OWEN C. KAIL

The Dutch in India



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This book
is dedicated to my wife
ESME MARGARET KAIL

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CHAPTER I

The Nether or Low Lands

Holland, as it is known today, along with Belgium, once formed a part of the Low or Netherlands, called so because almost half of the country was below sea level. It was a land of marshes and bogs, separated from the North Sea by a chain of dunes. Its inhabitants lived on those dunes and on the hillier regions to the east. The rest of Holland was in constant danger of being flooded and for centuries the Netherlanders built dykes and sea walls to prevent the sea from encroaching upon their land.

The Netherlands comprised a group of autonomous duchies, counties and cities which in the eighth century were the neglected north-western limits of the Frankish king, Charlemagne. By the end of the twelfth century, they were annexed to the dukedom of Saxony. The area to the south, roughly modern Belgium, was ruled by the dukes of Burgundy. By marriage, by purchase or by war the House of Burgundy accumulated a number of duchies and counties until they were able to rule over the whole of the Netherlands.

Charles thes Rah of Burgundy died in 1477. He was succeeded by his daughter Mary who had married Maximilian of Hapsburg. Their son, known as Philip the Handsome (1482–1506), married Jeanne or Joanna, heiress of Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile, which brought Spain and her South American colonies into the Hapsburg dominions. Philip's son was crowned Charles V of Spain and Emperor of Germany, and the Netherlands passed under Spanish rule.

The Reformation, in the meanwhile had spread out from Germany, and the Lowlands adjacent to the German states were quickly affected by the Lutheran movement. The northern Netherlands had several great cities with a large and affluent middle class, sufficiently educated to appreciate the need for

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religious reform. There were, however, no independent princes to take these new beliefs under their protection; and though Protestantism continued to exist, it was only in its extreme and fanatical forms, mainly Anabaptist. It is doubtful whether these fanatics would have survived the severe persecution of Philip II, if it were not for the sudden influx of Calvinist missionaries from Geneva. Their zeal stiffened the resistance of the Protestants, especially in the northern provinces.

In 1555 Charles V abdicated in favour of his son Philip II. Persecution of religious dissenters was intensified. The office of the Holy Inquisition was established. Many escaped into hiding or exile, later to return as the Sea-Beggars.

The first revolt against Spanish oppression was crushed by the duke of Alva and the counts of Egmont and Hoorn were executed on 5 June 1568. Four years later, the Sea-Beggars captured Den Briel, which was followed by a surge of rebellion in the states of Holland and Zeeland.

In 1579, the seven northern provinces, Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Guelderland, Overijssel, Groningen and Friesland, bound themselves to unite 'to all eternity' and to act as a single state. When the crowns of Spain and Portugal were combined in the person of Philip II in the following year, the delegates of these states, the States-General, led by Prince William of Orange, the Stadtholder of Holland, Zeeland and Utrecht, renounced their allegiance to Spain. The seven United Provinces had no sovereign and hence the authority of these provinces was vested in the States-General and their principal official, the Stadtholder, who was in effect their leader.

The prince of Orange was outlawed by Philip and eventually assassinated in 1584. The duke of Parma was sent to wipe out the heretics in the Netherlands. During the siege and capture of Antwerp, a number of wealthy Calvinists migrated to the north. The Dutch sent envoys to England to seek the Protestant queen's help, offering her the sovereignty of the United Provinces. Elizabeth I, though she sympathised with the rebellious Dutch, was reluctant to become involved in open war with Philip. In 1585 the earl of Leicester was deputed to act as supreme civil and military authority in the Netherlands. Leicester, however, lacked the ability of holding the seven provinces together in their struggle against Spain. His abortive governor generalship did not

last long and in the following year the Dutch people elected Prince Maurice, the second son of Prince William, as Stadtholder of the United Provinces.

The position of the House of Orange in the northern Netherlands was unique. As Stadtholder (a term originally denoting a medieval overlord's *locum tenens*, of one or more provinces and virtual commander-in-chief of the armed forces), the prince was the servant of the provincial states and of the States-General. The princes of Orange, owing to their birth, wealth, prestige and military prowess became the focus of a monarchist sentiment among the upper classes, who hankered after a court life and a crowned head. They were also popular with the lower classes, who had more respect for a prince of the blood than for a merchant prince. Though later severe resentment was shown against these princes, the Dutch people invariably turned to the House of Orange in times of crisis and acute danger.

The States-General was an assembly of the delegates of the seven provinces. They acted entirely on the instructions they received from their respective provinces, and formulated the foreign policy of the Netherlands. It was the Dutch method to show a united front to the outside world. Any resolution which affected the Union as a whole had to be voted unanimously to be valid and no province was obliged to obey an order of the States-General if its own delegation had not given its authorised consent to it. The States-General was the only national administrative body of the Dutch Republic. It had difficulty in functioning properly when provincial interests clashed. In times of crisis or deadlock, a strong man or an influential group had to take the lead, which was usually supported by the province of Holland, the richest of the provinces, and the House of Orange. Holland, which often meant Amsterdam, usually took the lead, and exercised this leadership through its highest official, the grand pensionary or legal counsellor. When the prince of Holland and the grand pensionary cooperated, the States-General and the provincial states could be induced to follow a pre-determined policy. When there was friction it resulted in permanent jealousy between Holland and Zeeland, or between both of them and the other five provinces.

It was during the Stadtholdership of Prince Maurice when Johan van Oldenbarnevelt was grand pensionary, the maritime

trade of the Dutch expanded to the Mediterranean, West Africa and the Indian Ocean. The competing pioneer companies were amalgamated into one monopolistic corporation, and Portuguese supremacy of the Eastern Seas was openly challenged.

The southern provinces which had remained faithful to Catholicism, or rather, had been subdued by Philip II, were entrusted to his daughter Isabella and her husband Albert, Archduke of Austria.

The year 1609 saw the commencement of the Ten Years Truce between the United Provinces and Spain, but the rivalry between the Dutch and the Portuguese in the East continued unabated. Even when Catalonia and Portugal revolted from Spain in 1640, and the duke of Braganza was crowned King John IV of Portugal, the Dutch preferred not to forget the persecution they had suffered, and the damage done to their trade by the closure of the Iberian ports in 1585, 1595 and 1597. They continued to openly attack Portuguese shipping and interrupt their trade and communications at Mozambique, Goa and the Moluccas.

Spain recognised Dutch independence in 1648, which brought to an end what was known as the Eighty Years War—the revolt which had started in 1568. Francisco de Souza e Coutinho, the Portuguese ambassador at the Hague, wrote to his master that the Dutch celebrated the event by 'simply reading the articles of the Treaty in the Supreme Court of Justice at 10 o'clock in the morning of the fifth of this month (June), as at that time eighty years ago the counts of Egmont and Hoorn had been executed by the Duke of Alva in Brussels; and the States wishes their freedom to begin at the same day and time as these two gentlemen had died in defence thereof.'

The seven northern provinces had not only secured complete independence; they were also the possessors of a maritime and commercial empire which now surpassed that of the Portuguese, and rivalled that of the Spaniards. Instead of being ruled by a Hapsburg king, the free Netherlands were governed by a burgher-oligarchy, whose first servant was the wealthy and influential William II, Prince of Orange, the grandson of that hunted fugitive of 1568. The 'motley levies' whom Alva had so easily crushed 80 years ago, had been succeeded by a disciplined army;

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the navy which had not existed before was the best in the Atlantic, having destroyed the Spanish Armada on 21 October 1639. Amsterdam had replaced Antwerp as the most prosperous and influential city in Europe. Its name was known in remote parts of the world that had never heard of London, Paris and Venice. Justifiably, the bells of Amsterdam pealed with joy while fireworks, illuminations and bonfires lit up the night of 5 June 1648.

William II died two years later, and except for Groningen and Friesland, the office of Stadtholder was abolished. Johan de Witt was appointed grand pensionary and leader of the republic, a position he held for the next 12 years.

The years 1672 to 1674 were a period of turmoil in the Netherlands—the Third Anglo-Dutch War, the invasion of the southern regions by Louis XIV of France and the murder of Johan de Witt and his brother Jakob. Once more the Dutch people rallied round the prince of Orange. The Stadtholdership was established in favour of William III, who having married the daughter of the duke of York, became King William III of England.

The death of the King-Stadtholder in 1702 brought about the second Stadtholderless period. The Dutch were now involved in the Wars of the Spanish Succession (1702–13) and of the Austrian Succession (1747–48). The internal conflict between the oligarchy of the ruling class and the people, who took as their champion a member of the House of Orange, led to the Stadtholdership of all seven provinces being offered to Prince William IV, and the office being made hereditary in that family. The death of William IV brought about the resumption of regent oligarchic rule during the minority of his son. Rivalry between the pro- and anti-Orange factions, which had long been smouldering, grew steadily worse when William V assumed the Stadtholdership in 1766. The political situation in the Netherlands continued to deteriorate until the king of Prussia, whose daughter was married to William V, intervened by attacking and capturing Amsterdam, and restoring full powers to the Stadtholder. During this troubled period thousands of 'patriots' fled to France.

Revolution in France in 1793 brought an invasion of the Dutch Republic, which was checked at Neerwinden. The subse-

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quent invasion in 1794–95 was virtually unopposed, due to severe frost in the Netherlands. The Stadtholder took refuge in England and the old regime collapsed. The 'patriots', seeing a resemblance between the rule of the Stadtholder and that of the French monarchy, reorganised the seven United Provinces on the pattern of France, under the style of the Batavian Republic. The Batavian Republic formally dissolved the Dutch East India Company in 1799 and took over its debts and possessions. But the British had already seized the Dutch colonies and territories in the East on the strength of a letter addressed by the Stadtholder to all the Company's merchants, governors, directors and commanders.

The destiny of the southern Lowlands was even more chequered. It became the battlefield of Europe between the Hapsburgs and the Bourbons, was absorbed into the French Republic, and returned to Austria, only to be invaded by France in 1795, when its connections with the Hapsburgs finally ended. Constitution followed constitution, as in France till the Treaty of Amiens.

In 1803, war broke out again, and Napoleon who was 'reorganising' Europe, made his brother Louis king of Holland. When Louis abdicated in 1810, Holland was annexed to the French empire. The defeat of Napoleon saw the return of Prince William who was crowned king of the united Netherlands, Holland and modern Belgium, in Brussels in 1815. Most of the Dutch settlements and factories which had been taken over by the English were restored, but the Netherlands made no effort or attempt to revive them. In 1825 they reverted to the English, when all Dutch influence in the sub-continent ended.

Behind the scenes, in the Netherlands, the old religious differences were still very much alive. In 1830, a revolt broke out in the southern provinces, which ceded from the Union, and offered the crown of Belgium to Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

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CHAPTER II

Dutch Maritime Trade

The realms of trade and commerce had always been important to the Dutch. The story goes that in 1384, Willem Beukelszoon of Biervliet in Zeeland, found a method of curing herrings, whereby seafood became a marketable commodity. The process required salt and Beukelszoon being a fisherman, set out to fetch it from Lisbon. Salt suppliers asked for grain in return, which was procured from the Baltic. This marked the beginning of organised commerce in the Netherlands. By the middle of the fifteenth century, the Dutch themselves admitted that the provinces of Holland and Zeeland were founded entirely on maritime trade.

While the people of Flanders and Brabant were merchants dealing in staple commodities, the Hollanders and Zeelanders were seafarers. Many of the towns of Holland became members of the Hanseatic League. They did not confine themselves to the transport of goods from their own regions to the staple markets, but were just as ready to ship cargo elsewhere. In the Baltic they competed with the Prussian and Wendic trading cities which eventually involved them in the Hanseatic War of 1438-41.

Nothing could stop their development of trade, and by the end of the fifteenth century the merchants and mariners of Holland and Zeeland were in control of the cargo trade from the Baltic to the Mediterranean. Not only had they been granted the right of free passage to all Turkish ports, but a number of Dutchmen indulged in large-scale piracy on the Barbary coast.

It must be remembered that in the northern Lowlands, there was little land, and what there was, was highly priced for rent or sale. Consequently, many people of moderate means invested their savings in buying shares in ships, in the fishing industry,

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in trading voyages or in land reclamation schemes. A unique feature of Dutch maritime trade was the *rederij* whereby a group of people would join together to buy, build, charter a ship and its cargo, a part-owner usually being the master himself who was personally interested in the sale of the cargo. Individual *reders* would contribute varying amounts of capital according to their station, ranging from wealthy merchants to deck hands.

This system caused a widespread investment in shipping and integrated the maritime and mercantile communities. In Holland and Zeeland most of the town councillors were shipowners, and were directly interested in the profits from the grain, timber, wine, fruit, salt and fishing industries which their vessels served. Moreover, the geographical position of the Lowlands gave the Dutch easy access to the markets of England, Germany and France, besides Denmark and other parts of the Baltic. This sea-borne trade gave the town councillors and the so-called regent class from which they were drawn, considerable political and economic power.

In a petition of the state of Holland to Charles V in 1543, this economic development was explained. 'It is noticeably true that the province of Holland is a very small country, small in length and even smaller in breadth and almost enclosed by the sea on three sides. It must be protected from the sea by reclamation works which involve heavy expenditure for dykes, sluices, mill races, windmills and polders. Moreover, the said province of Holland contains many dunes, bogs and lakes which grow daily more expensive, as well as barren districts unfit for crops and pastures. Wherefore the inhabitants of the said country, in order to make a living for themselves and their families must maintain themselves by handicrafts and trades in suchwise that they fetch raw materials from foreign lands and re-export finished products, including diverse sorts of cloth and draperies to many places, such as the kingdoms of Spain, Portugal and Germany, Scotland and especially to Denmark, the Baltic, Norway and other regions, whence they return with goods and merchandise from those parts, notably wheat and other grains. Consequently, the main business of the community must needs be in shipping and in related trades from which a great many people earn their living, like merchants, skippers, masters, pilots, sailors, shipwrights and all those connected therewith. These

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men navigate, import and export all sorts of merchandise hither and yon, and those goods they bring here, they sell and vend in the Netherlands, as in Brabant, Flanders and other neighbouring places.'

The shipowners of Holland and Zeeland loudly claimed that they had secured the lion's share of the carrying trade of Europe due to their lower freights and superior techniques. Admittedly, the evolution of the '*fluit*' or 'fly boat' which was manned by a relatively small crew, yet carried a bulky cargo was one contributing factor to the profitability of the maritime trade of the shipowners. However, what was not revealed was that they gave their crews less rations in quantity and quality, and employed 'six men for the work normally performed by ten'. It was these techniques which enabled the Dutch to offer lower freight rates than any other nation in Europe. Fortunately, underfeeding and overworking was not felt when the crews sailed in European waters. Skippers and shipowners could always man their ships with low paid and frugally fed sailors, because not only were Dutch seamen available in abundance, but many German and Scandinavian sailors also came to the Dutch provinces in search of work, lured by the 'sweet smell of profit'.

The lot of the Dutch working class, which included the seafaring communities, was distressingly hard. A large section living on the brink of penury, was liable to frequent unemployment, and being dependent on ill-paid labour, had no means of saving money. They lived in squalor in overcrowded slums, in conditions which were no worse than what existed in England at the same period. Child labour, for instance, was common, even though it was loudly denounced. What was however noticeable was the existence of alms-houses, poorhouses, orphanages and hospitals in the United Provinces, particularly in the port cities. In spite of these distressing conditions at home, Dutchmen could never be induced, even in the seventeenth century and after, to migrate or settle in their possessions overseas.

The lot of the seafaring people was even worse. The long cold winters when harbours were closed for considerable periods, caused seasonal unemployment. Rumours of wars and periodic embargoes on Dutch ships in the Iberian ports aggravated the frequency of this unemployment. Though more and more ships were built and larger fleets sailed from Dutch harbours, there

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was never a shortage of sailors. A Dutch skipper could always and easily muster a crew for ships sailing in the European seas. Consequently the maritime trade of the Netherlands increased and prospered.

By the end of the sixteenth century the Dutch had secured three-quarters of the traffic in Baltic grain, between half and three-quarters of the traffic in timber and between a third and a half of that in Swedish wood. Three-quarters of the salt from France and Portugal that went to the Baltic was carried in Dutch bottoms, and more than half of the cloth imported into the Baltic areas was made or finished in Holland. The North Sea fisheries for herring, haddock, cod and ling were 'the chiefest trade and gold mine', the value of the catch being in the vicinity of eight million florins. It was estimated to employ over a thousand fishing smacks of about 50 tons burden while the fishing and ancillary industries gave employment to nearly 450,000 persons. The fishing industry was supervised and controlled by the guilds and government regulations. This ensured the high standard of herrings barrelled for export, and of the fresh and smoked fish which was widely eaten in the country where only the rich ate meat more than once a week. The grain trade of the Baltic engaged about 1200 vessels and the Dutch ships passing the Sound, outnumbered those of the English by thirteen to one. The Arctic whaling industry also employed 260 ships and 14,000 seamen. In addition, they were the largest dealers in spices, pepper, sugar, porcelain and trade wind beads, which they imported and distributed from Spanish and Portuguese ports.

Maritime insurance also underwent a change. A Chamber of Assurance was organised in 1598, which supervised the registration of policies and settled disputes, arising from claims. Amsterdam handled a considerable volume of insurance including foreign business and retained its leadership in maritime insurance until well into the eighteenth century.

And so the provinces of Holland and Zeeland (the remaining five being of hardly any importance in the present context), became the nucleus of a maritime federation which made the Netherlands the principal seafaring nation of the world.

Spanish persecution had caused many merchants to migrate to these provinces, while members of their families settled in

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other lands from the Baltic to the Levant. It was due to these expatriate merchants that the Dutch were able to expand their already prosperous trade, first to the Mediterranean, West Africa and the Gold Coast, and then to the South Atlantic and Brazil. The extent of their trade in West Africa can be judged from the fact that almost all the gold coins of the Netherlands were at one time minted from gold brought from Guinea.

The confiscation of their cargoes and ships by Philip II and the closure of the Iberian ports in 1585, 1595 and 1597 prompted the Dutch to search for the sources from which these goods came. It was about this time Jan Huighen van Linschoten returned to the Netherlands.

Van Linschoten, who came to India in 1583 as the secretary to the archbishop of Goa, was a contemporary of the Englishman, Thomas Stephens, the rector of the Jesuit College there in 1579. The letters which Stephens wrote to his father describing the exotic produce of the East Indies, are said to have created a desire on the part of English merchants to trade directly in the East. Van Linschoten, on the other hand, was a great believer in Dutch enterprise. When he returned home in 1589, he carried sufficient proof to indicate that the Portuguese claim to be lords of the 'conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethiopia, India, Arabia and Persia' was not as effective as the title assumed by King Manuel I in 1501, particularly in the unguarded areas in the vicinity of the Sunda Straits and the island of Java in Indonesia, where the Portuguese had no effective control.

It however needed more than commercial ability and enterprise to be successful in venturing beyond the Cape of Good Hope, and in this respect the Dutch gained ascendancy over all other European nations, including the Portuguese, Spaniards and Venetians, who had more than a two hundred-year start over them. The production of navigation manuals and atlases, maps and charts gave the Dutch a supremacy in this field which lasted for a century. In all the Dutch seaports, there were a number of old sailors who taught the science of navigation to aspiring young mariners, particularly in the winter months when the ships were laid up and the harbours closed. There were also men who had never been to sea but had systematically studied mathematics and theoretical navigation. The Dutch were also fortunate in having Petrus Plancius, a Calvinist minister who had fled from

Flanders and settled in Amsterdam. Plancius was a well-known geographer who had published a map of the world based on data obtained from the Portuguese.

When van Linschoten returned, the Dutch were well-equipped to challenge the Portuguese supremacy of the Eastern Seas, and to enter the coveted marts of Malaysia and Indonesia, the monopoly of which the Portuguese had claimed on the strength of a series of papal bulls and briefs of fifteenth and sixteenth century origin.

In March 1594 nine merchants organised a 'Company of Far Lands' at Amsterdam with the object of sending two fleets to Indonesia for spices. The first fleet commanded by Cornelius Houtman was badly organised. Out of the four ships and 249 men, only three vessels and 89 men returned to Texel in 1597. The modest cargo of pepper however, which they had brought back from Bantam, more than covered the cost of the voyage, and the pent-up energy of the Dutch commercial classes burst as if a dyke had been breached. In the following year, 22 ships owned by five different and largely rival companies sailed from Dutch ports. One, commanded by Oliver van Noort, took the South American and Pacific route, becoming the first Dutch voyage round the world. The most encouraging results were achieved by the fleet owned by the Far Lands Company of Amsterdam which was commanded by Jakob van Neck. The fleet returned after a 15-month absence with a large and valuable cargo of spices. Never had such richly laden ships been seen in Holland. The officers and merchants were given a civic reception, while the bells of Amsterdam pealed with joy. The investors had good reason to be satisfied, as the return on capital amounted to 400 per cent.

Not all the ships and companies achieved the success of van Neck's voyage, and of the 22 vessels mentioned above, only 14 returned. Yet the lure of the spice trade was such that 14 fleets totalling 65 vessels sailed for the East Indies in 1601. It soon became apparent that the rivalry between the companies caused an increase in the purchase prices in Asia and lowered sale prices in Europe. The companies were organised on a regional basis and the competition between those of Holland and Zeeland was particularly savage. Furthermore their mutual jealousy made it

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impossible for them to cooperate to secure the new trade against the Portuguese.

On 24 March 1602, on the initiative of the grand pensionary, van Oldenbarnevelt, the States-General succeeded in getting all these companies to amalgamate as the United East India Company, the Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie, known as the VOC, with a capital of 6,500,000 florins. The new Company had six regional chambers or boards which were established at Amsterdam, Middelburg, Delft, Rotterdam, Hoorn and Einkhuizen, the former seats of the pioneer companies.

Under the charter granted by the States-General to the Dutch East India Company,* the VOC was given the monopoly of trade east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan, for an initial period of 21 years. The Company through its 17 directors, variously referred to as 'Heeren XVII' or the 'Seventeen' or 'XVII' was empowered to conclude treaties with foreign powers, build fortresses, factories and strongholds, and wage war against the Portuguese in the Indies, who, under papal authority had claimed the sovereignty of the Eastern Seas. The Seventeen were also empowered to enlist civilian, naval and military personnel who would take an oath of loyalty to the Company, as well as to the States-General. Powerful fleets of 12 vessels sailed from the Netherlands each year. While their main purpose was to trade in the Indian Ocean, they did not hesitate to attack the Portuguese at Mozambique, Goa and Malacca, thereby disrupting and hindering communications between these ports.

The VOC was a unique organisation; its shareholders had no control over the managing body, the Seventeen. No accounts were published, neither were minutes written. Its national character was a material factor in its commercial success, and its superiority over the English for over a hundred years, was due to its financial strength, the large permanent capital of six and a half million florins, sound administration, a higher level of capacity of its staff and the recognition of priorities. It had already six years experience, and its officials were known as customers and buyers in most of the Asiatic seaports, when the first English ships reached Java. In every action, the Dutch company acted as a single body, ready to stake everything for its own

*A company for trading in the West Indies was formed in 1621.

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well-being and success, and it acted with the full knowledge that the government of the United Provinces stood behind it. Even when the States-General condemned the VOC's action in the affair at Amboina in 1622, they still preferred to retain what they had gained, rather than satisfy the demands of the English. The same was the case when they captured Cochin and Cannanore many years later, during the pendency of the truce with Portugal, which stipulated that all conquests should be restored to their former possessors. It had been given wide powers by the state, so wide that it became a state within a state. The government of the Netherlands soon discovered that they could neither venture to curb it nor to break it. So sure did the Seventeen feel of themselves that they told the States-General in 1644, 'the places and strongholds which had been captured in the East should not be regarded as national conquests, but as the property of private individuals, who are entitled to sell these places to whomsoever they wished, even if it was to the King of Spain or to some other enemy of the United Provinces.'

The VOC was quick to realise that a strong centralised administration was essential in the East and soon established a headquarters, first at Bantam where they routed the Portuguese, and later at Batavia where they concentrated all their resources. Added to all this, was the emergence of really great men like Jan Pieterszoon Coen who, as director general of trade and later as governor general from 1618 to 1623 and again from 1627 to 1629, dominated the Eastern Seas much like de Albuquerque had done a century earlier, and Dupleix and Clive in the century to follow, in India.

The Council of Batavia stood out as a body of highly efficient administrators; its chain of responsibility was strict. Each of the chiefs at such centres as Pulicat, Surat and Taiwan were directly responsible for the successful and profitable operations of the factories under his control. Periodical inspections by senior officials were carried out to examine the working of the outlying establishments, control abuses, maintain discipline, as well as to develop and extend trade on the most profitable lines.

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CHAPTER III

The Lure of the East

Recognised trade routes covered most of northern India as far back as the sixth century B.C. and by Mauryan times these were linked to the caravan routes of the peninsula. The main route ran from the Ganges port of Tamralipti, not far from modern Calcutta, through Patna and Kausambi, near the city of Allahabad to the port of Broach in Gujarat; or crossed the five rivers of the Punjab by way of Sialkot to Taxila and Kabul, whence it continued on into Central Asia or to the Levant. The southern route branched off at Kausambi by way of Vidisa (Besnagar) and Ujjain to Paithan in the north-west Deccan. Thence it crossed the Deccan plateau to the lower Krishna and went on to the great southern cities of Kanchi (Conjeeveram) and Madurai.

Luxury articles such as spices, gold, gems, silk, muslins, musk and saffron formed the chief objects of long-distance trade. Sandalwood, iron, copper, salt, sugar and rice were also carried in these caravans.

Important seaports in ancient India were Broach (Barygaza of the Greeks), Sopara not far from Bombay, Musiris near modern Cranganore, Korkai near Tuticorin. Kaveripattinam near Pondicherry (Poduka of the Greeks), Masali or Masulipatam, Tamralipti and Champa on the Ganges. Early trade was mainly coastal and the largest vessel known to Pliny, who obtained some accurate information about the maritime trade of the Indian Ocean, measured 3,000 amphorae or nearly 75 tons.

The Greeks, mainly from the island of Iona, whom the Indians called *Yavanas* (a term denoting all Greeks, and later any Westerner) and the merchants and mariners of Roman Egypt knew India. There survives a remarkable seaman's guide compiled in Greek towards the end of the first century A.D. by an

anonymous author, the 'Periplus of the Erythrean Sea'. Not only does the Periplus refer to Barygaza and Musiris, but Tamil literature contains several references to Kaveripattinam, its artificial harbour, lighthouses and wharves, where the beautiful ships of the *Yavanas* discharged their merchandise. There is good evidence that the subjects of the Roman Empire, if not actual Romans, settled in India and that a temple of Emperor Augustus stood at Musiris which was then an international seaport.

Trade with India had greatly increased after Hippalus, an Egyptian pilot, 'discovered' the monsoon winds, whereby large ships leaving an Arabian port in July or August could sail across the Indian Ocean to Musiris in 40 days and return in December or January. Socotra in the Gulf of Aden had a considerable Indian colony and the name of the island may be derived from *sukhatara-dvipa*, 'the most pleasant island', the landfall for ships crossing the Ocean. One such merchant crossing from the Red Sea to the Nile left a brief inscription in a temple at Redesiye, 'Sophon the Indian does homage to Pan for a good journey.' Sophon probably refers to an Indian name such as Subhanu and Pan was no doubt identified with Krishna. There are records of embassies from Indian kings sent to the Caesars, particularly of King Pandion, the Pandya king of Madurai, to Augustus in 20 B.C.

The considerable number of gold and silver coins struck by Roman emperors, found in many parts of the peninsula and in the interior of the Tamil country, and the many sherds of Arretine and other wares, mass-produced in Western factories, and unearthed at Arikamedu, near Pondicherry (Poduka of the classical geographers), testify to the extent of the trade with the West. It also indicates that Roman coinage must have circulated as regular currency.

The main requirements of the West were spices, perfumes, jewels and fine textiles, as well as ivory both raw and worked. A finely carved ivory statuette of a goddess or a *yakshi* has been found in Herculaneum which was destroyed when the volcano Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79. Indian iron was appreciated for its hardness and purity. Dyestuffs such as indigo and lac were in demand and several live animals and birds were exported from India for the wild beast shows of the Roman emperors, the larger animals being conveyed by the overland route through the desert

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trading city of Palmyra. Wealthy Roman ladies kept monkeys, parrots and peacocks as pets. Emperor Claudius succeeded in obtaining from India a specimen of the fabulous phoenix, probably a golden pheasant, one of the most beautiful birds of India.

In return, India wanted gold. The drain of this precious metal from the Roman Empire was recognised by Pliny who bitterly declaimed that the degenerate habits of his day cost the empire 100 million sesterces a year, 'so dearly do we pay for our luxury and our women.'

Caracalla's massacre of the people of Alexandria in A.D. 215 caused a setback to Western trade with India, but with the rise of Constantinople in the fourth century, Roman coins reappeared in the peninsula and embassies from the south, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, were received by Constantine.

Contacts between India and the West are noticeable in language. Some Hebrew words are believed to be of Indian origin, notably *koph*, a monkey, from Sanskrit *kapi*; and *tukki*, a peacock, from Tamil *togai*. According to the Book of Kings, which may not be historically correct, the navy of Tharshish brought King Solomon gold, silver, ivory, apes and peacocks, which tends to show that the Hebrews received commodities from India. The land of Ophir from where King Hiram of Tyre brought gold, precious stones and almug trees was Sopara, an ancient port north of Bombay. In fact in the Septuagint, the pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament, the place name occurs as Sophara; the almug trees may have been sandal, one of the Sanskrit words for which is *valguka*, from which the Hebrew word may be derived. Indian loan words in Greek and Latin are nearly all articles of trade: precious stones such as *smarados*, emerald (*marakata*) and *berullos*, beryl (*vaidurya*); spices such as *ziggiberis*, ginger (*srngavera*) and *peperi*, pepper (*pippali*); foodstuffs such as *sakkharon*, sugar (*sarkara*) and *oruza*, rice (Tamil, *arishi*); and *karpasos*, cotton (*karpasa*). Greek loan words in Sanskrit include several connected with mathematics and astronomy: *ora*, hour, *hora*; *kentron*, centre, *kendra*; *gonia*, angle, *kona*; and words connected with writing: *kalamos*, pen, *kalama*; *melan*, ink, *mela*; and *puksinos*, book, *pustaka*.

By the sixth century, trade with India passed into the hands of the Arabs and the Ethiopians. The rise of Islam and the Arab

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conquest of Iran and Egypt in the following century closed all direct communication between Europe and India. Thenceforth Indian wares passed through Muslim hands which were transmitted from the marts of the Levant to Venice, which acquired enormous wealth and influence through its monopoly of Eastern commerce. At Pedda Ganjam in Andhra Pradesh, tradition associates a mound known as *farangi dibba* or the foreigners' mound with the Italian traders who had established a settlement there in A.D. 1224.

With regard to China, an overland route existed from remote antiquity. A direct sea route seems to have been used only from the fourth or fifth century, when Fa Hsien, the Chinese pilgrim sailed from Sri Lanka to India in a vessel along with 200 Indian and Sinhalese merchants. There were Indian merchants and a Hindu temple in Canton in A.D. 750. By the ninth century the countries of South Asia had developed extensive maritime commerce and the states which flourished on this trade were the T'ang Empire of China, the Sailendra dynasty of Sumatra, Java and the neighbouring islands, and the Abbasid Khalifat at Baghdad. In the days of the Sung dynasty, greater interest was taken in the maritime trade which became a monopoly of the court. The Chola kings sent several embassies to China and huge Chinese junks regularly called at Indian ports till the coming of the Portuguese. Siraf on the east coast of the Persian Gulf, was the chief emporium in the West. The trading community there entertained merchants and sailors from China, Java, Malaya and India, 'every Indian insisting on a plate exclusively for his own use'.

