiil</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hoozoory</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>1,351</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rambazar</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>2,102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haut Sootanuty</td>
<td>1,400</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>1,452</td>
<td>1,886</td>
<td>1,961</td>
<td>8,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bazar Sootanuty</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>385</td>
<td>316</td>
<td>586</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>2,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Bazar</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>2,867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9,620</td>
<td>9,907</td>
<td>9,728</td>
<td>10,737</td>
<td>1,086</td>
<td>51,057</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Bogbazar Tosiil  |       |       |       |       |       |        |
| Atmamadar        | 446   | 446   | 447   | 449   | 492   | 2,281  |
| Kajo Gunge       |       |       |       |       |       |        |
| Tosiil Homoory   | 150   | 150   | 150   | 150   | 600   |        |
| **Total**        | 446   | 596   | 597   | 599   | 642   | 2,881  |
| **Brought down** | 9,620 | 9,907 | 9,728 | 10,737| 1,066 | 51,057 |
| **Total Rupees** | 10,066| 10,504| 10,333| 11,336| 11,708| 53,939 |

Ordered that the Sunnud be translated against the next meeting.

The grant of Sootanuty to Nubkissen called forth a protest from the "inhabitants and landholders of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar." The orders passed on the petition were firm but conciliatory. The original documents may be interesting.
AT A COUNCIL (REVENUE DEPARTMENT), JANUARY 23, 1778.
Read the following petition from the inhabitants and landholders of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar.

"TO THE HONOURABLE WARREN HASTINGS, ESQR.,
GOVERNOR-GENERAL, &C., COUNCIL OF REVENUE AT FORT WILLIAM IN BENGAL.

The Humble Petition and Remonstrance of the Inhabitants and Landholders of the Districts of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar in the Town of Calcutta

HUMBLY APPREHEND:

That your Petitioners have been from time immemorial Inhabitants and Landholders in the Districts of Sootanuty and Baug Bazar in the Town of Calcutta by virtue of several Pottahs or grants which have been granted and renewed from time to time by the Honourable East India Company at a certain quit-rent payable quarterly as appears by the Pottahs and Receipts for the Rents in their possession, and were never Tenants or Reits to any other person for the same except the Honourable Company; and, standing in that relation to the Honourable Company, your Petitioners have been encouraged to improve and build upon the lands which have been granted to them as aforesaid, confiding in the security they enjoy under this Government and the little danger they had to apprehend of their lands being assigned over to any other person. And your Petitioners being so proprietors of their lands and houses have been allowed the liberty of disposing of them with the approbation of the Company and of exercising every other right of property over them which they might think fit. Notwithstanding which, your Petitioners, to their inexpressible concern, have lately been given to understand that the above Districts will be shortly made over by an order of the Huzzoor to Rajah Nobkissen as his Talook, which will tend greatly to prejudice them in the certainty of their possession, and will probably heap upon them a load of oppressions, grievances, and extortions; and the more so as the said Rajah Nobkissen will thereby become a judge in his own Districts, and they must be under the necessity of applying to his Court for justice.

And your Petitioners humbly apprehend that, as they have received Pottahs from the East India Company to hold of them under a certain rent, it would be unjust to assign over the said lands to any other person and thereby subject them to such innovations and oppressions which that person may think proper to introduce; and likewise that as the absolute property of the said lands has been granted to
A Bill of Soctanutta.

The petitioners state that while they pay their rents to Petitioners who hold it would be highly contrary to the principles of the species of tenants.

In consideration of their humble prayers for honour, liberty, and justice, they beg to take the following into consideration, that they will their rents to the East India Company upon the same terms and conditions as they have hitherto done, paying the stipulated rents to the Honorable the East India Company, and that your Petitioners may continue to be looked upon as tenants to the Honorable the East India Company and no one else.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c., &c.

(Sd.) [169 Signatures.]

Ordered that the Secretary to inform the Petitioners that the Board did not, nor do, intend by the Sunnad lately granted to Rajah Nobkissen to invest him with any rights or privileges or customs but such as were before possessed and accorded by the Company. That he has not the power or right of exacting new taxes, or to erect a Court of justice, nor can the Board make him answerable for any such suspension have arisen. It is their will that the Chars of the Company which they have thought it proper to transfer to Rajah Nobkissen shall be paid into his hands as the immediate proprietor instead of being paid, as they formerly were, to the hands of an Agent on the part of the Company, and the Board require their obedience.

Ordered that a copy of this Resolution be delivered to the principal of the Petitioners and another to Nobkissen himself.

A narrative of the proceedings which led to the enlargement of Nobkissen’s possessions has led to the omission from its proper place, in chronological order, of a fact which shows the growing confidence of the English authorities in his intelligence and honesty. The position which Nobkissen had acquired, the esteem in which he was held by high officials and the confidence which was reposed in him, were abiding and not evanescent. On the 21st December 1775 the Governor-General laid before the Board a letter from Bow Begum, mother of the Nabob Asaph-ud-Dowla, received by his servant Coja Shagoon Ally Cawn, in which she complained of some acts of high-handedness of
Mr. Bristow regarding the statement of the income and also his interference with the usual ceremonies of her estate which were enjoined on her by the customs of her family. He also laid before the Board the reply of Mr. Bristow to those charges. Lieutenant-General John Clavering thought that two gentlemen properly qualified must be appointed to enquire into the matter and report thereon. Warren Hastings considered the reply of Mr. Bristow to be conclusive and said the matter might be safely disposed of against the Bow Begum. Sir Philip Francis strongly objected to this mode of procedure, insisted on an enquiry by two gentlemen, "and one of them," he said, "must be Raja Nobkissen; he is well versed in Persian and is well acquainted with the customs of the country and he may be very safely relied on by the Government." Mr. Barwell observed: "I agree to this arrangement. Raja Nobkissen is a proper native who may be entrusted with this transaction." Mr. Monson questioning Nobkissen's qualification on the ground of his being a Hindoo, Mr. Barwell answered: "He is profoundly learned in Persian and most of the customs of the Mahomedans are based on the Persian Scriptures; besides, Raja Nobkissen is a man of vast experience and his repeated intercourse with the Nawab of Murshidabad had made him a quite competent man for the purpose." Nobkissen was accordingly appointed a member of the Committee of Inquiry.

A similar commission was entrusted to him shortly after the grant of the annuit for Sootanuty. There were suspicions of a conspiracy, and Raja Nobkissen was appointed to make an enquiry and submit a report. All the necessary facts will appear from the following papers:

AT A COUNCIL (SECRET DEPARTMENT), February 2, 1778.—

Minute by Governor-General (W. Hastings) relative to Jugg Mohan Dutt: inter alia—

"He received information in October last, that a man named Jugg Mohun Dutt, a near relation of the Sircar of Mr. Chevalier, the
Acquisition of Sootanutty.

French Commandant, used daily to frequent the house of Lall Sevuck Ram, the Mahratta Vakil, and to hold very long and secret conferences with him. Having taken the proper means to ascertain the truth of this information, the Governor-General gave order for his being apprehended and brought before him; but these were not executed, the man soon after falling sick, till yesterday morning, when he was taken coming from the house and before the door of Lalla Sevuck Ram." Questioned by G. G.; denied intercourse with L. S. Ram. G. G., confirmed in his suspicions, sent Dutt "to the New Fort under a guard and caused all the papers in his house to be seized and sealed in the presence of creditable [credible] witnesses, and to be brought to his house, where they now remain."

He now proposes "that persons properly, qualified may be nominated to examine the papers now under his charge, and for that purpose that each member of the Board will be pleased to appoint a person versed in the Bengal language (in which the papers are mostly written) to meet at the Governor's House and jointly inspect them, and to take the reports of the evidences of this transaction."

Mr. Francis's Minute:—"Agrees, but can only suggest Mr. Moore as qualified to examine the papers."

Mr. Barwell's Minute:—"I approve, and think Raja Nubkissen ought to be present at the inspection of the Bengal papers."

Mr. Wheler was unable to recommend any one.

Then:—"The Governor-General having ordered the papers which were seized to the Council House, and Moore and Rajah Nobkissen attending, they are delivered to them, with directions to select such as have any relation to conferences or concerns with Lalla Sevuck Ram, the Mahratta Vakil, and to deliver back the others immediately to the owner, Jug Mohun Dutt.

"Mr. Moore and Rajah Nobkissen, having examined the papers of Jug Mohun Dutt in his presence, inform the Board that they contain nothing but accounts and papers relative to his own concerns, but no letters received or copies of letters written by him, and, having put several questions to him on the subject of his frequent visits to Lalla Sevuck Ram, the Mahratta Vakil, they deliver them in with his answers as follow:

* * * * * * * * * * *

"Ordered that Jug Mohun Dutt be remanded to the Fort, to continue in confinement there till further orders."
This was not held to be conclusive, and a further inquiry was ordered and held. The proceedings are reported as follows:

At a Council (Secret Department), Monday, February 23, 1778.

Ordered that an abstract of examinations of various persons respecting the visits of Jugg Mohun Dutt to the Mahratta Vakil (Lalla Sewuk Ram) be entered, the full examinations being "very voluminous."

"Ordered that the Secretary do call on Mr. Moore and Rajah Nobkissen to deliver any further information which they may have received respecting Jugg Mohun Dutt."

The Governor-General's (W. Hastings's) speech on the points repeats that he had caused the Vakil's papers to be seized with a view to the discovery of proofs of intrigue. He says:

"I understand from Rajah Nobkissen that there was not a single letter of any kind among the papers that were seized and of which he had the inspection."

At a Council (Secret Department), Monday, March 2, 1778.

Read the following letter from Mr. Moore:

Hon'ble Sir and Sirs,

In pursuance of your directions to obtain information whether Jagamohun Dutt has any and what connection with the banian of Monsieur Chevalier, the Chief of Chandernagore, Rajah Nobkissen undertook to make the necessary enquiries, and, having furnished me with the result thereof, I beg leave to communicate it to you.

"Jagamohun Dutt has five cousins, who are brothers, viz. Rammun Dutt, Ram Mohan Dutt, Nilmoney Dutt, Monoo Dutt, and Roy Charun Dutt, of whom Rammun Dutt and Ram Mohan Dutt are in the service of Monsieur Chevalier as pycars, and support an intercourse with Jagamohun Dutt between Chandernagore and Calcutta.

"Rajah Nobkissen having personally enquired of Atter Ally Cawn whether Jagamohun Dutt had applied to him to be introduced to Lallo Sabuckram, he informed him that he had; that, on asking his reason for wishing the introduction, Jagamohun told him that he had occasion to send some letters into the Mahratta country, and

\[1\] Said by Jugg Mohun Dutt, in his answers to be "a Doctor in Calcutta," to whom he applied for an introduction to Lalloo Sabuckram (Lalla Sevuck Ram)
therefore was desirous of becoming acquainted with Lallo Sabuckram; but that Atter Ally Cawn, at the mention of the Mahrattas, being somewhat apprehensive of the consequences, declined the introduction.

"This is the substance of Rajah Nobkissen’s information to me this morning. He is still prosecuting his enquiries; and the result thereof shall be regularly communicated to you as I receive it.

Fort William,
25th February 1778.

I am, &c.,
(Sd.) P. Moore.

"The Secretary acquaints the Board that he called on Rajah Nobkissen and received from him almost a repetition of the above information, which he lays before the Board as follows:—

"Rajah Nobkissen, attending the Secretary, acquainted him that during the time of Jug Mohun Dutt’s examination before him he declared that he had desired to be introduced to Lall Sewuck Ram by Atter Ally Cawn. Nobkissen has since been informed by Atter Ally Cawn that Jug Mohun Dutt did earnestly request to be introduced by him to the Mahratta Vakil on account of some business of importance which he said he had with him, and when he was asked as to the nature of his business, he replied that he wanted to send a letter into the Deccan, but Atter Ally Cawn was deterred by this declaration from introducing him and denied his request.

"Nobkissen further acquaints the Secretary that Sam Dutt, Mannick Dutt, and Bujoo Kissen Dutt, all deceased, were three brothers; that the former left five sons, who all reside at Chandernagore; that the prisoner, Jug Mohun Dutt, who is the only son of the second brother, resides at Calcutta; that the third brother had one son, named Anund Dutt, who is also a resident of Calcutta. Nobkissen, having sent a person to Chandernagore to make private enquiries into the occupations of these several persons and to bring him any further intelligence in his power respecting their connexions with each other, obtained from him the following information: That Rammohun Dutt and Rammohun Dutt, two of the five sons by the eldest brother, are pycars in the employment of Mr. Chevalier, and indebted to him; that they frequently came backwards and forwards to Calcutta, and take up their residence at Jug Mohun Dutt’s house. He expects further intelligence on this subject and will communicate it without delay."

The Governor-General:—"I think it necessary to add to the above report that Rajah Nobkissen, when he was before the Board,
observed that, although it appeared from the papers of Jug Mohun Dutt that he had commercial dealings to the amount of (I think) thirteen lakhs of rupees, not a single letter either in business or of any other kind appeared among the papers which were seized, nor his cullundaun or standish, in which it is customary to keep papers of a secret or important nature, from which circumstance, which he mentioned as very extraordinary, he drew the conclusion that Jug Mohun Dutt must have given early orders for their being secreted for fear of a discovery. I do not know whether the members of the Board may recollect this part of Nobkissen’s information, but I think it necessary to record it, and to declare that I consider it as a confirmation of my suspicions.

Though the Governor-General did not abandon his suspicions, nothing further was heard of the conspiracy, nothing untoward happened. Possibly if any mischief was brewing, it was arrested and crushed by the very inquiry that was held.
CHAPTER VI.

NUNCOMAR.

An important fact worth considering at this stage of Nubkissen's life is the nature of his relations to Maharaja Nuncomar and the part he took in the case that will be forever associated not only with the memory of many distinguished individuals, but with many angry disputes and reversions concerning the integrity of Judges and Councillors in the early days of British administration in this country. As this work professes to be not the history of a period, but only the biography of an individual, it is only necessary to say as much of Nuncomar and his case as brings him into relations with Nubkissen. At the same time Nuncomar played such a conspicuous part in the early history of British rule, and his career and character have suggested, to so many English writers, reflections on the character of the Bengalee in general and the Brahmin in particular, that it will not be altogether out of place to take a somewhat wider view of his life than that presented by its points of contact with the life of Nubkissen. There is another reason for attempting a little study of Nuncomar. History as written by eminent Englishmen in recent times after elaborate research, as written, for instance, by Sir James Stephen, Colonel Malleson, and Mr. Forrest, has, in the eyes of impartial readers at any rate, delivered its final verdict on Nuncomar and his trial for forgery. The impression left on the mind of the last generation by the flaming periods of Burke, the ponderous pages of Mill, and the brilliant portraits of Macaulay, cannot but suffer to-day a large degree of effacement. But there are those who will not see, who love to hug an illusion that is beautiful, and who with little ceremony or scarcely an apology dismiss facts that are repellent to the
taste. Some recent Bengalee writers have made a hero of Nuncomar. They have represented him as the victim of a conspiracy led by Warren Hastings who employed Impey as his instrument for a judicial murder. Nuncomar was, in their judgment, a martyr to his patriotism. He was not only a social leader of the Brahmins, but the political leader of the entire Hindu community in Bengal, if not of the native population generally. Round him Hindu interests and forces were to rally; or at any rate the decaying strength of Mahomedan rulers was to revive; and he was to stand forth as the deliverer of his native land from a foreign yoke and the founder of a united nation and state. Nubkissen, on the other hand, was, in the light vouchsafed to these writers, a sneak and a coward, a trimmer and traitor who betrayed native interests, and delivered his country, so far as it lay in his little power, into the hands of the English. He abetted Hastings in his attempt to remove his chief accuser and witness of guilt, Nuncomar. By giving false evidence he abetted Impey in his judicial murder.

All this view of Nuncomar is excellent romance; it is not history. The writers have very largely drawn on their imagination. They have at once ignored and created history. Nuncomar at his best was a shrewd, worldly man of business, the mediocre character of whose abilities and the modesty of whose social position are proved by the fact that he did not make a prominent appearance or occupy a distinguished position in public life before he was past fifty. Taken all round he was an ambitious, scheming, intriguing villain, absolutely selfish, thoroughly unprincipled, dead to a sense of gratitude, prone to abuse of power, faithless as a friend, implacable as an enemy. Almost the whole of his public life is a tissue of crimes, --extortion, conspiracy, giving bribes, taking bribes, making false complaints, getting up false cases, perjury, subornation of perjury, forgery, the uttering of forged documents, and the like. His public life had nothing
of public spirit in it. His ambition was wholly personal. The solitary instance of faithfulness in his whole life was his attachment to Mir Jaffir, but even in the service of that potentate he seems to have had no thought except that of self-aggrandisement. He never appears to have excelled in diplomacy or administration, and if he had any influence over Mir Jaffir, if he shaped his policy and guided his counsels, the best index to his honesty, wisdom, and foresight would be the acts of Mir Jaffir himself, to which a brief reference will presently be made, and which, it may be observed in the meanwhile, exhibit very little of either firmness or fairness. In character and aspirations Nubkissen was the very antithesis of Nuncomar.

The testimony of the best writers in regard to the character of Nuncomar is unanimous. Macaulay, who will not be suspected of any prejudice in favour of Hastings or Impey or of any lack of sympathy with Nuncomar in his distress, speaks of him in the following terms:

"Of his moral character it is difficult to give a notion to those who are acquainted with human nature only as it appears in our island. What the Italian is to the Englishman, what the Hindu is to the Italian, what the Bengalee is to other Hindus, such was Nuncomar to other Bengalees."

Then follows his well-known description of Bengalees, Sir James Stephen considers this estimate to be exaggerated in its condemnation. He finds an explanation of Nuncomar's character in the circumstances of the time and the place in which he lived. His own opinion may be taken as marked by that "discriminating good sense" the absence of which he regrets in Macaulay's description, and that opinion is expressed as follows:

"Of all the provinces of the Empire none was so degraded as Bengal, and till he was nearly sixty years old Nuncomar lived in the worst and most degraded part of that unhappy Province. A push-ing, active, prominent, successful man in such circumstances could hardly be other than Nuncomar actually was, false all through, and
dead to every sentiment except pride, hatred and revenge. It is, however, due to Nuncomar to say that even a bitter enemy gives him credit for one good quality. "He was," says the author of the Siyyar ul Mutaghérin, "a man of a wicked disposition and a haughty temper, envious to a high degree, and on bad terms with the greater part of mankind, although he had conferred favours on two or three men and was firm in his attachments."

Colonel Malleson, apparently thrown beside himself by the shocking record of Nuncomar's intrigues, goes on to generalise about his race:

"It [Murshidabad] still remained, however, a hotbed of intrigue; and it is by intrigue that the Brahman of high caste, who finds his abilities too little appreciated by the ruling power, always works. There is no greater adept in the world in the capacity to undermine, to insinuate that which he dare not openly charge; in the disseminating of slanderous whispers; in convincing those with whom he may converse that the false thing is the true thing."

In a foot-note the writer adds: "In stating this I write from my own experience of the class." Then again:

"After the first moment of astonishment, the more astute amongst them, especially the Bengali Brahmins, recognized that whilst the new rules had abolished, for the time, autocratic powers of Mr. Hastings, it had widened the road to intrigue, and would afford them opportunities, such as they had never dreamt of, for the practice of that chicanery in which they excel all other races. The first field on which the ablest and most unprincipled amongst them determined, to practise his hereditary vocation ...................... Foremost to recognize the brilliant opening thus offered to his genius was Nand Kumar."

In face of such a consensus of opinion, do Bengalees advance their reputation, do they serve the interests of truth, when they put forward this infamous person, this genuine "Captain-General of iniquity" as one of the noblest specimens of their race, as their champion, leader and representative, their ideal of a hero? No, such a view is essentially

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1 Life of Warren Hastings, page 198.
unfair to Bengalees and to Brahmins. Nuncomar was not only not the noblest of Bengalees, but not even a typical or average Bengalee. Macaulay suggests that he was one of the worst specimens of a Bengalee and indeed as much inferior to the average Bengalee as the Italian is to the Englishman; and in that view he is absolutely right. No Bengalee has equalled him in villainy. The foot-note quoted from Colonel Malleson’s work shows that that writer did not know his own mind. Colonel Malleson’s experience of Brahmins, it would be interesting to know the sphere of life in which it was acquired, could never have made him indulge in his generalisations about Brahmin character if he had not before him the story of Nuncomar. But that story does not represent the normal state of things in the country: it is wholly without a parallel even in degraded Bengal. About Brahmins in general something may have to be said later on.

Nuncomar Roy was a son of Padlab Roy (which name appears to be an English corruption of the name Padmanabha Roy), who was Amin of two or three Pergunnahs and who appointed Nuncomar as a kind of Naib under him. Afterwards, in the reign of the Nabob Ali Verdi Khan, called also Mehabut Jung, Nuncomar was appointed Amin of the Pergunnahs Hidcote and Mushadal, where he committed oppression on zemindars and ryots and was guilty of much malversation in his office. The victims of his oppression laid their complaints before the Roy Royan Chey: Roy, who immediately displaced Nuncomar, and after his accounts were properly stated, confined him in chains for the payment of his balance and summoned him daily to the Khalsa Gutcherry, where he was constantly flogged and beaten. At last his father paid up for him the balance due to Government. Nuncomar was released, but his father never afterwards saw his face or forgave him. As soon as the seeds of internal enmity sprang up between the Nabob Mehabut Jung and his General Mustapha Khan, and Nuncomar began to suspect it (as it is-
his nature to apply himself diligently to a party, when any disturbance arises between great men), he immediately waited upon Mustapha Khan." Mustapha Khan took into his hands the Malguzar of several Zemindars, for some of whose lands Nuncomar became security. When a heavy balance was incurred on those lands, and Nuncomar's practices came to be better understood, Mustapha Khan determined to seize him and send him prisoner to the Roy Royan. He got intelligence of this and escaped secretly to Calcutta. When the quarrel between the Nabob and his General openly broke out, and Mustapha was slain, and the Roy Royan Cheyn Roy was also dead, Nuncomar made his appearance again at Moorshedabad, and by the recommendation of the Mutsaddis obtained the collection of the Pergunnah of Sutsestra.

These facts are obtained from a letter of Mr. Barwell's to his sister, discovered and published for the first time by Sir James Stephen in his work on the Trial of Nuncomar. The letter is a condensed biography of Nuncomar. All its details it is neither necessary nor desirable to reproduce. Much of it is borne out by other evidence. Only the more important points of the narrative can be here noticed. Nuncomar was soon recalled from his post and he lived for some time the life of an unscrupulous adventurer. He came to Hooghly; was confined closely for five days by Meer Hootubullu, an inhabitant of the place, for his debt of Rs. 2,000; then he absconded to Moorshedabad. He was on one occasion severely bastinadoed with a bamboo by Nabob Siraj-ud-Dowlah, apparently for some impertinent remark. The Nabob sent him also to Hidayet Ali Khan at Hoogly, whose treatment of Nuncomar compelled him to go again to Murshidabad, where he was reduced to the utmost poverty. After many vicissitudes, through the patronage of one Munshi Saduk Ulla, he was appointed Dewan of Hooghly, under Mahomed Yar Beg Khan, Foujdar of Hooghly. This Foujdar was dismissed from his post during the life-time of Ali Verdi Khan, and on
the death of that Nabob, Siraj-ud-Dowlah appointed successively two Mahomedans to the office. Ultimately Nuncomar managed to have himself appointed Fouljdar by securing the dismissal of the second Mahomedan incumbent.

When Colonel Clive was besieging Chandernagore, Dewan Nuncomar Roy sent him complimentary messages by one Kissen Ram Bow, and soon “the Colonel conceived a prodigious friendship for the Dewan,” which came to be generally known. When Colonel Clive was to go to Patna, Maharaja Doolub Ram appointed Nuncomar as his Vakeel to accompany the Colonel, expecting thus to improve his own relations with the Colonel. “Nuncomar had so ingratiated himself into favour that it was usual for the people to style him the black Colonel.” Through the influence of Clive he was appointed Dewan to Mahomed Ameer Beg Khan who was made Fouljdar of Hooghly, Hidcote, &c. Mir Jaffir unable to pay directly to the English the sums he had agreed to pay after the battle of Plassey, had given them assignments on the revenues of the districts of Bardwan, Nadiya and Hooghly. Nuncomar was on the recommendation of Clive appointed in 1758 their agent for the collection.

No long time has to pass before Nuncomar’s cloven foot is out again. He contrived to bring about an enmity between Maharaja Doolub Ram and Nabob Mir Jaffir, which almost came to open war. The Maharaja had remonstrated with Nuncomar for the rapacity he had exhibited as Collector. By his intrigues he succeeded not only in securing the removal of the Maharaja, but in causing a wide breach between him and the Nabob. At this time Nuncomar also demanded from his old friend, patron and master, Mahomed Yar Beg Khan, the sum of Rs. 14,000 under pretence of expenses formerly incurred, and by threatening him with an examination of all his accounts. “Mahomed Yar Beg, looking upon Nuncomar’s principles like to those of the adder which will inevitably sting the bosom that cherishes it, paid his unjust
demand.” To his present master, Ameer Beg Khan, he gave such pernicious advice that he raised a suspicion of him in the mind of the Nabob Mir Jaffir, so that Ameer, finding his situation desperate, begged leave to resign his post, and got on board a vessel.

Discovery of a certain unfairness on the part of Nuncomar in a particular matter created a breach between him and Maharaja Dooliah Ram, but Nuncomar had played his cards very well and he could dispense with all other friends and patrons when he secured the confidence and patronage of Mir Jaffir and a monopoly of influence over him. He could not long retain Clive’s confidence, and when Clive was leaving the country, Vansittart, warned by him, kept up the appearance of friendship and countenance to Nuncomar, but intrusted him with no part of his confidence. Nuncomar would not be himself if he did not plan a revenge. “He studied every possible method to raise a war and to endanger the Company, to which purpose a letter of his was detected after the victory of Burdwan and the death of Indar Jat Perkhee.” Mr. Vansittart put a guard of Sepoys upon him and produced before the Council many treasonable letters and copies taken from Nuncomar’s house. Dissensions in Council, brought about by Nuncomar himself, led to his release after forty days. The securrity of two letters that he wrote to Colonel Clive and the Company shortly after his release led Mr. Vansittart to confine him to his house for a number of days. The discovery of certain letters fabricated by Nuncomar, of which more will be presently said, led to his being imprisoned a second time under a Sepoy guard. He was released after a year, on the application of Mir Jaffir. He attended Mir Jaffir in the war against Meer Cossim. When the victory was decisively obtained over Meer Cossim, Nuncomar, unknown to Mir Jaffir, solicited and obtained from the Emperor Shah Alum the title of Maharaja, which was afterwards confirmed by Mir Jaffir.
The next incident in Nuncomar’s life had better be stated altogether in Mr. Barwell’s own words: “After this when Meer Mahomed Cossim Khan fled, and the Nabob Shuja-ud-Dowla had levied an army, Maharajah Nuncomar wrote a letter to Bulwant Singh, upon discovery of which treasonable correspondence, General Carnac was determined to seize Nuncomar, and send him under a guard to Calcutta. But at last by the earnest endeavour of Maharajah Nobkissen, who at that time was Banian to Major Adams, he escaped. A full account of this is to be found in the Records of the Council, where every particular of the whole affair may be learnt.”

Nuncomar continued to be a source of disturbances, and, after Najim-ud-Dowla had succeeded Mir Jaffa had to be sent under a guard to Calcutta. Lord Clive on his return from Europe to Calcutta appointed Muzaffar Jung the principal minister, and appointed Maharaja Dooliah Ram and Juggut Seet to assist him in the Government, and had determined in his own mind, for the tranquillity of the kingdom, to banish Nuncomar into Chittagong, and all Nuncomar’s family were then in the utmost tribulation upon that account.” This time also Nuncomar was saved by Nobkissen. “Maharaja Nobkissen represented that as Maharaja Nuncomar was a Brahmin, it was not right to punish him too severely, therefore his sentence of banishment to Chittagong was left unexecuted.”

Gratitude was foreign to the nature of Nuncomar, and he was never by any chance betrayed into that weakness. His nature fully manifested itself in his relations with Nobkissen. In remembrance, it would seem, of kindly services recently rendered, he got up a false but serious complaint against Nobkissen. He “suborned a woman, by name Neeboo, for a present of 2,000 rupees, to accuse Maharaja Nobkissen of having forcibly committed a rape upon her.” This complaint was fully inquired into, and the result has been given in a
previous chapter. "Upon the same affair, fourteen blank covers of letters sealed with many English gentlemen's and Hindostanee names were found in the Maharajah Nun-comar's house, and delivered into Council, as may be fully proved by reference to the Records of Council." The real reason that weighed with Nubkissen for interceding on behalf of Nuncomar had evidently been put in an official guise when addressed to officials, as will appear from the following record of proceedings:

At a Select Committee held the 19th July 1765 at Fort William.

Present:

The Right Honourable Lord Clive, President.
Mr. William Brightwell Sumner.

" John Carnac.
" Harry Verelst.
" Francis Sykes.

Whereas Nun Coomar had tried to destroy Mussalman administration and to rise on its ruin; and whereas the Company's servants had repeatedly detected him in the most criminal intrigues and whereas Nun Coomar, while professing the strongest attachment to the English, had been engaged in several conspiracies against them; and whereas he had been found to be the medium of correspondence between the Court of Delhi and the French authorities in the Carnatic, we, the members of the Council in our previous meeting, formed a resolution for his banishment to Chittagong. But our well-known friend, Nabokissen Mooshhee, has lately given us a very sound advice. He says that as an intriguing man, Nun Coomar should not be sent to Chittagong, at a considerable distance from Calcutta; on the contrary he should be detained at Calcutta under strict surveillance. It is therefore ordained that Nun Coomar be detained at Calcutta under strict surveillance as a State prisoner.

This does not by any means show Nubkissen's enmity to Nuncomar. When a boy is convicted of an offence, and his parent pleads that the young fellow would be demoralised by the company of criminals in a jail and might be dismissed with a

1 Quoted from Babu Chaundi Churn Sen’s Bengali work on Maharaja Nuncomar, pp. 221, 225.
MAHARAJA BAHADUR SIR NARENDRA KRISHNA. K.C.I.E.
wholesome flogging which he might never forget, is it difficult to guess the motive of the plea? It is not the infliction of flogging but the avoidance of jail, and the spirit that prompts the suggestion is one of tenderness and not of severity. It is easy to read the same spirit in Nubkissen’s suggestion in the present case. The “surveillance” is a mere excuse to recommend the suggestion to the official mind; the real motive is the desire to spare an exalted Brahmin the indignity of deportation. If the recommendation as put in the official proceedings is to be understood literally, it has the fatal fault of proving too much. Deportation is a punishment held to be specially suitable to turbulent and disaffected persons, and if Nuncomar was not to be sent away to Chittagong because he was an “intriguing man,” that would be a good argument for retaining in Calcutta “under surveillance” all dangerous characters at all times. Was surveillance or imprisonment impossible at Chittagong?