In the south of India, princes and rulers had, for over a thousand years, become accustomed to alien ships and merchants riding at anchor or trading in their ports. Chinese, Malayans, Arabs and Africans were welcomed and allowed to settle and to set up their own stations and colonies, administered by their own chiefs. Such a concept of mercantile extra-territoriality could only exist among people who had long-established maritime traditions and a high regard for the rights, customs and culture of foreigners.

The kings of Portugal in the fifteenth century had looked with envy on the riches of Venice and eagerly desired a share of her profitable trade. Prince Henry the Navigator devoted his life to

the discovery of a direct sea route to India, but until his death in 1460 his captains had only been able to sail as far as the river Senegal in West Africa. It was Bartolomew Diaz who, driven by storms beyond the Cape of Good Hope and Port Elizabeth in 1488, sailed sufficiently up the east coast of Africa to satisfy himself of the north-easterly trend of the winds.

Ten years later Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape, picked up Arab pilots at Malindi near Zanzibar, sailed across the Arabian Sea and anchored near Calicut on 20 May 1498. The long-sought route had been opened and Portugal claimed the suzerainity of the Indian Seas on the authority of papal bulls and briefs of fifteenth century origin. These, in the case of Asiatic nations, were entirely irrelevant since papal mandates were valid only in the Roman Catholic world.

Within a few years of their appearance in Indian waters, a new form of sovereignty was evolved of which Asia had no experience. It was to hold the seas in strength and to appropriate the seaborne trade for themselves. Such an enormous enterprise for a small nation located thousands of kilometres away was successful because none of the Asiatic powers, not even the Mogul Empire had anything which resembled a navy. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the Portuguese navy led the world in the rig of ships, navigational techniques and gunnery, and it was strong enough to destroy all opposition. Their control of the major shipbuilding centres moreover, upheld their domination, for neither the Red Sea nor the Persian Gulf afforded timber for building warships.

It was the trade in spices which had originally brought the Portuguese to India, and which in the early years yielded great profits. Ultimately they gained most from their participation in the carrying trade of the Indian Ocean and the China Seas. Certain trade or maritime routes were declared a monopoly of the king of Portugal and on these routes, no other vessel could ply other than Portuguese ships. Commodities such as pepper, spices, arms and gunpowder could only be carried in Portuguese ships. Finally, all other craft could not call at or pass Portuguese-controlled ports without paying licence fees, customs duties or sea tolls. The control of the seas was thus complete and enforced by the navy. In such a manner Muslim and other traders were deprived of a great share in Indian textiles and piece goods,

Persian and Arab horses, gold and ivory from East Africa and spices from the Malabar, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Trade was extended to the China Seas and the varying price of gold and silver in India, China and Japan brought the Portuguese great profits by acting as bullion brokers in Goa and Macao.

Portugal's sea-power in the sixteenth century was unassailable. Their fortified shore establishments from Africa to China afforded them shelter and supplies, and later furnished them with reinforcements of sailors and fighting men. They had three bases in the East, Goa, Malacca and Ormuz or Hormuz on the south-coast of Iran near the island of Qishm. Besides these bases they held several other stations, chief of which were Mozambique, Diu, Daman, Cochin and Colombo. Mozambique was a victualling station as well as a centre for trade; Diu and Daman watched the Gulf of Cambay, the most important area on the west coast for exports from India; Cochin was the principal city for the supply of pepper on the coast of Kerala, which item formed the largest single commodity in their homeward bound ships; and Colombo was the outlet for the cinnamon production of Sri Lanka. There were also numerous forts scattered in the Spice Islands to secure the trade in cloves, cardamom, mace and nutmeg; an extensive settlement at Macassar in the Celebes; a colony at Timor; a base at Macao at the entrance to the harbour of Canton; strategic positions on the shores of Africa and several fortified settlements on the coasts of India like Bassein, Bombay, Chaul, Quilon, Negapatam, San Thome, Hugli and Chittagong in Bangladesh. The commanders of all these fortresses, fortified towns and factories were appointed from Goa.

In India, Akbar (1555-1605) acknowledged the Portuguese position by paying tolls on Mogul ships sailing to the Red Sea. Bijapur and the Muslim states of the Deccan made several attempts to attack Goa, which were ineffective. The only challenge to Portuguese authority was from Cunnale or Kunjali, the pirate king of the Malabar, who enjoyed the secret protection of the zamorin of Calicut. Styling himself Lord of the Indian Seas, Defender of Islam, Expeller of the Portuguese, he repulsed two expeditions sent against him. The third was successful. He was captured, taken to Goa and hanged.

When the Dutch appeared in Indian waters the picture had greatly changed. The long absence of any serious competition had

led to poor design and unwieldy ships, the rate of loss at sea rose alarmingly and mortality on board was very high. Portugal was unable to replace the ships lost or to produce the men to man the few that returned. Her manpower had been almost exhausted in defending her Asiatic, African and Brazilian settlements, and after 1580, had been squandered by Philip II in his attempts to establish Spanish supremacy in Europe. The defence of her Indian possessions and those in the East had been left to the mixed race which had grown up in these settlements. Difficulties in communication between the outlying settlements and Goa, the preoccupation of their commanders with lining their own pockets by conniving with local merchants who traded at the so-called closed ports, and last of all, the conflict between the viceroy of Goa and the ecclesiastical authorities, all combined to undermine Portugal's once powerful Eastern empire.

When Portugal regained independence in 1640, the position was already desperate and her connections with Spain had brought her new enemies, foremost among whom were the Dutch, the inveterate opponents of Spanish power, who successfully challenged her at sea. One after another her Indian and Eastern possessions passed to the Dutch. Goa escaped actual capture, although it was often blockaded, but its importance had dwindled so steadily after the destruction of Vijayanagar in 1565, that in the seventeenth century, it mattered little who held it.

By 1610 the Dutch had established themselves on the Coromandel Coast, where the English Company also opened a factory in the following year. Eventually, with the English hampered for funds and the Portuguese for reinforcements, the tide turned in favour of the Dutch.

In the sixteenth century India had several large and prosperous cities whence a vast maritime trade was carried on with Africa, Arabia, Iran, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, China and Japan.

There was Tatta and Lauri Bandar in Sind, Pakistan. It was an area of considerable trade in the north-west of the subcontinent, from where goods were transported as far inland as Lahore. Tatta and its hinterland yielded indigo, salt, sugar, iron, pitch and tar, as well as fish oil used in boat building. The area

produced excellent cottons, bafts and lawns and the country was known for its horses and camels. Its artistic leatherwork was in great demand as bedspreads; so was its furniture such as desks, cupboards, chests and coffers inlaid with mother-of-pearl. Subsequent changes in the Indus delta reduced Tatta and Lauri Bandar to a position of insignificance, and even now their sites are doubtful.

Diu, in the bulge of the Kathiawar peninsula, had a decent harbour. A large colony of Turkish merchants and traders resided there till the coming of the Portuguese. Living was good in Diu and all the luxuries of life were easily available. Its trade was so profitable that it not only became the target of the Malabar pirates, but could also meet the losses from piracy.

Second to Goa was Cambay, 'a very noble city, the port of the whole of the Indian Sea'. Strictly speaking, Cambay was not a seaport, as ocean going vessels could not approach it. Its merchandise had to be carried in country craft to Diu or Surat. Cambay was the commercial centre of Gujarat and one of the wealthiest cities of India, the home and nursery of all that was best in Hindustan, where merchants from all parts of the world resided. It was famous for its weaving and dyeing industries and for its works of art made of ivory, wood and metal inlaid with mother-of-pearl, silver and gold. A variety of cottons, silks and perfumes came from Cambay as well as amber, agate, carnelian, coral, onyx and other semi-precious stones. Its cushions, quilts, canopies and paintings, tortoise-shell work, rings, buttons, beads and ornate knife handles were in great demand in the East. Cambay imported from Mecca and Aden coral, mercury, vermilion, copper, alum, madder (a pigment), rose water, saffron and gold in specie and in coin. The people of Cambay were described as, 'a cunning and crafty race, not however fraudulent nor easy to defraud. I have never seen men of wit so fine and polished, they have nothing barbarous or savage about them. They are unwilling to adopt the manner and customs of the Portuguese, yet the Portuguese have so much to learn from them. No people in the world know so much about pearls and precious stones, and even at Goa, the goldsmiths, lapidaries and other workmen are all Banians and Bramenis of Cambay, and have their own shops and streets.'

Between 300 and 400 ships sailed twice or thrice a year from

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Cambay to Goa. The whole city turned out to receive them, as in Spain they waited for those of the Indies. The principal exports from Cambay were indigo, oils and perfumes, sugar, conserves, paper, wax, opium and gems, besides printed cotton, *satrangis* or striped rugs, woollen carpets, inlaid cabinets, ornamental furniture and bedsteads and tortoise-shell work.

Another celebrated port of Gujarat was Surat, built on the site of an earlier city named Suryapur. Surat and its rival port Randhir were ravaged by the Portuguese in 1512 and 1530. The former recovered, but the latter, which was a greater city, sank into oblivion. Surat could use everything from whatever quarter of India it came. It was a convenient place for the exchange of goods from Central India and the Deccan. Merchandise from Agra, Lahore and Kashmir, the south of India, not to mention Europe and China passed through Surat. Everyone from the Cape of Good Hope to China, man and woman, was clothed from head to foot in material made in Gujarat.

Bassein, 55 kilometres north of Bombay, was known for its shipbuilding industry. It was to the Indies what Biscay was to Europe, for all the vessels of the king of Spain were built here. Bassein was a favourite of the wealthier Portuguese gentlemen, and the seat of the governor, who was called the General of the North.

The most important city in India at that time was 'Golden Goa', the metropolis of the Portugu ese East Indies. Its power, opulence, trade, elegant buildings and the wealth of its inhabitants made it the wonder of the East. It was the rendezvous of merchants from all the Eastern nations and many Venetians, Germans, Flemings, Spaniards and Englishmen resided in Goa. It was a marvel to see the great multitude of people who came and went, and the vast number of ships at anchor. The population of Goa was estimated at nearly a quarter of a million, of which three-fourths were Christians, the large number of clergy being unknown and not included.

Calicut was once the greatest port on the coast of Kerala, and its ruler, the zamorin, the sworn enemy of the Portuguese. The supremacy of the Portuguese and their patronage of Cochin had caused Calicut to lose its position of importance. Yet merchants of all nations and of all religions resorted to and settled in Calicut, for their possessions and persons were safe there.

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Through Calicut passed an abundance of pepper, ginger, cardamom, cinnamon, tamarind, coconuts, rice, timber, gems, printed and woven tapestries and a fine cotton cloth known as 'calico'. With the decline of the Portuguese, the zamorin had begun to regain his erstwhile position of supremacy over the princes of north and central Kerala.

Sri Lanka (Ceylon) was well-known for its precious stones such as topazes, garnets, rubies, sapphires, chrysoliths, spinels, cat's eyes and pearls. Cinnamon, cardamom, areca, ebony, ivory, elephants as well as gold and silver, were abundant. Coffee and tea were not grown on the island at that time.

On the east coast of India, besides Negapatam and San Thome or Mailapur (Mylepore) now a suburb of Madras, was Masulipatam, immortalised by Ptolemy in his Tables and in the Periplus of the Erythrean Sea, as Masalia. For centuries Masulipatam was famous for its export of cotton piece goods. It was a busy seaport and from its harbour ships regularly sailed up to Bengal and Burma, laden with a variety of cotton cloth, yarn, iron, glass, tobacco and cowries which were used as money in Bengal and Lower Burma, returning with silk, rice, gingili or til seed, a variety of sesamum; as well as sugar, woven fabrics and quilts, rubies and sapphires, lac, benzoin, porcelain, glazed ware, tin and gold. Ships also sailed to Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Indonesia bringing back sulphur, camphor, silk, tin and chinaware, besides cloth manufactured in Gujarat.

Marco Polo found 'the most delicate buckrams of the highest price which looked like the tissues of a spider's web, being exported to all quarters of the planet. There is no king or queen in the world who might but be glad to wear them.' Besides cottons, diamonds, rubies, pearls, agates, indigo, rice and slaves were exported in return for all that Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bengal, Burma, Cambay and even Europe could offer.

Beyond Masulipatam there were no great ports of the importance of Surat, Calicut and Goa, except for Pippli and Balasore in Orissa.

Bengal, the Paradise of Nations, had attracted Arab, Iranian, Ethiopian and Gujarati merchants who traded with the Coromandel ports, Malabar, Gujarat, Sri Lanka, Burma and Indonesia. Satgaon, near Hugli and Chittagong in Bangladesh were important centres of trade. Bengal was noted for tussore,

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'herba cloths' (material with floral and vegetal designs), raw silk, cotton, butter, rice, wheat, opium, ginger, chillies or long pepper, sugar, saltpetre, lac, borax, musk, agate, civet, elephants, black and red pottery, fruits, scented oils, rattan, furniture and leather harness embroidered with silk and enriched with gold, silver and pearls. It was also noted for eunuchs and slaves who were exported to Iran. Some of the Bengal cottons and silks were so fine that 'it is difficult to say whether a person so attired was nude or clothed'. The muslins of Bengal were known to the ancient Greeks under the name of *gangitiki*. Bengal imported spices, sandal and ebony and other woods for making furniture, cowries, tin, copper, spelter, salt, rhubarb, porcelain and coined money. The country was however too unsettled due to constant wars and rebellions. The seaports were difficult of access and most of them were dominated by outlawed Portuguese who had turned to piracy.

Burma, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam were noted for fragrant wood, benzoin, rhubarb, musk, camphor, lace, ivory and elephants, tin and spelter, rubies, sapphires, emeralds, bezoar stones, as well as silk goods, marble, skins and hides. Their requirements were coloured and plain piece goods, pearls, pepper and spices, lead, iron, copper, vermilion and chinaware.

China, the Celestial Empire, had been culturally and commercially connected with India from remote antiquity. Chinese diaphanous silk is referred to in the *Mahabharata* and the *Arthashastra*. Its porcelain was in great demand all over the world. Akbar is said to have left two and a half million rupees worth of Chinese porcelain when he died. China exported raw silk, damasks, satins and embroidery work, sugar, ginger, chinaroot, rhubarb, civet, musk, amber, wax, gold, gold leaf and wire steel, copper, tin, lead, spelter, iron pots and pans, flax, cotton, saltpetre, lacquered and inlaid chests and trays, mother-of pearl and tortoise shell work, confectionary, rubies and sapphires and fans. The Chinese demanded many of the same commodities as the Westerners, but they had more to offer in exchange. Though India made splendid silks and muslins, they were ready to buy the stuffs of China. Chinese procelain found a market in South India and Sri Lanka. China imported Japanese silver, Spanish dollars, wines, woollens, clocks, Malabar pepper, crystal and glass-ware, sandal, ambergris, olive oil, benzoin, frankincense,

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rattan, opium, saffron, vermilion, coral, pearls, diamonds, jewellery and the cottons of Cambay, Calicut and Bengal. The Chinese trade was a monopoly of the king of Spain and no private individual could trade there except some grandee, who may be given a permit for one trading voyage only. Macao was then the only opening for the Portuguese. Chinese junks plied to Malacca and to India, particularly to Calicut and Cochin. Sir Thomas Roe mentions that Chinese commodities were as expensive in England as in India.

Japan, Land of the Rising Sun, had not yet woken from its slumber of ages. It depended mostly on China for its wants and consumed the same goods as China, conveyed there by the Portuguese. Japan produced 'curiosities,' rice and lac, as well as plenty of silver.

The largest island in the South China Sea is Borneo, 74 million hectares (285,000 square miles) in extent; a land of dense equatorial forests, swamps and intense heat. Its attraction was gold, diamonds of good quality, fine round pearls and an abundance of cloves, nutmeg, pepper, coconuts, bamboo, rice, honey, camphor, wax, iron, copper, tin, angelica, bezoar stones, dragon's blood and dyes for colouring lac.

The Philippines, comprising over 2,000 islands, are to the north-east of Borneo. They were the centre of the Asiatic and American trade and a proud Spanish possession, resisting every effort of the Dutch to gain a foothold there. The Philippines imported spices from the Moluccas, Indian and Iranian goods, particularly cloth, from the Coromandel Coast. It exported civet, tortoise shell, gold, Spanish reals of eight, which were widely used in the East by all European traders including the Dutch.

South of the Philippines lay the Celebes, famous for its copra, wax and spices. Its chief town, if such a term may be used, was Macassar.

The Moluccas along with Java, Sumatra and Borneo were known as the Spice Islands. They were once populated by Indians until the old regime and Hindu religion was swept away by Islam, though trade with India remained. Its most important products were spices, timber and pearls. The Clove Islands of Ternate, Tidore, Morotai, Halmahera and several small islands formed a part of the Molucca group. Local produce included gold, tin, ivory, rosin, camphor, amber, rattan, benzoin, birds of paradise

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and cloves from which the islands received their name.

To the south lay the islands of Ceram or Serang, Amboina and Banda. The latter grew nutmeg and mace in considerable quantity. Amboina was in time better known for the incident described as the 'Massacre' than for the cloves which grew there in abundance.

The south-eastern mainland of the continent terminates in the Malay peninsula, whose chief port was Malacca, which was controlled by the Portuguese. All ships which plied between Goa and Japan had to pay dues at Malacca. It imported drugs from Cambay, pepper from the Malabar, sailcloth from Bengal and sugar, salt, opium, beads and leather articles from the other parts of India, porcelain from China, curiosities from Japan, tapestries and carpets from Iran and woollens and metals from Europe.

South of the Malay peninsula was the large island of Sumatra, separated from Java by the Strait of Sunda, It was noted for its precious metals, copper, brass, iron, gems, amber in several colours, camphor, benzoin, sulphur, sappan wood, wax, rattan and birds of paradise. It also produced silk as good as Chinese, and pepper in great quantity. In the north-west of the island was the kingdom of Achin, a flourishing centre of Islamic studies, virtually independent, strengthening and expanding Islam among the Indonesian courts and peoples.

Java, known to the Hindus as Yahva, the Island of Barley, yielded spices, nutmeg, mace, cloves, good pepper and ginger; also frankincense, camphor, diamonds, emeralds, jasper, sapphires, agates, carbuncles and bezoar stones. Java's requirements were plain and coloured piece goods from the Coromandel, Cambay and Bengal; reals of eight, porcelain, woollens and silks from China; curiosities from Japan, as well as opium, amber, coral, iron, lead, vermilion and broadcloth. Chinese, Arab and Indian merchants and artisans lived in communities in Java.

The countries of the Muslim world produced gold in specie and in coin, pottery, dry fruits, perfumes, saffron, pearls, coral, mercury, vermilion and alum. Iran was noted for its silk tapestries, carpets and horses. The east coast of Africa had nothing much to offer except slaves, foodgrains, ebony and various hardwoods and ivory.

The Dutch East India Company had been formed primarily

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to trade in pepper and spices. These two commodities formed the main cargo of their homeward bound ships in the first half of the seventeenth century. The European need for spices was due to the social life at that time in the North European countries, for under the prevailing system animals could be killed for meat only in summer and autumn. Provision for the rest of the year had to be made from animals killed in season. This was done either by 'salting' or 'powdering'. The latter process involved the use of a large quantity of mixed spices and its importance may be gauged by the frequent references to 'powdered meat' in English literature of the period. Gradually, all kinds of food were spiced—meat, poultry, game, fish and even bread.

Initially pepper and spices had to be paid for in gold and silver brought all the way from the Netherlands, for European goods were not much in demand in the East Indies. The Dutch soon discovered that these commodities could be obtained in exchange for Indian cloth, and that gold and silver were available in China, Japan, Borneo and Sumatra in return for opium, pearls, diamonds, hardware and iron, and Indian textiles. When the Dutch entered the port-to-port trade, they were able to generate the finance required for all their requirements in the East and the export of gold and silver from Holland was considerably reduced.

By the end of the seventeenth century, the European demand for Indian textiles, piece goods and Bengal silk reduced the demand for pepper and spices which however were still traded in the Near and Middle East. The eighteenth century saw a still further decline in these commodities when the tea and coffee trades became more important than that of textiles.

India's maritime trade, though it never wholly ceased, became more the affair of foreigners. Travel to lands overseas was believed to incur grave impurity for members of the upper classes, and it became profitable if not expedient for the Indian merchant to sell his wares to foreign middlemen, than to take them abroad himself.

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CHAPTER IV

Early Voyages and Settlements

The pattern of trade in the days of the pioneer companies was to invest the greater portion of the capital subscribed in ships and goods which could be sold in the East, and to convert the remainder into gold and silver in the form of Spanish reals of eight, a currency widely used in the East Indies. When the ships arrived in Achin or Bantam, whatever quantity of pepper and spices were available would be purchased, loaded, and the ships would return to the Netherlands. There, the vessels would be disposed of, the commodities sold, profits distributed and the adventure wound up. The Dutch had no intention of acquiring territory or of establishing colonies, nor did they anticipate the setting up of factories and agencies in the East.

This system had several disadvantages, foremost among which was competition from Chinese merchants. The Chinese, who had settled their buyers in all the spice and pepper producing areas of Indonesia, would buy these items in bulk from the planters, and store them till their ships came to carry the consignments away. The Dutch had therefore to take whatever was left or to wait till the next harvest. To wait till the next season was expensive and risky; ships became unfit for the long return voyage and sickness and disorderly behaviour among the crews, who received idle pay, took their toll. Another disadvantage was that the growers preferred to sell their produce for cash or for Indian cloth (brought to Sumatra and Java by Indian and Malayan merchants) and had no use for goods brought from Europe.

So the Dutch decided to settle merchants on the spot, and to get at the centres of cloth production which were known to be in Gujarat and on the Coromandel Coast. By leaving behind traders, not only would the goods they had brought be disposed of as and when the best opportunity presented itself, but they

could obtain their requirements as the harvest was gathered, and store it till the arrival of the next fleet. By 1602 they had established an agency at Bantam on the west coast of Java and another at Achin in north Sumatra.

In 1602, two Dutch merchants, Hans de Wolff and Lafer, belonging to one of the pioneer companies, appeared in Surat, one of the most eminent cities of trade in India. They found that the goods generally in demand were velvet, kerseys, lac, saffron, coral, tin, lead and firearms, while the Indian products available were cottons, indigo, iron and pepper imported from the south. They wrote enthusiastically to Bantam of the possibility of a profitable trade in Surat, and learning that there were some areas in Kerala which the Portuguese did not control, where pepper could be obtained, they sailed for Calicut. Here they were captured by Portuguese agents, taken to Goa and hanged.

De Wolff and Lafer's report was so encouraging that the Seventeen decided to secure Gujarat cottons for the markets of the Archipelago. Steven van der Hagen was accordingly commissioned by the VOC to sail to the East Indies with a fleet of 13 ships and to negotiate treaties of trade and friendship with the rulers and kings of Cambay, Dabhol, Calicut and Sri Lanka; to assure them that every year vessels would visit these countries to trade as well as to help them in their struggle with the Portuguese. He carried letters written in Portuguese, which had become the lingua franca in the East, to all Indian rulers and a personal letter to the Great Mogul in whose dominions Cambay was located. Van der Hagen was also instructed to call at Surat and to cause as much damage as possible to Portuguese shipping in the Gulf of Cambay.

Van der Hagen had not reckoned with the south-west monsoon which was in full blast when he entered Indian waters. He neither anchored at Surat nor did he encounter any Portuguese ships in the vicinity. He sailed southward and reached Calicut, whose ruler, the zamorin was a long-time enemy of the Portuguese.

While the zamorin's councillors received van der Hagen with great ceremony, the Portuguese made an unsuccessful raid on the harbour of Calicut. On 11 October 1604 he met the zamorin in person at Chettwaye. The outcome of this meeting was that

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Steven van der Hagen, in the name of the States-General and His Royal Highness, Maurice, Prince of Orange, concluded a treaty with the ruler of Calicut, which stipulated:

> A close alliance, eternal and unbreakable for the oppression of the Portuguese, and for driving them out of the lands of the Zamorin, and also out of the whole of India.
>
> That with the next opportunity, ships would be sent to trade at Calicut and merchants would be stationed there for that purpose. To effect this on the best opportunity, a fortress would be built which would remain in the hands and under the dominion of the Dutch for all time.
>
> No treaty should be made by either side with the Portuguese without the other party being informed; and if it was found to be oppressive, the agreement should not be entered into.
>
> The people of the coast of Malabar from the south of Goa to Cape Comorin should not be permitted to set out on any navigational enterprize without the authority of the Zamorin, and if any ships were intercepted without this permit, they would be confiscated to the Zamorin.

Van der Hagen's visit to Calicut brought about the first political understanding between the Dutch and an Indian prince. The treaty underlines Dutch policy in India—to ally themselves with Indian powers, to establish trading agencies and to openly attack the Portuguese whose monopoly of the Eastern trade they regarded as a grievance.

At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the VOC was not interested in territorial power in India and as such did not accept the fortress offered by the zamorin.

Although annual fleets called at Calicut and van der Hagen's treaty was renewed and confirmed and new agreements of trade and friendship made, all these covenants remained a dead letter. The west coast of India was effectively controlled by the Portuguese and the Dutch had to wait till that nation's power in Sri Lanka and South India declined, before they established themselves in Kerala. This happened in 1661 when Rijkloff van Goens captured Quilon.

While meetings and negotiations were in progress in Calicut,

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van der Hagen despatched the *Delft* (a three-masted *jacht*) to the Coromandel Coast. The *Delft* reached Masulipatam early in 1605.

Masulipatam, literally the City of Fish, had been famous since the dawn of history for its fine cotton piece goods and its great overseas trade with Bengal, Arakan, Pegu and Tenaserrim in Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia and China, as well as Sri Lanka and the Maldive Islands. A variety of Indian and Asiatic goods passed through this city—diamonds from Golconda, pearls from the far south, silk from Bengal and China, porcelain, gold, gems, spices, grains, various woods and metals, coir and coconuts, tobacco, sugar, sulphur, camphor and slaves. Van Linschoten had heard of the excellent textiles of all colours and designs which were made on the Coromandel Coast, at Masulipatam and further south, particularly the figured and floral patterns which were in greater demand than silk. Masulipatam along with Petapoli (Nizamapatam) and Bimlipatam were ports in the kingdom of Golconda, whose ruler at that time was Sultan Muhammad Quli (1580-1611).

Largely through a Jewish merchant named Azzelan, the Dutch were able to secure a consignment of cotton piece goods, and the *Delft* sailed for Bantam leaving behind Pieter Eyloff and Willemsz to set up a trading station at Masulipatam.

The Dutch factory probably consisted of an old brick house hired from one of the local officials as a residence; a shed for the storage of goods, the walls of which were partly thatched, its roof covered with coconut fronds and the floor surfaced with cowdung. Furniture consisted of several trunks and chests, some hammocks, a few tables and chairs taken off the *Delft*, the rest having been made locally. All communication with the local people was carried on through interpreters, none of whom knew the Dutch language. Since low Portuguese was spoken by the trading community, the Dutch carried on their business in that language, through Indian interpreters who spoke Telegu, Tamil or Persian.

The fleet which left the Netherlands in 1605 under Cornelis Matelief de Jonge called at Surat and Calicut and at Bantam where it took on the *Delft's* cargo and continued its voyage towards Sumatra. The *Delft* returned to Masulipatam in the following year bringing Dirk van Leeuwin and Paulus van Solt.

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En route it called at Pulicat to explore the possibility of trade in that area. Van Solt and his colleagues were unable to gain a foothold in Pulicat, as the Portuguese who were well-established there, used every ruse and device to prevent local traders and producers from contacting the Dutch. They decided to sail for Petapoli, a second port in the kingdom of Golconda.

Petapoli had none of the advantages of Masulipatam. Its anchorage was dangerous and exposed to the winds, the foreshore was marshy and malarious and the climate, unhealthy. Van Solt was welcomed and shown the various goods available. With the help of two influential Iranian merchants, the local weavers were contacted and asked to manufacture material according to the samples brought from Bantam. A plot of land was purchased and van Leeuwin remained behind at Petapoli to manage the new factory, the second Dutch establishment on the Coromandel Coast.

It may be of interest here to refer to the great diamond mines of Golconda. India was, for centuries, the only source of large diamonds in the world. These were recovered from mines and alluvial deposits adjacent to Vijayawada and near Kurnool, in the kingdom of Golconda. The rough gems were cut and polished and sold in the 'diamond quarter' of the city. By the middle of the seventeenth century there were 23 mines in operation. Ill-paid labour employed by individual 'farmers' or concessionaires, washed and sifted the earth in search of diamonds. Several thousands of labourers, artisans, craftsmen, contractors, moneylenders, merchants and officials were engaged in the Golconda mines, which afforded a steady income to the treasury as well as the possession of the choicest and largest stones found. Usually a Telegu Brahman paid a set amount for the control of all mining and supply concessions. He retained for himself all diamonds less than the weight of a gold hun. The Pitt diamond, also known as the Regent, along with several of the largest stones in existence, came from these mines, which were in those days the richest prize of the Deccan. Diamonds are still mined in India, though no longer at Golconda, a term which is synonymous in the English language with a source of great wealth. The Panna mines in Madhya Pradesh yield about 20,000 carats a year, none of them being very large.

The government of Golconda was despotic. Everything was

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done in the name of the Sultan by the Iranian nobles who had uncontrolled powers. They dominated the hierarchy of local officials whose primary duty was to collect revenue and taxes. Public offices were 'farmed' or auctioned once a year to the highest bidder. There were farmers of customs, harbour dues, road tolls, houses, cottage industries, fisheries, salt, tobacco, distilleries, almost everything which could yield revenue. The stipulated amount had to be paid in three instalments, the leaseholder or farmer being allowed to retain all that he could make over and above it. In other words, the court insisted that the money had to be paid; the local authorities had to find it, and the merchants and producers had to pay it. It was a system which intensified itself and impoverished the country. Golconda was divided into districts, each under an official whom nineteenth century writers called a governor. To secure these appointments, the nobles at court had to be bribed. To meet all these and other expenses, the governors used every possible method of reimbursement: levying additional taxes and tolls and even borrowing money with no intention of repayment. Petapoli was rented out for Rs 250,000 a year and in turn sub-contracted for Rs 290,000. Masulipatam, which was probably the busiest seaport on the east coast if not in the Bay of Bengal was rented out for Rs 800,000 which was again farmed out to several subordinate officials. Salaries of the actual tax collectors were calculated in cash but paid in grain and salt of poor quality valued at one-third above its cost. Sidappa, the governor of Masulipatam, who owed his position to Mir Jumla, the influential and unscrupulous chief minister of Golconda, levied a tax of 16 per cent on exports, instead of the normal four, and seven and a half per cent on imports. He cheated in the assessment as well.

They soon realised that it was not easy to carry on a satisfactory trade at these two ports. Not only were the taxes oppressive, but the local officials interfered with and intimidated the weavers, artisans and merchants on whom they had to depend. Van Solt decided that the only solution was to go to Golconda, the capital, where they would try to negotiate a regular trade agreement with the sultan.