The precise nature of Nuncomar’s duties as Collector will appear from the following extract from a letter of the Council to the Court of Directors, dated the 31st December 1758:

“As we were of opinion, it was too troublesome a task for a European to collect in the payments amount the tuncaws given us by the Nawab, and being willing likewise to get the moneys in the account brought by the Rajahs immediately to Hugley without being sent to Muxabad, we appointed Nundkumar on the 19th August Tasildar on behalf of the Company, he being recommended by the Select Committee as a person greatly attached to the English, and very capable of the employ we had appointed him to. His business is to call upon the Rajahs for the payments conformable to the Kistybands they have signed to, and when any considerable sum is received from them, to pay it into the Treasury; and in order to give him greater weight and influence with the Rajahs and Zemindars, we have procured a Perwanna from the Nawab empowering him to settle with the Rajahs, &c., for the amount of their tuncaws to the Company. We hope this method will have a good effect, and be a means of collecting in the money from those people without trouble and disputes.”

1 Long’s Selections from Unpublished Records, N. 9, 318.
All this confidence and reputation were lost in no time. Nabob Kassim Ali Khan in the course of a letter\(^1\), dated the 24th February 1761, writes:

"I have before wrote your Excellency concerning the contents of the letters I had intercepted of Nunkumar's, that he had carried on a correspondence with our enemies; that I had made him prisoner and was examining his papers. On an examination thereof, I find that he corresponded with the Shahzadah's people, Coingar Khan and Sree Bhut; Nunkumar has also endeavoured to detriment the affairs of your Sarkar and the Company's. He is therefore undoubtedly culpable, and had it been of such a nature as to come under the tenor of our laws, he would not have escaped unpunished."

Official evidence of Nuncomar's oppressions at Hooghly and his malversation as Tasildar is to be found in a letter\(^2\) from the Governor to the Nabob, dated October 29th, 1763. Nuncomar contrived to increase his influence very largely, but though he managed all the affairs of the Khalasa nothing was properly settled even up to the end of 1763, and the collections were poor. This appears from a letter of Raja Doolub Ram's, received on the 10th January 1764.\(^{3}\)

That letter also sets forth a list of the offices which were formerly annexed to the Nizamut and which were now separated from it and held by Nuncomar. These were (1) Huzzoore Novesy (office for taking copies of Sumnuds, &c.), Darogaship of the private Treasury and Jagheers Mustofygurry (office for examining the accounts of dismissed Officers); (2) Accounts of the Province of Patna; (3) Accounts of Poornea; (4) Accounts of the Chuckla of Bhagulpore; (5) Mushrefee of the Dewankhana; (6) Munshi-Khana; (7) Accounts of the Jagheers.

Three months later, the Governor in a letter\(^4\) to the Nabob, dated the 17th April 1764, bitterly complains of the

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\(^1\) Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 553.
\(^3\) Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 710.
\(^4\) Long's *Unpublished Records*, Art. 786.
maladministration of the provinces and attributes it to the "influence and direction" of Nuncomar. He goes on:

"These are strong instances of his misconduct and negligence, but what gives us still greater reason to be dissatisfied with him is, that from advices lately received from Major Carnac, we have too much reason to suspect he has been carrying on a secret correspondence with the enemy and counteracting every measure we have been taking for the support of your Government.

The Court of Directors expressed its opinion of Nuncomar in the following terms in a letter dated the 22nd February 1764:

"From the whole of your proceedings with respect to Nuncomar, there seems to be no doubt of his endeavouring by forgery and false accusations to ruin Ram Chunder, that he has been guilty of carrying on correspondence with the Country Powers hurtful to the Company's interests, and instrumental in conveying letters between the Shahzada and the French Governor-General of Pondicherry, in short, it appears he is of that wicked and turbulent disposition that no harmony can subsist in a society where he has the opportunity of interfering, we therefore most readily concur with you that Nuncomar is a person improper to be trusted with his liberty in our settlements, and capable of doing mischief if he is permitted to go out of the province either to the northward or towards the Deccan, and we shall therefore depend upon your keeping such a watch over all his actions as may be the means of preventing his disturbing the quiet of the public or injuring individuals for the future."

Great light is thrown on one chapter of Nuncomar's history by Mr. Wheeler in his Memorandum of the Records in the Foreign Department. He gives the following analysis of the Proceedings, secret and separate, from the 27th April 1761 to the 27th September 1762.

"The volume of Proceedings on the early forgeries of Nuncomar is a curious record connected with the administration of Mr. Vansittart, and is important on two grounds: first, as illustrative of the secret intriguing, real or imagined, which was carried on between the Hindoo chiefs in the service of the Nawab and the military commanders in the army of Shah Alum; and secondly, as indicating the origin of the

1 Long's Unpublished Records, Art. 133.
long-nourished hatred of Nundcomar against Warren Hastings, which did not find full expression until many years afterwards. It has already been pointed out that the policy by which the Nawab Ali-Verdy Khan had been enabled to retain his Nawabship free from rebellion was that of reserving all important posts for Hindoos alone, to the exclusion of the Mussulmans. His successor, Surajadowlah, did not exactly reverse this policy, but he offended and insulted both parties, and was, consequently, ousted by a union of both parties. Meer Jassir, and his successor, Meer Cossun, both attempted to recruit their respective treasuries at the expense of the wealthiest individuals amongst the Hindoos. It was under such circumstances, and whilst the English and Meer Cossun were still at war with the 'King' Shah Alum, that some extraordinary letters were discovered on the person of a lurkara, which seemed to imply that Raja Doolub Ram and another of the Setts, named Ram Churn, were carrying on a treasonous correspondence with one of the military commanders in the camp of Shah Alum. . . . From the proceedings of Government in this matter it may be gathered that for a long time Mr. Vansittart and his Council were divided upon the subject until about a year afterwards, when Mr. Warren Hastings was appointed Member of Council. Strangely enough, as it now appears, one of Mr. Hastings’ first acts after his arrival in Calcutta was to investigate the case; and his enquiries led to the discovery that the Native correspondence was a forgery in which the notorious Nundcomar was deeply implicated. The object of Nundcomar in forging these letters was apparently to ruin those influential personages in the eyes of the English, probably to get rid of parties who appeared to him to be standing in the way of his advancement, and possibly to afford an excuse to Meer Cossun for plundering their private property. How this unprincipled intriguer sought to revenge himself many years afterwards by bringing charges of corruption against Warren Hastings, and how in the end he was himself convicted and executed for a repetition of the same crime of forgery, are matters of general history. It is evident from these and other notices of Nundcomar that he was a thorough villain. In the Secret Proceedings for 1767 (see paragraph 14) a charge is recorded against him of endeavouring to ruin a rival named Nobkissen by inducing a married Brahmin woman to bring a false accusation against Nobkissen of having violated her."

No one will suspect Clive of any malice towards Nundcomar. He was at one time Clive’s favourite and protegé. It
was on Clive's recommendation, as has already been stated, that he was appointed Collector of three districts. But Nuneomar had only to be known to be hated. In 1765 Clive had seen enough of him to make him change his opinion completely. When General Carnac asked for Nuneomar the post of Naib Subah, Clive answered that "although Nandkumar may not prove guilty of the crimes laid to his charge, yet, believe me, my dear General, he will do no honour either to the Nawab or to the Company in any great or eminent post, which he was never fitted or designed for; and I can give you unanswerable reasons against his being the principal person about the Nawab when I have the pleasure of seeing you."

On the death of Mu Jafar, Mahomed Reza Khan had been appointed Naib Subah by the Calcutta Council. Clive on his arrival in Calcutta felt himself called upon either to confirm that appointment or to appoint somebody else. He had grave objections to Nuneomar, but he had little confidence in Reza Khan also. To General Carnac he wrote that the fact of his being a Mussulman, acute, and clever, are reasons of themselves, if there were no others, against trusting that man with too much power, and yet the young man [the Nawab Nazim] must have about him men capable of directing and governing him; for, besides his youth, he is really very simple, and always receives his impressions from those last about him. It is really shocking to see what a set of miserable and mean wretches Nandkumar has placed about him, men that the other day were horse-keepers."

Having to make a choice of evils Clive confirmed Reza Khan in his appointment as Naib Subah, but associated with him Maharaja Doolub Ram and the wealthy banker, Jagat Sett.

When in 1772 Warren Hastings was appointed by the Court of Directors to preside in their Council at Bengal, he found that Mahomed Reza Khan as Naib Subah was the head of the native administration of Bengal, and Shitab Roy, also
as Naib Subah, was the head of the native administration of Behar. The former was ordinarily resident at Murshidabad, the latter at Patna. Nuncomar had in the meantime made complaints to the Court of Directors against the administration of Reza Khan. The first task imposed upon Warren Hastings when he took his seat as President of the Council on the 28th April 1772, was to inform the Board that in consequence of orders received from the Secret Committee “he has sent instructions to Mr. Middleton to arrest the persons of Mahomed Reza Cawn and Raja Amrit Sing, his Dewans, and to send them under a guard to Calcutta; that he has received advice from Mr. Middleton, that the same has accordingly been put in execution.” The Court of Directors had written to Hastings that if the assistance and information of Nuncomar should be serviceable to him in investigating the conduct of Reza Khan, he should yield him such encouragements and reward as his trouble and the extent of his services might deserve. Hastings had no difficulty in giving effect to these directions as he was himself convinced that Nuncomar could give valuable assistance in investigating the conduct of Reza Khan. On the deposition of that official he proposed that Mummy Begum, the widow of Mir Jaffir, should be made Superintendent of the Nawab’s household and guardian of his person, and that Raja Gooroo Dass, the son of Nuncomar, should assist her as Dewan. In a letter to the Court of Directors he wrote:

“There is no doubt that Nuncomar is capable of affording me great services by his information and advice; but it is on his abilities, and on the activity of his ambition and hatred to Mahomed Reza Cawn that I depend for investigating the conduct of the latter and, by eradicating his influence, for confirming the authority which you have assumed in the administration of the affairs of this country. The reward which has been assigned him will put it fully in his power to answer those expectations, and will be an encouragement to him to exert all his abilities for the accomplishment of them. Had I not been guarded by the caution which you have been pleased to enjoin on me, yet my own knowledge of the character of Nuncomar would
have restrained me from yielding him any trust or anything which could prove detrimental to the Company's interests.

In making the arrangement Hastings was guided, it will be seen, not by generosity, but by prudence. He had known Nundercoomar too long and too well to have any confidence in him. What Clive had discovered late he had discovered early. As he wrote to the Directors:

"From the year 1759 to the time when I left Bengal in 1764 I was engaged in a continual opposition to the interests and designs of that man, because I judged him to be adverse to the welfare of my employers, and in the course of this contention I received sufficient indications of his ill-will to have made me an irreconcilable enemy if I could suffer my passions to supersede the duty which I owe to the Company.

The evidence is only too clear that Hastings... not allow his passions to supersede his duty or even to over-ride his judgment or his sense of justice. In a well-known minute he recorded an opinion of Nundercoomar than which nothing could be fairer. Without taking it upon himself to vindicate the moral character of Nundercoomar, he... thinks it but justice to make a distinction between the violation of a trust and an offence committed against our Government by a man who owed it no allegiance, not was indebted to it for protection, but on the contrary was the actual servant and minister of a master whose interest naturally suggested that kind of policy which sought by foreign aid and the diminution of the powers of the Company to raise his own consequence and to re-establish his authority."

The Court of Directors appreciated Hastings' wisdom and self-restraint, and wrote to him:

"Your choice of the Begum for guardian to the Nawab we entirely approve—the use you intend making of Nundercoomar is very proper, and it afforded us great satisfaction to find that you could at once determine to suppress all personal resentment when the public welfare seemed to clash with your private sentiments relative to Nundercoomar."

Nundercoomar must have done his best to secure evidence against the administrator whose place he wanted to fill, but
after a protracted trial both Mahomed Reza Khan and Raja Shiṭab Roy were acquitted of the charges brought against them. Great was Nuncomar's disappointment when the offices of those grandees were abolished. The effect of this stroke of Hastings' policy on Nuncomar's mind cannot be better described than in the words of Macaulay:

"Nuncomar had proposed to destroy the Mussalmān administration, and to rise on its ruin. Both his malice and his cupidity had been disappointed. Hastings had made him a tool, had used him for the purpose of accomplishing the transfer of the Government from Moorsheedabad to Calcutta, from native to European hands. The rival, the enemy, so long envied, so implacably persecuted, had been dismissed unhurt. The situation so long and ardently desired had been abolished. It was natural that the Governor should be from that time an object of the most intense hatred to the vindictive Brahmin. As yet, however, it was necessary to suppress such feelings. The time was coming when that long animosity was to end in a desperate and deadly struggle."

That Nuncomar's sole end was personal aggrandisement, that he wanted to rise on the ruin of the Mahomedan administration, is evidenced also by the proceedings, already quoted, of the Select Committee of the 19th July 1765. Hastings had now given a crushing blow to his long cherished ambition, but, as events showed, he had only scotched the snake.
CHAPTER VII.
NUNCOMAR: His Trial.

The appointment to which Nuncomar aspired, and of which he was baulked, was one which Nubkissen could have had for the asking. The document which follows, throws light on the circumstances which led to the appointment of Mahomed Reza Khan.

AT A SELECT COMMITTEE HELD THE 19th September 1765.

AT FORT WILLIAM.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LORD CLIVE, President.

JOHN CARNAC, Esq.

HARRY VERENST, Esq.

It appears that though Mahomed Reza Khan is a very able gentleman, yet we do not very much approve his appointment to the post of Naeb Nazim of Bengal. This gentleman has a very large amount of passive goodness. But we want that the Naeb Nazim should be a very active man, who would most willingly lend us valuable assistance in the improvement of our most lawful trade.

There is no other man so well fitted for the post as Babu Ram Hari Chatterjee, at present Dewan of our Kasim Bazar Factory. But some wicked people, at the instigation of Maharajah Nun Coomar, have sent us a petition objecting to Ram Hari's appointment to this most responsible post. The ground of their objection is that Ram Hari is not a descendant of an aristocratic family, and that his father was in the service of Moonshee Nabakissen as a cook at a monthly pay of one rupee eight annas.

We would have tried our best not to believe this false story. But unfortunately Nabakissen himself told me that Ram Hari's father was his cook on a salary of one Rupee only. Nabakissen is certainly to blame for unconsciously corroborating a false story, concocted by men belonging to Nun Coomar's party.

We are therefore compelled to approve and confirm the appointment of Mahomed Reza Khan.