Van Solt and Willemsz of Masulipatam were received at the court with great hospitality, and after the preliminary discussions had been completed, they were granted a *firman* which

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guaranteed a fixed duty of four per cent on exports and imports. The Dutch were allowed to choose their own workers and brokers, and not necessarily those recommended by the governors. Weavers, dyers, bleachers and other artisans would have free access to the Dutch factors and they were exempted from the payment of the *chappa dalala*, the 12 per cent stamp duty on linen. This privilege had hitherto not been granted to the sultan's own subjects, nor to the Portuguese. While this treaty was being drawn up, news was received of a flood at Masulipatam. Leaving Willemsz at Golconda, van Solt hurried back, where he found the situation deplorable. Two merchants and a bargeman had been drowned and all their provisions ruined. He set about repairing the damage, by which time Willemsz returned. He had been told by Mir Jumla, as he was about to leave, that all the concessions granted by the court were subject to Sidappa's confirmation. For a while all went well and the Dutch shipped 122 bales of cloth and a consignment of rice, pulses and iron to Bantam.

To Paulus van Solt must be given the credit for establishing the early Dutch trade in the kingdom of Golconda, which in the years to follow contributed such large profits to the Dutch Company. These advantages however were secured at great cost. Including the value of gifts and presents, the embassy to Golconda cost Rs 350,000 and Sidappa's confirmation was sealed with a loan of Rs 13,500.

In 1607 the *Great Sun* sailed into Petapoli with Lodwijk Eyloff from the Bantam factory who was to relieve his brother Pieter at Masulipatam, and Lucas Janssen who was to succeed van Leeuwin at Petapoli. The Bantam Council had decided that the chief merchant of each of these factories should, in turn, preside over both factories for periods of one month each. As long as the *Great Sun* lay alongside, the Dutch had no difficulty in obtaining the cotton piece goods they needed. No sooner had she sailed, than delays in supply commenced. Goods on which tolls had been paid were not allowed to be loaded or discharged, commitments were not honoured and Sidappa demanded Rs 90,000 for two ships he was building for the sultan. In vain Lodwijk Eyloff protested that all this was in violation of van Solt's *firman*. The governor insisted, declaring that if he did not get some profit from the Dutch, how could they, (the Dutch)

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trade. Eyloff was helpless, for not only could Sidappa stop all supplies, but goods lying in the warehouse could be tampered with. Eventually he loaned Sidappa Rs 20,000. Thus he who had recently returned the loan of Rs 13,500 compelled his successor to give him a larger loan. Hardly had the loan been given when the harbour master declared that all goods ordered by the Dutch should first be sold to him. This was settled by the Dutch paying the harbour master the commission which they would have paid to the brokers.

In Petapoli the situation was not so trying. The two Iranian merchants whose names have come down to us as Mir Kabady and Godiar Suhidar, obtained for them Rs 328,000 worth of cottons which was sent to Achin and Bantam and Rs 3,400 worth of diamonds which were sent to Amsterdam.

Further up the Bay of Bengal were the kingdoms of Arakan and Pegu in Burma and the province of Bengal. Pegu was known for its rubies and the best arrack in the sub-continent; Bengal for its rice and other food grains. If the Portuguese could be dislodged from this region, the Dutch felt that their East Indian trade could be greatly benefited, Since the ruler of Arakan had recently asked for help against the Portuguese, Pieter Willemsz and Jan Gerritz Ruyll the book-keeper at Petapoli sailed for Arakan with a consignment of sandalwood, spices, camphor, ivory, sulphur and procelain. On arrival, they were offered Fort St Iago, if they could expel the Portuguese from it. Willemsz found that the piece goods and indigo from the Krishna delta were in demand. Moreover, there was a possibility of trading with Thailand through Burma. The Dutch secured cotton yarn and rubies, the greater part of which was shipped to Europe. Willemsz and Ruyll, having assured the ruler that ships would regularly visit Arakan, returned to Masulipatam well satisfied with their mission to Bengal.

The Council of Bantam now decided to unify the command on the Coromandel Coast. Pieter Eyloff returned to preside over both the factories with Jan van Wesick stationed at Petapoli, as his deputy. In Masulipatam the situation had again deteriorated. Goods which had been ordered by the Dutch were taken over by the governor at cost price on the grounds that they were required by the sultan. The Dutch were blamed for not protecting two vessels belonging to the sultan which had been captured by the

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Portuguese. There were odd incidents of violence and the local people seemed to have been set up against the Dutch. For a while Eyloff considered abandoning their trade and reverting to the old system of trading voyages between Burma and Java. Godiar Suhidar whose influence in Petapoli was considerable, transferred a large quantity of Pulicat cottons to the Dutch warehouse, and also purchased and removed the consignment of taffetas and porcelain stored aboard a Dutch ship, without the harbour master's knowledge. The Pulicat cottons, in spite of the cost of transportation, yielded considerable profit. Van Wesick's knowledge of the piece goods trade, the processes involved, his advice to junior merchants, the frequent tours he undertook to seek new sources of material and the supervision of weavers and producers, went a long way in making the Dutch trade in this area extremely profitable.

The annual fleet which sailed from the United Provinces in 1606 brought David van Deynsen to Surat, while Admiral Verhoff and Captain Caerdin went on to the Malabar coast. After the tragedy of de Wolff and Lafer, no progress had been made at Surat until van Deynsen reached this city with goods valued at 12,000 florins (about Rs 10,000), to be used mainly for the purchase of indigo manufactured at Sirkhej, Agra and Lahore. Portuguese priests who doubled as merchants and traders, systematically harassed and intimidated the Dutchman. They accused him of not paying for the wines he had taken; they induced his servants to desert and tampered with the supply of provisions. Jan Hussen, his assistant, died and all the work had to be done by van Deynsen himself. Disheartened mentally and physically worn out, he committed suicide in the summer of 1608. The goods he had purchased in Surat and from Burhanpur through agents were taken over by the harbour master. They remained in his possession for seven years, until the Dutch were well-established on the Coromandel Coast, when an attempt was made to recover them.

In the meanwhile, Verhoff and Caerdin called at Cannanore and at Calicut, renewed van der Hagen's earlier agreement and signed a second treaty with the zamorin. The highlight of the meeting with the zamorin and his advisers was the variety of gifts which were exchanged—the ruler received a piece of scarlet velvet, several clusters of fine coral, six crystal mirrors, two

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small cannons, six matchlocks, two muskets, a sword with a silver hilt and a large gold medallion with the portrait of Prince Maurice on it. The admiral was presented with a diamond-studded gold ring and a thick gold chain. Caerdin and the other ship's officers received chains, uncut semi-precious stones, bags of pepper and spices and baskets of fruit. The zamorin mentioned that he needed six Dutch warships, two for the defence of his capital and the rest to blockade Cochin and Goa. Verhoff was unable to spare so much of his fleet which was required in the Moluccas. When he later reported this to Jacques L'Hermite de Jonge of the Bantam Council, he was told that trade need not be developed in Calicut, as there was nothing there they needed except pepper, of which they had sufficient quantities.

On 19 November the *Arent* and the *Valk* with Jakob de Bitter and Pieter Bourgonje on board, the latter on his way to relieve Eyloff, were blown into Tegnapatam (Devanampatam) near Cuddalore, a port in the territory of the nayak of Gingi. With three assistants they set out for the town of Gingi. They were welcomed there by the nayak's advisers, permitted to buy as many cotton piece goods as they needed, and offered an abandoned bungalow built by the Portuguese, as a residence and for the storage of their goods. The nayak further promised 'to take under our protection the Dutchmen who shall remain behind at Tegnapatam and to let them build in the town, to deny the Portuguese, and to remain their enemies'. Against this the Dutch promised to start trading there and to pay the usual duties on imports and exports.

Bourgonje and his assistants remained in Tegnapatam. Much was expected from this trade, as there was a greater degree of security, less oppression from local officials and the market was promising, especially since they had access to the manufacturing centres further south. It also made the Dutch less dependent on the favours of nobles and officials in Golconda.

For all his faults, Bourgonje* was an able merchant. He imported camphor, sandalwood, cloves, nutmeg, mace, velvet, porcelain and bronze, and secured in exchange a considerable

*He rented 5,400 measures of land for himself for Rs 2,200, which he later leased to the factory, and shut his eyes when Hans Marcelis, his *tweede*, bought at the back door, cotton piece goods meant for the Company.

quantity of dyed and printed cottons, and some indigo. Until such time as the old Portuguese building was repaired, he was allowed to occupy a large house in the village of Tirupapaliyar, two kilometres inland. Unfortunately, an incident occurred shortly after they occupied the Tirupapaliyar lodge, which lowered his prestige in the eyes of the Tamilians. Jakobsz, a junior merchant, and three others entered the factory in a far from sober condition. When reprimanded, they became boisterous, Jakobsz brandishing his rapier; they climbed onto the roof of the building, refusing to heed Bourgonje. In desperation, the latter called in the local guards to arrest them. The output of the factory suffered due to the absence of these assistants, and instigated by the Portuguese clergy in the vicinity, the dyers and weavers struck work. To make matters worse, the Portuguese re-occupied and rebuilt the old bungalow at Tegnapatam with materials purchased by the Dutch.

Events turned in their favour when the nayak expelled the Portuguese from Tegnapatam. In gratitude the Dutch decided to present him with a pair of elephants, which they proposed to obtain from their new-found friend, the raja of Kandy in Sri Lanka.

Tirupapaliyar could produce cotton piece goods to the specifications required in Malaysia and Indonesia, which were not easily available in Masulipatam and Petapoli. Trade with Pulicat, however, was not yet possible, as the Portuguese were in strength at San Thome, which lay between Pulicat and Tegnapatam.

Unpleasantness at Masulipatam continued and Eyloff now considered shifting his headquarters to Tegnapatam. Matters came to a head when Pylappa succeeded Sidappa. His first action, with the assistance of Namaiga, his counterpart at Petapoli, was to call upon the Dutch to pay the stamp duty on cloth. When the Dutch refused, he arranged with a brahman adviser at Golconda to demand the arrears of this duty, in the name of the sultan. The Dutch still refused to pay. Before this deadlock could be resolved, an incident occurred which placed the Dutch in Namaiga's hands. Pieter Julis caught a thief entering the Petapoli factory, when van Wesick was away on tour. The thief was flogged and three days later handed over to the authorities, when he died. Namaiga accused Julis of murder, and

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through his brahman friend at Golconda, arranged for the Dutch merchants to be summoned to the court to account for their actions. Van Wesick, accompanied by Pieter Klassen and Anthony Schover, set out on this delicate mission. When they reached the capital, the purpose of the summons became apparent—the stamp duty. In spite of the concession granted to van Solt in 1606, they were now called upon to pay the duty, which was computed at Rs 54,000, and an additional sum of Rs 18,000 as port dues. They were also accused of having ruined the trade of Masulipatam by monopolising the harbour, and by not allowing other vessels to call there, including those of the Portuguese. As a result the only foreign goods brought into the kingdom had been those which the Dutch imported. The hearing dragged on for nearly three months, the Dutchmen being abused and insulted whenever they appeared in the streets. Eventually they were allowed to leave, after having promised to settle with Namaiga. There is no record how the matter was settled.

Early in 1610, Arend Maertenssen was sent to Gingi to renew the old agreement and to consolidate the Dutch position there. They were allowed to fortify the lodge at Tirupapaliyar, free use of the harbour of Tegnapatam, and to trade at Porto Novo, which facility they did not avail of at that time. While Maertenssen was at Gingi a message was received from the raja of Chandragiri, inviting them to commence trade at Pulicat. Maertenssen, Fontaine and Marcelis travelled overland to Vellore, whose ruler the nayak, a tributary of the raja of Chandragiri, controlled the port of Pulicat. The outcome of the agreement with Vellore was the usual concessions which South Indian rulers granted to foreigners: assistance in the employment of dyers, weavers, printers and other artisans, and a duty of two per cent on imports and exports. It was also stipulated that the requirements of the nayak and the raja should be sold to them at cost price. The Dutch were allotted a stone house for their merchandise and their arms and ammunition. Hans Marcelis stayed on at Pulicat, with Fontaine to assist him.

The usual troubles now started at Pulicat, the main instigators being the harbour master and the governor. The warehouse was broken into and several muskets, powder and shot stolen. When the Dutch merchants appeared on the scene, they were attacked and beaten. Marcelis reported the matter to the nayak

of Vellore. Redress was speedy: the harbour master was replaced and compensation was given in the form of a half per cent reduction in duties. Marcelis and Fontaine were given a palanquin and taken in procession around the town. As additional compensation they were granted the villages of Kaveripak, Kunnattur and Satyavedu.

Marcelis reciprocated this friendly gesture by promising the nayak of Vellore a pair of elephants which the raja of Kandy was asked to supply. Only two elephants arrived from Sri Lanka and the Council of Masulipatam decided that they should be given to the youngest establishment on the Coromandel Coast, completely ignoring the promise they had made to the nayak of Gingi. Marcelis for a while toyed with the idea of presenting the elephants to the raja of Chandragiri, but when the council insisted, he handed them over to Vellore. When Gingi heard of the gift he threatened to withdraw all the concessions he had given to the Dutch. To save the situation Marcelis offered him the price of the elephants, which he later changed to an offer in kind, and this was accepted.

Eventually, Marcelis' eccentric behaviour and discourteous attitude to the local brokers and merchants as well as to his colleagues, caused his *tweede* (the second merchant) to write a strong letter to the Council of Masulipatam, in which he reported his failings. Janssen was sent with full authority to put things right in Pulicat. The factory procedure drawn up by Janssen stipulated that all letters, entries in ledgers and transactions should be signed by both the senior merchant and his second; that goods could only be bought with the consent of the council; likewise all presents and gifts, as well as any other commitments needed their consent; and due courtesy should be shown to all ranks as well as to local dealers and workmen. This system of dual control and management by committee was introduced in all the Dutch factories and was adopted by the English East India Company as well.

Pieter Eyloff, the veteran of the Coromandel, while returning from Petapoli died of what has been termed 'inward bleeding'. Greatly respected by all, his body was brought to Masulipatam and buried in the Dutch cemetery there. The Council of Bantam appointed Jan van Wesick in his place and suggested that the Golconda factories be closed down. It was probably an indirect

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method of saying that van Wesick would not be able to handle the authorities at Masulipatam and Petapoli. Van Wesick however did not close these factories. He succeeded in getting the customs duties fixed at four per cent and the arrears of *chappa dalala* waived. The greatest hindrance to all his efforts to further Dutch trade, was the dishonesty of his own officers who indulged in considerable private trading.

The trade at Pulicat flourished and Marcelis, writing to Bantam, declared, 'if we had ten times more money and capital to spend on cloth, it should not have been otherwise spent.' He pointed out that there were requirements of new items such as lead, tin, mercury, leaf brass and sulphur, besides camphor and benzoin; and that relations with the local merchants were extremely good. Pulicat helped the factory at Tirupapaliyar to become profitable and a second warehouse was constructed there. An agency was opened at Trimelipatam, in the territory of the nayak of Tanjore.

Raja Sinha, having learnt of the progress the Dutch had made on the Coromandel Coast, now asked for assistance in his struggle to expel the Portuguese from his lands, reminding van Wesick that he had sent them two elephants. A similar appeal came from the ruler of Arakan. Carolus de Lannoy was sent to Sri Lanka to explain the Dutch position and to assure the raja that help would be forthcoming; Jakob Dirk Cortenhoeff was sent to Burma to inform the Arakan ruler that his appeals had remained unanswered because Willemsz had not made them known to his superiors. He carried goods valued at five thousand rupees. He was also to mention that the sudden death of Eyloff had created difficulties in Masulipatam, and moreover, since there was now peace in Europe between the Netherlands and Spain, they were required to maintain that peace in India.

The Portuguese also had been watching with dismay, the rising influence of the Dutch in India, particularly on the east coast. Their attack on Pulicat was repulsed by the Dutch vessels in the harbour. Two of the Portuguese ships along with their crews were captured. Another attempt was made to destroy the shipping in Masulipatam harbour and to intercept sailings to Bantam. Two more of their ships were captured. A second attack on Pulicat failed miserably.

Several of the senior merchants on the Coromandel now

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began to feel the need for a centralised administration on the Coast, that they should have 'a head to deal with their enemies, to resist the craft and unreliableness of the natives and the increasing plots of the Portuguese. It was necessary for one person to be appointed to exercise supreme authority over all the establishments.' The Bantam authorities decided to leave this decision to Pieter Both who had been appointed the first governor general of the Netherlands East Indies. But Both was late in reaching Bantam. So the Council recommended Jakob Groenewegen, or failing him, Jacques L'Hermite de Jonge. The former was killed at Banda before he could sail for India and the latter could not be spared from Bantam. Shortly after assuming office Both, on the advice of the newly formed Council for the Indies, appointed Jan van Wesick director and governor of all the factories on the Coromandel Coast. Juan de Labistrate carried this order of council to van Wesick, as well as a personal letter from the governor general commending his past service and conduct. De Labistrate was also told that in the event of van Wesick not accepting the appointment, he was to assume charge himself. The general instructions to the new director of the Coromandel were that he would reside at Pulicat, and with the help of de Labistrate and the other senior merchants, a Council for Coromandel would be formed, which would advise and assist the director. All the factories on the east coast were now subordinate to Pulicat. The director was instructed to investigate the feasibility of van Solt's plan of overland transport of merchandise to Gujarat; to obtain indigo from Agra and Lahore which was superior in quality to that available locally; and to decide whether the trade with Burma and Bengal was worth pursuing. Finally, stringent action was to be taken to stamp out private trading; the factory at Petapoli be reduced in staff; and from the available Dutch merchants on the coast a suitable person was to be selected as the Dutch ambassador to the court of Golconda.

Van Wesick accepted the appointment of director of Coromandel, which office he filled with credit till 1612. Pulicat remained the Coromandel headquarters till 1689, when as a result of the disturbed conditions in this part of India following Aurangzeb's conquest of Golconda, the headquarters was transferred to Negapatam.

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Hardly had van Wesick taken over when the Portuguese made two abortive raids on Pulicat, one from San Thome and the other from Negapatam. The failure of these raids was an indication of their waning sea-power. Competition from the English merchants in the vicinity was negligible, as they were hindered by a shortage of capital and lack of support from home.

After the tragic end of David van Deynsen in 1608, the Dutch left Gujarat alone for several years. Though the potential value of its market was recognised, the Company was more intent on concentrating all its resources on the struggle for the Spice Islands. A few months after van Deynsen's death, Capt. Hawkins of the English East India Company anchored off Surat.

Even though the Portuguese had no fortified settlement in the town, as they had at Diu and Daman, they still dominated coastal shipping with their warships and collected licences and tolls from all vessels which sailed from the Gujarat and other west coast ports. None of the merchants and brokers dared to deal with any other shipper for fear of confiscation of goods and destruction of vessels. Portuguese priests in Surat also acted as merchants, traders and suppliers of provisions. Van Deynsen had held out for nearly two years in spite of his staff being harassed and intimidated. Hawkins would have received the same treatment if he had remained in Surat. When he went ashore to meet the governor, he soon learnt that only on the strength of a *firman* from the emperor would the English be allowed to trade in the town. Hawkins set off for Agra, to the court of the Emperor Jehangir. His reception was favourable, but his somewhat boisterous diplomacy was ineffective against the intrigues of the Jesuits there, and he returned without achieving his objective.

Sir Henry Middleton met the same fate in 1611, but on his way home retaliated by attacking Portuguese and Gujarati ships in the Gulf of Aden. Captain Best, in the following year, was attacked as his fleet reached Surat. In the ensuing battle he destroyed the entire Portuguese squadron. This was an eye-opener to the people of Gujarat who had all along believed that the Portuguese navy was invincible. Possibly news of Middleton's action had also reached Surat, and the governor granted him

permission to open a factory in the city. Regular English trade in western India starts with the agency opened by Best in 1613.

In the meanwhile, the report of van Deynsen's death had reached the Coromandel, whence it travelled to Bantam. Both, who had been instructed to inquire into the circumstances, called upon the merchants of Masulipatam to look into the matter, and the Dutch method of doing so was to attack Mogul shipping. Accustomed to the barbarian island chiefs of the archipelago, they did not realise that they had come under the sway of an empire which not only insisted on good behaviour, but could crush petty infidel settlements with a stroke of the pen. The Mogul however, was powerless on the high seas and realised the need of averting the vengeance of the Dutch who believed that one of their countrymen had been ill-used and his property detained. The governor of Gujarat accordingly wrote to the Dutch at Masulipatam offering to hand over van Deynsen's goods. It was this move of Mukharab Khan which caused the reappearance of the Dutch in Surat. The real intention of the Mogul governor is shown in a letter written by Nicholas Downton, the English factor there in 1614, in which he says, 'that he (the governor) hath sent to Masulipatam for the Hollanders to come hither, promising them Daman when it is taken from the Portuguese.'

Gujarat was an important province in the Mogul Empire. Surat, its commercial capital, was called the Gate of Mecca. The governor of Gujarat was also the viceroy of the Deccan, if the appointment was held by a prince of the blood or an intimate friend of the emperor, such as Mukharab Khan was of Jehangir. Surat therefore had two imperial officials, the governor or viceroy who resided in the city, and the commander of the castle or citadel. Mukharab was a keen sportsman, a skilled surgeon and a diplomat. He had been chosen as the emperor's ambassador to Goa, but because the English had been allowed in Surat where the Portuguese claimed a monopoly, Mendosa, the viceroy of Goa refused to accept the embassy. It was while he was viceroy that he learnt of the capture of four imperial ships off Daman by the Portuguese, one of which carried three million rupees worth of treasure. Jehangir retaliated by arresting all Portuguese nationals in the empire, closing all churches and forbidding the public exercise of the Christian religion. This

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was probably the last naval police action of the Portuguese. Hereafter the control of the sea lanes passed to the Dutch, who guaranteed the safety of the pilgrim traffic and undertook to suppress piracy on the west coast, in the process of which all the Portuguese squadrons were shut up in their harbours. It was the Dutch and not the English who were instrumental in destroying the Portuguese monopoly of the sea routes and their supremacy of the seas.

On the other side of India, Wemmer van Bercham had replaced van Wesick at Pulicat. While he was on tour at Masulipatam and Petapoli, the Portuguese once again attacked Pulicat, destroyed the factory, seized all the goods and carried away Adolf Thomaszoon* and six merchants as prisoners to San Thome. Three other merchants lost their lives in the attack. Van Bercham tried to enlist the aid of the sultan of Golconda, but was told by Mir Jumla that they had no jurisdiction in that area. He however agreed to compound all the import, export and harbour dues for an annual cash payment of Rs 8,000. Possibly Golconda had begun to realise that Pulicat would soon supplant Masulipatam as a centre of trade on the Coromandel Coast. Van Bercham accepted the concession as it made the Dutch virtually the masters of the city.

The raid on Pulicat had aroused the indignation of the raja of Chandragiri who volunteered to build a fort for the Dutch. Work on this structure was tardy, so van Bercham decided to complete it at his own cost. He named it Castle Geldria after his home town. Shortly after it was completed, the Portuguese launched another attack on the Dutch settlement, which was repulsed. They then used indirect means of getting at the garrison, by sending two slaves disguised as refugees from San Thome to poison the Dutch. They were caught and executed.

Geldria played an important part in the affairs of the Coromandel in the century to follow, when civil war caused many refugees to seek safety there. It almost became a nucleus from which a new territorial power may have emerged. Even after Golconda was overrun and anarchy reigned in the Carnatic, Geldria's position remained unchanged. The Dutch coined their

*Thomaszoon succeeded in escaping a year later, when files sewn to mules were smuggled to him.

own gold pagodas there, much as the English later did at Madras. Pulicat was favourably situated for trade, being in the centre of the coast from where Dutch influence could spread both northwards and farther south. Moreover, prices were very much lower here than at their other settlements.

Castle Geldria was 535 metres in circumference and its walls and bulwarks were seven metres in height. Initially it was defended by 70 marines drawn from Dutch ships, which also provided 10 cannons and other small arms. Van Bercham estimated that 150 to 200 men were required to defend it, as well as additional armament of eight or 10 cannons, 100 muskets and 150 swords. In 1616, after heavy rains had damaged its walls, it was further strengthened by the addition of four bastions on which were mounted 26 cannons, the garrison now consisting of 75 soldiers. Geldria and its dependent township had about 1000 inhabitants, and the Dutch community formed 50 households made up by the marriage of the Company's servants and 'free' Dutchmen to local women.

All that remains of the Dutch fortress are two fragments of its sea-wall and an imposing cemetery, where, on the grave of Abraham Mendis who died in 1684, may be seen the sculptor's impression of Castle Geldria.

In the early days of Dutch expansion on the Coromandel, Wemmer van Bercham stands out as a controversial figure; that he was loyal and devoted to the Company's interests there was no doubt, but many of his actions attracted considerable criticism. Marcelis, a moody and temperamental man, was also dishonest. Yet van Bercham condoned his failings because he had obtained the villages of Kaveripak, Kunnatur and Satyavedu. When Schover of Masulipatam was called upon to account for Rs 6,300, van Bercham exonerated him on his declaration that the money was stolen from the cash box. Van Bercham himself was accused of giving large bribes to local officials without the consent of Council and of purchasing an Arab horse for his own use.

Accounts of all these incidents and irregularities reached the ears of the acting governor general, Dr Laurens Reael, who sent Hans de Haze to put things in order in the Indian factories. De Haze recommended the reduction of the garrison at Pulicat and that the walls of Geldria should be faced with stone brought

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from Tegnapatam, which was never done. He recommended that only four or five Portuguese prisoners should be retained as hostages, the rest were to be thrown into the sea. But when he chose Samuel Kindt to succeed van Bercham, the latter opposed the appointment on the grounds that Kindt was sick in the head as a result of a fall from a window. The Coromandel Council supported van Bercham's nominee, Raphael Oliva.

De Haze selected Pieter Gillesz van Ravensteyn of Masulipatam to travel overland to Surat, to trace and recover the goods left behind by van Deynsen. He was furnished with a letter written in Portuguese and signed by de Haze, on behalf of the governor general, requesting the authorities in that city to assist van Ravensteyn in every possible manner. Van Ravensteyn was instructed to take over the merchandise, to obtain compensation for material lost or damaged, and to inquire into the circumstances of van Deynsen's death. He was also to obtain samples of cloth and the other produce of Gujarat; to report on the extent of Portuguese influence in Surat, as well as that of the English, and whether it was at all worthwhile to trade in Gujarat.

Herman Barentsz, a Calvinist preacher accompanied de Haze from Bantam to administer to the spiritual needs of the Dutchmen on the coast. This is the first reference to a Calvinist *predikant* who was required to attend to Dutch settlements extending over 800 kilometres of the coast. Hans de Haze returned to Bantam in the following year with van Bercham, who shortly afterwards sailed for Holland, his dignity untarnished. No action was taken against him in the Netherlands.

Van Ravensteyn along with Hendrik Adriaansen and eight merchants, left Masulipatam on horseback on 8 May 1615 and reached Surat on the 9th of the following month. They took up residence in one of the houses of the harbour master, near the Tapti River. The first news he received was that Mukharab Khan was being replaced by the emperor's son, Prince Khurram, later Shah Jehan, who had brought with him Zulfikar Khan as his financial adviser. Mukharab Khan now realised that he would have to keep his promise to hand over van Deynsen's goods. On various pretexts, he avoided meeting van Ravensteyn. When he had departed from Surat, the latter sought and gained an interview with Prince Khurram to whom he presented a piece of red velvet, a length of satin and the letter signed by de Haze on

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behalf of the governor general. He explained the purpose of his visit. The prince assured the Dutchman of all co-operation, promising to take action against the Portuguese for what they had done to van Deynsen. The next meeting was with the harbour master, who had taken the goods into his custody. It soon became apparent that the harbour master had no intention of handing over van Deynsen's property. He even admitted that he had sold the lead. After several meetings during which gifts were exchanged, van Ravensteyn succeeded in collecting Rs 900 for the lead and an additional Rs 400, probably a part of the cash which van Deynsen had left. He also received 16 firelocks, 17 pistols, six pieces of lamlet (a warm quilted material), 75 ells of velvet (damaged), 18 flasks of perfume, all empty, 10 pounds of sea horse teeth, 30 packs or bales of indigo, 600 pieces of 'corneban' probably carnelian and some clothing damaged by termites. The harbour master pointed out that the remainder of the Dutchman's property was at Burhanpur: about Rs 8,000 worth of textiles. Van Ravensteyn sold whatever he could. As he was about to set out for Burhanpur, Sir Thomas Roe, the British ambassador to the court of the Great Mogul, landed at Surat. Since the route to Agra lay via Burhanpur, he accompanied Sir Thomas Roe. At Burhanpur he learnt that only a tenth part of van Deynsen's goods were available. This was only to be expected after seven years. Again he sold what he could, purchased samples of locally made cloth and returned to Surat, where he made further purchases of the textiles manufactured there. To avoid paying road tolls if the merchandise was sent overland to Masulipatam, he requested Capt. Keeling, who had accompanied Roe from England to convey his purchases to Bantam, and the captain agreed to do so. Eventually, the material was loaded, but not until the harbour master claimed Rs 130 as customs duties.

Van Ravensteyn finally left Surat on 15 December and reached Masulipatam on 9 February 1616. He reported adversely on the possibility of doing any business in Gujarat, as the officials were difficult to deal with, and the Portuguese were still influential in spite of Prince Khurram's assurances. He enumerated the conditions under which a factory could be established and the difficulties under which Dutch merchants would have to function. He pointed out that there was a great demand for

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toys, novelties and curiosities in the Mogul Empire.

The trade in toys, curiosities and novelties needs some explanation. Foreign merchants were helpless without the goodwill of the authorities, for seldom could a request be made without an appropriate present. The fashion of the time required that these presents should be toys or curiosities. Van Ravensteyn described the Emperor Jehangir as 'an amateur of all rarities and antiquities, and all European merchants did their best to gratify the taste of the Emperor.' Some of the articles presented to him were: drinking glasses or tumblers, cut glass platters, mirrors in ornamental frames, landscape paintings, portraits, greyhounds, strong dogs which could tackle tigers, copper lanterns and sword blades. In Shah Jehan's time the Dutch presented the emperor with copper candelabra worth Rs 20,000 weighing 200 kg, sandalwood, spice, Persian horses, mastiffs, water spaniels, elephants, hawks, parrots, small monkeys, crimson and violet velvet, Japanese writing tables, a telescope or magnifying glass, globes and a suit of armour. Though these gifts were made directly, many of the princes, Khurram included, were eager to obtain credit for presenting such novelties themselves. With this object in view, they would search all imported consignments, and take over what they fancied at a price fixed by themselves.

Though the toy trade' was neither extensive nor remunerative, it was a commercial necessity throughout India, and was a matter that had to be taken seriously. It was an indispensible preliminary to securing profitable business, as much as the give-aways and gifts serve to smooth business transactions today.

Jan Pieterszoon Coen, the director general of trade, however decided that the cottons of Gujarat were a necessity for the Indonesian markets, especially since their arrangement for buying these textiles in Achin had broken down. Pieter van der Broecke of Bantam was sent to Surat in 1616 along with Pieter Gillesen and three others to open a factory in that city. Opposition now mainly came from the English merchants led by Sir Thomas Roe, but the trading community of Surat prevailed upon Zulfikar Khan to allow the Dutch to settle in the town. Van der Broecke left Gillesen behind, where he was soon joined by van Ravensteyn, and returned to Bantam. It is to the lasting credit of these two Dutchmen that a *firman* was granted to Gillesen stipulating:

All help and friendship shall be shown to the Dutch and no more shall be exacted from them for customs, as is usual in Surat.

That merchants and brokers who sell and buy their goods shall not be molested.

That no one shall be allowed to make any claim on the effects of the Dutchmen who die, but they shall be left untouched to their lawful heirs.

That no one shall interfere in any disputes that may arise among them, but that the same shall be left to the decision of their own chief, who is put over them.

That no one shall be compelled to embrace the Mohammedan religion by force.

That according to ancient custom, no duties shall be exacted upon the provisions they purchase for their ships.

That no injustice shall be done to them under any pretext whatsoever and care shall likewise be taken that none be committed on their part.

In 1621, van der Broecke, who had some trying experiences at the battle of Jakarta, returned as director of the western quarter, that is West and North India, Iran and Arabia. He was soon followed by a number of merchants who travelled overland from the Coromandel Coast.

The Dutch now settled down to trade in Surat. They had no territorial jurisdiction or fortified settlement as they had at Pulicat. They lived as foreign merchants on the strength of a *firman* from the emperor. This *firman*, by the way, was renewed 28 times between 1618 and 1729,* and on each occasion considerable sums of money and gifts were given for the grant of fresh privileges. This and the changes in customs duties show how entirely free the Mogul felt to alter or cancel the charters granted by his predecessors.

*The *firman* of 1618 was confirmed in 1627, 1631, 1632, 1633, 1634 (twice), 1638, 1643 (thrice), 1645, 1650, 1654, 1657, 1662, (four times), 1664, 1690, 1709, 1712 (six times) and 1729.

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CHAPTER V

The General Rendezvous

Within a few years of its foundation, the Dutch East India Company had entered into treaties of trade and friendship with many of the island chiefs of South-East Asia. In India it had two factories in the kingdom of Golconda, at Masulipatam and at Petapoli. The trading stations which the pioneer companies had at Achin on the island of Sumatra and at Bantam in the north-east of the island of Java, had passed to the VOC on the amalgamation of the former. Casting round for the weakest link in the chain of Portuguese influence in the archipelago, the Dutch were drawn to Amboina, noted for its large and fragrant cloves. In 1605 they expelled the Portuguese from the island and took over all their rights and privileges. Shortly afterwards they seized Banda.

Such a wide sphere of operations required a maritime base where their homeward and outward bound fleets could load and discharge cargoes and where the goods of the inter-island trade of Asia could be collected, stored and transshipped. Many of the senior officials of the Company and several commanders of fleets had suggested that such a headquarters should be located in the region of the Straits of Sunda and Malacca, where the trade routes and the monsoon winds converged. Having failed to wrest Malacca from the Portuguese in 1606, the Dutch eyed Jakarta, about 100 km east of Bantam, where the rivalry between the sultan of Bantam and the susuhunan of Mataram could be used to their advantage.

The Seventeen in the Netherlands also realised that their wide influence in so many distant countries needed a supreme commander in the East, 'who would act as an authority over persons and their actions, so as to inspire the princes and peoples with confidence in the Dutch nation, and also regulate their

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relations with the mother country.' By a proclamation dated 26 November 1609, the States-General created a governor general and council to manage the affairs of the VOC in the East. In a subsequent proclamation, issued on the following day, Pieter Both was appointed the governor general of the Netherlands East Indies.

Annexed to the proclamation were the special instructions to the governor general, which are worth summarising here, as they describe the colonial administrative system of the Dutch.

The first article stipulated that on the governor general's arrival in Bantam, the factory council there would cease to function and would hand over charge to the newly formed Council of the Indies, consisting of five members besides the governor general. It would hereafter control and co-ordinate all the affairs and activities of the VOC in the East. Jan Lodewycksz van Roosengin,* the chief of Banda, was specifically named as one of the council. The governor general, acting on the advice of the council, was authorised to appoint such councillors and officers as were necessary to administer the Company's affairs.

The eighth and ninth articles and also the twenty-first, empowered the governor general to extend the activities of the Company to any area which could yield a profitable trade.

The tenth article set out the Company's foreign policy: 'You will particularly inquire into the relations with all kings, princes and nations with whom the company is trading, so as to know whether they are friendly and favourable or otherwise disposed, and why, and for what purpose each and everyone is so disposed to the company. You will try to find out which of them are friends or enemies of the Portuguese before the arrival of the ships of this country in the East Indies, and how each and everyone of them behaved towards our nation and towards the Portuguese. You will further inquire who are the actual rulers of the affairs of the different states and what are the best means of entering into closer relations with them in order to be able to decide what should be done not only to extend the East Indian commerce, to propagate the name of Christ for the salvation of the heathen, for the honour and reputation of our nation and

*Van Roosengin along with Willem Jansz were the first Europeans to discover Australia in March 1606.

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for the profit of the company, but also to increase it by all possible ways and means.'

Since the VOC did not possess a suitable headquarters in the East, Pieter Both was empowered to select Johore or Bantam or any other place as the capital of the Netherlands Indies and the residence of the governor general.

Private trading by the officers of the Company was prohibited and frequent searches of ships were to be carried out to discourage it.

Article twenty-two covered the trade of the Moluccas, particularly in Amboina and Banda, which should be wholly, absolutely and entirely in the hands of the Company, and no article of it should be left to anyone but the Dutch. Accordingly, Both was advised to strengthen their fortresses and garrisons in that region.

Pieter Both was also advised to lease a portion of land from the susuhunan of Mataram's regent at Jakarta, with whom the Dutch had a commercial agreement, and to erect a suitable factory there.

The twenty-eighth and twenty-ninth articles outlined the action to be taken against their old enemies: 'if they should forget themselves so as to attack you, your subjects or your allies, or cause them damage contrary to the Truce, you must counteract the same in such manner as you deem proper according to Divine and Human Right, always remembering the duty incumbent on you of upholding the nation's honour and reputation by all honourable means.'

The remaining articles covered details of the China trade. There was also reference to the death of van Deynsen at Surat and advice to the governor general that reprisals should be taken against the people of that city.

Both brought out from the Netherlands, *predikants* or ordained preachers, craftsmen and 36 women, apparently to found a colony in Bantam. He remained governor general till 1614 when he handed over to Gerard Reynat. While returning to the Netherlands, his ship was wrecked off the coast of Mauritius where he perished. The Pieter Both mountain and bay on that island were named after him.

On the appointment of Reynat, more detailed instructions were issued covering the port-to-port trade, the type of vessels

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to be used and the frequency of the China runs. The governor general was advised to periodically change the heads of establishments to avoid any possible misuse of power and position. Private trading was to be ruthlessly stamped out, and all ships returning home or trading from port to port were to be searched for contraband goods. The van Deynsen affair was again referred to and the governor general enjoined to obtain compensation or to take such other action as he thought fit.

Reynat died at Jakarta a year after his arrival and the council elected Dr Laurens Reael,the governor of the Moluccas, to act as governor general. On 21 March 1618, Jan Pieterszoon Coen was appointed by the Seventeen to succeed Reael. In the third set of instructions the Council for the Indies was specified, which was to consist of nine members:

1st member The most able merchant who can be found.
2nd ,, A valiant and able sailor, a Vice-Admiral.
3rd ,, One of the most able and experienced officers of the army.
4th ,, A person learned in law and equity.
5th ,, The director general of the offices of trade in the East Indies.
6th ,, The governor of the Moluccas.
7th ,, The director of the Coromandel establishments.
8th ,, The governnor of Amboina.
9th ,, The governor of Banda.

Then followed the powers of the governor general and the salaries and wages of all the officials, the governor general, the director general of the offices of trade and the governor of the Moluccas receiving the highest, 250 florins a month. Special instructions were issued regarding prisoners, especially Spaniards who were to be used only as galley slaves; the Chinese were to be encouraged to settle in the Moluccas as they were not only industrious, but harmless people not prone to carrying arms. The governor general was once again instructed to select a capital for the seat of government in Asia, and that peaceful means should be used to gain possession of such a place.

Malacca was the first preference being traditionally a place of great commerce and comparatively near to China. But their attempt to take this city from the Portuguese in 1606 had failed

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miserably, and in Both's time the Dutch did not possess sufficient forces to make a second attempt. On the other hand, if they moved from Bantam, their trade in pepper there would pass into the hands of the English. So the Dutch decided to retain Bantam until circumstances forced Jan Pieterszoon Coen, who became governor general in 1618 to take the initiative in founding the city of Batavia.

From the beginning of the century, the English, though far inferior in resources, followed the Dutch wherever they settled, in Bantam in 1602, in Amboina and Banda in 1604, in Borneo and the Coromandel in 1610, and in Surat as well as in Jakarta in 1614. Although the governments of Great Britain and the United Provinces had for several years tried to maintain friendly relations between their respective Companies in the East, what really took place there was anything but amicable. In Bantam there were frequent street fights between the factors and the staff of both nations. During the time of Dr Laurens Reael a serious riot broke out as a result of some Portuguese and Spanish prisoners escaping from Dutch custody and hiding aboard a British vessel, whom the English refused to hand over. The Dutch retaliated by capturing two British ships sailing to Banda. One incident led to another with the sultan of Bantam sometimes supporting the English and at other times, the Dutch.

A few months after Coen assumed office, a British fleet under Sir Thomas Dale was sent to Bantam with the declared intention of 'teaching these Dutchmen a lesson' and driving them out of the area. Coen was caught unawares; he had insufficient soldiers and only seven ships with which to defend Bantam and their factory at Jakarta whose fortifications were incomplete. The situation became worse with the arrival of a second British fleet and the regent of Jakarta attacking the Dutch factory. He called upon Pieter van der Broecke, the senior merchant of Bantam, who happened to be in Jakarta, to defend the factory and if necessary to surrender to Dale and not to the regent, while he sailed to the Moluccas for reinforcements.

Dale assured himself of the support of the sultan of Bantam with a gift of 1,500 reals, 10 cannons and 20 barrels of gunpowder. At this moment van der Broecke received a message from the regent that the attack would be called off if he received 5,000 reals in cash and 1,000 reals worth of cloth. When the

Dutchman went across to the regent's palace he was attacked and captured, and according to Danvers, forced to write a letter to his '*tweede*' or second in command to surrender the factory. Dale intervened by suggesting that it would be better to surrender to a Christian nation than to a heathen. As arrangements were being made for the surrender, the sultan of Bantam attacked the regent who in turn set free van der Broecke. The latter realised that the only course open to him was to defend the factory at any cost. At this moment the Dutch frigate *Ceylon* sailed into Jakarta with Coen on board, followed the next morning by a fleet of 16 ships.

On 30 May 1619 Coen bombarded the English factory, then attacked and captured the town of Jakarta which he destroyed along with the regent's palace and mosque. Dale retired to Bantam to defend their outpost there and later put out to sea. All this Coen did in defiance of the Seventeen at home, who had emphasised that the site of the general rendezvous should be secured by peaceful negotiation and not by the force of arms.

The governor general wrote of his conquest in exultant and enthusiastic terms: 'all the kings of these lands know full well what the planting of our colony at Jakarta signifies and what may follow from it, as well as the cleverest and most far-seeing politician in Europe might do.' Justifying the force of arms, Coen added, 'Your Honours should know by experience that trade in Asia must be driven and maintained under the protection and favour of Your Honours' own weapons; and that the weapons must be paid for by the profits of trade; so that we cannot carry on trade without war, nor war without trade.'

The year-long skirmish between the English and the Dutch and the rivalry between the rulers of Bantam and Jakarta had caused most of the local people to seek asylum elsewhere. When Coen captured Jakarta on 30 May 1619, which he renamed Batavia, he had a capital without a population; 'from a paradise the city had become a wilderness'. He was faced with the task of building a new city and peopling it. Masons, carpenters, market-gardeners, shop-keepers and many other tradesmen and craftsmen were needed, besides labour. Residences, lodges, warehouses, wharves and a castle had to be built. The Chinese were the first to move across from Sumatra and Malaya. They lived in their own quarters under their own headman. The

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Javanese from other parts of the island followed and so did the Malayans. From India, slaves were brought at the rate of a thousand a year with lesser numbers from Burma. The growing population had to be provided with food and clothing, which the Dutch imported from the Coromandel Coast, from Bengal and later from Sri Lanka.

Under Coen's administration (he was twice governor general, from 1618 to 1623 and again from 1627 to 1629), Batavia grew rapidly to prosperity, magnificence and importance which made it both the admiration and the dread of the nations of the Indonesian Archipelago. Batavia, 'the Queen of the Eastern Seas', gave the Dutch a position comparable to that of the Portuguese in Goa, a century earlier.

Hendrik Brouwer, one of the few directors of the Company who came out to Batavia, became governor general in 1632. On this occasion a fresh set of the instructions were issued embodying all the earlier orders. The council was advised to reduce expenditure on the maintenance of forts and the repair of ships. Wedding gifts to young women from Holland at the time of their marriage in the Indies were abolished. Economy was to be observed on the premium paid for slaves; and the giving of presents to rulers and princes, as well as the funerals of officials who died in service in the Indies, were to be carried out with the least possible ostentation. There were also instructions on the Dutch trade in Surat, Iran, China, Japan and Taiwan and a reference to Masulipatam, which was to be retained in spite of the difficulties the Dutch had been experiencing in the past.

By this time the governor general and his council had more or less become independent of the Seventeen and of the States-General. Forceful personalities such as Coen and later van Diemen, Rijkloff van Goens and Speelman preferred to present the Seventeen with a *fait accompli*. Very few of the directors had ever served in Asia or even showed much interest in the political situation there. They were dependent on the advice and knowledge of their overseas representatives, and though at times critical of the policies initiated by men of expansionist views, they usually ended up by accepting the *fait accompli* or by sending the ships, men and money for which they were asked. This attitude is seen in the cynical observation made to Francois Valentyn, a Dutch *predikant*, when he showed the director general

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at Batavia a written order from the Seventeen; 'the directors in the fatherland decide matters as it seems best to them there, but we do here what seems best and most adviseable to us.'

With the expansion of the Dutch sphere of operations in the East, the council which in 1609 had five members and later nine, was enlarged to 17 members, the director general ranking next after the governor general whom he invariably succeeded on death or retirement. There were five councillors including the director general, one of whom (after 1652) was the governor of the Cape of Good Hope; nine extraordinary councillors and two secretaries. The directors or governors of the Coromandel, Sri Lanka, Samarang and Macassar were usually extraordinary members of the Council of the Indies. In addition there were three ex-officio members, the port admiral, the attorney general and the water fiscal.

The Council of the Indies governed and controlled the commercial policy of the VOC, the civil, naval and military administration and the postings, transfers, promotions and dismissals of all the Company's servants. Preachers and members of the Council of Justice were appointed in and sent from the Netherlands, and the governor general's council had no jurisdiction over them except in the case of transfers.

Theoretically, the governor general had no personal authority, and was totally guided by the majority decision of the council, whose resolutions under his signature became acts binding on all the merchants, servicemen, priests, artisans and others in the Company's service, as well as the 'free' Dutchmen. Since the extraordinary councillors had no say in any matter except the pardoning of criminals condemned to death, the defence of the Dutch settlements and the election of an acting governor general, the latter had to deal with only five members, and his desires and wishes were usually ratified by the majority, for few would ever oppose him. All of them at some time or another needed his help, to secure employment for their relatives, to seek postings of their choice or lucrative appointments in Batavia or elsewhere. Not all the governor generals were of the calibre of Coen, van Diemen or Maetsuyker. Adriaan Valckenier who held this position from 1737 to 1741 had ordered van Schinnen and de Haaze to be sent back to the Netherlands as prisoners. When the council opposed him, he surrounded the table with his

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bodyguard and refused to allow them to leave until they had agreed with his action. It would be of interest to record that though he was tried and acquitted of the charges of massacring the Chinese in Batavia in 1740, he was found guilty of gross miscarriage of justice and executed.

The director generals had complete and independent control of the Company's trade, and with few exceptions were men of considerable business acumen and great administrative ability. In addition to their local responsibilities, the resident councillors held overall charge of certain factories and were also nominated as presidents or managers of various bodies and chambers, such as Registrars of Marriage, the Orphans' Chamber, the Bankruptcy Chamber and the Opium Society.

The two secretaries who held the rank of merchant were mainly concerned with recording discussions, drafting resolutions, getting them signed and issued as acts under the governor general's signature. They also wrote out and issued letters of appointment, transfer and promotion, for which they were paid a special allowance. The private secretary to the governor general was a man of his own choice who was usually promoted to the position of secretary to the council. There were numerous clerks and assistants at the government house in Batavia, all of whom aspired to higher and better paid positions in the company's service.

The port admiral, one of the three ex-officio members, signed the sailing orders, examined the ships' journals and was responsible for ship repairs. The attorney general or advocate fiscal was the chief law officer, who also acted as public prosecutor; and the water fiscal or naval provost marshall was the head of security, as his main function was to detect fraud, smuggling, private trade and the like. The attorney general and the water fiscal were also members of the Council of Justice.

Though technically the Council of Justice was independent of the governor general, its members being appointed directly in the Netherlands for a period of ten years, they were invariably committed to the governor general. On his orders they could be relieved before their tenure was completed, either to fill a vacancy as governor or director or even as a councillor of the Indies.

Batavia, the general rendezvous in the East which Jan Pieters-

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zoon Coen specially built as a place where Dutch ships could load and discharge their cargoes, and where the chief executive of the Dutch Company would reside, quickly developed from a maritime centre to an oriental capital of great splendour and power. With few exceptions the Dutchmen who came out to the East belonged to the middle and working classes. The United Provinces had nothing which represented a traditional monarchy nor could the court of the prince of Orange rival the dignity and magnificence of its neighbours. It was not long before Dutch merchants abroad gazed in wonder at the *durbar* of the Great Mogul or of the other great emperors of Iran, China and Japan.

The display of great wealth and power, pomp and ceremony was not only the prerogative of an Eastern potentate; it was the European's method of impressing and over-awing the 'native' and showing that they were no less important than the local governor or ruler. The governor general of the Netherlands Indies also held court in a manner which several European and Asiatic sovereigns may have envied. This august personage gave public audience twice a week, not to hear the grievances of his subjects, but to receive their acclamation. Not a soul could speak to him except on matters of the greatest urgency; inaccessible to almost everyone, no man or woman was allowed to pass his mansion, and everyone in the street had to stop, bare their heads and bow deeply when he passed. His councillors, to a lesser degree, kept up the same state; the harbour of Batavia resounded with the boom of cannons whenever they entered and left the port. Millions of people in Asia were subject to the sway of the Council of Batavia, and kings and queens were crowned or dethroned by its mandates.

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The Dutch East India Company's Possessions and Settlements in 1725

BATAVIA: Capital of the Netherlands Indies and residence of the governor general. Modern Jakarta.

AMBOINA: Governor. Now known as Malaku; comprised 10 islands including Amboina, Hitu, Leitimor, Haraku, Supurua, the Uliasser islands and Laut.

BANDA: Governor. Nine islands including Pulu Run, Banda Neira, Lontor and Rozengyn.

BANTAM: Senior merchant. West Java on the Sunda Straits.

BENGAL: Director.

CAPE OF GOOD HOPE: Governor.

CHERIBON: Senior merchant. 240 km east of Batavia.

COROMANDEL: Director.

GUJARAT: Director.

IRAN: Director.

JAMBI: Senior merchant. Centre of the east coast of Sumatra.

JAPAN: Senior merchant. Included Hirado, an island on the west coast of Japan, near Sasebo and Deshima on the island of Nagasaki.

KERALA: Commander. Responsible to the governor of Sri Lanka.

MACASSAR: Governor. Southern tip of the island of Celebes, now known as Sulawesi.

MALACCA: Governor. All the factories in the Malayan peninsula and the east coast of Sumatra, excluding Jambi and Palembang.

MOCHA: Senior merchant.

MOLUCCAS: Governor. Also called the Spice Islands. They lie between the Celebes and New Guinea (Irian Jaya) and include Ternate, Tidore, Ceram, Jijolo, Halmahera, Batjan, as well as Amboina and Banda, which were under separate governors.

PALEMBANG: Senior merchant. East coast of Sumatra.

SAMARANG: Commander. North-east Java.

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SOLAR & TIMOR: Senior merchant. Two islands about 700 km west of Darwin, Australia. Now known as Nusa Tenggara.
SRI LANKA: Governor.
WEST SUMATRA: Senior merchant. Bengkulu (Bencoleen) and Padang.

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Governor Generals of the Netherlands Indies

Pieter Both	1609-14	Hendrik Zwaar-decroon	1718-25
Gerard Reynat	1614-15	Mattheus de Haan	1725-29
Laurens Reael	1615-18	Diederik Durven	1729-32
Jan Pieterszoon Coen	1618-23	Dirk van Cloon	1732-35
Pieter Carpentier	1623-27	Abraham Patras	1735-37
Jan Pieterszoon Coen	1627-29	Adriaan Valckenier	1737-41
Jacques Specx	1629-32	Johannes Thedens	1741-43
Hendrik Brouwer	1632-36	Willem Gustaff, Baron van Imhoff	1743-50
Antonio van Diemen	1636-45	Jakob Mossel	1750-61
Cornelis van der Lijn	1645-50	Pieter Albert van der Parra	1761-75
Carel Reyniersz	1650-52	Jeremias van Riemsdijk	1775-77
Johan Maetsuyker	1653-78	Reinier de Klerk	1777-80
Rijkloff van Goens (Senior)	1678-81	Willem Arnold Alting	1780-97
Cornelis Speelman	1681-84	Pieter Gerard van Overstraten	1797-1801
Johannes Campius	1684-91	Johannes Siberg	1801-5
Willem van Outhoorn	1691-1704	Albert Hendrik Wiese	1805-8
Johan van Hoorn	1704-09		
Abraham van Riebeck	1709-13		
Christoffel van Swoll	1713-18		

The Republic of Batavia was constituted, on the French pattern, in January 1795 after the revolution in the Netherlands, when the Stadtholder fled to England. This republic lasted till 1806, when Napoleon placed his brother Louis on the throne of Holland. Louis Bonaparte abdicated in 1810.

Herman Willem Daendels	1808-11	Jan Willem Janssens	1811

Napoleon surrendered on 17 September 1811. By the Convention of London of 1814 between Great Britain and the Netherlands,

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Java and its dependencies were returned to Holland. Three Dutch commissioners, C.T. Elout, Baron van der Capellen and J.C. Busykes arrived to take over from John Fendall, the British lieutenant governor.

Godert Alexander Gerard-Philip, Baron van der Capellen	1816-26
Hendrik Merkus de Kock	1826-30
Johannes van der Bosch	1830-33
Jean Chretien Baud	1833-36
Dominique Jacques de Eerens	1836-40
Carel Sieards Willem, Graf van Hogendorp	1840-41
Pieter Merkus	1841-44
Johan Cornelis Reynst	1844-45
Jan Jakob Rochussen	1845-51
Albert Jakob Duymaer van Twist	1851-56
Charles Ferdinand Pahud	1856-61
Ary Prinsz	1861
Ludolff Anne-Jan Wiet, Baron Siolet van der Berle	1861-66
Ary Prinsz	1866
Pieter Mijer	1866-72
James Loudon	1872-75
Johan Willem van Lansberg	1875-81
Frederik s'Jacob	1881-84
Otto van Rees	1884-88
Cornelis Pijnacker Hordijk	1888-93
Carel Hermansaart van der Wijk	1893-1904

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CHAPTER VI

Gujarat

The region generally known as Gujarat, that is, where the Gujarati language is spoken, includes the peninsulae of Kathiawar and Cutch. Kathiawar was called Saurashtra by the ancient Hindus and Sorath by the Muslims. Though the official and literary language of Cutch is Gujarati, the spoken vernacular there is a dialect of Sindhi.

The mainland section of Gujarat enjoys exceptional natural advantages. It is a fertile land where many rivers discharge their waters into the Gulf of Cambay, and various crops are grown in the valleys between the rivers. It is well supplied with manufactures and possesses numerous ports whence profitable overseas commerce has been practised since remote times. A country so desirable has necessarily attracted the attention of all the races which have conquered northern and western India.

Mahmud of Ghazni's famous raid of A.D. 1024 and the destruction of the temple of Somnath provided immense booty for his army, but no attempt at permanent conquest was then made. Muslim invasions towards the end of the twelfth century also did not produce any permanent result. The country continued to be ruled by Hindu dynasties till 1297 when an officer of Ala-ud-din Khilji annexed it to the sultanate of Delhi. Thereafter Muslim governors were appointed from the capital as long as that sultanate existed.

The last governor, Zafar Khan who was appointed in 1391, and had been practically independent, formally withdrew his allegiance in 1401. His grandson who assumed the style of Sultan Ahmed Shah and who ruled for 30 years was the real founder of the kingdom of Gujarat. In the time of his father and grandfather, they controlled a comparatively small piece of territory in the neighbourhood of the old Hindu town of Asawal. Ahmed Shah

extended his territory, spread the religion of the Prophet and built the noble city of Ahmedabad, adjoining Asawal. 'Travellers are agreed', wrote a local historian, 'that they have found no city in the whole earth so beautiful, charming and splendid.' The prosperity of Ahmedabad, according to a local saying, hangs on three threads—silk, gold and cotton.

Mahmud Begara or Bigarha, Ahmed Shah's grandson, ascended the throne in 1459 at the age of 13, and ruled prosperously for 52 years. He was eminently successful in war, made himself master of the fortresses of Champaner to the north-east of Baroda, and of Junagadh in Kathiawar. He overran Cutch and gained victories over the sultan of Ahmednagar and other princes.

Towards the end of his reign, Mahmud Begara came into conflict with the Portuguese who had established themselves in Cochin, and were expanding their influence northwards along the west coast of India. He allied himself with the sultan of Egypt and the zamorin of Calicut against the Portuguese. A squadron of Egyptian ships built at Suez reached India in 1507 where it was joined by the Indian fleet. The combined forces defeated a Portuguese flotilla at Chaul. But in 1509 the Muslim fleet was annihilated in a battle fought off Diu.

There were many stories told in Europe about Mahmud Begara, mainly brought there by the Italian traveller Ludovico di Varthema. His moustaches were reputed to be so long that he tied them over his head, and his beard reached to his waist. His appetite was enormous and he was credited with eating over nine kilograms of food a day. Mahmud was believed to have been dosed with poison from childhood and to have become immune to its effects. His body was so saturated with venom that if a fly settled on his hand, it would drop dead. The legend found its way into English literature, through Samuel Butler's reference in *Hudibras*: 'The Prince of Cambay's daily food, Is asp and basilisk and toad.'

The last noteable sultan of Gujarat was Bahadur Shah (1526–1537) whose uneasy life was ended by a tragic death at the hands of the Portuguese. In 1535 Bahadur Shah was defeated by Humayun, who, driven from his kingdom was forced to take refuge in Malwa. Mogul pressure forced Bahadur Shah to conclude a treaty of peace with the Portuguese by ceding Bassein to them. While negotiations for the transfer of Diu were taking

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place, the sultan visited the Portuguese governor, Nuno da Cunha, on board his ship. Both parties apparently had hoped by some future treachery to seize the person of the other. Bahadur Shah in attempting to return, jumped overboard and while in the water was knocked on the head by a Portuguese sailor and killed.

The subsequent history of Gujarat till 1572 is a record of anarchical confusion, until Akbar laid claim to this rich province on the grounds that it had been subject to Delhi in the days of the Khiljis and Muhammed bin Tughluq.

Akbar's conquest of Gujarat in 1573 gave the Mogul free access to the sea and all the rich merchandise passing through Surat and other western ports. The territory and income of the province was considerably extended and the viceroyalty of Gujarat became one of the most important posts in the gift of the emperor. Akbar saw the sea for the first time and came into contact with the Portuguese in Cambay and Surat. The Mogul however had nothing which resembled a navy and his vessels had to pay tolls to the Portuguese who claimed the monopoly of the Indian sea routes. It was towards the end of Akbar's reign that the Dutch appeared in India.

Surat, the Gate of Mecca, was a important seaport in the empire. Situated at the mouth of the River Tapti, it handled all that the hinterland could produce, though much was consumed by the Mogul Empire, the Deccan states and the nayaks farther south. It was one of the most eminent cities of trade in India in the sixteenth century. Merchandise from the Red Sea ports, north-east Africa, the Gulf countries, Europe, China and southern India was transhipped at Surat. Goods from Agra, Lahore and Kashmir were brought down and stored in its warehouses. Many rich and influential merchants, traders, bankers and brokers from all the lands of the Eastern Seas lived in and carried on their business in Surat.

On gaining a foothold in Gujarat, the Dutch were determined to make Surat their chief city in India, next to their newly acquired capital, Batavia. Their only rivals were the English and the Portuguese. To discountenance their English competitors, the Dutch accused them of being in league with the Malabar pirates and of attacking and capturing pilgrim ships sailing for Jidda. They paid higher prices for Indian products and sold European

goods at a loss in their efforts to hinder English trade in Surat. Portuguese power which had already begun to wane was entirely broken by the Dutch; as a result Goa, Cochin and Malacca and many other ports lost their great trade. The commerce of the Red Sea region and of Iran was intimately connected with the markets of Gujarat, and Mocha was an important seaport where Indian goods were transhipped for Egypt and the Mediterranean. In 1620 the Dutch occupied Mocha. The Persian Gulf trade was controlled by the Portuguese at Ormuz (Hormuz) Island near Qishm. Iranian exports to India consisted of horses, dried fruits, perfumes and a variety of luxury goods. Silk was an outstanding commercial product of Iran and the monopoly of the shah. In 1622 the English joined the Iranians and ousted the Portuguese from Ormuz. It was utterly destroyed and ceased to exist as a port or as a mart, its commerce being transferred to Bandar Abbas (Gombroon) on the mainland. Though the Dutch took no part in the seige of Ormuz, they were able to secure great advantages in the Iranian markets by the large quantities of spices which they were able to supply, mainly due to their monopoly in the archipelago. The demand for Iranian silk continued till about the middle of the seventeenth century when it was supplanted by Bengal silk.

As a result of the freeing of the sea routes from Portuguese domination, Goa's prosperous trade in the Red Sea and with Iran, as well as with China and the Far East, slumped. The Dutch openly captured their vessels and took over the port-to-port traffic. They could blockade any harbour, capture any ship, shut up any Indian or Asiatic merchants in their ports, and above all they appropriated the coastal and foreign trade to themselves.

As early as 1622, Asaf Khan, Prince Khurram's father-in-law, accused the Dutch of seizing and confiscating a ship and its cargo which belonged to him. There was much truth in this allegation, as the Dutch in their search for Portuguese shipping, captured Mogul vessels or vessels carrying imperial cargo. Relying on the Dutch navy, the merchant at Cambay took a high-handed attitude, threatening Coen's vengeance. Though the Mogul was helpless at sea, he was by no means incompetent on land. The factor was arrested and taken to Agra and the factory closed. It was only after van der Broecke paid a large indemnity

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that the Cambay factory was able to function again. Incidents like this were common in a strong and despotic empire like that of the Mogul, but they did not prevent the Dutch from making large profits in Gujarat. In 1624 the first ship sailed directly from Surat to the Netherlands.

Johan van Hasselt, who succeeded Pieter van der Broecke as director of Surat, in his letter dated 25 December 1628 to the council, describes the situation in Surat: 'The moors were not pleased that the Dutch began to trade in tobacco and rice etc. which they brought to Persia. The moors complain that we are taking every trade out of their hands, that we should be content with cargoes bound homewards, the rich cargoes sent south and the friendship of the moors should be worth more to the Dutch than the small trade. The Dutch should moreover assist and protect them. They complained to the king that we did not give any profit to his subjects and were here only to seek our own profit and to turn everyone out of the trade.' Van Hasselt goes on to say that it would be unsafe for Dutchmen to walk in the streets of Surat, so unpopular had they become.