An appointment to which a son of Nubkissen's cook was held eligible was one which Nubkissen might not only have

1 Quoted in the Bengali book on Maharajah Sunda Coomar by Chandi Charan Sen, page 226.
obtained if he had cared for it, but which he had practically at his disposal. Any nominee of his could have obtained it. He had no ambition, however, to fill appointments of that kind. Mere emoluments were no attraction to him. His interests were political, and mere civil offices, however high, were not to his taste, at any rate after he had proved his political capacity and made his mark in political life. Nuncomar's ambition was wholly different. He was ever thirsting for high civil employment, for mere self-aggrandizement and not service of the state was his end. Great indeed were his indignation and disappointment when the office of Naib Subah was abolished. He planned vengeance against Warren Hastings, and a favourable opportunity arose when by the arrival of the members of the newly appointed Council, the power and importance of Hastings were reduced. The Council came "armed with the most uncompromising spirit of hostility towards the Government of the Company, and towards Hastings in particular." Almost immediately after their arrival they "wrested the government out of the hands of Hastings." Nuncomar took advantage of the situation. His attempt to humiliate and if possible crush Hastings has been to Macaulay a text for a sweeping condemnation not merely of Bengalee, but of Indian and even Asiatic character. His judgment is worth noting:

"The natives soon found this out [that is, that the higher powers of government and its most valuable patronage had been taken from Warren Hastings]. They considered him as a fallen man, and they acted after their kind. Some of our readers may have seen in India, a cloud of crows pecking a sick vulture to death, no bad type of what happens in that country as often as fortune deserts one who has been great and dreaded. In an instant all the sycophants who had lately been ready to lie for him, to forge for him, to pander for him, to poison for him, hasten to purchase the favour of his victorious enemies by accusing him. An Indian Government has only to let it be understood that it wishes a particular man to be ruined, and in twenty-four hours it will be furnished with
grave charges, supported by depositions so full and circumstantial, that any person unacquainted with Asian mendacity would regard it as decisive....Hastings was now regarded as helpless. The power to make or mar the fortune of every man in Bengal had passed, as it seemed, into the hands of the new councillors. Immediately charges against the Governor-General began to pour in.

This is neither just as opinion nor correct as history. It is a generalisation from a single instance and is at best a gross exaggeration of a defect in some types of Indian character. In the next place it does not appear that any charges poured in against the Governor-General. Indeed no one, certainly no Bengalee except Nuncomar, appears to have brought any charge against Hastings. It is Nuncomar alone that Bengalees must thank for such certificates as Macaulay has thought fit to give them about their national character, and the only way in which they can vindicate themselves and uphold their honour is by disowning the notorious Nuncomar, that is by disclaiming all sympathy with him. No Bengalee approached him in cunning or criminality, and none was so ready to be a crow pecking a sick vulture to death.

The accusation which Nuncomar brought against Hastings was formulated in a letter addressed to the Governor and Council and laid before the Board on the 11th March, 1775, by Francis, into whose hands it had been delivered. It was partly in the nature of an insinuation and partly direct. Nuncomar related his connection with the Company and recounted what he considered to be his services, one of which was that he assisted Hastings in prosecuting Mahomed Reza Khan and Shitab Roy. Then the accusation begins. Mahomed Reza Khan offered 10 lakhs to Hastings and 2 lakhs to Nuncomar, and Shitab Roy offered 1 lakh to Hastings and one lakh to Nuncomar. These offers Nuncomar, in all honesty and with a noble disinterestedness, reported to Hastings, who not wishing that there should be a witness to his corruption, refused them. But soon after Hastings set Mahomed Reza
Khan at liberty and entirely dropt the enquiry into his embezzlements and malpractices. "Why this extraordinary favour was so suddenly shown, the Governor can best assign the reasons." Shitab Roy was reinstated in office. "Motives of these proceedings will best be understood from Mr. Hastings himself." The ingenuous Nuncomar could not imagine why his prosecution should break down unless the person conducting the inquiry had received an illegal gratification. He was apparently not prepared to say that he had offered convincing evidence against the men he had prosecuted, but he made the quiet assumption or suggestion that bribery alone could account for the result. The direct charge comes next. At various times in the year 1772 Hastings had received the sum of three lakhs and fifty-four thousand rupees from Nuncomar and Munny Begum for procuring Raja Gooroo Dass's appointment to the Niaubut and causing Munny Begum to be made the superior of the family.

The letter containing the accusation had been received by Francis in his home in the course of a visit of Nuncomar's. He professed to have not read it before he laid it before the Board. At a meeting of the Board on the 13th March 1775 another letter from Nuncomar was received and read, in which he offered to appear before the Board to give his evidence, oral and documentary. Hastings's enemies in Council, Francis, Monson and Clavering, seemed to revel in the opportunity thus offered of humiliating Hastings. They desired to summon Nuncomar before the Council to give evidence. Hastings recorded a Minute in which he protested against the procedure as being unconstitutional and inconsistent with his position. It is not necessary here to refer in detail to the various passages at arms between Hastings and his opponents in Council, and it is enough only to state the conclusion. Hastings declared the Council dissolved and protested against acts of the Council during his absence as illegal and unwarranted. He then quitted the Council. Barwell also withdrew from the
Board. General Clavering took the chair. Nuncomar was called in and asked to offer his evidence. A careful analysis of the evidence is given by Sir James Stephen in his work "Nuncomar and Impey." That writer acknowledged to have been one of the greatest authorities on Criminal Law and the Law of Evidence, has expressed the opinion that the evidence was grossly inadequate to support the charges. The Board, however, came to the conclusion "that the several sums of money specified in Maharaja Nuncomar's letter of the 8th March have been received by the Governor-General, and that the said sums of money do of right belong to the East India Company." It was resolved "that the Governor-General be requested to pay into the Company's treasury the amount of those sums for the Company's use." In accordance with the orders of the Board the papers and proceedings were delivered to the Company's Attorney so that he might obtain counsel's opinion as to the means of recovering the sums of money which Hastings had been declared liable to pay into the Company's treasury. The law officers of the Company in Bengal did not advise any prosecution in India, but they advised the Board to send the records to the Company who might take such legal steps as they might be advised. The subsequent history of the proceedings cannot be better described than in the words of Lord Thurlow: "These documents arrived at a time when it certainly was the anxious wish of the Minister to take any fair and reasonable ground he could for the removal of Mr. Hastings. The papers were all submitted to the law officers of the Company, who declared that the information of Nundeoomar, even upon the ex parte case before them, could not possibly be true. The reasons for that belief were assigned at length. The Directors, though a majority of them were very well disposed to oblige the Minister, concurred with their law officers, and all that rubbish and trash remained unnoticed from 1776 to the year 1789, when, as your Lordships know, it was repeatedly
mentioned to you by the managers as containing proofs of the corruption of Mr. Hastings, and it was very properly rejected by the Court. It was never pretended by the managers that they had evidence to go a step beyond this rejected information of Nundoomar."

Nuncomar next comes into notice as one of the accused in a charge of conspiracy against Hastings and Barwell. One Camalud-din made a complaint to Hastings to the effect that he had been forced by Nuncomar and Mr. Fowke to sign a petition stating that he had bribed Hastings and Barwell. He was referred to the Chief Justice, and the Judges, who exercised the functions of justices of the peace, held an inquiry. There was no prima facie case against Francis Fowke, who was discharged. Hastings, Barwell and Vansittart were asked if they intended to prosecute Joseph Fowke, Nuncomar and Radha Churn for conspiracy. They declared their intention to prosecute. At the session, Nuncomar and Fowke were convicted on the charge of conspiracy against Barwell alone. Fowke was fined fifty rupees. No sentence was passed on Nuncomar, because he was in jail awaiting the extreme penalty of the law for his memorable conviction on a charge of forgery.

If it is necessary to refer to the trial for forgery, it is because Nubkissen gave evidence in it. The popular notion with regard to that trial has, for a long time, been that it was a vindictive prosecution abetted, if not started, by Hastings, and that Impey, acting as his tool, convicted Nuncomar, or rather secured his conviction by the unfair admission and rejection of evidence and by misdirections to the jury. It is necessary to remember, however, that the prosecution arose out of a civil case which had been instituted in the Diwani Adalut or Civil Court of Calcutta about two years before Sir Elijah Impey and the other Judges of the Supreme Court arrived in Calcutta; that when criminal proceedings were first instituted the complaint was enquired into by two Judges of the
Supreme Court (not including Impey) acting as justices of the peace before the case was committed to the sessions presided over by Sir Elijah Impey; and the trial was held not only before him, but before him and the other Judges of the Supreme Court.

The facts of the case are briefly as follows. The civil suit just referred to had been instituted against Nuncomar by Gungabissen, the executor of Bollakey Doss, a banker. It had in fact been instituted earlier in the Judicial Cutcherry and was transferred to the Dewani Adalut on its establishment in 1772. A sum of over a lakh and a quarter was claimed as “due to the estate for Company’s bonds.” Nuncomar denied the claim, alleging that after adjustment of accounts, there was a small balance in his favour. The account set up had been signed by the plaintiff and his attorney, Mohun Pershad, but they denied that it was an account with Nuncomar. In the course of the defence, Nuncomar set up three bonds alleged to have been executed in his favour by Bollakey Doss, upon the strength of which Nuncomar claimed to retain the Company’s bonds. The court recommended arbitration for several reasons. Nuncomar at first raised a difficulty, but afterwards consented. The parties, however, could not agree about arbitrators, and whilst matters were in this suspense, the Supreme Court of Judicature arrived in Bengal (October 19, 1774). The plaintiff, who believed the bonds to be fictitious, was advised by his client to institute a criminal prosecution for forgery against Nuncomar, now that a competent and independent Court was available. No proceedings could be instituted, however, before the plaintiff could get access to the original papers which were not obtained till after many applications had been made from time to time. On the 6th of May 1775 Nuncomar was brought before Le Maistre and Hyde and was committed to the common gaol to be tried on a charge of feloniously uttering a forged writing obligatory with intent to
defraud the executors of Bollakey Doss. Those Judges in a letter to the Court of Directors, August 2, 1775, say:

"When the charge of the forgery was exhibited against the Maharajha Nuncomar, Mr. Justice Le Maistre happened to be the sitting magistrate. He requested the assistance of Mr. Justice Hyde, who attended with him the whole day upon the examination, which lasted from nine in the morning till near ten at night; when, no doubt of his guilt remaining in the heart of either of us, upon the evidence on the part of the Crown, a commitment in the usual form was made out."

"The importance of these details," says Sir J. F. Stephen, "lies in the fact that they show that whatever connection Hastings and Impey, or either of them, may have had with the prosecution of Nuncomar, it originated in the usual way. There had been a litigation of long standing, in which an imputation of forgery had been cast upon Nuncomar. His antagonist decided to prosecute him criminally, and tried to do so many months before the Supreme Court was established, but was unable at that time to get the necessary materials. When the Supreme Court was established these efforts were renewed, and succeeded; and as soon as the forged document was obtained, Nuncomar was brought before the magistrates and committed for trial in the ordinary course."

The purposes of this book do not require a more elaborate statement of the facts of the case. The most complete and the most searching and systematic account of the case and of all facts connected with it is to be found in Sir J. F. Stephen's work, to which it is impossible for any writer on this chapter of Indian History to avoid incurring a very large obligation. There is no occasion here to discuss the merits of the case or the impartiality of the tribunal. It is sufficient to consider the evidence given by Nabkissen,
RAJA BAHADUR RAJENDRO NARAIANA DEB.
A. It is not necessary. [Translate of a bond exhibit A read.]

The prisoner desired he might ask Rajah Nobkissen a question.

Court.—Let him consult his Counsel before he ask the question.

[The question being overheard by Nobkissen, he said, “Maha Raja Nundocomar had better not ask me that question.” Upon which Nundocomar declined asking the question.]

Court to Jury.—You must receive no prejudice from this; you must forget the conversation, and judge only by the evidence at the bar.

[The Jury said they would only judge by the evidence.]

Q. How long did you know before his death?
A. I believe, three or four years, when Lord Clive was Governor.

Q. What was Bollakey Doss’s business?
A. He was not then in any business in Calcutta.

Q. Was you intimate with him?
A. I was very well acquainted with him.

Q. What was his general character?
A. A very honest man.

Q. Did you know Pudmohon Doss?
A. I did.

Q. Do you know anything of Bollakey Doss’s circumstances?
A. He was reckoned a monied man.

Q. Are you acquainted with Bollakey Doss’s manner of executing bonds?
A.—I know nothing about it.

Again: ¹ Rajah Nobkissen.

Q.—Did you know Sillabut?
A.—Yes; he was a Vakeel and Munshy of Bollakey Doss.

Q.—Are you acquainted with his handwriting?
A.—I am; I have seen him write many times.

[Bond shewn him.]

Q.—Is this the handwriting of Sillabut?
A.—The words “Sillabut, Vakeel of Bollakey Doss,” are not of his handwriting; it is not his common writing: I have seen several papers of his handwriting.

Q.—Can you take upon you to swear it is not his handwriting?
A.—Sillabut wrote several letters to me and Lord Clive, and has wrote several things before me: this is not the kind of writing I have seen him write; but God knows whether it is his handwriting or not.

Q.—What is your opinion about it?
A.—The prisoner is a Brahmin; I am a Coit; it may hurt my religion; it is not a trifling matter; the life of a Brahmin is at stake.
Q.—Do you, or do you not, think this the handwriting of Sillabut? Remember, you are upon your oath, to tell the truth, and the whole truth.
A.—I cannot tell what is upon my mind on this occasion about it.
Q.—Why not?
A.—This concerns the life of a Brahmin. I don't chose to say what is in my mind about it.
Q.—Did Sillabut write a better, or worse, hand than this?
A.—The letters on this paper are well formed—those of Sillabut are not badly formed, but are not so good as these.
The papers are shown him which were shewn to the former witness, for the purpose of selecting those which were the handwriting of Sillabut: he immediately fixes on the three papers before proved to be the handwriting of Sillabut.
Witness. These three are the handwriting of Sillabut: I can find no other papers of his writing among these.
Q.—Did you ever see these papers before?
A.—Never in my life: I never was in such a cause: I would rather lose a great sum of money than be in such a cause.

That is all the evidence that Nubkissen gave in the case, and it might have been left to speak for itself if it had not been very much misunderstood and misrepresented. Sir Elijah Impey in his charge to the jury refers to it in the following terms:

"Rajah Nubkissen, on the paper being shewn him, swore positively, that it was not the handwriting of Sillabut; but afterwards retracted the positiveness of his opinion: but the circumstance of his immediate fixing on the three papers, which were before proved to be of Sillabut's writing, is a stronger proof of the knowledge of his handwriting, than any positive oath. I must again caution you against receiving any impression unfavourable to the prisoner, from the hesitation and doubts or exclamations of this witness, or from any other circumstances except what he actually deposed to."

This is an acknowledgment that, in spite of his hesitation, doubts and exclamations, the evidence given by Nubkissen was absolutely true, judged by a very practical test. There
was no attempt at cross-examining him. Sir James Stephen’s comment on his evidence is: “Both the reluctance and the obvious conviction with which he spoke are very remarkable.”

In another passage that writer has occasion to refer to Nubkissen’s “reluctance to give evidence on Nuncomar’s trial.”

The reluctance is capable of being understood in two ways, either as an artful means of expressing the very thing which it appeared to suppress, or as a genuine unwillingness to say a thing which would endanger a Brahmin’s life. Rules of charity and common sense alike tell us to presume an honorable purpose in preference to a perverse one where both are equally possible. Apart from all principles of presumption, however, there are certain facts to be borne in mind in connection with Nubkissen’s evidence. The truth of it is indisputable. His hesitation cannot therefore be regarded as the prevarication of a perverse witness who conceals his ignorance of a fact by answers that simulate knowledge, who in spite of his ignorance is bent on ruining a prisoner by mere suggestions of guilt, but who dares not make positive affirmations for fear of exposing his mendacity. Nubkissen showed that he really did know Sillabut’s handwriting, and was satisfied in his own mind that the signature shown to him on the bond was not in Sillabut’s handwriting. No cross-examination could have discredited his evidence. If he still hesitated, it is clear that it was a bona-fide hesitation. It can never be pretended that he knew nothing of the matter on which he was called upon to give evidence, or that he knew the reverse of what he chose to say, and that out of spite against the prisoner or to help the prosecution, he, by his hesitation, merely put on a knowing aspect. What he did know was against the prisoner, and there was nothing to prevent his saying it outright, saying it with

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1Nuncomar and Impey. Vol. I, p. 120.
eagerness, and saying it with emphasis, exaggeration and ornament, if his purpose was to help the prosecution and damage the defence. The hesitation was displayed in a Court of Law and not in a drawing-room. Nubkissen was giving evidence and not coquetting with a friend. Why then was he so modest, so sweetly reluctant, so importunate not to be pressed? Obviously he was indulging in no affectation, but was sincerely unwilling to bear evidence against a Brahmin whom he always regarded with kindly feelings and whose life was now at stake.