Factories were opened in several cities in Gujarat, Sind, Pakistan and in northern India at Agra. The Dutch factory in Agra dealt mainly in the supply of spices, and in mercury, vermilion, ivory, red woollen cloth and curiosities. From the region around Agra and to the east they obtained indigo which was of the best quality, as well as saltpetre, borax and a variety of fine and coarse cottons. The trade of Agra has been described in detail by Francisco Pelsaert who came out to the Coromandel in 1620 as a junior merchant, travelled overland to Surat, whence he was immediately posted to Agra. Pelsaert who became an expert indigo-buyer and even mastered Urdu, remained in Agra till 1627, rising to the position of *opper-koopman* or senior merchant. He returned home in 1628, was reappointed and sent back to Batavia in command of a fleet, his flagship being the *Batavia*.

The voyage was disastrous. The *Batavia* was driven far south and shipwrecked on an island off the west coast of Australia. Pelsaert undertook an adventurous boat journey to Java, reached Batavia and returned on a relief vessel to the scene of the wreck, where a serious mutiny had occurred. He dealt severely with the mutineers and brought the crew back to Batavia. The story of this

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shipwreck has a literature of its own. The journal of the voyage was published in Holland, translated by de Thevenot, and it reappeared as the 'hard-headed Dutch sailor, Capt. Francis Pelsart' in tales of adventure published in the last century.

Returning to Dutch affairs in Gujarat, Surat became their commercial capital of West and North India, Iran and Arabia. Fourteen factories and agencies were subordinate to the director of Surat: Bandar Abbas (Gombroon), Lar, Shiraz and Isfahan in Iran; Basra in Iraq; Mocha in Yeman; Tatta in Sind, (Pakistan); and Agra, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Broach, Cambay, Sirkhej (Sarkhej) and Vengurla in India.

Many of the agencies did not remain long under Surat. Bandar Abbas, Lar, Shiraz and Isfahan were subordinate from 1622 to 1633, when they were placed directly under Batavia. Basra and Mocha remained with Surat till 1686 during which period the Mocha establishment was frequently closed and reopened, until they also were placed under Batavia. The Dutch retired from Agra in 1720 when as a result of disturbed political conditions in the north, it was decided to close the factory. Ahmedabad, Broach and Tatta in Sind were opened along with the factory in Surat and functioned till 1744; Baroda, Cambay and Sirkhej were abandoned in 1670. Vengurla, north of Goa had Dutch merchants resident there as early as 1636. It was placed under the 'commandeur' or commander of Cochin in 1677 who was subordinate to the governor of Sri Lanka.

While Shah Jehan was encamped at Burhanpur, intent on his schemes to subdue the sultans of the Deccan, a terrible famine desolated Gujarat and the adjoining regions. There are several accounts of the famine of 1630-31; the official historian, Abdul Hamid's, an English traveller, Peter Mundy's and that of van Twist, a Dutch merchant in Surat. The latter account is interesting enough to bear quotation:

'So little rain fell that the grain sown was lost and no grass grew, cattle died in large numbers in villages, in fields and on roads, men lay dead in great numbers causing such a stench that it was terrible to use the ways. For want of grass cattle fed on corpses, some in desperation searching for bones which had been gnawed by dogs. As the famine increased, men abandoned towns and villages and wandered helplessly. It was easy to recognise their condition—eyes sunk deep in the head, lips pale and covered with slime,

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the skin hard with bones showing through; the belly nothing but a pouch hanging down empty, knuckles and knee-caps showing. One would cry and howl for hunger, while another lay stretched on the ground dying in misery. Wherever you went you saw nothing but misery, you saw nothing but corpses.

'Men deserted their wives and children; women sold themselves into slavery. Mothers sold their children, children deserted their parents and sold themselves. Some families took poison and so died together, others threw themselves in the rivers, so that the rivers flowed full of corpses. Some ate carrion flesh, others cut up the corpses of men to fill their bellies—men lying in the street, not yet dead were cut up by others so that even in the streets men ran in danger of being murdered and eaten.

'Terrible tragedies were seen every day. We learnt that a mother had killed and cooked her only son, husbands ate their wives, wives their husbands, children their parents. Many hundred thousands died of hunger so that the whole country was covered with corpses lying unburied which caused a great stench and the whole air was filled and injected with it. Some of our Dutchmen coming from Ahmedabad found people sitting at a little fire where hands and feet were cooking, a terrible sight to see. In the village of Susuntra human flesh was sold in the open market.

'The punishment was not yet over. In 1631 the Almighty sent locusts, rats, mice and other vermin which brought heavy damage to the young crops. The heavy rain caused ripening crops to perish in the fields, flooded rivers caused greater loss in towns and villages and the country. This famine lasted throughout the year and pestilence and fever followed, so that scarcely a healthy man could be found. The dead lay scattered in the streets, corpses lay for days in houses because men could not be paid to carry them out. Wood could not be had for pyres and unburnt corpses were buried or thrown in the river. May the Almighty protect all Christian lands from such terrible calamities.'

The famine of 1630 caused a break up of family life, loss of agricultural capital, aimless wandering, voluntary enslavement and deaths from suicide or from starvation. There were hardly any measures for state relief though there are references to the opening of public kitchens, the refunding of taxes and money being allotted for relief. Overland transport costs increased. Gold prices fell as more was sold and skilled workers were difficult

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to replace as children no longer had their fathers to guide and teach them. The Dutch and the English did what they could to alleviate the lot of their workers by importing grain from Iran. By 1635 the situation had improved and the Dutch factories in Gujarat were functioning normally.

Much of their early success was due to the services rendered by a Gujarati merchant-prince named Virji Vora,* whom the Rev John l'Escaliot, the East India Company's chaplain in Surat in 1664, called 'the richest merchant in the world.'† From 1619, Vora, who was a wholesale merchant, broker and banker or money-lender, is frequently referred to in commercial records usually buying or selling such varied commodities as cotton, opium, spices, ivory, coral, lead, silver and gold, practically everything which changed hands in the wholesale market of Surat. His business was on a large scale and syndicates controlled by him bought entire cargoes valued between a half and one million rupees. Such large scale purchases secured for him a temporary monopoly of a particular item, such as spices, which he would sell at a profit of 50 per cent. He controlled the pepper market in Surat and the coastal trade to a few small ports in Kerala which were not dominated by the Portuguese. He had agencies in Ahmedabad, Agra, Burhanpur and Golconda as well as in the North Malabar and on the Coromandel Coast. He traded with Java, Iran and Iraq using Dutch and English shipping. Virji Vora dominated the business community of Surat. His personal fortune was estimated at eight million rupees.

In 1630 Masih-uz-Zaman, the governor, proposed a business partnership. When he refused, Vora was arrested and imprisoned. What the charges were no one knew, but the proceedings appear to have been irregular. He was summoned to Agra to answer the charges in person, but such was his influence that it was the governor who was removed from his post. He lost heavily in Shivaji's raids on Surat in 1664 and 1670. Anonymous petitions reached Batavia accusing him of corrupt dealings with the Dutch factors, but once again nothing came of the accusations. Virji Vora died in 1677.

Merchants like Virji Vora and later on 'Podemsee', who bought a consignment of orient pearls from Iran valued at one

*Sometimes spelt Baharji Borah or Pirji Borah
†Indian Antiquary 1921, p. 312 ff.

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hundred million rupees, welcomed the presence of European traders. Hitherto not only had Indian merchants been prohibited from doing business in certain commodities, but their carriers had to be Portuguese vessels or vessels with Portuguese permits; many ports were closed to trade and the patrol of the high seas rendered the sea routes dangerous. The arrival of the Dutch (and also the English) changed all this, and though the Dutch preferred to enter the carrying trade themselves, they were not averse to acting as carriers whenever shipping space was available. Dutch freight rates being the lowest, Indian merchants invariably preferred to use Dutch bottoms.

By this time, the French, the Danes, the Swedes, Flemings and Greeks had settled in Surat; yet the most successful of the European merchants were the Dutch. Their success, to a great extent, was due to their monopoly of spices in Indonesia which gave them considerable advantage wherever this item was in demand. Added to this was their sound administration.

The chain of responsibility in the East was strict, each director or governor being entirely responsible to the Council of the Indies for the profitable working of all the factories and agencies under his command. Frequent conferences were held to develop new lines of business, and periodical inspections were carried out to maintain discipline and to curtail abuses. In the early years of Dutch expansion in India, the Company's officers were, with few exceptions, loyal, devoted and capable which cannot be said of other Europeans trading in India. By the end of the seventeenth century Dutchmen started yielding to temptation. The superiority of the Dutch system was acknowledged by Elihu Yale,* the governor of Madras in 1687, who sent the directors of the English East India Company a manual of Dutch procedure: '. . . as there appears in this, great wisdom and policy, we recommend to you frequent reading and consideration of what is contained in these papers, which the oftener you read, the more you will discover the wisdom of the persons who contrived these methods. . . . Our design is to set up the Dutch government among the English in the Indies, for the good of posterity.'

The system of management by committees, that is by the factory councils, ensured that the Company's interests took

*Yale University, a leading educational institution in the U.S.A. received its name from Elihu Yale, who largely endowed it in 1716.

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perference over all other considerations. Every action was deliberated upon, every incident from the personal behaviour of one of their own subordinates, the activities of other traders, both Indian and foreign, to the political changes in the land, were faithfully recorded and communicated to the superior authorities. Every year the governor general and council would write a report to the Seventeen in the Netherlands on the state of trade throughout Asia. Some of these *generale missieven* ran to over a thousand pages, with attachments in original or copies of letters from the heads of subordinate factories to Batavia, or letters exchanged between chief merchants. Each retiring director or governor or chief of establishment left a memorandum describing the trade and other relevant matters of his region, for the guidance of his successor, and needless to say a copy of this report was also sent to Batavia.

Dutch imports at Surat were gold, silver, lead, mercury, tin, and copper; as well as cloves, nutmeg, mace, pepper, ivory, porcelain, and toys and curiosities. Other articles handled were benzoin, camphor, areca nuts, sandalwood, cowries, sugar, coral, ebony, gems and jewellery.

For the European markets, they needed indigo which was mainly used for dyeing wool. The area around Agra, Delhi and Lahore produced the purest quality, whereas the Sirkhej production was adulterated with mud. Saltpetre was an important ingredient in the manufacture of gunpowder and for salting meat. The third item was cloth of all description; other articles of export were raw cotton and yarn, wax, borax, carpets and diamonds.

The average profits of the Surat factory from imports and exports amounted to nearly Rs 640,000 a year. From 1662 to 1670 after the Dutch were established in Sri Lanka and in Kerala, their profits in spices alone were Rs 304,000 a year or 520 per cent; and from 1688 to 1698 it went up to Rs 463,000 or an annual average of 790 per cent. All other items yielded an average of sixty per cent.

Foreign merchants, including the Dutch, were as wealthy as their Gujarati counterparts. The Dutch found it useful to impress the local population by imitating Mogul pomp and ceremony, and by the ostentatious display of wealth and power. The director appeared in public in the same style as a noble of the imperial

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court, preceded by a white horse of state, trumpeters and mace bearers, reclining in a palanquin while servants fanned him with ostrich feathers.

From Surat great pilgrim fleets set out yearly for Arabia; and to Swally, its anchorage, came Arab dhows, Chinese junks and Indiamen from Europe, bringing merchants and traders, to trade in her bazaars. At the time of the spring tides ships of 1,000 tonnes burden could anchor beside the city. It was common to see more than 100 vessels anchored off Surat, those of the Dutch being most numerous and those of the Arabs, conspicuous by their enormous streamers of blood red silk. The customs revenue of the town amounted to Rs 700,000 a year.

Although Akbar had fortified the city and allotted a yearly sum to the governor for its upkeep and defence, succeeding governors had reduced the garrison and appropriated the salary of the troops. Elsewhere the more wealthy merchants would hire private guards to protect their mansions, shops and warehouses, but in Surat, this custom had fallen into disuse, so general was the sense of security and so great was the confidence in imperial protection.

On Tuesday 5 January 1664, Shivaji camped before Surat and sent word offering to spare the city if three of its richest Mohammedan merchants presented themselves to ransom their fellow citizens. A reasonable proposal, to which the governor sent no reply. On the contrary, he lost his head and shut himself in the citadel with his guards, and left the town to the mercy of the Marathas. Panic prevailed in the city as futile attempts were made to bury or conceal the accumulated wealth of years. Some scrambled into fishing boats with their possessions, while others scattered over the countryside hiding in woods.

Shivaji ordered his troops to sack the city from one end to the other. The only resistance offered was by Theodore van Adrichem, the Dutch director and Sir George Oxenden of the English factory, who barricaded their buildings and prepared to defend their property. The English even went to the rescue of Said Beg (one of the three merchants Shivaji had sent for to ransom the city) by stationing soldiers around his mansion, while the Dutch gave asylum to the governor. Shivaji was apparently impressed by these foreigners and made no move against them. The plight of those who had neither fled nor who were lucky enough to

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have such guardians, was pitiable. There are many instances of Shivaji's humanity—the houses and property of priests were spared and when he learnt that a certain merchant had been charitable to the poor with gifts of food and provisions, he ordered that neither the man nor his possessions should be harmed and sent soldiers to guard his house.

Nevertheless, the sack was extremely thorough. Houses, shops and godowns were looted systematically and methodically. Many caught fire, and by Saturday night, two-thirds of the city had been destroyed. On Sunday morning, Shivaji, with a booty worth millions of rupees, was already riding with his usual speed to Raigadh.

Aurangzeb recognised van Adrichem's courageous rescue of the governor and ordered that for a period of one year, the Dutch would be exempt from paying customs duties in all their factories in Gujarat. Thereafter the duties would be reduced by one half of one per cent.

Shivaji sacked Surat for a second time in 1670. Three years later when differences arose between him and the English, Rijkloff van Goens, who was governor of Sri Lanka, opened negotiations with the Maratha, promising the assistance of the Dutch navy in capturing Danda-Rajapur, if Shivaji would provide 3,000 soldiers for the conquest of Bombay. Shivaji ignored the proposal.

The inevitable war of succession followed the death of Aurangzeb on 27 February 1704. Prince Muazzam the eldest son, also called Shah Alam, was away at Kabul. The second, Prince Azam and the third Prince Kambakhsh, who were both in the Deccan lost no time in asserting their claims. Each proclaimed his accession and struck coins in his own name. The objective of all three claimants was to seize Agra with its vast hoard of treasure, Muazzam moved down from Kabul with all speed, met the army of Azam which he defeated at Jajau, near Agra, when his brother was killed. Muazzam or Shah Alam assumed the title of Bahadur Shah in 1707 and in the following year he defeated and killed Kambakhsh.

Bahadur Shah, already an old man of 69 years, died in 1712. The subsequent history of the Moguls is worth relating. Bahadur Shah's four sons fell out among themselves until Jahandar succeeded, only to be assassinated 11 months later. He was

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followed by Farrukhsiyar in 1713 who was deposed and put to death in 1719. Several phantom emperors were set on the throne by the Sayyid king-makers, until Muhammad Shah ascended the degraded throne, surviving till 1748. His son Ahmed Shah was deposed in 1754. Alamgir II who followed, was murdered in 1759, and Shah Alam II became emperor.

Bahadur Shah, who had succeeded Aurangzeb, granted Johan Grotenhuis, the director, a permanent place for the warehouses and godowns of their factory and for the residence of the director. Jahandar Shah granted further privileges to Johan Josiah Ketelaar, which included the use of Itabar Khan's mansion as quarters for the factory staff, who hitherto had lived in a portion of the warehouses. It was however stipulated that no part of any of their buildings could be fortified, no guns could be mounted, and no alterations or strengthening of the walls could be made, except for necessary repairs. During the reign of Muhammad Shah, when Pieter Lawrence Rhoon was director, the Dutch were allowed to purchase a three-hectare plot of land outside the Mecca Gate of the city, near Jahangir Bandar for their marine warehouses and jetties. This place came to be known as *Wallanda Bandar* or the Dutch Wharf.

From about 1740 a recession crept into the affairs of the Dutch. Competition from the English, the French and from free-booters, drew off much of their trade; the demand for spices in Europe had declined, the tea and coffee industries having to a great extent taken their place. The rise of Bombay as the commercial centre of the west coast had reduced the importance of Surat. Nadir Shah's sack of Delhi in 1737, the almost total collapse of Mogul authority and the rise of new aspirants to power—the Sikhs, the Jats, the Rohilla Afghans and particularly the Marathas*—made trade and the transport of goods difficult. Other factors which contributed to the decline in the fortunes of the Dutch Company were the corruption and defalcations of its officials, which had reached alarming proportions. Moreover Dutch maritime power had also declined in the purely naval and economic spheres. Whereas in the first half of the seventeenth century Dutch vessels had outstripped all their competitors, a hundred years later, this was not so; larger crews were required

*The generals of the Peshwas had formed dynasties of their own. Damoji Gaekwar having established himself in Baroda in 1737.

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to man outdated and clumsy rigging, and there was no improvement in the science of navigation and the correction of their charts.

All this was not unknown to the authorities at Batavia, for Baron van Imhoff complained, 'I am afraid to say how things are with us, for it is shameful—everything is lacking, good ships, men, officers, and thus one of the principal props of the Netherlands' power is trembling in the balance.' This however did not mean that the Dutch trade had been reduced to insignificance; it was still impressive, the total revenues of the Gujarat factories being a little over Rs 500,000. But the recession had set in and the Dutch middle and working classes were no longer interested nor inclined to seek a livelihood at sea in the service of the Dutch company abroad.

A series of scandals now reduced Dutch prestige in Surat. Mynheer Phonsen who was director in 1736 was found to owe the Company Rs 135,000, which he declared he had no means of paying. He was permitted to resign quietly and set up as a private trader. It was later discovered that he had concealed his assets. When he was expelled from Surat he sought refuge in the English factory. A few years later van der Laer was accused of fraud and he absconded. In 1747, Bosman, the director himself, was expelled by his subordinates for gross misuse of his authority.

When Johan Splinter Stavorinus, rear-admiral in the service of the States-General visited Surat in 1775, the city was already showing signs of decay. The walls of the fort were in ruins and though the citadel was serviceable, the residence of the governor, around which were mounted old and damaged cannons, resembled a 'hovel'. The Dutch director's mansion within the fort was still however in good condition, but their buildings at *Wallanda Bandar*, the Dutch Wharf, needed considerable repairs. The Dutch cemetery in the suburbs was well maintained, and like all their cemeteries elsewhere in India, are the only monuments of the Dutch standing today. Stavorinus who visited the graveyard noted that most of the tombs had lofty spires, that of van Rheede being the most elegant. It was built with the intention of eclipsing Sir George Oxenden's and consisted of 'a double cupola of great dimensions with a gallery above and below, supported on handsome columns. It was originally adorned with frescoes,

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escutcheons and passages from the scriptures, and the windows were filled with beautiful carvings.' As late as 1877 an old bill was in existence charging the Dutch company Rs 6,000 as the cost of repairs.

The tomb of a ship's butler in the same cemetery showed him to be 'a true votary of Bacchus who proved faithful to the worship of this jovial god even in death, by expressly desiring that three large punch bowls should be placed at the corners and one on top.' De Thevenot and later Ovington add, that the surviving friends of the deceased butler, used to make merry at the tomb, 'preparing their beverage in the stone bowls and remembering him there, sometimes so much, that they quite forgot themselves'.

The population of Surat at that time was nearly half a million, according to the rear-admiral; mostly Hindus, Jains and Mohammedans, a few Christians and one hundred thousand Parsis, descendants of the Zoroastrians who had fled to India in the seventh century. The Parsis maintained themselves by agriculture and by trade; several were wealthy merchants. 'They are fair and do not differ much from the Spaniards,' observes Stavorinus, 'the women are still fairer, tall and graceful, have large piercing black eyes full of the most fascinating fire. Their eyebrows are black, perfectly arched which added considerable beauty to their face, the forehead is high and the nose has an aquiline bend, the mouth is small adorned with most beautiful pearly teeth, bosom fully symmetrical, their legs are handsome, their deportment and gait airy and graceful and their moorish attire loose and gay.'

In 1775, the Dutch employed two brokers, Govindram and Mancherji a Parsi. This was after they had been 'disarmed' by the English. The factory was being run as a private business; the council existed in name only, each member being more concerned with his personal affairs, than in serving the VOC's interests. Defections to the English were a common feature. On several occasions goods brought in Dutch vessels for export to Europe or the Near East were sold to the English factors.

The administration and revenues of Surat were divided between the provincial governor who resided in the fort, and the commander of the castle or citadel. About the year 1750, Sidi Massoud, a member of a clan of Abyssinian sea rovers, who had

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occupied the island of Janjira, 70 km south of Bombay, sailed up the Tapti, seized the castle and proclaimed himself its commander. He appropriated one-third of the city's revenue for himself. No one resisted the Sidi, neither the provincial governor, the foreign merchants, nor the inhabitants of the town.

In 1758 the Sidi decided to hand over his command to the Dutch for a consideration. The plan was that Taillefert the director, would enter the castle with a body of troops, ostensibly to free their brokers who had been detained by the commander, and having gained entry, seize the citadel. Spencer, the English factor, heard about the plot and bribed Taillefert to remain inactive. Possibly the Dutch director did not possess sufficient funds to pay the Sidi, and the cash he received from Spencer, need not have been accounted for in the Company's books. In the following year, the principal merchants and citizens of the town appealed to the Governor of Bombay, Richard Bourchier, to take over Surat. A combined force led by Commodore Watson, assisted by Capt. Pollock of the Bombay army landed at Surat, took possession of the castle and permitted the Sidi and his retainers to retire to Janjira. The English now appropriated for themselves the Sidi's share of the revenue, and shortly afterwards took over the government of the city in its entirety.

A few years later the Dutch made an abortive attempt to occupy the castle. They were fined Rs 90,000, instructed to dispose of their cannon and to shift their goods, possessions and equipment to *Wallanda Bandar*. Senf who became director after this incident, even considered moving his factory to Bassein which had been taken from the Portuguese by Chimnaji Appa, the brother of the peshwa, Balaji Bajirao. There was now no question who were the masters of the city, nay of Gujarat. The French had been reduced to the status of a consulate, and the Portuguese were represented by a Jewish merchant.

In 1780 some letters were intercepted by the English authorities in Bombay showing that the Dutch had agreed to help the Marathas in an attempt to capture Surat. Stern measures were now taken to prevent any further interference in the politics of Gujarat. All their ancient privileges were annulled, their movements were supervised and permits were needed from the English for the loading and discharging of their ships. Surat's position as the foremost city for trade in India ended with the great storm

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of 1782 and the severe famine which followed a year later. In the Netherlands, only a public guarantee of the VOC's shares enabled it to carry on. Everyone realised that the State must take a hand in the affairs of the Company, but the United Provinces were much too shaken by internal dissensions to be capable of any energetic action.

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Memorandum of the Merchandise Asked for and Wanted Yearly at Surat, Agra, Cambaia and Surrounding Countries, and its Prices

100,000 Reals of eight	
100,000 Florins in Moorish or Hungarian ducats, quantity of gold in bars for the gold soon gives a profit and can easily be transported without duty or risk	
200,000-250,000 lb cloves (One *man* 30 lb Holland weight)	200-210 mahmudi
40-50 sachel of mace	40-50 ,,
40-50 picul of sandalwood	25-50 ,,
20,000-30,000 lb of ivory	30-60 ,,
100,000 lb of lead	½ ,,
2,000-3,000 lb of tortoise shell	150-200 ,,
4,000-5,000 lb of China root	10-20 ,,
1.000-2,000 lb of quicksilver	180-200 ,,
1,000-1,500 lb of vermilion	130-200 ,,
40-50 boxes of red coral according to its quality	—
100 bahars of sapan wood	9-10 ,,
10,000-20,000 lb of spionter (spelter)	18-20 ,,
3,000-4,000 lb of benzoin. Good quality	50-60 ,,
Camphor	50-60 ,,
Tin	35-40 ,,
Copper	25-26 ,,
Pepper	16-17 ,,
Wax	30-35 ,,
Large quantities of earthen and chinaware	—
20-24 pieces of fine scarlet	—
6-8 pieces of Italian gold cloth	—
10-12 pieces velvet	—
10-12 pieces of satin	—
Gold lace	—
Some pictures, nicely painted landscapes	—
2-3 nice clocks, antique rings for women, nice pearls, fine falchions, 2 or 3 fine and large English bulldogs	—

This 29 December 1622

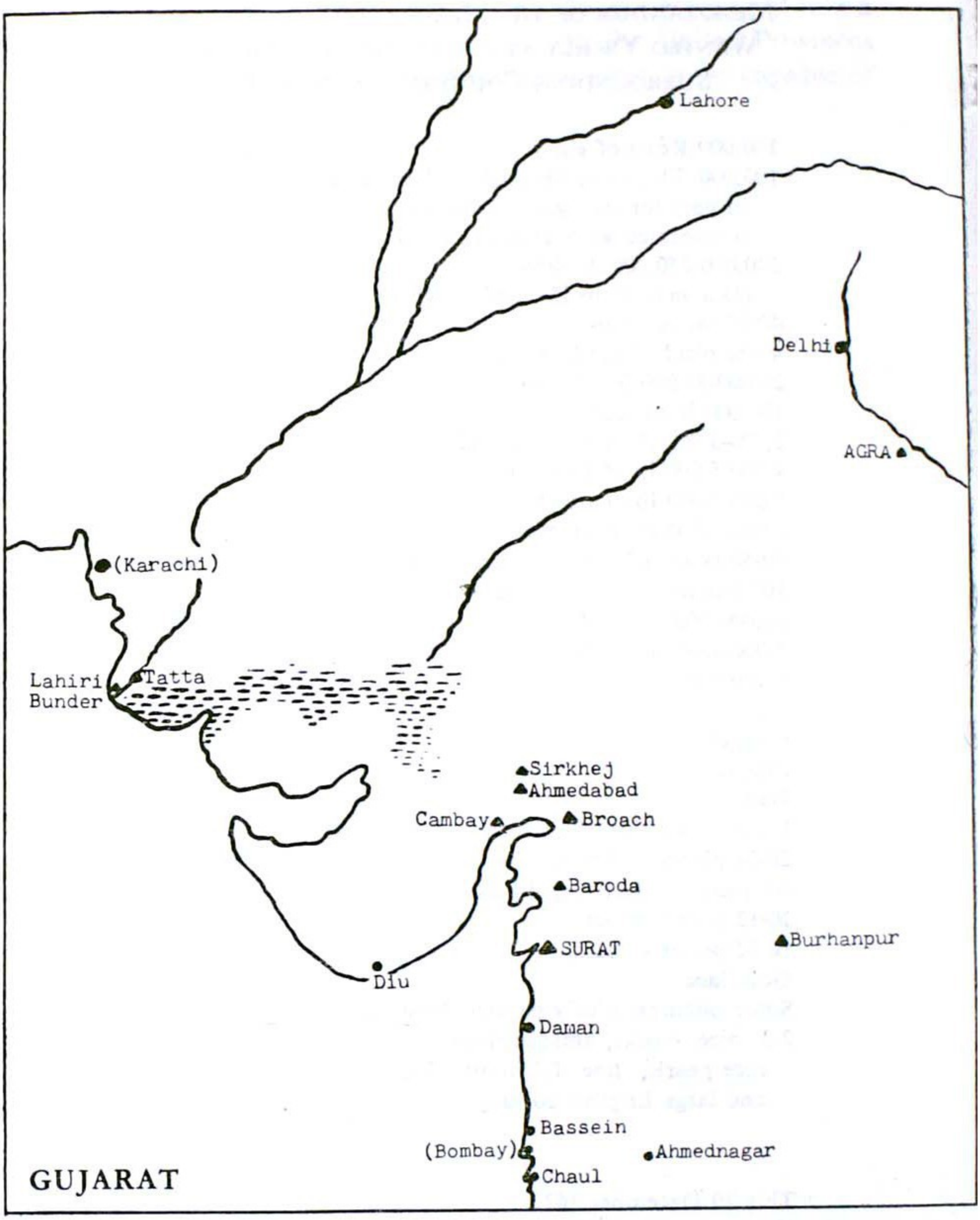
signed: P. van der Broecke,

at Suratte.

(One mahmudi=10 stivers Holland)

SOURCE: *Dutch Records:* Vol. IV CLXVII

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Lahore
Delhi
AGRA
(Karachi)
Lahiri Bunder
Tatta
Sirkhej
Ahmedabad
Cambay
Broach
Baroda
SURAT
Burhanpur
Diu
Daman
Bassein
(Bombay)
Ahmednagar
Chaul
GUJARAT

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CHAPTER VII

Coromandel

'The Dutch in their glory laugh in their sleeves at our present misery' wrote an English merchant at Armagon in 1622, 'and much disparage the efficiency of Mr Drake which is table talk among them, and of our small means at present at Masulipatam, as also in this place, which is very true and not in a tenth part comparable to theirs, which is much noted among these people.' A decade later English merchants on the Coromandel Coast were still complaining of the competition of the Dutch, 'whose skill and prudence backed by immense resources have given them undisputed supremacy in the Eastern trade.'

Although Pulicat was their headquarters on the Coromandel Coast, they were loath to retire from Masulipatam or to reduce their establishment there. In 1626, being determined once and forever to rid themselves of the exactions of the local officials they decided to bid for the 'farming' or governorship of the city. When this proposal reached Batavia, Pieter Carpentier, the governor general, overruled it on the grounds that Dutch merchants 'could not hope to extort by tyranny, the amount required by Golconda'.

In the following year the oppression of the new governor had become so unbearable that they decided to break with Golconda. They withdrew to Pulicat, and from the harbour blockaded Masulipatam until the governor was dismissed, and they were formally invited to return. In this respect the Dutch possessed what no other nation had: sufficient strength, mainly sea power, to threaten an enemy at a vulnerable point without exposing themselves to any great danger. They were thus able to insist that the terms of a convention were honoured.

At Masulipatam, there is an area known as *Vallandu-palem*, the Hollanders' suburb, where the Dutch factory and buildings stood.

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Their fortified factory was large and well-built to withstand the encroachments of the sea and attack by land. In spite of all the difficulties they experienced with the local officials, their trade there averaged Rs 600,000 a year throughout the best part of the seventeenth century. In 1660 they opened a factory in the city of Golconda, whose chief merchant acted as their ambassador.

Lt. Campbell's description of the old Dutch fort at Masulipatam is interesting: 'the fort was originally built on a patch of dry ground surrounded by a swamp, which no living creature but a Dutchman, a frog or an alligator would have selected for his habitation.' By that time the Dutch had abandoned the place for nearly 50 years.

By the middle of the seventeenth century, the Dutch possessed a number of factories on the east coast of India. There was Bimlipatam, 40 km north of Vishakapatnam and Jagannathapuram 150 km to the south; near the mouth of the Vashishta Godavri at Narsapur and at Palakollu were their iron foundry and saltpetre works. In the delta of the Krishna was Masulipatam (Machilipatnam) and Petapoli or Nizamapatam, the latter near the town of Bapatla. North of the Pulicat lake or lagoon was Durgarajupatnam, the Armagon of the English, which along with the villages of Kaveripak (14 km east of Walajapet), Kunnatur, south-west of Madras near St Thomas Mount and Satyavedu near Ponneri, were under the direct jurisdiction of Pulicat. The raja of Chandragiri had also permitted them to trade at Sadras, an area noted for its fine muslin, and in the territories of the nayak of Gingi were Tegnapatam (Devanampatnam) and Tirupapaliyar, as well as a third agency at Kunimedu and a fourth at Porto Novo on the north bank of the Coleroon river, the Cuddalore group.

Tranquebar (Tarangambadi) was the chief trading station of the Danes. Negapatam was still a Portuguese stronghold, but in the far south, the sethupati of Ramnad had granted them a site in Pambam.

Through their agreements and conventions with the local rulers the Dutch exercised a limited form of territorial jurisdiction over the lands and villages adjacent to their factories and had the right to strike their own gold, silver and copper coins. These privileges enabled them to supervise and direct the work of the weavers, dyers, printers, refiners of saltpetre and the other

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workmen and artisans they employed. Their staple commodity was cotton piece goods, but they also handled indigo, arrack, sugar, grains, diamonds from Golconda and pearls from the Tinnevelly coast, in fact 'any business which may be thought in the least profitable, to great vast trade of the Hollanders here'.

Along the coast of Kerala, the Dutch had no influence at all, except for the small fort at Vengurla, north of Goa, which was actually on the Konkan coast. The Malabar was effectively controlled by a string of Portuguese fortresses.

The struggle for Sri Lanka, which does not form a part of this account, lasted from 1638 to 1655, when Portuguese influence on the island was destroyed. It then fell to Rijkloff van Goens, who had served the Company in many capacities with striking success, 'to clean up that whole quarter', that is, those parts of South India where the Portuguese still held sway. In 1658 he captured Tuticorin and sent a mission to the nayak of Madurai, mainly to ensure his neutrality in the campaign to follow. Van Goens then advanced on Negapatam (now called Nagappattinam) which he captured in 1660. Fortified factories were established at Kilakkari, Mannappadu and Cape Comorin. All these new conquests were placed under the administrative control of the governor of Sri Lanka until Negapatam replaced Pulicat in 1689 as their chief city of the Coromandel.

At Negapatam, an impressive fort was built at the cost of 1,600,000 guilders, nearly one and a half million rupees. Naarden, as it was called, surpassed Geldria in size and strength. There is absolutely no trace of Naarden today, and the only memory of the Dutch is the main street of this city which some of the older inhabitants refer to as *Hollandai Shalai*.

Tuticorin was a large and prosperous city. It had a fine harbour where the Dutch could anchor their larger vessels in the stormy season. Here they built a ship repair yard, several warehouses and a small fort. As a result of the mission to Madurai, van Goens secured the monopoly of the pearl and conch fisheries off the Tinnevelly coast. From the other villages they collected a quantity of piece goods which they sent to Sri Lanka.

The only possession left to the Portuguese was San Thome, now in Mylapore, a southern suburb of Madras. San Thome (which should not be confused with St Thomas Mount, a hillock a few kilometres to the west) has been traditionally associated

with St Thomas the Apostle who reached South India in A.D. 68, and who died at Mylapore. Van Goens was spared the task of capturing San Thome when the French occupied it in 1672. In the following year, the French admiral de la Haye, driven out of Trincomalee in Sri Lanka, sought refuge in San Thome. Shortly afterwards the city was overrun and occupied by Golconda, assisted by Dutch troops. By this time Quilon, Cranganore, Cannanore and Cochin had passed into their possession, and with the exception of Goa, whose influence in India had ceased to count, the Portuguese era had ended.

The rapid expansion of the Dutch in the south and their destruction of the power and influence of the Portuguese who had ruled the seas for over a century had the effect of instilling a certain degree of awe in the rulers and princes of South India. Golconda's attitude had completely changed and the relations between the sultan and the Dutch merchants in his kingdom were extremely cordial. He visited Masulipatam in 1678 and attended service in the Dutch church there on Christmas day. Thereafter he invited the Dutch ladies to meet his wives, and as a gesture of friendship, waived the payment of port dues and other tolls for one year.

About this time Dutch society on the east coast was shaken to its foundations by the arrival of Baron Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede tot Drakensteyn, a member of the Council for the Indies. His first appearance in the East was as an ensign in 1657 when he was 22 years of age. He took part in the seige of Cochin and later succeeded Ludolff Colster as governor in 1673. Shortly after he handed over to Jacob Lobo, the Seventeen appointed him inspecting commissary general of all the Dutch establishments in the East, with extraordinary powers to reform the administration and stamp out corruption.

Several officials, senior chiefs of factories included,* were broken by this ruthless reformer, whose social position (he was a member of the Utrecht nobility, the lord of Mijdrecht, an unusual rank among the Company's servants) added to the awe he inspired. In addition to putting down corruption and effecting economies in the administration, he recommended in the face

*The director of Bengal and several of his subordinates were dismissed.

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of considerable opposition that the headquarters of the Coromandel establishments should be shifted to Negapatam. The majority of the Dutch merchants were married and had their families with them. The womenfolk led scandalous lives, were over-conscious of their rank and their demands for jewellery, clothes and servants led many a husband to supplant his salary by dishonest means. Van Rheede, as he is generally referred to, sent many of the families to Batavia.

He died on 15 December 1691 'on board the ship *Dregenlant* sailing from Cochin to Surat, abreast the English fort of Bombay'. Van Rheede's tomb at Surat was built with the intention of surpassing that of Sir George Oxenden, so large and handsomely decorated it was, with a dome, columns, wood carvings and frescoes,

In 1687 a dispute arose in Masulipatam over an outstanding debt and before the argument could be settled, Aurangzeb's army appeared before Golconda. The country was overrun, the sultan deposed and the state absorbed into the empire. The Dutch took advantage of the situation, and on the pretext that they had been insulted, took possession of the city.

Justifying this action, Johan Pits, the chief of Masulipatam wrote to the English agent at Fort St George, Madras: 'It cannot be unknown to Your Honour how our Honourable East India Company for some years on the Coast of Coromandel are abused and insulted in so many unspeakable ways . . . . Whereupon the Right Honourable Council of India cannot swallow such innumerable and overgrown injuries and have been forced to resolve the better to come by our right . . . to take possession of the city of Metchlepatam* and by God's blessings and the Company's arms so effected that we are now for our Company, this 26 July, masters of the said city of Metchlepatam, wherein according to our orders and to the maintaining of our friendship, we shall not incommode or hinder Your Honour to imbarque in your ships.'

As a result of the disturbed conditions prevailing on the Coromandel Coast after Aurangzeb's conquest of Golconda, the authorities at Batavia decided to implement van Rheede's recommendation. In 1689 the Coromandel headquarters was

*Masulipatam. The English settled there in 1611, withdrew in 1628 and returned four years later.

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transferred to Negapatam. It may be of interest to record that Aurangzeb's *firman* of 1690 to Johan Bacherus of Surat, also confirmed the Dutch in their possession of Pulicat.

After San Thome had been captured, Francois Martin and 60 Frenchmen were allowed to settle in 1674 at Pondicherry, 136 km south of Madras. For the next 15 years the French settlement there was a thorn in the side of the Dutch. In 1692 they laid seige to and captured the city. The Dutch retained the city till 1697 when, under the Treaty of Ryswick, it was restored to France. During the five years of their rule, they constructed fortifications long ranked as the finest in India.

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century, in spite of the existence of widespread private trading by the Company's officials, misuse and misappropriation of funds and considerable expenditure on pomp and ostentation, the profits of the Coromandel group which were around Rs 430,000 a year continued to rise until it reached Rs 960,000 in 1684-85. After the conquest of Golconda by Aurangzeb in 1687 they dropped to Rs 350,000. Moreover, competition from the English, the French and the Danes had drawn off a good bit of their trade, and the maintenance of large garrisons ate into their profits. Up to the middle of the eighteenth century, however, Batavia was satisfied with its commerce on the Coromandel Coast, whose profits in comparison to their directorates elsewhere were quite good. Till the end of their influence in India, the largest profits were recorded in the regions where they had not taken up the responsibility of sovereignty. Surat, Bengal and Coromandel figure in the Company's books with annual profits running into hundreds of thousands of rupees, whereas in Kerala (and in Sri Lanka) heavy losses were shown. 'Their strength', wrote the directors of the English Company in 1718, 'is greatly superior to ours and all other Europeans joined together, and nothing but the powers in Europe makes them afraid to prove it against any or all of their competitors in the trade of India.'

The Danish settlements in India demand passing notice. A Danish East India Company had been formed in 1614 and four years later the factory at Tranquebar (Tarangambadi), 25 kilometres north of Negapatam, was established under an agreement

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with the nayak of Tanjore. The Danes dealt mainly in spices and cotton piece goods and supplied arms and ammunition. Their principal settlement in India at Serampore on the Hugli, dates from 1676. The Danish settlements were not important at any time. In 1845 they were sold to the British government.

The French appeared late on the scene, their official organisation, La Compagnie des Indes Orientales, having been established in 1644. Being more an offspring of State patronage than the outcome of spontaneous mercantile activity, it had gradually sunk to the position of a subordinate department of the State. As a result of the latter's bureaucratic control, a certain lethargy had crept into all the Company's business. Trade flagged and there was little enterprise or growth. Pondicherry had been developed by the energy of its founder, Francois Martin and later by Lenoir and Dumas; but Chandernagore (Chandarnagar) in Bengal, which province was commercially and politically the key of India, made little progress until it came under the control of Joseph Francois Dupleix from 1731 to 1741. The revival of French power dates from the time of Dupleix, and also Dumas, who in a short space of 20 years, lifted the fortunes of their country to something like an apparent equality with that of their longer established rivals, the Dutch and the English.

By the middle of the eighteenth century a change came over the destinies of European settlements in India. The English and French companies began to be embroiled in the international conflicts of their respective countries, and the effect of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1747-48 in Europe developed the French Company from a trading organisation into one which had its eye on political influence in India. At this time in the Carnatic, that wide strip of land from the Krishna Delta to Tanjore (Thanjavur), there were three European cities: Negapatam under the Dutch, Pondicherry under the French and Madras under the English. Each was a place of considerable trade and reputed strength and each had a large Indian population. Behind them the country was divided between Hindu and Mohammedan, with the English and the French jockeying for position. The first blow to Dutch prestige on the Coromandel Coast was when Masulipatam, which they had controlled since

1687, passed into the hands of the French, being granted to Dupleix in 1751.*

But decay had already set in the VOC's establishments in India. To maintain their trade and commerce, a large portion of their income had to be spent on their garrisons. Their naval power which had been the despair of not only the Indian princes, but of their rivals on the coast, had declined. Their astute commercial diplomacy had degenerated to the giving of bribes and gifts and flattery. Obviously, the Company's organisation suffered from grave defects. Its administrative system was outdated, and its strict adherence, against the advice of all its greatest governor generals, to the policy of commercial monopoly was a failure. The severe subordination of the whole system to Batavia, and the widespread disloyalty and corruption of its officials, undermined its foundation. Great as it had been as an empire builder, and able as it was as a merchant, the Dutch Company had failed as a colonial power. No longer was the VOC able to produce men like Jan Pieterszoon Coen, van der Broecke and Rijkloff van Goens. On the contrary a person like Christiaan van Teylingen became the director of the Coromandel.

Van Teylingen, on board the *Rotterdam* reached Fort St George, and after the necessary salutes had been exchanged, came ashore with the skipper and a writer or book-keeper. He then asked for his baggage to be brought to the fort. While his personal effects were being off-loaded, a small Dutch vessel approached the *Rotterdam* and seized it. Later in the evening, a party from the same vessel landed, and handed over a letter to the president of Fort St George, stating that van Teylingen had deserted his post and should be returned to Naarden. For months correspondence was exchanged between the Dutch and English authorities, the former accusing van Teylingen of theft and dishonesty. The latter had actually assisted the English in their trade in Madurai cottons and the president of Fort St George was reluctant to surrender him.

The American War of Independence which began in 1775, developed a few years later into an European coalition bent upon the ruin of British power overseas. The alliance of France, Holland and Spain against England made it difficult for

*It was taken by Colonel Forde in April 1759, who later in the year defeated the Dutch in Bengal.

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reinforcements to be sent to India. To neutralise any combination of Dutch and French forces in India, the English seized all the Netherlands' settlements on the east coast and in Bengal. Surat had long ago ceased to matter and the commander of Cochin was too deeply involved in defending his outposts against Haidar Ali to constitute a menace. The peace of 1783 saw the restoration of these places with all their ancient rights and privileges, lands, forts, factories, bleaching grounds and the adjoining villages, as well as their trade and their right to strike gold, silver and copper coins. Negapatam was however retained until Holland could offer an alternative, which she was unable to do. Pulicat was reoccupied and once again became their capital of the Coromandel, but the VOC, now on the verge of bankruptcy, was no longer interested in their settlements in India. Many of the factories and buildings were in ruins and had to be demolished. Others were deserted, and those at Porto Novo, Palakollu and Jagannathapuram were claimed as the private property of Dutch individuals.

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Articles of Capitulation for the Surrender of Pulicat

Articles of Capitulation by the underwritten Governor and Council on the part of the General Netherlands East India Company, on account of their inability to defend their possessions, on the summons made by the Rt Hon'ble Lord Hobart, Governor and President of Fort St George. According to the resolution of the 10th and 16th instant proposed to the Rt Hon'ble Lord Hobart, Governor in Council at Fort St George, by which it is agreed to deliver over Pulicat and its dependencies to the power and authority of His Brittanic Majesty.

ARTICLE 1ST

That an exact inventory of all public property in Fort Geldria at Pulicat, as it stands on the 15th inst. shall be delivered according to the above inventory to the gentleman appointed by the Govt of Madras to receive it. The said gentleman granting his receipt for the same. — Approved

ARTICLE 2ND

That all books, charters, letters and other papers belonging to the Hon. Dutch East India Company shall as a Holy Depositum not be removed from Pulicat, but carefully kept distinct in the different departments to which they belong in the charge of the present Chiefs or Heads of those departments; for the reasons mentioned in the following article. — Approved

ARTICLE 3RD

As there is much arrear in the offices — Agreed. — That

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especially in that of the trade and in the Paybooks of this Head Factory since the year 1792–93, and the gentlemen of the Dutch service shall be allowed to bring up arrear to the present day and it is requested as an indulgence to our Governor that he may send the annual books and statements &c to Europe and Batavia, as opportunities may occur.

attested copies of such books &c be sent to Europe and Batavia, but the originals remain in Pulicat, subject to the inspection of Fort St George.

ARTICLE 4TH

The Governor and Council of Pulicat wishes to be favoured with an explanation whether the Dutch Company's servants who by the present arrangement are deprived of their employs; and other private gentlemen such as free merchants &c under their jurisdiction though not in the service are to be considered as free subjects of the States General and at liberty to go elsewhere, even to Europe, if they please, or is it expected that they shall apply to the Govt of Madras for that purpose. It is proposed also that on account of the Governor in Council and other servants of the Dutch Company being deprived of their emoluments, a subsistence shall be granted to them.

Leave will be granted unless under particular circumstances by the Govt of Madras to the Dutch Company's servants and free merchants to go to Europe or elsewhere but any allowances by way of subsistence must cease for the period of permission being granted.

ARTICLE 5TH

The garrison which consists of 75 sepoys as also their native officers are not to be made prisoners of war but may be dismissed and permitted to deliver over their arms and accoutrements to their commanding officer who will deliver the same to the British Commissary.

Agreed

ARTICLE 6TH

That all the said Company's servants

Agreed

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and other inhabitants of Pulicat and its subordinate Company's factories as well as Europeans shall retain the right of private property of every description without being molested in any manner.

ARTICLE 7TH

That all the said servants and others under the government of Pulicat shall be granted permission to trade on equal terms and enjoy the same immunities as His Brittanic Majesty's servants in India.

Whatever may be done upon this article must be subject for future consideration. It cannot be admitted as part of the Capitulation.

ARTICLE 8TH

The cash belonging to the orphans and that which the Vestry has charge of for the Consistory, being money collected by private charity shall be of course considered as Private Property and shall remain under the administration of those whom they have entrusted.

Agreed. But liable to the control of government.

ARTICLE 9TH

The above Consistorial Fund having been found insufficient to maintain the widows and other indigent persons, proper objects of that charity, the Dutch Company have since 1st January last, contributed to their support, 37½ pagodas per month—the objects of the above charitable donation are strongly recommended to the humanity of the British people. Proper information will be given of the particulars of the station of these poor people.

Agreed

ARTICLE 10TH

The exercise of Divine Service such as

Approved

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hitherto prevailed in the Dutch ports and Malabar churches shall be permitted to be performed in the usual places.

ARTICLE 11TH

That all civil causes shall be decided according to the Dutch laws and regulations of the Dutch Company, by the same gentlemen who now compose the Court of Civil Judiciature. — Until the King's pleasure be known.

ARTICLE 12TH

The Vendumaster, the Curator Adlites (administrator of the estates of those Company's servants who die intestate) and the Sequestrator (the person with whom such sums are deposited and who administer to those who die insolvent) do keep their right to summons before the above Court and proceed as by law directed, against all who are deficient in paying the cash belonging to the various departments, and the said Court shall have every protection and support of the British Government in the exercise of their lawful functions. — Approved

ARTICLE 13TH

The Secretary of the Political Department as also his deputy in the capacity of Sworn Clerk and secretary of the above Court shall be continued in the exercise of his office of Notary and that the same be granted to the secretaries or other authorised persons in the subordinate factories. — Approved

ARTICLE 14TH

The Publick Notarial deeds already entered, registered and passed by the — Approved

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above mentioned officer in behalf of individuals for their safety and security should remain as secret documents that officers are entrusted with, and of which deeds no person may require inspection or copy except in cases in which the Sovereign or Magistrate are concerned, whose commands as well as those of the above Civil Court, the Notary is to obey.

ARTICLE 15TH

The Company's interpreter named Mandelelum Venkatachellum Naiq, the Bramin named Coupiah and merchants not subject to any other jurisdiction, but that of the Dutch Company, consequently not amenable to the Nabob's Court and to that of his Dewan should be entitled to the privileges mentioned in Articles 6th and 7th, and the two former do keep their usual ways or shall receive subsistence as serving both for the affairs of the Dherbar and for the explanation of the Dutch Company's rights and privileges, customs and usages at Pulicat in case any dispute should happen about this with the Nabob's Dewan here.

Unnecessary and inadmissible.

ARTICLE 16TH

The duties of Pulicat collected by the Nabob of which the Dutch Company are entitled to a share, and not paid up by him to a date later than 31 August 1794, and therefore this arrear and what is further to be collected shall be duly paid to the British Commissary.

This will be a subject of arrangement between the British Government and the Nabob of the Carnatic.

ARTICLE 17TH

The Company's villages, Erikan, Manguvauk, Aurevauk, as also the pieces

This suggestion will be attended to, but

of ground named Ranatoray being publicly rented once every three years were on 1st September 1794 rented to Magadalla Ramayah for the sum of 785 star-pagodas per annum for which amount he is to be yearly responsible, and it is proposed that the above farm given on the faith of the Dutch Company, should be continued to the said renter, his paying his rent to the British Government.

cannot be admitted as an article of the Capitulation.

ARTICLE 18TH

To the Chiefs of the Dutch Company's factories on the Coast of Coromandel, shall be sent a copy of these articles and they shall be directed to draw out their Capitulation and deliver over the factory and castle on the terms here stipulated. Agreed

ARTICLE 19TH

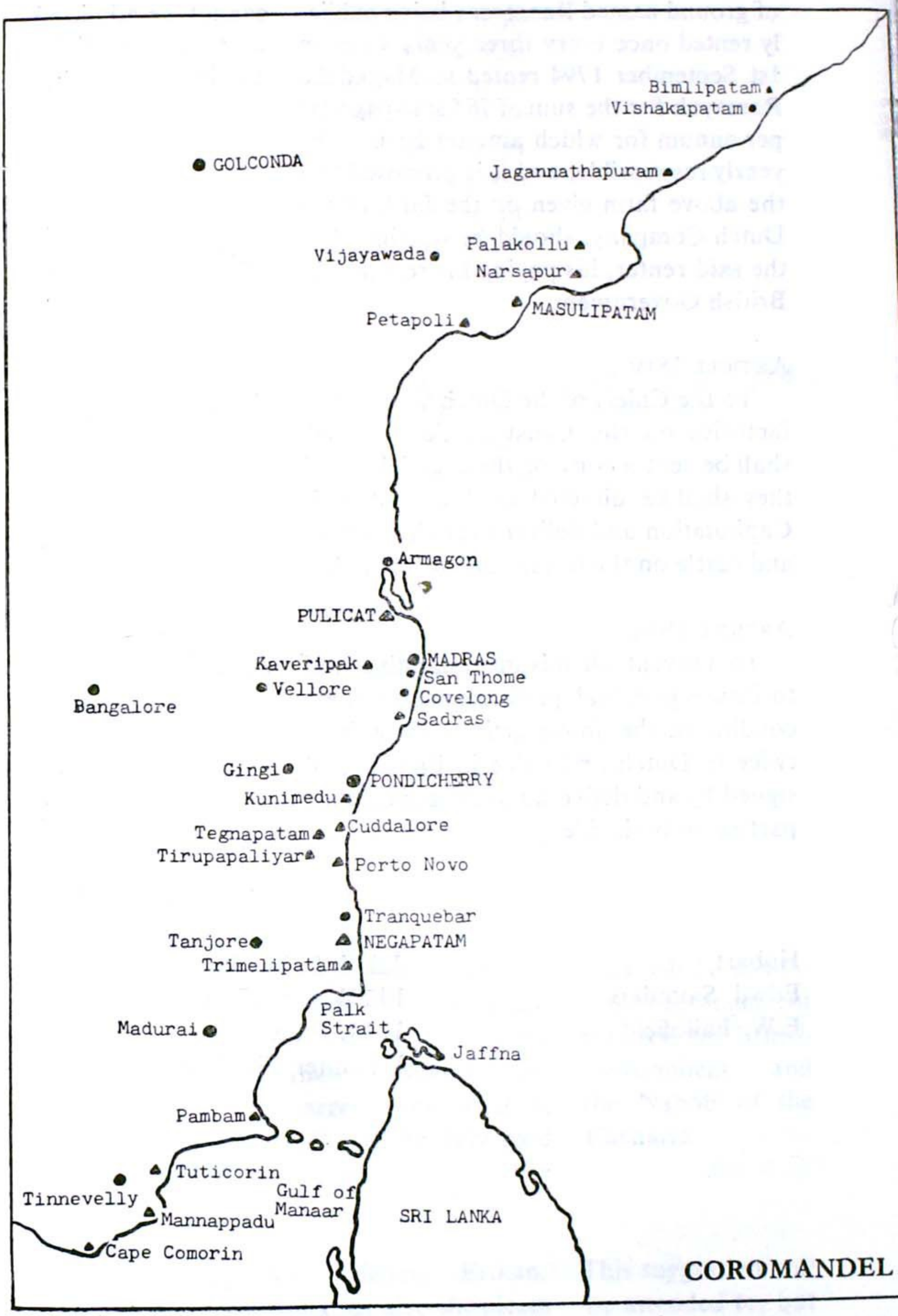
To prevent all misunderstanding and to insure punctual performance of these conditions, the above articles be written twice in Dutch and twice in English and signed by and delivered to the contracting parties on both sides. Agreed

Pulicat, 16 July 1795.

Hobart
Edwd. Saunders
E.W. Fallofield

Jakob Eilbracht
Fk. Wm. Bloeme
H.M. Hasz
I. Hanter Visscher

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Bimlipatam
Vishakapatam
GOLCONDA
Jagannathapuram
Vijayawada
Palakollu
Narsapur
MASULIPATAM
Petapoli
Armegon
PULICAT
Kaveripak
MADRAS
San Thome
Vellore
Covelong
Bangalore
Sadras
Gingi
PONDICHERRY
Kunimedu
Cuddalore
Tegnapatam
Tirupapaliyar
Porto Novo
Tranquebar
Tanjore
NEGAPATAM
Trimelipatam
Palk
Strait
Madurai
Jaffna
Pambam
Tuticorin
Gulf of
Manaar
Tinnevelly
Mannappadu
SRI LANKA
Cape Comorin
COROMANDEL

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CHAPTER VIII

Factory and Fort

The Dutch *factorijen* and the English 'factories', whether fortified or not, were descended from the Portuguese trading agencies or *feitorias*, which were scattered along the African and Asian coasts, beginning with the castle erected at Argium in Morocco in 1445 and ending with the *feitoria* at Nagasaki in Japan in 1570. The *feitorias* had much in common with the medieval *fondachi*, the residential quarters of Genoese and Venetian merchants in the Muslim seaports of North Africa and Ottoman harbours. In fact, at Pedda Ganjam in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, tradition associates a mound called *farangi dibba* (the foreigners mound) with Genoese or Italian traders who had established a settlement there in A.D. 1224.

From remote antiquity foreign merchants had lived and traded in India. The rulers and princes of the maritime states in the south were familiar with the institution of, what has been called, mercantile extra-territoriality, and had allowed Arabs and Iranians, Malayans, Indonesians and Chinese to live in separate residential districts, each under the administration of their own headman. Such settlements were governed by a special agreement with the local ruler, and the position of these foreign merchants, traders and artisans was determined by the terms of the convention, rather than by the ordinary laws of the land.

Not only in India but in many Asiatic seaports, from the Persian Gulf to the South China Sea, foreign traders lived in these more or less autonomous residential quarters. Some attained great wealth and influence. Others were at the mercy of the ruler or his governor, who could take their daughters for his harem or seize his estate when he died. They were also exposed at times to the unreasonable exactions of local officials or to the malice

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of rival traders or of the mob. Foreign merchants accommodated themselves to these hazards. When circumstances permitted, they fortified their factories for the greater security of their persons and goods in a potentially hostile environment.

The first Portuguese settlements in India did not conform to the traditional institution of extra-territoriality, because they were more than commercial. Early commanders insisted on territorial concessions, or they seized territory, not as merchants, but in the name of the king of Portugal. The only exceptions were their settlements at Hugli and San Thome, but it was not long before they exceeded the terms of the agreement, and relying on their formidable naval power, assumed sovereignty. A Portuguese captain summarised their stand by explaining to the rani of Attingal in 1519 that the king of Portugal did not build forts in India to conquer territory, but merely to protect his merchandise on the seashore.

When de Albuquerque reached Malacca, the greatest seaport in the Far East, in 1511, the city had several settlements of merchants. His arrival caused a divergence of interest among these communities; the Chinese and the Javanese willingly admitted them but the Mohammedans from the west coast of India and their Malayan co-religionists opposed the establishment of a Portuguese settlement. The predominating influence of the sultan led to the outbreak of hostilities (which would have taken place sooner or later). De Albuquerque effected a settlement by the force of arms and the city passed into Portuguese possession under whom the old privileges of foreign merchants gradually disappeared. The position in Calicut, an equally great seaport in India, was similar. The zamorin's subjects welcomed the Portuguese while Arab and Egyptian merchants opposed them.

Towards the end of the sixteenth century, the Dutch revolt against Spanish oppression was transferred to Portugal when the crowns of the two kingdoms were combined in the person of Philip II. The closure of the Iberian ports in 1585, 1595 and 1597 and the confiscation of their cargoes, compelled the Dutch to seek the sources of the oriental goods which the Portuguese brought to Europe. While the Dutch had attained a considerable degree of efficiency as shipbuilders and mariners, a long period of absence of any serious competition had resulted in Portugal

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turning out unwieldy ships of poor design, a large number of which were lost at sea. The Dutch *fluit* was comparatively inexpensive to build; it carried a bulky cargo, mounted few or no guns and was manned by relatively few hands. It was eminently superior to the large ungainly galleons which sailed from Lisbon. Portugal was unable to replace her losses at sea or to produce the crews to man the few which returned, as her manpower had been exhausted in defending her possessions in Africa, Asia and South America and her resources squandered by Philip II in his attempts to establish supremacy in Europe. Her claim to be the lords of 'the conquest, navigation and commerce of Ethopia, India, Arabia and Persia' was no longer effective. Her navy was no match for the armed merchantmen from the Netherlands who openly attacked them on the high seas and interrupted their communications between ports. Moreover the conflict between the viceroy and the ecclesiastical authorities, the corruption of the captains and commanders and the general collapse of its colonial administration, indirectly contributed to the rapid success which the Dutch achieved when they reached the East Indies.

The Dutch, who followed the Portuguese in India a century later, adapted themselves to the system of extra-territoriality prevailing in the south. They obtained a place where their merchants could reside and their goods could be stored, and negotiated a special arrangement in regard to customs duties and port dues. They were permitted to retain jurisdiction over their own nationals as well as over the Indian workmen they employed. Gradually they modified the terms of these conventions to include a monopoly of the trade to the exclusion of all others. Being apt to feel insecure in an environment which they did not understand, among people whose language few could speak and whose religions and customs they regarded with contempt, they began to fortify their factories and defend their harbours.

On the Coromandel this was necessary, for the Portuguese regularly raided their establishments, on several occasions carrying away their merchants as prisoners. The English, who followed the Dutch like gadflies wherever they settled to trade, were competitors though not serious rivals. It therefore became expedient that the Dutch should gain preferential trading rights over them.

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The Dutch were not great builders of castles, forts and mansions. They preferred to take over existing structures and modify them. Their factories on the Coromandel were fortified by erecting a thick wall around their property, which was usually surrounded by a ditch, the earth from the ditch being used to construct the wall. The garrison consisted of men taken off their ships, one or two of which would remain anchored in the harbour. The first fortress which they built in India was Castle Geldria at Pulicat, 535 metres in circumference, with walls seven metres in height. On its ramparts and bastions were 36 cannons. Van Bercham, who built Geldria, estimated that 200 men were required to defend it. Naarden, the 'castle with the golden walls' at Negapatam, cost 1,600,000 guilders; it was said to surpass Geldria in size and strength, for even towards the end of Dutch influence on the east coast, Naarden was defended by over a thousand men of which 184 were marines.

The Dutch considered that there was nothing more magnificent than their fortified factory at Chinsura in Bengal, with its high stone walls, its moat filled with water and the many cannons on its walls. How the Mogul allowed them to fortify the Chinsura factory, which the Dutch named 'Castle Gustavus', and not their factory at Surat is difficult to understand. They were extremely proud of Gustavus, 'the largest and completest factorie in Asia'. None of these Dutch castles stand today. By the end of the seventeenth century, when orders were given to economise on expenditure, the fortresses were first to suffer. Garrisons were reduced and only essential repairs were carried out. When the British took over these Dutch buildings in 1781 to prevent them falling into the hands of the French, many were dilapidated and had to be demolished. It is only those forts which they had taken over from the Portuguese, like the drab and dingy Fort Cochin, which still stand.

In powerful empires like that of China, Japan, Iran and that of the Mogul, no foreigner was ever allowed to establish a position by building a fort. In Surat, the Dutch lived and behaved as merchants on the strength of an imperial *firman*. Their buildings were rented, no part of which could be fortified and mounted with guns. But backed by their sea-power they ensured that their nationals and property were safe, for none of the Indian princes nor the Mogul had anything which resembled a navy.

If the Dutch felt that any of their people were ill-treated, they retaliated by blockading harbours and attacking shipping until redress was obtained.

A remarkable exception to the normal treaty relationships between European and Asiatic powers was the Dutch-Iranian Treaty of Trade and Friendship of 1631. It stipulated that Iranian merchants in the Netherlands would not only be treated on equal status as Dutch citizens, but they would be given special commercial and judicial privileges. The States-General granted these generous conditions because they knew that Iran had no ocean-going vessels and the land routes being blocked by hostile Turkey and Russia, the prospect of any Iranian merchants establishing themselves in the Netherlands was exceedingly remote.