The trial commenced on the 8th of June and lasted for seven consecutive days. The jury returned a unanimous verdict of guilty.

A motion in arrest of judgment was made by the prisoner's counsel, Mr. Farrer, and rejected. The Court pronounced the sentence of death. A petition for leave to appeal was rejected. A petition to the Judges, to which the signatures of the Jury were sought to be obtained, praying for a respite, had to be abandoned, because only one juryman consented to sign it. Nuncomar prepared a petition to be presented to the Governor-General in Council. Before submitting it he wrote a letter to Francis earnestly soliciting his intervention. In the course of the letter he wrote:

"All my hopes under God Almighty is in you, therefore most humbly entreat, in the name of God, you will be pleased to intercede for me and procure a respite till His Most Gracious Majesty's pleasure is known...... As I entirely rely on Your Worship's endeavour to do me all the good you can, I shall not, according to the opinion of the Hindoos, accuse you in the day of judgment of neglecting to assist me in the extremity I am now in......"

Sir James Stephen reprints the letter, dated the 31st July, 1775, from Merivale's Life of Francis. Francis acted as Macaulay's Bengalee would have done. As Sir J. Stephen remarks:

"There is an ominous tone in the concluding words which must at least have given Francis an uneasy twinge in after life, when he
thought, if he ever did think, that earnestly and unsuccessfully as he had laboured for years to wreak his deadly malice on Hastings and Impey, he had left Nuncomar to die when he could have saved him with a word, and was as false and treacherous to his friend as he was persistent in his malignity against his enemies."

The prayer of Nuncomar's petition to the Governor-General was "'to intercede with the Judges on your petitioner's behalf for a respite on such conditions as might be thought proper." Hastings suggested that the Council should endorse the petition to the Court. General Clavering and Colonel Monson opposed the idea, and the matter was dropped. This contemptuous rejection by the majority of the Council, of Nuncomar's petition to them, forms the subject of some strong but well-deserved remarks by Sir James Stephen: "On the 1st of August 1775," writes he, "they had it in their power to save Nuncomar's life by simply voting in their capacity of a majority of the Council, to send to the judges, in the name of the Governor-General and Council, the letter which Farrer had drawn.....If at that time they really did believe that he was an innocent man, on the point of being judicially murdered, they made themselves, by their conduct, accomplices in the murder which they believed to be in the course of being committed."

Clavering, Monson and Francis were cruelly indifferent. The petition was not sent on to the Judges; no respite was granted; and on the 5th of August 1775 Nuncomar was hanged. The extreme severity of the sentence has made Nuncomar, and will probably continue to make him, an object of general sympathy. It is impossible not to agree with Macaulay. A sentence falling short of the capital would have commanded universal approval, for not only was there no doubt of Nuncomar's guilt in the case in which he was convicted, but no man could be in worse repute than he was as to his general character and behaviour. It would seem that in spite of this severity of the sentence, the conviction was
regarded with approval by various classes of people. In the course of July four addresses were presented to the Judges approving of their conduct. The first was addressed by the grand jury to Impey personally; the second was also addressed to Impey personally by Europeans calling themselves "the free merchants, free mariners, and other inhabitants of the town of Calcutta;" the third was signed by forty-three Armenians and addressed to all the Judges; and the fourth was signed by about a hundred leading natives of Calcutta and the neighbourhood, headed by Maharaja Nubkissen. The last address states that the King of England has formed a new law; that their "hearts were filled with various doubts concerning the manner in which the new law would operate, but by the manner in which it had been administered these doubts had been removed, and confidence and joy sprang up in our hearts, and we are thoroughly convinced that the country will prosper, the bad be punished and the good be cherished." It was not the influence of the Court which elicited this address of the native citizens, for it was over-shadowed by the influence of the Council. The address rather gave strength to a Court lacking influence. With reference to it Impey wrote:

"The address from the Hindoos I thought no ingenuity could divert from proving the sense of the natives in this town, but it seems it is signed by black banyans. Every gentleman who has been in Calcutta will inform your lordship that there is scarcely one Hindoo in the settlement except the banyans of General Clavering, Colonel Monson and Mr. Francis, and one named Cossinault, who has not subscribed to that paper. Cossinault was one of the first that proposed the address; he had afterwards a dispute with the Governor-General and Council about some allowance on account of a farm as will appear on the records of the Council, and declined signing the address."

It would thus appear that public opinion, European as well as native, was expressed in an unmistakable way in the nature of a vote of confidence in the Court. It is very likely that the masses of the Hindoo population were especially shocked by the hanging of a conspicuously Brahmín, but
it seems to be clear that all citizens, in whom the sense of legal justice prevailed over other sentiments and who had intelligently followed the course of the trial, loyally accepted a result which, if lamentable, the law rendered inevitable.

Thus closed a career to which the scaffold has been a real elevation. If Nuncomar is an object of sympathy to any class of men, it is because he was hanged. And scarcely has a criminal been more fortunate. He brought charges against Mahomed Reza Khan, and though that officer had to be acquitted because the charges were proved to be false, suspicious men looked upon the result as proof positive of the corruption of Hastings. He brought charges of corruption against Hastings, but though the evidence in support of them was of the feeblest, and competent judges to-day look upon them as wholly unfounded, Hastings has been presumed to have, with a natural malice, instigated and secretly managed the prosecution of his antagonist and accuser. The Chief Justice of the Court which tried him has been roundly charged with unfairness on mere suspicion for no other reason than that he was a friend of Hastings. Nuncomar with indiscriminate spite threw mud at many, and something of it has stuck to each. For himself he posed as an injured innocent, and the mere emphasis and persistency of his protestations have in the eyes of a good many invested his stories with an air of truthfulness. 'When, however, he is judged as he was, and not as he or his sentimental champions have made him out to be, he cannot but come to be recognised as a monumental villain, compared to whom Cethegus was a simple citizen and Titus Oates, a man of honour.
CHAPTER VIII.

LAST DAYS OF PUBLIC LIFE - SEZAWUSHIR.

Nubkissen had long been in possession of the Talook of Huchapur (written also Etchapur, Itchapur or Hitchapur). On the 4th of January 1774, the President laid before the Board 243 gold coins which were delivered to him by Nubkissen as a Royalty, having been found in that talook. It was ordered that they should be delivered to the Treasury of the Khalsa, reserving such as had the fairest impression to be sent home to the Court of Directors as they seemed to be very ancient and curious.

In the same year Nubkissen offered Rs. 500 for the farm of the Soubah Bazar to be continued to him in perpetuity. He solicited the usual sanad. Its potam in the previous year was Rs. 250. The bazar's contiguity to the Raja's dwelling house made him desirous of the grant, but it had been the custom to let the bazars of Calcutta for one year only at the commencement of each year. The Raja's proposal for farming the Soubah Bazar in perpetuity was accepted. Next year one Raghu Nath Mitter wanted to establish a rival bazar on his own ground adjoining Soubah Bazar. Nubkissen made a complaint. Raghu Nath Mitter's attempt was foiled. He had obtained no sanad from the President, and it was contrary as well to the general regulations as to the custom of the country that a bazar, hat, or ganj should be established without such a sanad. Nubkissen's petition and the orders passed thereon are inserted below.

Extract of the Proceedings at a Committee of Revenue held at Fort William, the 7th December 1775.

Read the following Azeez from Nabokishen:

I beg leave to represent that Raghu Nath Mitter being evil disposed towards me wants to run Soubah Bazar and to establish a new bazar on his own ground adjoining to the other. I have been farmer for a long time and am possessed of a sanad in perpetuity. If
you will please to take the matter into consideration, you will find nothing but viciousness and erroneous conduct in Rugoo Mitre. Some time ago Ram Behary Seet whose land is near the bazar applied to the Superintendent of the Calza for leave to establish a bazar on his own ground. It was not granted to him. The then Superintendent is now in Calcutta. There are many persons possessed of ground hereabouts. Should Rogonat succeed, all these persons will on the same principle apply. I therefore request that you will reprove Rugoo Mitre and order him to lay aside his project.

The President's information thereon:

Nubkissen Maharajah made to me a regular complaint against Rugoo Mitre, before he preferred it to the Board, my interference alone having been found insufficient. On the receipt of it, knowing the erection of a bazar was contrary to the established custom of the country until a sannad should first be obtained from Government to authorise it, I sent for Ragoo Mitre and enquired the truth of the circumstance which he confirming and promising to destroy it if I thought proper to direct it, I gave him a verbal order to put it down immediately; as he did not comply with this, Nubkissen preferred to the Board this representation.

Sentiments of the Committee.

It is particularly forbid by the General Regulations, and is contrary to the custom of the country that any person shall establish bazars, hauts, or gunjes without sannads from the President, and it seems from the vicinity of the situations of the Sobah Bazar and Rugoo Mitre's house that no bazar can be established there without prejudice to the grant lately made by the Government to Nubkissen.

Agreed therefore that Rugoo Mitre be obliged to enter into a Machalaca to destroy the bazar he has erected and desist from such undertaking for the future, and ordered he or his vakeel do attend at the next meeting.

Extract from the Proceedings at a Committee of Revenue, held at Fort William, the 8th January 1776.

The vakeel of Rugoo Metre attends the Committee, being asked, if he has any sannad for establishing a bazar, replied he has not; he is then made acquainted with the Committee's Resolution of the 7th ultimo and directed to give a Machalaka that he will not establish a bazar without previously obtaining a sannad from Government.

In 1777 a question arose as to the precise limits and contents of the village or mahal granted to the Raja. In the
sanad, it is worthy of note, Nubkissen is described as ‘the high and powerful Maharaja Nobkissen Bahadur.’ In a petition, which was considered in December 1777, Nubkissen stated that he had not been put in possession of Ram Bazar, Soubah Bazar, Charles Bazar, Raje Bazar and the sayer of Baug Bazar. An inquiry was made and it was found that the land-rents of Ram Bazar, Soubah Bazar, Charles Bazar, and Raje Bazar were included in the mahal of Sootanutt. It was decided, however, that the jumma of Ram Bazar and Raje Bazar was to be deducted from the malguzarry to be paid by Raja Nubkissen as those grants were still held by Cossinuat | Kashi Nath | and Rauje Bullub | Raj Bullubh | respectively. The following are the original papers:

Ordered that the Resolution be also transmitted to the Khalsa with orders to the Superintendent to conform to it.

At a Council (Revenue Department), December 16th, 1777.

Ordered that the Secretary do apply to the Secretary to the Calcutta Committee to know whether the Annildary Perwannah has been delivered to Condop Dass for the furn of part of the Hulgelee Districts, if Rajah Nobkissen has been put in possession of the lands ordered him by the Board, and if he has received the Annildary Perwannah. In case the Perwannah have not been delivered to Condop Dass and Rajah Nobkissen, that he will immediately order them to be drawn out, so that they may be laid before the Board before they break up.

At a Council (Revenue Department), December 19th, 1777.

Read the following Petition from Rajah Nobkissen, delivered in by the Governor-General, together with a Note from the President of the Calcutta Committee.

Translation of a Petition from Rajah Nobkissen.

The Council having been graciously pleased to approve of my request, the gentlemen of the Committee yesterday (the 17th day of December) granted me an order of possession under English signatures and the seal of the Company, Ram Bazar, Soubah Bazar, Charles Bazar, Raje Bazar, which have from of old been under Sootalutty and yield a revenue of about two thousand rupees, as also the sayer of Baug Bazar, which is at present desolate and pays no jumma, have not, however, been included in the above order; and I have to pray therefore that orders may be given to the Committee to put me in possession of these mahals agreeable to the terms of my request.
Last Days of Public Life—Sezawulship.

Note from Mr. Holme.

To the Hon'ble Warren Hastings, Esq.,

Governor-General.

Hon'ble Sir,

Upon inquiry I find that the land rents of Ram Bazar, Soobah Bazar, Charles Bazar, and Raje Bazar (being a gunge granted to Rajah Rauje Bullub) are included under the Mahal of Sootanooty.

Annual Revenue:

Rs.
500 ... Soobah Bazar, held by sunnad to Nobkissen.
700 ... Ram Bazar, do. do. Cossinault.
850 (1184) ... Charles Bazar, farmed out annually by the Company.
150 ... Raje Bazar, held by sunnad to Rauje Bullub.

I understand from Nobkissen that he wants to have the fixed rents of the three bazars held by sunnad as above to be paid to him, the sunnads to continue as heretofore. Also that the jumma of Charles Bazar should be comprised in his grant.

I am, with respect, etc.,

(Signed) J. Holme.

19th December 1777.

Agreed that the Calcutta Committee of Revenue be written to as follows:—

To Mr. John Holme, President, &c., Provincial Council of Revenue at Calcutta.

Gentlemen,

As we understand that Ram Bazar and Raje Bazar are included in the mahal of Sootanooty, lately granted to Rajah Nobkissen, we direct that you deduct the amount of their jumma from the malgazarry to be paid by Rajah Nobkissen, as these grants must still be held by Rajah Rauje Bullub and Cossinault, who have sunnads for them, and who must pay the rent of them direct to Government.

We are, etc.

Fort William,
The 19th December 1777.

In the list of amilnamas laid before the Committee on the 23rd October 1777, by the President, Nobkissen is described as Zemindar of Hunchapore. And in a list of perwanas to the talookdars of the Zilla Calcutta, laid before the Committee
on 24th October 1777, Nubkissen is mentioned as talookdar of village Mahinderpore.

In 1778 there were fresh attempts to set up a rival hāt in Sootanutty. They were made by an influential gentleman, Madan Dutt, and a comparatively insignificant person, Jugmohun Sooree, but these attempts also failed. The original papers in this case are rather long and they may be left to speak for themselves.

Petition

6th November 1778

To the Honourable Warren Hastings, Esq.,
Governor-General, &c., Members of the Honourable the Supreme Council of Fort William

The Humble Petition of Rajah
Nabo Krishna, Calcutta Inhabitant

Most Humbly Sheweth

That in the Village of Sootabutty Hauto and Bazaar there was formerly a Moorish Idgah (a place where the Moormen in general, inhabitants of this settlement, used to go to worship every year) one Madan Dutt of Calcutta by some means or other possessed himself of the said Idgah without having obtained any pattahs from the Collector's office for that place or paying any attention to the Laws of Mahomed. The said Madan Dutt with a view to his own emoluments have erected on this spot of ground a new bazaar without authority which bazaar greatly injured the rents of your Petitioner's bazaar and hauto of Sootanlooy. Your Petitioner finding himself thus injured complained to the Calcutta Committee, who were pleased to order an ammun and four peons with a parwannah to destroy the said new bazaar. But the said Madan Dutt and his people paid no attention either to the parwannah or the ammun and peons but beat and drove them away. Since which he the said Madan Dutt established on the same spot a new bazaar which greatly prejudiced the Malguzarry of Sootanlooty hauto and bazaar, the rents of which formerly amounted to the sum of 3,350 rupees as will appear by the Collector's books:

Also the Subah Bazaar in the Districts at Sootanlooty belong to the Talookdary of your petitioner; your Petitioner having had the Subah Bazaar sunded from the Government granted him a long time
ago in perpetuity. Now one Juggomohan Sooree, finding Madan Dutt had taken such steps of erecting bazar and hauts of his own with impunity, raised a body of sepoys with firelocks and bayonets and by force of arms erected a bazar in the main road, which is also under your petitioner’s talook and in his golah barry by which your Petitioner is greatly prejudiced and sustains heavy losses.

Your Petitioner has heard that it has been represented to the Council by the bazar people that he has made uncustomary collections from them. This is utterly void of truth, as will appear from the cabooliets of the people to whom he rented the tobacco and betel leaf mahals, and if on enquiry it should appear that he has received anything beyond what has been usually paid for the three years prior to the date of his grant, your Petitioner is ready to forfeit three times the value agreeably to the tenor of his sunnud. The shop-keepers and bazar people are poor ignorant men who know not how to write, and the petition given in their names is well known to have been fabricated by Madan Dutt from motives of enmity to your Petitioner, thereby hoping to avail himself of necessary time for enquiry into this circumstance to establish his own bazar and hauts. The bazar people and shop-keepers request permission to erect a new haut and bazar; this has never hitherto been permitted to the prejudice of the established ones. If they were dissatisfied with coming to your Petitioner’s bazar, they ought to go to other established bazars, in which case your Petitioner could make no objection.

Your Petitioner therefore now humbly requests that the Hon’ble Board will be pleased to depute an ammin to the said old haut and bazar of Sootanlooty to examine the shop-keepers and bazar peoples on oath, when should it be found that he has over collected anything he is willing to repay it three times. Your Petitioner further requests that people on the part of Government may be sent to destroy the bazar and hauts newly erected by Madan Dutt and Juggomohan Sooree as likewise that Negabans may be stationed to prevent the re-establishment of this bazar and hauts, as also to prevent any further disputes.

And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray, &c.

P.S.—The gentlemen of the Committee having on a former occasion defined and assisted the rights of Government, it may not be improper to annex to my representation, the formal decree on which the prayer of my Petition is grounded to shew the equity of such prayer and that I am warranted in making it by the usage of the country repeatedly and formally declared by Government.
PROCEEDINGS.

TO MR. JOHN EVELYN,
Acting President, &c., Members of the Calcutta Committee of Revenue.

GENTLEMEN,

Enclosed we transmit you the copy of a petition which has been presented to us in behalf of Rajah Nobkissen.

We desire you will refer to our former orders on this subject, and we recommend it to you, if you have not already decided upon that reference, to summon Madan Dutt to show cause why you shall not proceed to the abolition of the bazars erected by him, and if he can produce no authority for them, they must be abolished.

We are, &c.,
(Sd.) Warren Hastings.
(Sd.) P. Francis.
(Sd.) Edw. Wheeler.

Fort William,
The 6th November 1778.

To Mr. Edward Golding,
President, &c., Provincial Council for the Division of Calcutta.

GENTLEMEN,

We have received your letter of the 16th ultimo, accompanying your proceedings on the subject of the complaints of Rajah Nobkissen against Madan Dutt.

We have in consequence resolved to abolish the bazar erected by Madan Dutt and we have issued our instructions for this purpose to the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records.

We are, &c.,
(Sd.) Warren Hastings.
(Sd.) Ru D. Barwell.
(Sd.) P. Francis.
(Sd.) Edwd. Wheeler.

Fort William,
The 8th January 1779.

Mr. Vansittart's Minute on the Bazar is somewhat tediously long, but it contains many points of general and historic interest and may, therefore, be inserted.
MR. VANSITTART'S MINUTE.

As the dispute between Rajah Nobkissen and Moden Dutt has not only long employed the attention of the Committee, but also engaged the notice of the Board who have issued to us repeated orders on the subject, I think we shall best discharge our duty and fulfill their expectations by presenting it in every point of view and discussing the various objects, which are contained in its compass, for it is not a concern which affects only two individuals, but involves public and political questions, which greatly interest and merit the consideration of Government. It is our duty to explain and the province of a superior power to judge, assisted by such information as we may be able to supply.

I shall record my opinion, previously to the general resolution of the Committee, that it may be more compact and full than any which I could possibly blend with the sentiments of the other members, however unanimous we might be.

In order to make the subject entire, I must unite the two points on which we have received the orders of the Board. The first is, Rajah Nobkissen's complaint against Moden Dutt for erecting a bazar in Sootanatee without the sanction of Government, and by this unauthorized proceeding injuring a public bazar which he (Rajah Nobkissen) holds in its vicinity by virtue of a sumnah. The second is the complaint of the tahbeezaries or backsters of Calcutta against Rajah Nobkissen for exacting more than the authorized duties and by his oppressions necessitating them to quit his talook.

With respect to the first complaint Moden Dutt has denied that he has erected a bazar, alleging that the test of a bazar is the collection of duties and making the weights and scales, neither of which he has ever practised, but has taken ground rent.

To deny the right of Government to establish public bazars, is to deprive it of part of the resources which qualify it to perform the functions of supremacy by controlling and protecting its subjects and providing for the exigencies of the State. To deny the exclusive privilege of public bazars, is to frustrate this right of Government and to commit injustice towards the talookdar or farmers to whom the faith of Government is pledged and who is promoting in a subordinate capacity the public good. To erect a private bazar is not only to create all the evils stated in the foregoing proposition, but to destroy the pre-eminence of Government and to assume the powers which it delegates to others.
RAJAH LAHADUR HARENDRA KRISHNA.
If such be the right of Government and, if the force of it be so strong, as to be felt by the individual who is now accused of having erected a private bazar, shall any person be suffered to invade it by indirect methods and by subtle reasoning? However, I will examine the arguments which have been produced. The first is that Moden Dutt has only taken ground rent.

A spot of ground, before almost, if not entirely, uninhabited, becomes on a sudden a public mart, and is crowded with those very persons who used to resort to the public bazar held by Rajah Nubkissen. The market days are observed, and Rajah Nubkissen's bazar and haunts of Sootanpoor have been desolated.

This is incontrovertible evidence that Moden Dutt's bazar is used instead of Rajah Nubkissen's, that it is frequented by the same persons, and that it has been so effectually appropriated to the same purposes as to render the other useless.

However, I shall consider the distinction pointed out by Moden Dutt that he has only received rent, or, in other words, I will endeavour to mark the limits which divide the natures of dwelling houses and markets. I think it may be admitted that the tenant of a dwelling house may set up a shop in it and maintain himself by his sales. I would admit also that three or four or more dwelling houses of this kind might be collected together and would not be taken notice of. But should an individual step forth, and encourage the tenants of public bazars to relinquish the protection of Government and place themselves under his patronage; should he assign them ground and exempting them from duties, charge them with house rents which will be proportionably enhanced, as the bazar flourishes, will the Government tamely suffer such an injury, alarming in its immediate consequences and more dangerous in its future?

There are various kinds of markets in this town, a bazar is one, which is open every day, and a haut is frequented on particular days. There are two kinds of shop-keepers in the bazars. The moodies who keep a shop in the houses, in which they reside, and the tahbuzaries who expose their goods on stalls or in temporary shops in the day time and return to their own houses in the evening; the utmost indulgence, to which an individual can have any pretentions, is to let his ground to moodies, who are his tenants in the same manner as any other persons who may inhabit his houses. However, Government may certainly restrain such shop-keepers, should they increase to the great a number and injure the revenue, particularly if they have
one general landlord and patron, as no individual has a right to convert to his own use, or to suppress the duties which appertain to Government. But the tahbuzarries are to be regarded in a very different light. They come to a spot of ground appropriated to the use of a market and with no other intention than to vend their articles which are usually of a perishable nature and must be sold within the day, such as fish, greens, &c.

The public bazars are so necessary that they claim the care of Government. They should not be left to chance or to the pleasure of individuals, but Government should provide them and place them under proper regulation. The case, nay the very existence of the people, depends upon them, as they circulate the conveniences and necessaries of life throughout the country.

I wish that the customs of bazars had been more fully explained in the answer, which has been delivered by the canongoes. We are, however, informed that the duties are at first fixed and cannot be altered afterwards. But I presume, although it is not expressed, that the rule for fixing them is the custom of the spot, which varies in every part of the provinces.

The tahbuzarries relate some circumstances peculiar to Calcutta, which do not apply to bazars in other places, such as the establishment of the Custom House, the appointment of Negabunns, &c.

A nation gradually establishing their influence, and exercising authority under various forms, may have created changes, I may say some confusion in the principal seat of their residence by blending customs and acting at different times from different principles, our records give us no insight into the Regulations of the Custom House, nor are they of any importance. We are to look to the present system of letting the bazars to farm which commenced from the last change, and established duties, if none were collected before. The bazars have yielded a revenue to Government and the duties have formed the assets which have enabled the farmers to fulfill their engagements. The duties are now a customary branch of the revenue, and the collection of them is authorized by the practice in all other parts of the country, as well as by the increase of population and wealth which so amply supplies Calcutta with the means of paying them.

A market is a place where authority must be exercised to regulate the weights and scales, to preserve order, and to afford protection to the persons who frequent it; can such authority exist independently of the Government? Moden Dutt argues that the assemblage of
shops in his ground is not a bazar, because there are no officers of the
market, and because no mark is affixed to the weights and scales.
But it is not a plain inference from these premises that a market
ought not to be entrusted to an individual who cannot station in it the
officers necessary to regulate and control it.

A talookdar is dependant upon the Government which can fix
or reduce the duties, but can the Government fix or reduce the rent
which an individual is to receive from his own tenants? The truth
of the assertion of the Vakeel of the Moden Dutt cannot be denied,
that a person has a right to let his ground for the most he can.
What then will ensue from the toleration of such bazars? The pub-
lic bazars will be desolated and their revenue entirely lost, the
inhabitants, who have been used to depend upon them for provi-
sions, will be left at the mercy of individuals, who are proprietors of
ground. What disturbances will arise between landholders who will
mutually oppose each other and sometimes use force to support their
respective bazars? The evil will be still greater if a powerful man
should acquire an extensive influence, or a number of men should
combine to enrich themselves by oppressing their fellow-subjects,
an income might grow from the spoils of the abolished duties of
Government, under the name of rent to an amount considerably
above the duties. The shop-keepers can have no remedy except
from changing their situation and private influence or combinations
might deprive them of that.

I cannot avoid taking notice of an alteration in the second peti-
tion of the dokandars. In the first they style themselves tahbazaries
and say they have been used to sell divers articles in several bazars in
Calcutta and to return home on the evening with the proceeds. In the
second petition they style themselves dokandars; and in the petition,
which they delivered to the Board, shop-keepers. I am inclined to think
this change was suggested to them, as it agrees with the means which
have been made use of to prove that the shop-keepers in Madan Dutt's
ground are residents and not tahbazaries.

Another argument adduced by the dokandars is, that there are
many private bazars. The interposition of Government therefore is
the more necessary to suppress the evil in the present instance, as the
abolition of all other private bazars will follow, whenever the talook-
dars or farmers who suffer by them shall lodge complaints.

An argument lately adduced by Moden Dutt is, that some mer-
chants who reside in the bazars have settled some shop-keepers under
Amboah, and to propose some means of liquidating the same, also directing us to enquire and report to you who had charge and management of the collections of Amboah during the period of Rajah Nobkissen's secur...ship.

In reply to your directions respecting who had the charge and management of the collections of Amboah during the period of Rajah Nobkissen's secur...ship, we must observe that we are wholly ignorant to what period the said secur...ship extended, but we have learnt from an examination of Kissenram Metre [?--Mitter] that he, Kissenram Metre, has had the entire management of the collections at Amboah from the commencement of the Bengal year 1183, when Nobkissen became secur...y, to the present time; that by order of the late Ranny of Amboah, until the time of her death, which happened on the 20th Augus...1184, he remitted the amount of the collections, excepting the Ranny's expenses, to Rajah Nobkissen in Calcutta, and after her death and by order of the present Ranny of Burdwan, he remitted the collections in the same manner during the remainder of the year 1184; and that, during the whole late year 1185, he remitted the whole of the collections to the Ranny of Burdwan; and he avows himself solely a servant of the two Rannys."

Nobkissen in consequence of his ability and special experience of the affairs of Burdwan was appointed to the Sezawulshhip and control of the revenues of that district in 1780. The old Rani of Amboah died in 1777. The lady, who was Rani on the occasion of Nobkissen's appointment as Sezawul, and who was mother of the infant Raja, put every obstacle in Nobkissen's way, and stringent measures had to be taken to enforce her obedience to orders, as the following paper will show:--

4th August 1780.

The Board taking into consideration the petition of Raja Nobkissen and the report of the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records thereupon--

Resolve, that whereas Rajah Nobkissen was furnished with a perwannah from Government to the Rajah and Ranny of Burdwan, directing them to act in concert with him as Sezawul for the year 1187, in farming the settlement of the current year, making the collections, &c., her refusal to proceed to Burdwan, her not permitting Nobkissen to see the Rajah, and her sending for the zemindary officers from
Burdwan to Bansbariah, are acts of direct disobedience and contumacy, and highly detrimental to the authority of Government.

That the delay which is occasioned by this disobedience in holding the Mofusil Pooneah and making the collections and remittances of the revenue, is not only attended with great present inconvenience to Government by retarding the payment of such part of the public revenue as has become due, but may eventually be the cause of actual loss to Government.

That it is highly incumbent on the Board, not only to take effectual measures to prevent the above consequences, but to support their authority in the present instance.

Agreed therefore that the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records be directed to proceed immediately to Bansbariah, and that the Sezawul do accompany him thither. That he read again to the Ranny of Burdwan the perwannah appointing the Sezawul, and require her immediate return to Burdwan with the Rajah and zemindary officers, and that she give an assurance that she will punctually obey the Board's orders contained in the perwannah relating to the appointment of the Sezawul.

That in case of her refusal to comply with these orders, or shewing any tendency to evade them, the Superintendent do then peremptorily insist on seeing the Rajah of Burdwan, and acquaint him that the Board have thought proper on account of the contumacy shewn by the Ranny, his mother, and her refusal to yield to obedience to their orders, to divest her of all authority and control in the management of his zemindary.

That he is required by the Governor-General and Council to proceed to Burdwan to take upon himself the charge and management of the zemindary and to make the collection of the revenues in conjunction with the Sezawul of Government, and in the manner pointed out in his perwannah, and to appoint proper officers to conduct the business of his zemindary in his own name and independent of the Ranny.

That the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records proceed with all possible expedition with the Rajah to Burdwan, and on his arrival there, proclaim the Rajah's authority over the province, require him to appoint proper officers for the management of the business of the zemindary, to hold the Mofusil Pooneah, and make the collection in conjunction with the Sezawul.

That the Superintendent be empowered to call on the Commanding Officer at Chandernagore for the assistance of an officer with two
or three companies of sepoys, if he judges it necessary, to attend
the Rajah to Burdwan, as well to prevent any insidious attempts on
his person in the way thither, as to announce his return and the
authority vested in him with greater dignity to the inhabitants of
the province.

That the necessary orders be given to the Commanding Officer at
Chandernagore in consequence of the preceding resolution.

Nubkissen's administration during the first year of his
office was remarkably successful. He managed the collection
of the revenues so well that he paid the demands of
Government in advance without any trouble or embarrass-
ment to the Board. It was, therefore, determined that he
should continue in the office of Sezawul for the next year.
On this occasion also his powers were defined and
enlarged and steps taken to help him in the due discharge
of his duties. The following document bears testimony to
his services and throws light on the situation of affairs at
Burdwan at that time.

26th January, 1781.

Read again the Superintendent of the Khalsa's letter under
date 26th of August last, entered in consultation the 12th of Sep-
tember.