As their activities and influence in the East expanded, the Seventeen realised the need of a 'general rendezvous' where their homeward and outward bound fleets could load and unload cargo, and where the goods from the intermediary ports of Asia could be collected, stored and transhipped. A headquarters was necessary to control and coordinate their numerous agencies and factories in coastal Asia. Jakarta, which Jan Pieterszoon Coen seized on 30 May 1619 and renamed Batavia, became the strategic, administrative and economic centre of all their possessions from the Cape of Good Hope to Timor, north of Australia. By the middle of the seventeenth century their seaborne empire included Mauritius; Sofala in Mozambique; Mocha in Yemen; Basra in Iraq; Bandar Abbas, Lar, Shiraz, and Isfahan in Iran; Tatta in Pakistan; several factories and agencies in India; trading stations in Bangladesh, Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea; Castle Zeelandia on the island of Formosa or Taiwan; two factories in China; Hirado and Deshima on the island of Nagasaki in Japan; several factories in Borneo, the Celebes, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Moluccas and all the other important islands in the archipelago.

All that was needed to complete their mastery of the commerce of the Indian Ocean was Sri Lanka, which they gained when the Portuguese were expelled from the island in 1658. Within the next five years they ousted their old enemies from the southern Coromandel Coast and from Kerala. By 1663 all the Portuguese possessions in India, with the exception of Goa, Daman and Diu, had passed to the Dutch. In the meanwhile,

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Jan van Riebeeck planted the Dutch flag at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652. Although Batavia was the general rendezvous and capital of the Netherlands Indies, the voyage to Holland was long and arduous and many vessels were damaged on the long journey home. The Cape colony which started as a victualling station soon became important as a transhipment point for piece goods and textiles which were traded along the east coast of Africa, Arabia and Iran, as well as a convenient place for repairing ships.

The principle of civilian control was the corner-stone of the Company's service. The senior position in any establishment was invariably held by a merchant with the rank of *opper koopman* (senior merchant) even in a strongly garrisoned settlement like Pulicat. Some of the smaller agencies were manned by two or three Europeans, whereas in a fortified harbour or in a headquarters of a directorate there may be well over a hundred mercantile staff, all of whom were subordinate to and dependent on the chief, be he a senior merchant, a commander or a director. The chain of subordination was strict, and the duties of the factory staff which varied according to their number and the importance of the place, were clearly defined. The senior merchant or chief factor was also the president of his factory council. Any decision, action or activity needed the majority vote of the council to be implemented. In the larger establishment, particularly in those areas where the Dutch had jurisdiction over the nearby villages, several officers had to be appointed to manage the civic administration, as in Chinsura, and to command the armed forces. All the officers in charge of non-mercantile departments, such as the fiscal or sheriff, the captain of the militia or the fleet commander were granted merchant rank. Though members of the council, they acted as advisers and had no executive vote.

Although the majority of Dutchmen were reluctant to serve the VOC if they could earn a livelihood at home, the prospect of making money abroad brought many Europeans to Amsterdam, who took service in Dutch Indiamen. Periodically the Seventeen enacted that foreigners should not be employed, and no Roman Catholics be taken on in any capacity whatsoever. But the ruling remained a dead letter from the start, as there were never

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enough Dutchmen to fill the commercial, naval and military appointments in the Company. Norwegians, Danes, Germans, Poles, Swiss, Flemings and Englishmen signed on for service in the Indies. Francois Caron, a Frenchman who joined as a ship's cook, rose to become the director general of trade at Batavia in 1647, before he turned over to the French Company, 20 years later.

As early as 1622, barely three years after the founding of Batavia, there were 143 foreigners in the garrison there, 60 of whom were Germans. Batavia never seemed to have sufficient Dutchmen to man its services. Isaac de St Martin, a French Huguenot was the commander of the garrison from 1688 to 1698, and by 1710 the troops there were almost entirely Germans, Poles and Swiss. Out of some 60 men sentenced in a series of naval courts-martial in the South China Seas in 1622-23, 18 were foreigners, including Swiss, Britons, Flemings, French and one Japanese.

Eight years after van Riebeeck founded the colony, the Cape of Good Hope garrison consisted almost entirely of Englishmen; J.T. Rhenius of Berlin was governor of the Colony from 1728 to 1740. Towards the end of the eighteenth century the VOC had to recruit two complete regiments in Europe, the German Wurttemburg and the Swiss De Meuron, for service in the East, mainly for the defence of Sri Lanka.

In India, several Gujaratis, Bengalis and Tamilians, as well as people from the Konkan and Malabar Coasts were employed in the VOC's subordinate services. A man like Bawan Prabhu was the *boek-houder* or book-keeper in Cochin. Govindram and Mancherji in Surat were not full-time servants of the Company. In Chinsura, Bengali clerks were appointed on Rs 25 a month, provided they had a good hand and could copy Dutch accurately. Masulipatam, Pulicat and later Negapatam employed a comparatively large number of local people as book-keepers and writers, in addition to craftsmen.

The division of duties among the factory personnel depended on the size of the staff and the importance of the place. In one of the smaller agencies in the Coromandel in the seventeenth century, the chief merchant or *opper hoofd* who carried the style of senior merchant or *opper koopman* dealt with local merchants, ordered textiles, received payments, authorised the

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cashier to make payments and kept the money chest. The *tweede* or second in seniority kept the trading account, supervised the warehouses or godowns, helped inspect the goods received and invoiced them for export. All outgoing correspondence had to be signed by the chief and the second after Janssen introduced this as standard procedure in the Coromandel in 1610, and it was adopted in all their establishments. All incoming official letters had to be opened by the chief merchant and the *tweede* as well. The third merchant, if there was one, was employed in buying goods in the interior and for any other duty. Assistants, clerks and writers functioned under the supervision of their superiors. In Bengal, where the Dutch were granted the villages of Chinsura and Baranagar as *jagir* the factory staff was much larger, for in addition to the regular merchants, officials were appointed to supervise the jetties and wharves, enforce law and order, detect smuggling and carry on the administration of the townships. The next in seniority at Chinsura was the chief merchant of Kassimbazar, who held the rank of senior merchant. The third was the chief administrator, also with the rank of senior merchant, who performed functions similar to that of the director general of trade in Batavia, on a much smaller scale. The superintendent of the Walk or Cloth-room, a merchant by rank, assisted by a junior merchant or *onder koopman* and one or two book-keepers, received, inspected, sorted, packed and despatched all goods supplied by local merchants, and also dealt with the brokers. Chinsura had a chief of the militia, whose command extended over the naval personnel as well. He ranked next after the administrator, had the same rank, but no executive vote on the council.

The fiscal or sheriff was also the mayor and held the rank of merchant. The fiscal not only maintained law and order but also watched the Company's interests in respect of theft, fraud and smuggling. As the mayor he settled disputes among the local inhabitants of Chinsura, awarded sentences and punishments. Other officials were the controller of equipment who was and usually a marine officer, the purveyor and the secretary of the factory council.

In India the nature of trade, whether seaborne or agricultural, was seasonal and dependent on the monsoons and the monsoon winds. Most of the factories would be busy during the season,

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but once the ships were loaded and despatched, there was not much to do till the following season, other than dispose of unsold goods, as and when the opportunity presented itself, and collect merchandise before the next fleet arrived. Most of the goods were shipped to Batavia, though ships did sail directly from Masulipatam and Surat to Holland. Sailings from the Netherlands followed a fixed pattern—the outward bound Indiamen usually left in three fleets: the Kermis (fun) fleet sailed in September, the Christmas fleet in December or early January and the Easter fleet in April or May. The Kermis fleet was the most important as it reached Batavia in March or April in time to tranship cargoes for Japan, China and the Bay of Bengal. Homeward bound Indiamen usually left Batavia in two fleets, the first in December and the second in February or March. The voyage in either direction took about six months, longer voyages not being uncommon.

In the larger stations the average Dutchman or Company's servant rose early and started work at eight o'clock in the morning. He broke off at 11 or 11.30, lunched at midday, had his afternoon nap till four o'clock, and then he returned to work. By 6 p.m. most of the business of the day ceased. The authorities in Batavia repeatedly advised the staff in India to observe the hours of work followed there, i.e., from 6 to 11 a.m. and from 1 to 6 p.m. but the factors in India worked according to the requirements of the day. After six o'clock in the evening the factory and its warehouses would be closed and the Dutchman would call on one of his colleagues where they would listen to music, play cards, smoke and drink up to 9 p.m. If he decided to stay for dinner he was welcome, but during all these sessions, none of the women folk would make their appearance.

Life in the remoter factories and inland agencies which had little or no communication with the outer world when the trading season ended, was the dullest and dreariest of routines. 'He is in a manner dead and buried in an obscure part of the globe. He hears no news of any kind, nothing relative to war or other misfortunes and evils that plague and infest mankind; neither the rumours of inland or foreign concerns delight or molest the ear. The European way is luxurious and irregular. We pay a visit every evening to the Chief, after having walked up and down the two streets. These evening visits last from six to

10 o'clock and sometimes even to midnight, and constitute a very disagreeable way of life, fit only for such as have no other way of spending their time than droning over a pipe of tobacco.'

It is said that the Dutchman began his day with gin and tobacco and ended it with tobacco and gin, and in the interval fed grossly, lounged about, indulged in the essential siesta and transacted little business. The *predikants* were no better, they were 'mostly ignorant of matters of religion and were inclined to drunkenness'. The pipe and the bottle were the inseparable companions of the Dutch in India. Their insatiable thirst for strong drink was a well-developed feature of their life, whether as Company's servants or private individuals. The majority of Dutchmen who settled in India took to the profession of tavern-keepers and vendors of arrack. The excessive addiction to drink, combined with malaria and dysentery, a torrid climate and not very hygienic surroundings reduced the population by nearly 20 per cent every year. The numerous well-filled cemeteries all along the coast of India are a testimony to the high rate of mortality in the Dutch settlements.

If the lot of the factory staff was dull and dreary, the life of the Company's sailors, soldiers and craftsmen was even worse. They were badly fed, with little or no medical care and were dressed in tattered clothes. Punishments were savage, the most common being flogging or being sentenced to the chain gangs. It was a common saying that if a soldier died, the Company could get another for nine guilders, about eleven rupees.

Particularly in the Coromandel, the Dutch had their own *ambachtskwartiers*, craftsmen's quarters, where European and Indian artisans, carpenters, furniture-makers, smiths, armourers and others worked together under the supervision of a Dutch foreman. Some of the finest carved Indo-Dutch baroque furniture was produced by the Tamilian cabinet-makers of the Coromandel Coast.

Lastly, there were Dutchmen who had retired from service and settled in India. These 'free' Dutchmen were subordinate to the Company's officials and were bound by the rules and regulations of the local factory with regard to marriage, the commodities they could trade in and the professions they could pursue. While the Seventeen were interested in developing prosperous colonies in the East, they were reluctant to allow

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these civilians to enter the coastal trade for fear of repercussions on the Company's own trade. Many were induced to settle in India by the bonus or incentive offered—three times the last salary drawn if unattached Dutchmen would marry local Christian women. The only occupations and professions they were allowed to follow were that of dealers in grain, livestock, farming, and certain trades like carpentry, in none of which they could ever hope to excel when skilled Indian labour was available. So, many became wine shop-keepers, some helped the English or other foreign traders in their locality, and a few indulged in smuggling. All these private individuals, whether Holland-born or born in India, were liable to military service in times of emergency.

As a whole the most conspicuous item of commerce and the foundation of the Dutch trade in India was cotton cloth. It is said that every man and woman from the Cape of Good Hope to China, and many in Europe as well, was clothed in India's cotton material. Cotton piece goods were highly diversified, their descriptions were drawn from several languages and localities—their nomenclatures today would be too confusing, conflicting and irrelevant to use.

The markets in Indonesia and elsewhere in South-East Asia were conservative, preferring to buy only that type of material with which they were familiar, most of which was conveyed there by Arab, South Indian and latterly, Portuguese traders. The Dutch were therefore compelled to supply the exact requirements of these peoples, and to this end they imported specimens of material commonly in demand in Sumatra, Java and the Moluccas, and arranged with Indian weavers, dyers, printers and bleachers, to manufacture cotton fabrics according to these samples. This entailed considerable labour. Raw material or yarn, dyes, bleaching agents, printing blocks, looms and frames would have to be procured; money advanced to workers; transport organised if the weavers were located at some distance from the factory; sample production checked and inspections carried out to ensure that the cloth made in India was of the same standard as the material required. Finally, when the batch was ready, it was packed and baled and the workmen paid off.

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Generally, hardly anything interfered with the course of business except meeting the requirements of local officials, toll-collectors, tax gatherers, harbour masters and others. The Dutch knew how to handle these officials, but the biggest problem was when the rains failed and the cotton and other crops perished, and famine followed. The failure of the monsoon, a regular feature in India, brought all work to a standstill, and there was nothing the Dutch nor anyone else could do, until the situation improved. Famine resulted in deaths from starvation or voluntary enslavement; skilled workers were no longer available and the children who survived could not carry on the work of their fathers, as the fathers were no longer there to guide and teach them.

The failure of the monsoon also affected the production of the other articles of commerce which the Dutch needed: indigo, sugar, tobacco and silk. Indigo was once the most important of vegetable dyestuffs and valued for the beauty and permanence of its colour. In North India and Gujarat, the seeds were sown in June after the first monsoon showers. The plant was ready for the first cutting of leaves, known as *nauti* in four months, when it was clipped to 10 centimetres from the ground. In the following year, the second cutting, called *ratoon* took place, and sometimes instead of leaving the plant for seed, a third cutting called *katel* was done. To extract the dye, the leaves were soaked in water for 18 hours, then vigorously stirred until the water took on a deep blue colour. After the raw indigo settled to the bottom of the vat, the top water was drawn off. The indigo which remained was formed into balls or cakes which were placed in an earthen jar and sealed to preserve its colour and to exclude moisture. Indigo extracted from the second cutting was always of a superior quality.

A Dutch indigo buyer was expected to be familiar with all the stages of manufacture, to examine indigo only in the midday sun, to look for adulterants like mud, to ensure that the *nauti* and *ratoon* varieties were separately supplied, and that brackish water increased the yield. Indigo was packed in bags of double cloth, so proper packing materials had to be obtained. Above all, he had to get at the supplies before the Armenians arrived, who bought all that they could lay their hands on, for

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conveyance overland to the Levant and Europe. Francisco Pelsaert of Agra was considered to be the most successful buyer in the VOC.

Saltpetre, besides being used in the manufacture of certain types of glass and in the dye industry, was in great demand for making gunpowder. It was invariably found in villages in India, 'which had been formerly inhabited and later abandoned'. Saltpetre was extracted by mixing this earth in water, thoroughly stirred and then allowed to stand for a few days. The water was drawn off into a shallow pit and the crude saltpetre allowed to settle to the bottom. The crude was removed and refined to the degree of purity required by a second or third evaporation.

A Dutch merchant was expected to know that black earth had a higher yield, and he would also have to look for signs of adulteration in the form of common salt, saltpetre having needle-shaped crystals.

The greater majority of Dutchmen and others who joined the overseas service of the VOC had little or no experience in handling such varied items as sugar, salt, tobacco, food grains, gems, pepper, spices and even slaves. A lot depended on the instructions they received from their seniors, who had learnt their business the hard way. A retiring chief would leave for the benefit of his successors a memorandum on the procedure to be followed for receiving, inspecting and despatching the trade items of his locality. Generally, Dutch merchants were competent and energetic—they discussed, deliberated on and tested every item of manufacture, the methods to improve and increase yield, quality and quantity, forms of transport, methods of packing. In fact, every angle of the business was considered, hardly any aspect of any transaction was overlooked, and the profitability of their trade was ever present in their minds.

The population of India consisted of a small, wealthy and extravagant upper class, a small frugal middle class and a numerous lower class living at a low level of poverty. The conditions which prevailed in the subcontinent were such as to prevent any large development of the import trade as the great majority of the people were too poor to be interested in the foreign or exotic goods available. While the demand for Indian products abroad gave employment to thousands of workmen including children, none of them saved or ever hoped to save any money.

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The rapacity of their headmen or overseers and the demands of officials left them little above the means required for subsistence. As one writer remarked, 'weavers, naked themselves, worked to clothe others; peasants hungry themselves, toiled to feed the cities and towns. Men toiled and parted with useful commodities in exchange for little gold and silver, living from season to season, on the verge of hunger, and when the supply of food failed, their hope and salvation was the slave trader.'

In Tamilnadu, Andhra, Bengal and Bihar, men not only sold themselves to slavery to survive, but sold their families as well, for, to the producers, life ceased to be worth living. Up to 1660, about 1000 slaves, purchased for Rs 40-60 per head, were exported each year from India to Batavia; thereafter the number dropped to about 500 slaves annually.

As employers, the Dutch were no better than their Indian counterparts. In Agra and several cities in Gujarat, the Dutch followed the Mogul system of taking a month to be 40 days. Wages of factory servants employed in Masulipatam in 1622 were about Rs 2 a month; skilled workmen received about Rs 3.50. By the end of the century wages had risen by hardly 25 per cent.

'Public offices' such as the collector of customs duties, the harbour master, the collectors of taxes on animals, transport, use of roads* and handlooms, the mint master, the collector of taxes on saltpetre, refineries, arrack distilleries, in fact every source of revenue, even to the inheritance of property on the death of the owner, were auctioned or farmed to the highest bidder. The system was widespread in the Deccan and eventually spread throughout the Mogul Empire. The court of Golconda was dominated by nobles from Iran, 'the proudest nation in India', who had been granted *jagirs*.† The *jagirdars* (holders of *jagirs*) auctioned the public offices in their territories to the highest bidder, many of whom were *banias* (Hindu traders and money-lenders). These farmers of revenue, called governors, undertook to pay the stipulated amount in three

*De Thevenot passed 16 toll stations in Golconda in a distance of 100 kilometres of a journey he had travelled.

†A *jagir* was a hereditary assignment of land by way of salary and allowances for service rendered to the ruler. In Golconda the term *maqasa* was used instead of *jagir*.

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instalments, retaining for themselves whatever surplus they could extort from merchants, artisans, peasants and workers. Salaries of their subordinates, for whom they were allowed to retain one-seventh part of their revenue collection, however were never paid in cash, but in grain and salt, usually of inferior quality, valued at one-third above cost. Whether peasant, worker, artisan or merchant, all were deeply involved in meeting the demands of the tax gatherer. The annual auctions of the heads of revenue were the most oppressive feature of seventeenth century life. When such assignments changed frequently, the assignee of the time thought only of extracting as much from the workers and peasants as they could pay or produce. There were cases of two assignees holding the same office in the same area, and of others being changed within three or four months. The collector of Vengurla, which belonged to the sultan of Bijapur, had contracted to pay 34,000 pagodas a year for three years. A bid of 42,000 pagodas was subsequently offered, and the former possessor was dismissed within four months. It is difficult even today to believe that any revenue collector of this island, inhabited by fisherfolk and farmers, could ever raise Rs 147,000 a year and still retain a reasonable amount for himself.

The court, rather the nobles or *jagirdars*, insisted that the amount had to be paid. The local authorities had somehow to find it, and the worker had to pay it. It was a system which intensified itself, and since no new remunerative means were invented to increase productivity, the mass of the people were forced to live on the borderline of starvation. Land was seldom tilled except by compulsion, irrigation canals were not repaired, even houses were kept in a dilapidated condition for the fear of dispossession was ever present. And when they were incapable of discharging the demands of the merchants and landlords, their children were carried away as slaves. Unable to satisfy the cravings of hunger or to cover his body with the coarsest garment, the worker toiled to increase the wealth of the merchant, and the merchant and middleman sought to meet the demands of his masters. There was no escape from this system of rack-rent except to flee to some neighbouring region where conditions were more favourable or by surrender of personal freedom as a slave in some foreign country. The only exception was in the

domains of Shivaji who treated his subjects comparatively well, and this was in a great measure due to the large portion of revenues which he drew from the subjects of neighbouring rulers.

A few words may be said about inheritances and gifts. A wealthy merchant, even a noble, could never call his property his own. Bernier quotes a letter which Aurangzeb wrote to his father Shah Jehan: 'we have been accustomed, as soon as an Omrah (noble) or a rich merchant has ceased to breathe, nay sometimes before the vital spark has fled, to place seals on his coffers, to imprison and beat the servants and officers of his household, until they make a full disclosure of the whole property even to the most inconsiderable jewel. This practice is advantageous, but can we deny the injustice and cruelty ?' Shah Jehan is said to have realised one hundred and ninety million rupees on the death of Asaf Khan, his father-in-law in 1641. Whether the amount was an exaggeration or no, there is no doubt the practice was a paying one, for the Dutch reported that the confiscation of the estate of a merchant from Tatta in 1647 yielded Rs 150,000.

Gifts and presents were frequently exchanged on special occasions, though those received by the nobles and provincial governors far exceeded the value of what was given. Foreign merchants usually gave presents for the trade concessions they wanted. Indemnities were arbitrary fines—a certain sultan or provincial governor requiring money for a particular purpose, which may range from wedding expenses for his sons and daughters to paying the arrears of salary of his troops, would decide that the merchants of a particular city should provide a certain sum of money. A list of such merchants would be drawn up and an amount entered against each man's name. He then had to produce the money, which was usually paid after a little bargaining. Van Hoorn, the chief of Patna in 1715 paid Rs 200,000 being listed as the richest man in that city; and Adriaan Bisdome was fined Rs 450,000 by Siraj-ud-daula for sheltering the English families at Falta.

Following an old custom probably set by the Portuguese, the VOC allowed each man who sailed or served abroad, to bring home in his sea-chest a small quantity of foreign goods. This privilege was soon abused, and as early as 1603, complaints of

the prevalence of private trading were heard. Within a few years the Seventeen noted with distress that all their merchants, skippers, officers and others were bringing or sending home the choicest bits of porcelain, lacquer-ware and other Indian rarities, contrary to the oaths these men took when they were employed. Men who risked their lives to serve on a meagre salary abroad were determined to get rich as quickly as possible, and their superiors in the East were not inclined to report these activities nor to discourage them, as they were invariably more deeply involved in the same game.

Opportunities for fraud and misappropriation were endless. Besides bribery, the Company's accounts in the remoter factories could be easily manipulated. Purchases could be entered in the books at higher rates; damaged goods over-valued and even stolen material accepted as if legally purchased. Building materials and workmen's wages could be charged at higher than actuals and non-existent workmen shown on the books. Company's funds could be lent out at interest and trading could be carried on in the name of or in association with Indian merchants. By 1652, Dutch merchants were remitting their private fortunes through bills of exchange on the English East India Company. This practice became a major scandal in the latter half of the eighteenth century when Johannes Mathias Ross, the director of Chinsura, sent home half a million rupees through his friend, Robert Clive.

Private trading was an open secret and many a Dutchman, who on his return home published his reminiscences, explained how the fiscal had been bribed or dodged or how he smuggled his contraband material into the Netherlands. The Seventeen periodically denounced this trade and issued orders to its governor generals, governors and directors to severely punish the culprits. They even thought of increasing salaries, but apparently came to the conclusion that high wages would not 'lessen the coveteousness of their servants nor induce them to do their bounden duty any better'.

The scandal of private trading was most rampant in Japan and in Bengal where local officials and merchants connived at and cooperated with Dutch merchants in defrauding the Company. Hendrik Cansius who was chief of Deshima in Japan in

1681-82, on his return to Batavia, declared that more private trade was pursued in Japan than the Company's trade. A few years later the Japanese government stamped out this corruption by executing 38 of its own nationals and deported Andreas Cleijer, Cansius' successor on pain of death if he should return. A similar sensation took place in Bengal at the same time when Baron van Rheede tot Drakensteyn, the inspecting commissary-general of the VOC, dismissed the director of Chinsura and several of his subordinates for the embezzlement of Company's funds and for private trade. Opium was a favourite item of this contraband trade in Bengal. It could be purchased for Rs 70-75 per box of 57 kg and sold for Rs 1,100 to any merchant, including the English. In Surat matters were no better, for besides using the Company's funds for their own trade, many a director allowed Gujarati merchants to use cargo space on Dutch vessels, the payment for which went into his own pocket.

In 1722, Zwaardecroon ordered the execution of 26 VOC employees for bribing the fiscal and for blackmarketing in rice. Nine years later the Seventeen recalled their governor general, Diederik Durven and several members of his council who were deeply implicated in a smuggling ring. Even the *predikants*, who drew the same salary as a senior merchant set no better example. When they visited the districts they would carry as much merchandise as possible which they sold to the local people. A few Japanese gold coins slipped into the palm of the fiscal was sufficient for that official to turn a blind eye on the material they smuggled. Stephen Versluys, governor of Sri Lanka, was found guilty of illegal trading in rice and cloth, heavily fined and dishonourably discharged.

The exposure of all these scandals had no lasting effect, and the contraband trade continued to flourish throughout the life of the VOC, at all levels and in all its forts, factories and settlements. In a way, corruption of this nature was largely due to the inadequate salaries paid, the difficult and arduous conditions of service and the temptingly easy opportunities to enrich oneself quickly by dishonest means. Everyone from the governor general down to cabin boy traded on the side and everyone knew it. The practice was denounced in the strongest terms by the Seventeen and the Batavian authorities. In spite of periodical checks,

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audits and inspections, in spite of commissions and brokerages up to five per cent being allowed to the senior officials, corruption and dishonesty remained.

This lack of discipline was most apparent among the English factors who were also allowed to take home certain items of merchandise in small quantities. But it was not very long before they filled the entire cargo space of their vessels with their own goods. The English authorities treated this abuse with leniency, sometimes taking over the cargo and charging freight rates, at other times imposing a nominal fine. English factors were allowed to use their Company's funds for their own private ventures, but many diverted these funds to Indian merchants, or carried goods for them and pocketed the freight rates. A sound administration would have stamped out such corruption, but the English Company seemed to wink at it. In the end Dutch merchants succumbed to temptation and imitated their English counterparts. Throughout the seventeenth century the frugality and probity of the Dutchmen was noticeable—instances of fraud and embezzlement were few. Thereafter we see them yielding to temptation, indulging in luxurious living and ostentation until the exception became the rule.

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The VOC's Establishments in India at the beginning of the Eighteenth Century

GUJARAT: Surat. Headquarters of the directorate.
Ahmedabad
Baroda
Broach
Burhanpur
Cambay
Sirkhej
Agra, in North India
Tatta, in Sind Pakistan

COROMANDEL: Pulicat. Headquarters of the directorate up to 1689.
Negapatam. Headquarters of the directorate from 1689 to 1783.

Bimlipatam
Cape Comorin
Durgarajupatam
Golconda
Jagannathapuram
Kunnatur
Kunimedu
Kaveripak
Kilakkari
Masulipatam
Mannappadu
Narsapur
Palakollu
Pambam
Petapoli (Nizamapatam)
Porto Novo
Sadras
Satyavedu
Tirupapaliyar
Tegnapatam (Devampatam)
Tuticorin

BENGAL: Chinsura. Headquarters of the directorate.
Baranagar
Falta
Kassimbazar
Malda
Murshidabad

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Pippli in Orissa
Balasore in Orissa
Patna in Bihar
Dacca in Bangladesh
Chittagong in Bangladesh

KERALA: Cochin. Headquarters of the commander of the Malabar establishments, subordinate to the governor of Sri Lanka.
Cannanore
Chettwaye
Cranganore
Kayamkulam
Purrukad
Quilon
Vengurla
Vypeen

Strength of the Dutch Establishments in India in 1776

	Surat	*Coromandel*	*Bengal*	*Kerala*
Mercantile	30	142	64	102
Ecclesiastics	1	9	2	3
Surgeons	2	14	7	10
Marines	4	184	69	49
Artillerymen	—	79	10	60
Soldiers	25	736	48	613
Mechanics	—	11	—	30
	62	1175	200	867

Grand total: 2,304

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Salary Scales of the VOC's Overseas Staff in the Seventeenth Century

Governor general	250 florins a month
Director general of trade	250 ,,
Governor of the Moluccas	250 ,,
Other governors, directors	200 ,,
Commander (*commandeur*)	150-180 ,,
Senior merchant (*opper-koopman*)	80-100 ,,
Merchant (*koopman*)	40-60 ,,
Junior merchant (*onder-koopman*)	36-40 ,,
Book-keeper, writer (*boek-houder*)	18-24 ,,
Assistant, clerk	16-24 ,,
Ordained preacher (*predikant*)	80-100 ,,
Catechist (*ziekentrooster*), sick-visitor (*krank-bezoeker*)	30-36 ,,
Surgeon	45-60 ,,
Assistant surgeon	14-30 ,,
Craftsmen & artisans:	
Carpenter, mason	15-16 ,,
Sword cutler, furniture-maker	14 ,,
Gunsmith, locksmith, smith	12-14 ,,
Marine:	
Master of a vessel	60-80 ,,
First mate	36-50 ,,
Second mate	24-36 ,,
Boatswain	22-36 ,,
Boatswain's mate, master gunner, cook, steward	20-24 ,,
Quartermaster, provost, ship's corporal, steward's mate, cook's mate, sail-maker's mate, gunner's mate	14-16 ,,

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Carpenter's mate, surgeon's mate	24-28 florins	a month
Ship's surgeon	36-50	,,
Ship's carpenter	30-48	,,
Able seaman	10-11	,,
Apprentice, ship's boy	4-6	,,
Sailmaker	18	,,
Military:		
Captain of militia	80	,,
Lieutenant	50-60	,,
Ensign	36-40	,,
Sergeant	20-24	,,
Corporal	14	,,
Cadet, private soldier	10	,,
Recruit	7-8	,,
Drummer	6-10	,,

The governor general and the councillors of the Indies received the following additional emoluments:

House rent allowance	125 florins	a month
Entertainment allowance	60	,,
Councillor's allowance	100	,,
Provisions from the Company's warehouse worth	300	,,

The governor general received a further 150 florins a month for signing despatches and resolutions.

The salaries of the mercantile, marine, and military staff were exclusive of rations or ration allowance, quarters or house rent allowance and firewood.

From the latter part of the seventeenth century, commissions and brokerages were granted to the senior officers of factories.

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CHAPTER IX

Bengal

Towards the end of the twelfth century the old Hindu kingdoms in Bengal and Bihar were conquered and annexed to the sultanate of Delhi by Muhammad Khilji. Thereafter, Bengal never escaped the rule of the Muslims for any considerable time, until they were superceded in the eighteenth century by the British.

In 1338, a revolution broke out against the tyranny of Muhammad bin Tughluq, who was too occupied elsewhere to assert his sovereignty in eastern India. This resulted in the definite independence of the province until it was conquered by one of Akbar's generals in 1576. A few years later the emperor began to show indications that he had lost faith in the creed of the Prophet, and there is a general belief that he even forbade the use of the name of Mohammed in public prayers. The excessive favour Akbar showed to the Jesuit priests, and through them to Portuguese traders who were allowed to settle near Satgaon under the protection of an imperial *firman*, his obvious lack of faith in Islam and his partial compliance with the rituals of the Parsis and Jains, alarmed his Muslim subjects, particularly in Bengal and Bihar, who broke out in rebellion. This rebellion was suppressed only in 1585.