The Board taking into consideration the subject of the above
petition of Rajah Nobkissen are of opinion that the Rhanee has
acted very improperly in taking away the Rajah, farmers, or public
servants at this season of the year, and during the heavy collections,
without the smallest intimation given to Government or permission
received from them.

That the absence of the Rajah and public officers at this time
from the Sudder Cutcherry of the district may not only contribute
to prejudice the collection, but to spread an unnecessary alarm
amongst the inhabitants of the district, and induce them to leave
their habitations and neglect the culture of the lands for the future
year.

That at the present crisis, when Bengal itself may become the
seat of troubles, and when this Government will have occasion for
all their resources, it behoves them to take special care of the
revenues of so valuable a province as Burdwan, amounting to near
40 lacks of rupees, and that the continuing the management to the
Rhance, a woman, and maintenance of her influence in the district during the present crisis is impolitical and improper.

That it is the opinion of this Board that, in order to preserve the tranquility of the Burdwan Province to prevent the operation of any intrigues on the part of the Rhance and her adherents, she be required to reside at Amboa in the same manner as the mother of the former Rajah used to do until the further orders of the Board, but that the Rajah and public officers be directed to return to Burdwan immediately.

That as the Rhance has on many occasions shown her backwardness to comply with the orders of the Board, and may in the present instance endeavour to evade them by returning to Burdwan, that the Nazir or Naib Nazir of the Khalsa be directed to proceed to Amboa, and place proper chokey of peons round her house with strict directions not to suffer the Rhance to return to Burdwan, nor any covered dooly or conveyance to pass without then being properly satisfied that the Rhance is not in it, but not to enter her house or otherwise molest her, than by preventing her return to Burdwan till they have orders from the Board, and that the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records do furnish the Nazir or Naib Nazir with a proper Warrant for executing this order by the sanction of the Board.

That as Rajah Nobkissen appears to have managed the collection of the revenues of this zamindary with so much success during the past year, and has paid the demands of Government in advance without the smallest trouble or embarrassment to the Board, he be continued in the office of Sezawul during the ensuing year, and directed to proceed with the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records to Burdwan immediately to take the most effectual measures under his control for securing such part of the revenues of the current year as may remain outstanding and for promoting the cultivation of the district, and enabling the Rajah and zamindary to afford a competent aid to Government in the following year.

That as it appears from the letter of the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records that an improper use has been made by Ram Gaunt and others of their influence with the Rhance, and that the property of the Rajah has been wasted and dissipated during his minority which is a fact of most public notoriety.

That Rajah Nobkissen be vested with authority to examine into the present state and accounts of the Rajah's household under the control of the Superintendent as above, and to use his endeavours
to discover and bring to account any property or effects of the Rajah which may have been secreted or embezzled by Ram Caunt or others of the Rhanee’s officers during her management, and that if the Superintendent shall from the information he may receive have reason to think that Ram Caunt or any other persons employed by the Rhanee have embezzled or secreted any of the Rajah’s property, that he shall be empowered, and is hereby directed by this Board for the security and recovery of the said property to take the persons suspected as above into custody and to set guards over their houses, or any other places, where the Superintendent may believe such property to be concealed in order to prevent its being conveyed away or misapplied.

That for the purpose of carrying the above orders and resolutions into execution, the Superintendent of the Khalsa Records be directed to proceed as soon as he conveniently can with Rajah Nobkissen to Amboa, and notify them to the Rajah and Rhanee, and that he from thence conduct the Rajah and such farmers, or public officers as may be at that place to Burdwan, and that any of the farmers or officers refusing to attend him thither, be forthwith dispossessed of their farms or offices. That on his arrival at Burdwan he publicly notify the discontinuance of the Rhanee’s authority in all matters relating to the management of the zemindary collection of the revenues, or the Rajah’s household.

That the Superintendent form an estimate of the necessary expenses for the maintenance of the Rajah’s household with the assistance of Rajah Nobkissen, and transmit the same to the Board for their approbation.

That the Superintendent do continue to reside at Burdwan till the further orders of the Board, and be directed to give every aid and support in his power to the Sezawal to enable him to comply with the foregoing resolutions of the Board.

Nobkissen applied himself with a will to his new duties and exhibited rare powers of industry and financial administration. Mr. G. G. Ducarel, Commissioner at Burdwan, wrote to say that the Sezawal had since his arrival been taken up in making the mofussil settlement. The following papers give some evidence of the kind of work he did: --

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, 5th June, 1781.

Read the following translation of a letter from Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawal of Burdwan:—

“In consequence of an order from the Supreme Council, I have
discovered from the accounts upwards of 18 lakhs of rupees was the Mohasil or profit of Burdwan, &c., in the years 1485 and 1486, exclusive of the Ranny's dowry money borrowed from Maharajahs and the expense of despatching the Government's revenue. Six lakhs of rupees are fully sufficient for the expenses of Maharajah Demaje Tej Chund Bahadur; the Ranny, and Ram Cauut, are answerable for the remainder.

Ordered that a copy of the above letter be transmitted to Mr Ducarel at Burdwan, that the Sezawul be required to bring before him the profits [proofs] and vouchers of the amounts thereto alluded to, that Mr. Ducarel be directed to enter into a minute investigation of them and examine the evidences upon oath which the Sezawul shall produce in support of his charges, and to grant him such assistance as he may require for apprehending the persons of his evidences.

Council. Revenue Department, 26th June, 1781

Letter (20th June) from Mr Ducarel, Commissioner at Burdwan.

"I have been honoured with your letter of the 5th instant enclosing a petition from Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawul of Burdwan, and shall be particularly attentive to the execution of your commands contained therein. The Sezawul and Zamundarry Amlah have since their arrival at this place been entirely taken up in making the mofussil settlement, which has prevented their attending me for the purpose of proceeding on the investigation directed.

In order to enable me to afford the Sezawul the assistance directed in your letter in apprehending the persons of this evidence, I beg leave to represent that it is necessary Captain Long should be furnished with authority to supply Sepoys on my written requisition in the customary form."

[This letter (dated 20th June) was circulated on 22nd June, and at the meeting of Council on 26th June the Board agreed that the order required by the Commissioner should be immediately issued to the Commanding Officer at that station] (Burdwan).

Council. Revenue Department, 5th July, 1781

Letter (4th July) from Mr Ducarel

"In conformity to your letter of the 5th June ultimo, Rajah Nobkissen, Sezawul of this province, has brought before me the following persons, servants and officers of the Rajah of Burdwan's household as evidences in support of the charges contained in his petition delivered to your Board."

Budden Chunâd Mojumdar, Carkon,
Sumboo Churn Ghose, Mohrir of the Dewan Dufter,
Kišhencaunt Doss, Mohrir of the Treasury,
Ramjoy Burrall, Jumma Khurch Nuvree of the Cansamany,
Juggut Bullûb Roy Mitter, Cansamany Seristadar,
Juggut Narain Mitter, Naib of the Cansamany,
from whom I have received the accounts, receipts, and disbursements
of the Zemindary of Burdwan for the two years of the Ranny’s
management, viz., 1185 and 1186, the original of which in the
Bengalee language, together with their respective translations, I
have now the honour to lay before the Board. The purport of the
said accounts together with the order in which they are arranged
will appear from the Abstract II.

Agreeable to your directions contained in the above mentioned
letter, I have examined the evidences which the Sezawul has pro-
duced in support of his charges upon oath, who have attested the
accounts in the manner which will appear at the foot of each
respectively."

The Board, taking into consideration the above report of the
Commissioner at Burdwan, and accounts accompanying it, find that
the sum of 11,19,570-1-14 Sicca rupees appear due from the Ranny
to the Rajah for the period of her management.

Resolved that the Sezawul be directed to attach the profits of
the Dowry, and hold them sequestered in satisfaction of this demand.

Resolved that the Commissioner in conjunction with the Sezawul
do proceed in the business directed by his former commission, and
give the Rajah and his officers every assistance required by them in
recovering the amount of the above balance from those persons who
may appear to have embezzled it.

Nubkissen for his consistent support of English interests is
highly unpopular with a certain class. Their hero is Nuncomar;
their authority is Bolts, an English Thersites in the early
days of English supremacy in the East. They are eager to
grasp at every bit of scandal that the tongue or pen of a
malicious imagination may have invented about Nubkissen.
It has been said or suggested by some of this class that
Nubkissen as Sezawul of Burdwan was guilty of much
oppression and many malpractices. There does not seem,
however, to be a record of any. In March, 1781, it appears there was a complaint against him of false imprisonment. The person imprisoned was one Gocul Chunder Chowdhry; and on his behalf his Gomastah, Abhai Churn Ghose, instituted proceedings by an affidavit on the Crown side of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal. The complaint was false, and therefore it proved as abortive as the complaints of Gocul Sonar and Rammut. Gocul Chunder Chowdhry had indeed been imprisoned by the Maharaja, but upon a just cause and in the exercise of his legal rights as Sezawul. To leave no doubt as to the facts and the history of the case the following original papers are inserted in full:

COUNCIL, LAW DEPARTMENT, March 23rd, 1781

AFFIDAVIT. In the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, Crown Side

The King vs. Rajah Nobkissen

Abhai Churn Ghose, Cash keeper and Gomastah for Gocul Chunder Chowdry, the plaintiff above named, maketh oath and saith

That from the fourth day of Phalgun last past (answering nearly to the 12th day of February last) until the 11th day of the said month of Phalgun, he, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, was confined against his will and consent in a dwelling house of Rajah Nobkissen in the chulkha of Bardwan in the Province of Bengal, and from the said 11th day of Phalgun until the fourth day of Choite (which answer to the 14th day of March instant), and which is the last day this deponent saw the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, he, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, has been kept a prisoner and still is kept a prisoner, as this deponent believes, in his own house by the order of the said Rajah Nobkissen without any legal authority or warrant for that purpose obtained by the said Rajah Nobkissen as this deponent is informed and believes, but merely to compel the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry to pay to him a large sum of money as rent for certain lands which he, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry, holds under the Rajah of Bardwan and under the Ranny (mother of the said Rajah), and which rent this deponent or cash-keeper and gomastah for the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry has already paid to the said Rajah and Ranny, to whom the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry is bound to pay it, and this deponent saith that the said Rajah Nobkissen is Sezawul
or Collector of Revenue in the service of the United Company of merchants of England trading to the East India for the chuchlah or district of Burdwan aforesaid and therefore is subject to the Jurisdiction of this Hon'ble Court as this deponent is advised and believes.

Sworn before me this 20th day of March 1781.

J. Hyde.

Writ.

Crown Side.—On reading the within affidavit I do order that a writ of Habeas Corpus in the usual form do issue from the Office of the Clerk of the Crown directed to the within named Rajah Nobkissen commanding him to bring up the body of G. C. C. confined in his custody (unlawfully as it is said), together with day and cause of taking and detaining the said G. C. C. immediately before me or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Judge at Fort William in Bengal or any other Justice of the same Court at the Court House in Calcutta at Fort William aforesaid. Dated this 20th day of March 1781.

(Signed) J. Hyde.

[Mr. George Wroughton, Attorney for the Hon'ble Company, writes (March 21st) to the Secretary to the Board of Revenue, Mr. Isaac Baugh, enclosing the above papers and asking instructions.

He says:—“At the same time inform them (the Board) that I have enquired of Rajah Nobkissen, to whom the Habeas Corpus is directed, the reason of prisoner’s confinement, from whom I learn that he is the farmer of the purgunahs of Bhant Ghauzee, Badepoorca and Dhauzy in the District of Burdwan, and that he is imprisoned for a balance of revenue due to the Hon’ble Company on account of the aforementioned purgunahs, amounting to about the sum of 4,500 sicca-rupees.”

Ordered—(March 23rd) that the Company’s Attorney do instruct the Company’s Counsel to plead that G. C. C. is in the District of Burdwan, a farmer of the public revenue, of which Rajah Nobkissen, is in virtue of his office of Sezwul, the Collector on the part of Government, to whom the said Chowdry being now in balance, Raja Nobkissen has in consequence, by virtue of his office, and the power delegated to him by the Governor-General and Council, a right to demand payment of such balance from the said farmer, and to confine him, and to use such other means as the law and usages of this country do warrant for enforcing the recovery of it; and further, that the plaintiff having confessed the defendant is in
possession of the office of Sezawul on behalf of the Company, and he himself a farmer of the revenue, the right of the defendant to proceed with the plaintiff as he has done is thereby proved; and that the Company's Attorney do also instruct their Counsel not to enter any further than here specified into the merits of this case but to rest the issue of it upon the facts abovementioned.

The opinion delivered by the Chief Justice in the cause wherein Radha Govind Sing was plaintiff and Mr. Hosea and other defendants applying directly to the present case.

Ordered—that the following extract from it, as it already stands recorded on the Consultation of the 20th of February last, be here entered.

Extract from the speech delivered by the Chief Justice:

"I thought it was understood that the right of the Company, executed by their Provincial Council, of getting lands for bts, due to the Government, was meant to be contested in this action. The Counsel for the defendant disclaimed controverting that right, and as far as the Court can judge by what has already passed in it, it entertains no doubt whatsoever of that right. In the judgment given in the case of Camaul-ul-Dien, the final opinion of the Court was that, in matters of Revenue, by which I mean the settling of the quantum of the debt due to Government, the Provincial Council, or those officers to whom the trust was committed, had full and complete jurisdiction, exclusive of the interference of this Court. We have given sanction to their judgments."

COUNCIL, LAW DEPARTMENT, May 22nd, 1781.

Range 166 Vol. 84.

The following letter from the Company’s Attorney to the Secretary with the return proposed to be made to the Habeas Corpus issued to Rajah Nubkissen having been sent in circulation for the orders "of the Board, the Governor-General delivered the opinion thereafter entered, to which Mr. Wheeler having subscribed, orders were signed accordingly.

GEORGE WROUGHTON,
Attorney to the Honourable Company.

TO ISAAC BAGH,
Secretary to the Board of Revenue.

DATED FORT WILLIAM,
April 6th, 1781.
"I request you will lay before the Hon'ble Board for their approval the enclosed copy of the return intended to be made to the Habeeb's Corpus issued to Rajah Nobkissen at the instance of Gocul Chunder Chowdry provided it meets with their sanction. The return has been revised and approved by Mr. Newman, Mr. Davies, and Mr. Lawrence on a meeting yesterday evening, and has since received the sanction of the Advocate-General, subject, however, to a circumstance whereon I must request you to procure me the advice and direction of the Hon'ble Board.

The return states the acts complained of to have been committed by Rajah Nobkissen in the performance of his office of Sezawul in the District of Burdwan, the duty of which office is stated on the return "to have been at and before the passing the Act of the thirteenth of George the Third to enforce payment of the revenues due to the Hon'ble Company within that district and to imprison persons owing the same without bail, &c." It has been thus formed under the idea that the office is not a new institution, and that it has been the usage in some places within the Provinces to collect the revenues by Sejawuls, and to imprison in case of non-payment, at least some short time previous to the time of passing the before-mentioned Act. The doubt which now arises is whether the nature of Rajah Nobkissen's office be as above stated, or whether extraordinary powers have not been superadded to those considered as incident to the office of Sejawul. Should the latter prove the case, the gentlemen seem to be of opinion it will be more advisable to alter the return in that respect and to state in lieu thereof that Rajah Nobkissen has confined the prisoner by virtue of his office of Sejawul, an appointment recently made by the Governor-General and Council, they having judged it an office requisite to be instituted for the better managing the territorial acquisitions and revenues entrusted to them by the before-mentioned Act."

Enclosure in Company's Attorney's Letter.

The Schedule to which the annexed writ refers.

"In obedience to the command in the annexed writ contained I do hereby humbly certify and return to the Hon'ble John Hyde, Esquire, one of His Majesty's Justices, and to other, His Majesty's Justices of the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, that in the District of Burdwan in the Province of Bengal there is a farm commonly called or known by the name of the Pergunnahs of Bhaul, Ghawzee; Bundepore, and Dhawree Mundelka, which farm now is and at the time of passing a certain Act made in the thirteenth year of the reign of His present Majesty King
George the Third, entitled "An Act for establishing certain regulations for the better management of the affairs of the East India Company as well in India as in Europe," was part and parcel of the territorial acquisitions in such Act mentioned, and the rents and profits of the said farm now are and at such time as aforesaid were parcel of the revenue of the said Province of Bengal. That at the time of passing the Act aforesaid the said farm was and still is remaining in the possession of the said United Company as part and parcel of the said territorial acquisitions and revenues and at the time when the debt hereinafter mentioned accrued due was held in farm by the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry in the annexed writ mentioned under the said United Company at a certain annual rent payable to them, the said United Company. That on the 12th day of February last, there then was and still is justly due and owing by and from the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry to the said United Company for rent and revenue in arrear of the said farms the sum of 4,520 sicca rupees, and for which he was and is imprisoned by and under the authority hereinafter mentioned. That the late President and Council and Select Committee of Fort William aforesaid in the said Act mentioned previous to and at the time of passing the same Act exercised by themselves or their officers the whole management or government of the said farm (so being part of such territorial acquisitions) and also of right exercised a power by themselves or their officers to adjust and settle the accounts of farmers indebted to the said United Company for rents and revenues in arrear and of enforcing the payment of such revenue in arrear by imprisoning such farmers so being debtors as aforesaid without bail or mainprise for non-payment thereof, and which mode of procedure at the previous to the time of passing such Act was the known usage and custom in the Province of Bengal, Behar and Orissa in the enforcing the payment of such rent and revenue.

That the accounts of the said farm having been settled and which were actually settled by the proper officers of the said United Company, the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry on such settlement, to wit, on the said 12th day of February, was found in arrear the said sum of sicca rupees 4,520, the justness of which upon such settlement allowed and confessed by the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry and the amount of the same debt acknowledged by him to be due to the said United Company, and the said sum of 4,520 sicca rupees having been afterwards, to wit, on the said 12th day of February, demanded from the said Gocul

Query: If to the Company or the Rajah.
Chunder Chowdry, and which was so demanded of and neglected by the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry to be paid. The said Gocul Chunder Chowdry on the said 12th day of February last was lawfully taken and duly imprisoned by me and now is detained by me for the same debt so due to the said United Company as aforesaid. That at and previous to the time of such imprisonment I, the said Rajah Nobkissen, was a known officer of the said United Company, appointed by and acting under the authority of the said Governor-General and Council in the place or office of Sejawul in the District of Burdwan aforesaid, the duty of which office is and at such the time aforesaid was to enforce the payment of all revenue due, owing and in arrear to the said United Company in the district aforesaid and to imprison the person owing the same without bail or mainprise, in case of non-payment thereof until the full payment of such revenue in arrear. That in the matters aforesaid, I have acted only according to the duty of my office as Sejawul for the district aforesaid and which authorizes me according to the laws and usages of the Province of Bengal to keep and detain the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry in confinement without bail until the debt aforesaid shall be discharged. But in obedience to the command in the said annexed writ contained I now have the body of the said Gocul Chunder Chowdry before His Majesty’s said Justices of the said Supreme Court of Judicature to do, receive and be subject to what His Majesty’s said Justices shall consider of him in this behalf. Given under my hand this day of March 1781.

GOVERNOR-GENERAL’S OPINION.

Governor-General:—“It does not appear for what reason the extraordinary powers given to Rajah Nobkissen, if any such have been given, in cases which have no reference to the imprisonment of a farmer of the public revenue should be inserted, since as a Sejawul he possesses the power to imprison a farmer of the public revenue. May it not be proper to insert the clause proposed for amendment in addition to that which states the regular powers of the Sejawul?”

The following further letter, having been received by the Secretary from the Company’s Attorney, was circulated on 13th April and is now recorded:—

WROUGHTON TO BAUGH.

Dated April 11th, 1781.

“I request that you will communicate to the Hon’ble Board that I have just received official information from the Attorney of Gocul
Chunder Chowdry that the matter in contest between his client and Rajah Nubkissen is adjusted, and that therefore he does not intend to call for the return to the writ of Habeas Corpus issued some time ago."

Here ends this episode. In August or September 1781, both the Rajah of Burdwan, Maharajadhiraj Tej Chund Bahadur, and Maharaja Nubkissen, the Sezawul, made complaints in writing against certain acts of Mr. Austin, Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut at Burdwan. Those acts, they alleged, were beyond his legitimate authority and they had the effect of hindering them in the collection of the revenue. The Committee of Revenue expressed an opinion on the complaints, which was accepted by the Council and which ran as follows:–

1st. -- The Committee are of opinion that such servants as have accepted assignments of the balances of rents in lieu of wages may undoubtedly demand payment of the same, and if coercion is necessary, they are to apply for assistance of the Revenue Cutcherry, and the collection to be enforced as a balance of rent, which in fact it is. It appears to the Committee that by the 8th Article of the Judicial Regulations, the Judge of the Dewanny Court has no right to interfere in these cases. The nature of the interference asserted to be made by the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut is not particularized, it appears, however, to the Committee.

2nd. — That the Aymadars of Burdwan having been subjected to the payment of rent, they are to be considered as Talookdars and subject to the same jurisdiction, as pointed out in that article of the Judicial Regulations.

3rd. — By the 14th Article of the Judicial Regulations the enquiry into the right and title to lands, as well as to the limits of the same, is within the jurisdiction of the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut without any exception. Further experience may, however, suggest the propriety of some modification in this Article. The Committee of Revenue exercise the power of resuming grants of Baza Zemin, either where they have been collusively made or granted after certain periods, and delegate the same power to Zemindars, Farmers, and other officers employed under them in the collections. The exercise of the same powers by two distinct establishments will create confusion, and interference, of jurisdiction. The Committee of Revenue will
direct the Sezawul to report to them such instances of the interference of the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut as occur, and will lay the same before the Supreme Board, who, from these instances, will be enabled to ascertain the proper rule to be laid down in such cases. In the interim it does not appear necessary to the Committee to issue any particular orders, as the vacation of the provincial Courts of Adawlut has taken place and will continue some time.

4th.—The mode of conduct prescribed to the Judge in the 31st Article of the Regulations with respect to Zemindars, Talookdars, Chowdries, and Landholders, or persons employed in the collections under what name soever immediately under the Committee of Revenue, or any Collector of the Revenues directs “that he is not to issue a summons to compel such person, being defendant in any cause, to appear, but in lieu thereof to issue a summons requiring such person, being a defendant, to appear personally, or by vakil, at a certain time.” An attention to this Regulation on the part of the Judge will remove the inconvenience complained of in this Article.

In November of the same year a fresh complaint was made by Nubkisson against further illegal interferences of Mr. Hugh Austin, and the Council, in the Revenue Department, rebuked that officer for his illegal acts. The following was their decision:—

The Zemindar by ryats, and farmers against farmers for encroachments and the like, their revenues are never realised until such disputes are settled. The officers of the Zemindarry in conjunction with those of the Sezawul determine such disputes and collect the revenues. Now Mr. Austin, paying no kind of attention to the usage of the country, opposes us, and has sent his peons to summon my brother, who is Tahsildar to Burdwan, and disgraced him in the presence of the farmers, &c. As none of the customs of the country are hidden from you, you must be sensible how much the revenues will suffer, when the Tahsildar is unable to support his consequence. I now hope that, as what has happened cannot be recalled, orders will be issued from the Council to Mr. Austin that in future he do not, by disgracing the officers, interrupt the collections, and, as the Zemindar’s vakil is always in waiting, I request he may be directed to transact what business he may have with us through him, and, in case any of our officers should act contrary to the orders of the Huzyoor, that he be directed to represent it to the Council
for their determination, by which means all disputes and disturbances in the mofussil may be prevented."

ORDERED.—That a copy of the representation from the Sezawul of Burdwan accompanying the Committee's letter of the 26th of November, be transmitted to the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut at that station and that he be directed strictly to attend to the Board's orders of the 11th of September last, and positively forbid any further interference with respect to the Tannabhdars and Pykes than what immediately relates to his Foujdarry jurisdiction.

ORDERED—Also that he be informed that, as by the 18th Article of the Judicial Regulations the Tehsildar of Burdwan is exempted from the process of the Court, as well as from being compelled to personal appearance to the hurt of his credit among the farmers, the Board highly disapprove of the summons issued to him by the Judge.

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, January 3rd, 17

Extract from the proceedings of the Committee of Revenue of the 24th December, 1781.

Petition of Tee Chund Bahadur.

"Chut[ar] Sing, the Etmaundar of Boagree, has not sent a single cowry of revenue for the last three months, but has removed with all his people into the jungles.

"A Tehsildar resides on the spot to which he is retired who has no control over him, nor does he pay any attention to my letters. He owes an immense balance to Government, which he will not liquidate. Tillook Sing, his uncle, prays he may be appointed in his place and engages to pay his revenues regularly.

"I hope you will comply with this request, and that two companies of Sepoys may be sent to put Tillook Sing in possession, and to lay hold of Chutter Sing that measures may be taken for the recovery of his arrears to Government."

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, October 23rd, 1781.

Letter from Mr. Hugh Austin, Judge of the Burdwan Dewanny Adawlut, dated September 18th, 1781, replying on the points in Articles 1, 2, and 4, in respect of Maharajah Nobkissen's complaints. It does not seem necessary to quote more than the final sentence:—

"How far the representation of the Sezawul is just, respecting my having occasioned impediments in the business of the revenue, I submit to your Hon'ble Board and request that in any future complaints that may be made against my conduct he may be directed

Later, called Chitter Sing.
to state specifically what he has to charge me with and not by a vague and general detail of circumstances, wholly unsupported, prevent me from entering into a clear justification of my conduct."

It would seem that Nubkissen as Sezawul of Burdwan was the head and the complete representative of that district. If any person required anything to be done even by the Raja of Burdwan, he would have to work through the Sezawul. In September 1781 one Gunganarain Gose [Ghose], the farmer of gunge Murshedpore, commonly called thana Cutwa, complained that the Zemindar of Burdwan had lately erected a gunge within a distance of two or three kosh from his, and prayed that a perwannah might be sent to Maharaja Nubkissen desiring him to order the Zemindar to abolish his gunge. The Council, in the Revenue Department, resolved that the following answer might be written to the Committee of Revenue: "We desire you will issue a perwannah to the Sezawul of Burdwan, requiring him to abolish the gunge erected by the Rajah contiguous to that of Gunganarain Gose, the farmer of thana Cutwa. This order we have communicated to the Commissioner of Customs."

There is abundant testimony to the success of Nubkissen as the Sezawal of Burdwan. The following is one:

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, November 27th, 1781.
Letter from the Committee of Revenue giving "an account [of the] settlement of all the districts of Bengal and Behar" for April 1781 to April 1782 in Bengal, and September 1781 to September 1782 in Behar.

"...8. Rajah Nubkissen had the charge of the collections of Burdwan when this Committee was established. The merit of his management in that capacity can only be estimated from facts. In the course of a few months he not only relieved the Zemindary from the incumbrance of an enormous debt, but discharged the revenues of Government with great punctuality. A very large portion of the surplus rents which enabled him to pay such considerable sums has been added to the public revenues as an increase this year, and he has been united in the management with the young Zemindar. He still preserves the office of Sezawul, but is at the same time responsible for
the amount of the engagements of the Zemindar. "A comparison between his conduct and that of his predecessors in the management of the business will, we imagine, point out the propriety of this mode of settlement."

COUNCIL REVENUE DEPARTMENT December 18th, 1781.

Letter from Committee of Revenue (November 26th, 1781).

"We have the honor to lay before you a representation which has been made to us by Rajah Nobkissen, the Sezawul of Burdwan, stating instances of the interference of the Judge of the Dewanny Adawlut in matters which we apprehend are not within the line of his jurisdiction."

"On the 3rd of September last we had occasion to address your Hon'ble Board on a similar representation from the Sezawul, and we hoped that the orders you then issued to the Judge of Adawlut would have prevented his making further claims to the superintendence of the lands appropriated to the maintenance of Tannahdars at Pykes in that Province, who, though they are immediately employed in collecting the revenues from the ryots and are in fact servants of the Zemindars are likewise subject to obey all orders of the Judge in pious darry matters. As we are of opinion his jurisdiction extends no further over the Tannahdars and Pykes, we request you will please to repair to Burdwan within a limited and convenient time and account for the amount of the revenues paid to them, and may contain an assurance that they shall not be confined or ill-treated upon their appearance. If one or the other should appear according to the summons, you will call upon them to pay what is due from them, in which should they fail, we shall propose to the Hon'ble Board to comply with the request of the Rajah to invest Tillook Sing in the management of the district upon his making good the present engagements. We shall also propose to them to adopt the same alternative in case neither Chutter Sing or Jadoo Sing should appear agreeable to the summons..."

There is equally good testimony in regard to his work of a later date.

Agreed that the following answer be written to the Committee of Revenue

"We approved your proceedings respecting the Etmaundar of Buggry and of the measures you propose for the security of the revenues of that District.

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, January 29th, 1782.

General account of collections of revenue, from Committee of Revenue. Mr. Shore's report on the balances of Aughun.
"Burdwan." The former of these districts is under the manage-
ment of the Sezawul, Rajah Nobkissen, the latter under Rajah Deby Sing. Both these persons have been punctual in
their payments through the whole course of the year, and there is no
reason to apprehend any failure on their parts. Rajah Nobkissen is
very forward in his payments for the month of Poos, and the pay-
ments of Dinagepore are completed for the same month."

COUNCIL, REVENUE DEPARTMENT, March 19th, 1782.
Letter from Mr. Austin, dated February 4th, 1782.
"I have had the honour to receive your letter under date the
18th of December enclosing the copy of a representation which has
been made to the Committee of Revenue by Rajah Nobkissen,
Sezawul of Burdwan, charging me with interfering with the Tannah-
dars and Pykes by requiring the papers concerning them, and sum-
moning and disgracing his brother in the eyes of all the farmers,
in consequence of which your Hon'ble Board highly disapprove of
the summons issued to him by me. In answer to these charges, I beg
leave, in justification of my conduct as well as to expose the misrep-
sentations of the Sezawul, to inform you that, in pursuance of a
letter from the Hon'ble the Governor-General under date 3rd of July,
placing all the Tannahdars and Pykes employed in the foujday
jurisdiction under my charge, I thought it necessary to request a list
of them from the Zemindar, that I might obey my orders in stationing
them so as to protect the peace of the districts, and which I have
been hitherto unable to obtain.

"I beg leave to assure you that I have never in any instance inter-
fered in the appointment, payment, or dismissal of the Tannahdars.

It is not possible to fix the date when Maharaja Nub-
kissen ceased to be Sezawul. There is evidence to show,
however, that he declined to undertake the management for
the Bengali year 1789, declaring the impossibility of realising the jumma [the assessed revenue] of the preceding year.
The office of Sezawul was apparently the last public office that
Nubkissen held. Henceforward his life appears to have been
one of ease and dignity. He had given proofs of his capacity
not only as a diplomat, but also as a statesman and an adminis-
trator, and he could afford to rest on his laurels. He gave
himself to the discharge of social functions with an undistracted
mind and soon came to prove himself a king in that sphere.