In the meanwhile, those Portuguese merchants who had settled above Satgaon in 1579 had gradually strengthened their position by erecting substantial buildings, so that trade migrated from Satgaon to the new centre, which came to be known by the name of Hugli. If they had confined their energies to trade, they might have remained undisturbed, in spite of having damaged provincial customs revenues. But they maintained a customs house of their own and enforced a duty on tobacco, which had become an important article of trade at the

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beginning of the seventeenth century. Not satisfied with their revenue from tobacco and the monopoly of the manufacture of salt, many Portuguese skippers indulged in piracy and slave trading. The navigation of the two estuaries, that of the Hugli and the Meghna, being extremely dangerous caused many vessels to be wrecked on the sandbanks and shelves. These pirates thought nothing of selling entire crews and passengers into slavery. The children so seized, whether Hindu or Muslim, were bought by Portuguese priests and brought up as Christians. All this had been brought to the notice of Shah Jehan before his accession, and one of his first acts after his establishment on the throne was to appoint Qasim Khan as governor of Bengal with instructions to exterminate the Portuguese.

The siege of the Portuguese settlement at Hugli began on 24 June 1632, preparations having been made for nearly a year. Qasim Khan, probably overestimating Portuguese strength or deciding not to take any risks, assembled a force said to number 150,000 to attack a garrison of nearly a thousand men. The siege ended three months later, 400 prisoners being taken to Agra and given the choice of conversion to Islam or slavery under the most severe conditions. With this Portuguese influence on the Hugli river ended.

The disturbed conditions in Bengal and the menace of the pirates had discouraged the Dutch from trading there, though Willemsz and Ruyll had made a voyage of reconnaisance as early as 1610. Dutch extension into Bengal was gradual. Their first ventures were in the region of Cuttack in Orissa, when their ships sailed to Pippli and Balasore. In 1634 instructions were issued to the director of Coromandel to trade on the Hugli. Their attempts however were not successful, as the monopoly of all trade had been granted to two local merchants by Qasim Khan, and he was not interested in granting any concessions to these foreigners. So from Pippli and Balasore, buyers sailed up to Kassimbazar and even to distant Patna in Bihar for raw silk, sugar and saltpetre.

On the strength of Shah Jehan's *firman* of 1645, when additional concessions were granted to Arnold Bernard Muiskensz, the director of Surat, the Dutch were officially allowed to set up an agency at Hugli, near the ruined settlement. Shortly after the factory started functioning, its warehouses were swept away

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by floods. New buildings were erected further inland and the Dutch continued to operate from Hugli till 1656 when they were allowed to build a much larger establishment at Chinsura.

'There is nothing more magnificent than the Dutch factory. It is built on a great space at a distance of a musket shot from the Ganges for fear that if it were nearer, some inundation of the waters of the river might endanger it or cause it to fall. It had indeed more the appearance of a large castle than a factory of merchants. The walls are high and built of stone and the fortifications are also covered with stone. They are furnished with cannon and the factory is surrounded by ditches full of water. It is large and spacious. There are many rooms to accommodate the director, the other officers who comprise the council and all the people of the Company. There are large shops built of stone where goods that are bought in the country and those that our vessels bring here are placed.'

The Dutch also referred to it as the 'largest and completest factorie in Asia'. Streynsham Master, the English agent, was not so enthusiastic and called it 'very large and well built with two quadrangles'. This was Castle Gustavus, headquarters of the Dutch in eastern India and the residence of the 'Honourable Director of the Company's important trade in the kingdoms of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa'. The first director was Mathews van der Broucke.

The Dutch settlement at Chinsura, now known by its Bengali name, Chuchura, is on the western bank of the Hugli river. The principal buildings in Castle Gustavus were single-storied, flat-roofed and made of brick. There were no glazed windows in the houses, frames of woven cane, like the seat of a chair, being used instead. The roofs and flooring were surfaced with a mixture of pulverised stone, lime and molasses, which after setting resembled one large stone slab. The church was built as late as 1744 when Sichterman was director. It seldom had a resident *predikant* or preacher, the service being conducted by a *ziekentrooster*, literally, a comforter of souls, who was not an ordained minister. When children had to be baptised an English clergyman was sent for from Calcutta and paid for his trouble by the parents. The old Dutch church at Chinsura is now administered by the Protestant bishop of Calcutta.

Chinsura had three gates—one by the river and the other

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two on the landside, to the north and to the south. The river gate had a battery of 21 cannons for the firing of salutes, a necessary formality in all Dutch establishments, for no director would leave or enter his residence without a salute of guns.

Nothing now remains of Castle Gustavus. Most of the stone and brick was used for road building when Chinsura passed to the English for the third time in 1824. All the buildings have crumbled with the exception of the director's residence, which was considerably renovated and is now used by the district police. Taillefert's cemetery, so called because it was opened by Taillefert in 1754, like all the other Dutch cemeteries in India, is a mute reminder that the Dutch lorded it in Bengal for over a hundred years.

During the reign of Aurangzeb, Dutch trade in eastern India was regulated by a *firman* of 1662, which stipulated: 'The Dutch arriving with their ships before Hugli, Pippli and Balasore shall have the liberty to anchor in such places as they choose; that after payment of the fixed duty of two and a half per cent on their goods, they may convey them to such places as they please, sell them to whatever merchants they choose, purchase again goods from the same in the manner they like best and employ brokers in their business according to their own choice, without that anyone shall be permitted to intrude himself into their service contrary to their liking; that with respect to the piece goods, saltpetre, sugar, silk, wax and other articles for which they trade in places situated in the provinces of Bihar, Bengal and Orissa and which they convey for export to the ports of Hugli, Pippli and Balasore, they shall not in any way be molested; that no one shall trouble them in passing and re-passing for any charges of the road except upon that which is prohibited at the Court of the King, namely wine and spirituous liquors, but that on the contrary everyone shall be aiding and assisting them and shall show them all friendship in order that they may be enabled to despatch their ships with ease and safety; that their vessels shall not be liable to be pressed into the Imperial service; that all merchants and others shall not seek for delays in satisfying their debts, but that on the other hand the governors shall assist the Dutch in recovering their claims; and shall not suffer anyone to afford protection or concealment to their debtors; that those Dutch who may have occasion to travel

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through the King's dominions for the transaction of their business shall be allowed to travel as such and no more than they think fit per day, and to halt or rest wherever they may choose without anyone being allowed to molest them.'

To the Dutch were leased the village of Chinsura and that of Baranagar and they were allowed to build factories at Pippli and at Balasore. Chinsura became the headquarters for all their agencies and factories in Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Bangladesh. The factory near Patna was opened mainly to deal in saltpetre. In the eighteenth century when the demand for opium increased, their profits from this one item were so great that it could meet the expenditure of all the Bengal factories. There were two agencies in modern Bangladesh, at Dacca and at Chittagong; the former from its inception was badly managed, its merchants indulging more in private trading than in the Company's business. Pippli and Balasore were in Orissa; and in Bengal they had a station for outgoing ships at Falta, an agency at Malda, another at Murshidabad where they had a resident who supervised the recoining of silver in the name of the emperor; a garden south of Chandernagore, a place at Baranagar and an important factory at Kalkapur near Kassimbazar.

Mogul rule in the Ganges stopped short of the estuary of the Meghna and portions of eastern Bangladesh were ruled by the king of Arakan till 1666 when Shayista Khan who governed Bengal for 30 years, cleared the waterways of the Brahmaputra of pirates and brought the intervening country under the administration of the empire.

The Danes had reached Tranquebar, a seaport in Tanjore in 1618, which, under a grant from the nayak became their chief station in India. A few years later they settled at Balasore and took an active part in the trade of Bengal. In 1642 when their ships failed to arrive from Denmark, the governor had their merchants poisoned, seized their goods and demolished their warehouses and lodges. When the Danish fleet did eventually arrive and found their settlements desolate, the commander raided the port and caused much damage to local shipping passing Balasore. In 1676 they were admitted to a settlement at Serampore. In the meanwhile the French had established themselves at Chandranagar (Chandernagore) and all that was left

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of the Portuguese was their station at Bandel, a little above Chinsura. The English were in Calcutta.

Though considerable rivalry existed between these foreign merchants, the Dutch far outstripped all others in power and wealth. In spite of imperial *firmans* and grants, petty officials along the Hugli were inclined to obstruct Dutch vessels carrying sugar, saltpetre, opium and grain. The Dutch however preferred to overcome these difficulties with their own brand of commercial diplomacy, sometimes using threats, at other times with presents and bribes. Seldom did they interfere in the politics of Bengal, preferring always to engross their trade. There were however a few occasions when, as a result of the looting of their vessels in 1684, Martinus Huysman called for a Dutch squadron to escort their ships. When the looting started at Baranagar, the squadron opened fire on the looters, and all further interference thereafter stopped. In the following year a more serious incident took place, and Huysman evacuated their factory there. When trouble broke out between the English and the local authorities in 1686 they were back again in possession and made full use of the estrangement to their own profit.

During the disturbed conditions which followed the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712, the Dutch moved their womenfolk and treasure from Kassimbazar down to Chinsura, but retained one of their armed vessels at the former place for its defence. Jahandar Shah who succeeded Bahadur Shah ratified the grants of his predecessors in all the provinces of the empire and granted them the use of Nur Ali Khan's mansion in Patna for their trade, provided that it was in no way fortified. Needless to say, the merchants at Surat and Chinsura made six trips to the capital in 20 months for this and other concessions, and on each occasion considerable gifts and presents changed hands.

The factory at Chapra in Patna was originally established for the saltpetre trade. Tavernier, the French traveller who visited Patna early in 1666, called it one of the greatest cities in India. 'The Holland company have a house there by reason of their trade in saltpetre which they refine at Choupar (Chapra). Coming to Patna we met the Hollanders in the street who stopped their coaches to salute us. We did not part till we had emptied two bottles of Shiraz wine in the open street, which is not taken

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notice of in that country whose people meet with an entire freedom without any ceremony.'

Tavernier, like so many European travellers of that period, was over-enthusiastic about the cities of India. With the exception of Agra, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Surat, Golconda and Goa (Vijayanagar having been destroyed in the previous century) all the other cities of India were overgrown villages, unhygienic, badly laid out, with dusty roads and where imposing brick and stone buildings rubbed shoulders with mud huts and thatched structures. The nobles and the officials led an indolent and extravagant life, and the masses of the people were forced by the administrative system to live on the borderline of starvation.

The Dutch chief of Patna held the rank of senior merchant and was entitled to full participation in the affairs of the Chinsura Council when present there. It was the most lucrative post after that of the director of Bengal.

The demand for opium at the end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the eighteenth century, brought the Dutch into this trade. The Opium Society was later formed in Batavia by Baron van Imhoff in 1745 and it was managed by a councillor of the Indies. Eight million boxes of opium each weighing 57 kg (most of which came from Patna) reached Batavia every year. The profits from opium alone amounted to one and a half million rupees.

During the reign of Farrukhsiyar (1713-19), it was decided to lay the town of Patna under contribution. A list of the rich men of the city was drawn up, at the head of which was the Dutch chief, van Hoorn. His goods and property were declared confiscated, and he succeeded in redeeming it only on payment of a 'contribution' of two hundred thousand rupees.

The English agent of Calcutta, writing in 1718 to the court of directors, admitted the overwhelming superiority of the Dutch: 'their strength is greatly superior to ours and all other Europeans joined together.' By the fourth decade of the eighteenth century the Dutch were the most favoured nation in this part of India, their director having had for over 20 years the right of precedence at the nawab's *durbar* and also the right to buoy the Hugli, which 'they claim argues a mastery over the river and a superiority in matters relating to trade'.

The director of Bengal was obliged to refer all matters of

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importance to the council, and a decision on any matter was subject to a majority vote. Seldom, however, did the members of the council take any decision contrary to his wishes, for all of them at some time or another were dependent on him for favours. In addition to his salary and allowances, the director was allowed a commission of three per cent on the sale of imports and two per cent on the purchase of opium; he also received presents and gifts in cash and kind from merchants, brokers, tenants and others. The large sum in the cash box could be used in numerous ways, as loans, on short term investments and for personal expenditure. If G.L. Vernet, who was director from 1764 to 1770 could declare that he required a minimum of Rs 35,000 a year for the maintenance of his household, one can imagine what his total income must have been, and what the total earnings of the directors were, prior to 1760, the good days of the Company.

Considerable pomp and ceremony was maintained by the director, he being the only Dutch official in Bengal permitted the use of a palanquin. When he stirred forth from his residence, a 21-gun salute was fired; eight orderlies heralded his approach and the same number with drawn swords marched on either side of the palanquin; a large number of peons and servants accompanied him. The people of Chinsura or any other Dutch factory he visited, were required to acknowledge his presence by the beating of drums and the sounding of bugles.

The person next in seniority after the director was the chief of Kassimbazar. He held the rank of senior merchant and was entitled to a commission of two per cent on the sale of imports and was also in charge of the mint at Murshidabad, the capital of Bengal, where silver was recoined.

The third in rank in the council was the chief administrator whose duty it was to negotiate the purchase of all goods, their storage and despatch. The other members were the superintendent of the Cloth Room or Walk who, assisted by a junior merchant and a book-keeper, inspected, sorted and packed all merchandise. The appointment was a lucrative one for obvious reasons. The captain of the militia, who ranked after the chief administrator and held the same rank, was an adviser to the council, having no executive vote. The fiscal or sheriff was also

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the mayor of the town. As fiscal or head of security his responsibility was to ensure that the Company's property was not misused. He was also entrusted with the detection of smuggling and private trade. As mayor he settled disputes among the local people. He had the authority to impose fines and punishments. It was the most paying appointment in Chinsura and was invariably held by one of the director's favourites. He was entitled to five per cent of the value of goods imported and exported by ships' officers, and half the value of all contraband goods seized. The man most feared in Chinsura was the fiscal. Drums and bugles were sounded when he did his rounds; he commanded more respect than the director himself. The remaining members of the council were the controller of equipment who supervised the loading and the despatch of ships, their repairs, and the repairs of all other equipment; the purveyor or dispenser who was the invoice-keeper; and the secretary, who was also the cashier.

The chief of the militia and the controller of equipment had no executive vote in the council; the superintendent of the Cloth Room, the chief warehouse-keeper and the controller of equipment, as well as the fiscal held the rank of merchant.

The factories in Dacca and Chittagong though technically under the control of Chinsura, went their own way. The main items of trade were food grains and semi-precious stones brought from Burma. They were badly run, frequently closed due to the corruption of the staff and as frequently re-opened. Probably the Chinsura officials were too deeply concerned with their own affairs to exercise much supervision over these remote and neglected agencies.

Bengal was the area in India where not only were the largest profits made, but where corruption had reached its highest level. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Baron van Rheede tot Drakensteyn had dismissed the director and six of his subordinates for fraud and corruption. Systematic swindling of the Company continued right through the life of the Chinsura directorate. Jakob Mossel, who rose from the rank of ordinary seaman to be governor general, in his report to the Seventeen bitterly complained of the state of affairs in Bengal. 'For a series of years, a succession of directors there have been guilty of the greatest enormities and the foulest dishonesty; they have

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looked upon the company's effects confided to them, as a booty thrown open to their depredations; they have most shamefully and arbitrarily falsified the invoice prices, they have violated in the most disgraceful manner all our orders and regulations with regard to the purchase of goods, without paying the least attention to their oaths and duty. We will not add that the whole of the company's profits on silver have been embezzled, but they have not for many years been forthcoming.'

The story of the 'Black Hole of Calcutta' does not form a part of this narrative, except to relate that the Dutch gave refuge to the English women and children, and also to Drake the president, and Minchen, the commander of the garrison who escaped in boats and reached Falta when Siraj-ud-daula attacked Calcutta on 17 June 1756. For sheltering these refugees, the nawab called upon the Dutch to pay a fine of two million rupees. Bisdome, the Dutch director, threatened to leave the country rather than pay the fine, whereupon they were let off with a payment of Rs 450,000.

The policy of retrenchment and economy in all their possessions in India, the prevalence of corruption, dishonesty and private trade, the large number of desertions to the ranks of the English and the decline of Dutch maritime power, all combined to bring about the downfall of a nation which once had the right of precedence at the nawab's *durbar*. Adriaan Bisdome in his letter to the governor general reported, 'we are not able to offer any resistance worth mentioning, for our palisades that have to serve as a rampart are as little proof against a cannonade as the canvas of a tent, and our entire military force consists of 78 men about one third of whom are in hospital, while all our native servants run away for fear of the English. So that if matters come to such a pass, we should have to man and aim the guns ourselves.'

Prior to 1755, English trade in Bengal was insignificant. Within four years it suddenly spurted, particularly in saltpetre and opium, the former reaching 1,140 tonnes and the latter (obtained from Patna) over 22,700 tonnes a year. Suddenly the Dutch decided to wake up from their lethargy and to share in the wealth acquired by their rivals, and also their political power in Bengal. They were annoyed at the right the English had obtained to search all vessels coming up the Hugli. They approached Mir

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Jaffar, whom Clive had installed as the nawab of Bengal, to grant them a greater share in the opium and saltpetre trades. When the first armed Dutch merchantman arrived, Clive had the vessel searched and seized it. Later in the year, a heavily armed flotilla of seven vessels from Batavia, with a large force of European and Malayan troops, entered the Hugli. The nawab informed Clive that he had allowed the fleet to shelter and that it would leave when weather permitted. News now reached Calcutta that troops were being recruited and that the Dutch fleet was heading for Fort William. Clive felt that to allow the Dutch troops to land and form a conjunction with the garrison at Chinsura, was to admit the establishment of a rival and superior force in the province, which, coupled with the conduct of the nawab, was to submit to the certain ruin of English influence and power in Bengal. To prevent this, which could only be done by force, was to commence hostilities with a nation with which the mother country was at peace.

He positioned four gun-boats to protect Calcutta and reinforced the garrisons at Tannah Fort and at Charnock Battery. The Dutch threatened to open fire if their vessels were searched or their troops and ships hindered from coming up the river. Clive pointed out that there was no intention to injure the Dutch trade, or to insult their colours, but that it was impossible to allow their vessels and troops to pass, under the existing treaty with the nawab. He referred them to the Mogul, offering his services as a mediator. The Dutch captured several small boats and landed a party of marines at Falta and Raipur, where they burnt the English settlement there. Col. Forde marched with a detachment of English troops to Baranagar where he seized the Dutch factory and then pressed on to Chandernagore to prevent a conjunction with the Dutch garrison. On 23 November the Dutch forces landed at Melancholy (Manikali) Point where they were confronted by Commodore Watson's squadron.

On Clive's orders, Watson demanded a full apology from the Dutch, the restitution of English property and withdrawal from the river. When the demand was refused, Watson attacked and captured all the Dutch vessels, except that of the second in command which reached Kalpi and surrendered. On the same day Forde repulsed the Chinsura garrison. In the evening he learnt that the Dutch were marching up from Sankrail and wrote to

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Clive asking for a written order to fight the Dutch. Clive received the note when he was playing cards in Fort William, and without leaving the table, endorsed on it, 'Dear Forde, fight them immediately, I will send you the order of council tomorrow.' Forde moved to Bedarrah which commanded the road to Chinsura and gave his artillery and cavalry full scope. The action was short and decisive. Within half an hour the Dutch forces were completely defeated and put to flight, leaving 320 dead, 300 wounded and Colonel Roussel, 14 officers and 550 men taken prisoner. Only 14 Dutchmen escaped to Chinsura.

The Dutch sued for peace and at the Convention of Ghariatti, they agreed to pay a large indemnity. Clive agreed to return their ships, stores and prisoners, except those who wished to enter the service of the East India Company. The Council of the Indies was aghast at the failure of the Dutch expedition, and went to the extent of disavowing the acts of their commanders and captains. By a subsequent treaty they were allowed to repair their factories and lodges on the condition that their garrison was reduced to 125 European troops and only one ship sailed up the Hugli at a time. The Dutch abandoned all attempts to rival the English in the wider field of Bengal politics and devoted themselves purely to trading, rather to reviving their trade which had dropped to Rs 32,000 a year. Business however picked up and they were soon able to make considerable profit. The defeat was soon forgotten and the Dutch merchants of Chinsura reverted to their old habits of lining their own pockets. It was said that during this period for every one rupee of profit the Company made, their servants made one hundred, and while the officials of the VOC were amassing fortunes, the Company was heading towards bankruptcy. In 1772 it had to borrow ten million florins to meet immediate payments, while millions of rupees reached the Netherlands through bills of exchange on the English Company. Johannes Mathias Ross, who was director of Chinsura in 1780 and a friend of Robert Clive, transferred half a million rupees to Holland in this way.

Along the banks of the Hugli, four European nations had established themselves—the Dutch, English, French and Danes, as well as the 'Ostenders' at Bankipore. The first toc lose was the Ostend Company (see Appendix One), when a local official was

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instigated by Fort William to attack their factory, which surrendered. The Danes had several houses and godowns at Serampore, but their trade and influence was negligible. In 1759 the Danish chief factor was prevailed upon to defect to the English bringing with him Rs 350,000 in cash. Thereafter Serampore ceased to count in the affairs of Bengal and eventually in 1845, all the Danish settlements in India were sold to the English for £20,000.

Among the remaining three nations, considerable pomp and ceremony was observed, especially on the occasions known as 'national visits'. These visits were annual events usually at the beginning of the year or when a new governor or director took office, as for instance when John Cartier was appointed governor of Bengal in 1770, and George Louis Vernet, the director of Chinsura called at Calcutta to pay his respects.

At four o'clock in the evening on 26 February 1770, Vernet's entourage assembled at the director's residence and moved in state to the jetty, where the company's barge and several other barges were moored. They were escorted by an officer and 24 men who remained as the director's bodyguard till his return. At the jetty the Chinsura garrison was drawn up in two ranks as a guard of honour. As soon as the director's barge shoved off, a salute of 21 guns was fired from the battery. Each member of the party had his own boat where he spent the night, but the rest of the day was spent on the Company's vessel which had a cabin large enough to accommodate 36 men. In addition to the barges of the members of the entourage, the soldiers and servants had their own boats; two were used as kitchens and two as store-ships for provisions, making a total of 33 barges of different sizes, an imposing sight.

As the sun set the flotilla anchored a little south of Serampore for the night. At four o'clock next morning the procession continued its journey and three hours later halted at Chitpur, about five kilometres north of Calcutta. Deputies from Fort William led by Russel, the second in command, came aboard to welcome them. Russel then conducted Vernet ashore to a beach house near the river where they all had breakfast. An hour later they set off in five coaches provided by the English, which were escorted by the governor's own personal guards in blue and gold uniform. At ten o'clock they reached Calcutta where they were

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conducted to a house specially prepared for their reception. This was the mansion of Mohammed Reza Khan, adjacent to the governor's residence, which the English had bought for Rs 120,000. At the bungalow the Dutch director was received by a guard of honour consisting of 80 sepoys commanded by a British officer, which remained with Vernet all the while he was in Calcutta. As soon as the Dutch director entered the house a salute of 19 guns was fired from Fort William.

Vernet then sent his special messenger to government house to request whether he and his councillors could wait upon His Excellency. Shortly afterwards, Cartier and the Council of Calcutta, in the order of their rank called at Reza Khan's mansion to welcome the Dutch. Vernet then explained the purpose of his visit, which was to congratulate John Cartier on his succession to the governorship. The exchange of these compliments was made by Vernet speaking in French to which the English governor replied in English, Russel acting as the interpreter. The ceremonial visit lasted an hour; then Cartier returned to his residence. Half an hour later, the Dutch director reciprocated the visit by calling at government house.

At 12.30 p.m. the Dutch company once again called on the English governor in response to the latter's invitation to lunch, which was served in a large hall where nearly 60 persons were already assembled. The service was of silver. Vernet sat at the upper end of the table on the governor's right, on the left was the general of the English land forces who was next in seniority to Russel. More than half the diners were army officers. After the meal a hookah was placed on the table and everyone smoked for half an hour, after which the Dutch group returned to the guest house. What was most noticeable at this state luncheon, was the little emphasis on precedence and formality, totally unlike the etiquette observed in Batavia, where everyone was stiff and formal and no one would address the governor general until he spoke first.

At six o'clock in the evening, John Cartier called again on Vernet to request him to be his guest at a concert and dinner at Belvedere in Alipore, the governor's country seat. The evening's entertainment ended at midnight when they all rode back to Calcutta.

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The following morning, 28 February, Cartier once again called on Vernet to invite him to dinner and a ball at government house at seven o'clock in the evening. The ball was opened by Mrs Cartier and Vernet. There were many guests all magnificently dressed, especially the ladies who were covered with jewellery. The meal was served in the banquet hall and the whole gathering was conducted with great elegance. It lasted till the next morning.

The next day was the day of their departure and at nine o'clock in the morning the Dutch party called on the governor to take their leave. They then paid a visit to Russel with whom they had lunch. In the early afternoon, escorted by Cartier and his personal guard they left by coach. A salute of 19 guns was fired in their honour. Before embarking, Vernet presented Cartier with a gift and all the other attendants received presents in cash.

From Chitpur they proceeded to Ghariatti which they reached next morning, and breakfasted with the French director, M. Chevalier. Thereafter they rode to Chandernagore where they re-boarded their barges and finally reached Chinsura to be welcomed by a 21-gun salute and the remaining members of council who were assembled at the director's residence.

In 1781, Ross was called upon to surrender Chinsura to the English to prevent it falling to the French. It was restored two years later only to be retaken in 1795 when France declared war on England and Holland. Chinsura was first administered by a special commissioner and then by the judicial magistrate of Hugli. During this period it became a haven for thieves, cheats, swindlers and receivers of stolen goods. Castle Gustavus was in such a ruined condition that it would have been dangerous to fire the cannon mounted its walls. Not a single blade of grass nor a bush were to be seen anywhere. Chinsura was restored to Holland in 1817, but the Dutch government was no longer interested in trading in India. By the Treaty of 1824 all the Dutch settlements, except Balasore (which was ceded in 1846) were made over to the English, and Daniel Overbeck, the last director, and eight other Dutchmen were granted pensions.

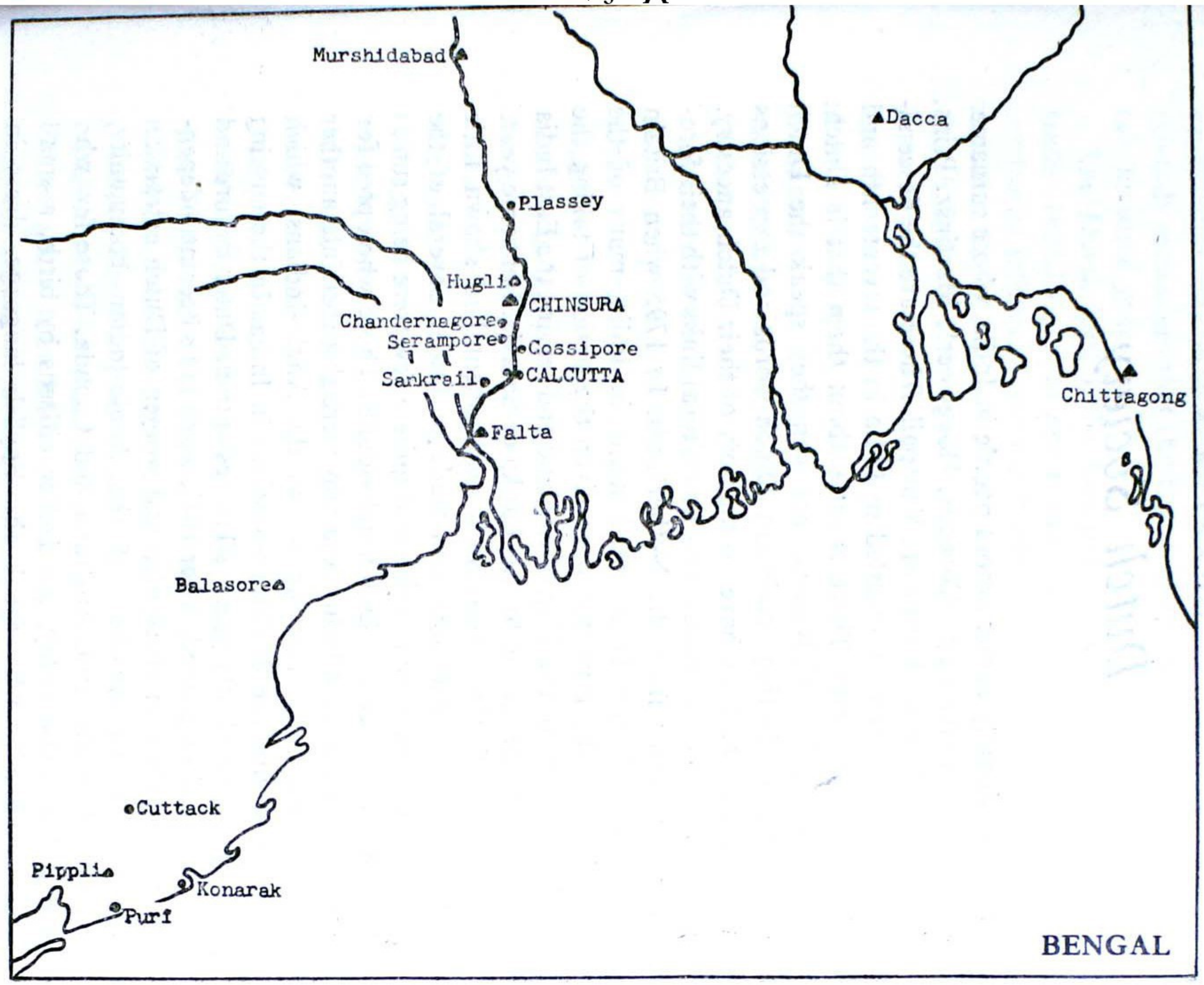
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Directors of Chinsura

Mathews van der Broucke	1658	Louis Taillefert	1754
Constantin Ranst	1670	Adriaan Bisdome	1754
Martinus Huysman	1684	George Louis Vernet	1764
William de Rov	1706	Johannes Mathias Ross	1780
Antonio Huysman	1712	Pieter Breuys	1783
M. Vuyst	1724	Isaac Titsingh	1789
Patras	1726	Col. C. van Citte	1795
Sichterman	1744	J.A. van der Braam	1817
Huygens	1749	Daniel Overbeck	1818

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Murshidabad
Dacca
Plassey
Hugli
CHINSURA
Chandernagore
Serampore
Cossipore
Sankrail
CALCUTTA
Chittagong
Falta
Balasore
Cuttack
Pipplis
Konarak
Puri
BENGAL

CHAPTER X

Dutch Society

One occasionally comes across people in India, whose surnames have a distinctive ring—Cornelis, Hoegwoerf, Martinsz, Prins, Twist, Vandeputte, Vangazen, Vanspall. These are the descendants of Dutchmen who settled in India in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. There is little about them that is Dutch; they are neither Calvinists, nor can they speak the Dutch language, nor do they retain any Dutch words and expressions in their speech. They have no memory of their Dutch ancestry, except for their surnames, and no cultural links with their forebears who came from the Netherlands. In 1795 when Britain took over all the Dutch settlements in India, many of the ancestors of these people were given the option of taking the oath of loyalty to the king of England and serving the East India Company or departing for Sri Lanka or Batavia. For some years prior to 1795 the Netherlands government had shown little interest in its possessions and trade in India. Several of the Indian factories were in ruins and quite a few were being run as the private property of Dutch individuals. Those who opted for service with the East India Company were absorbed into another mixed community, now known as the Anglo-Indians, which grew up around the British possessions in India. In the ensuing one hundred and fifty years, all traces of their Dutch culture and association disappeared. After 1947, when India became independent, a number of these men and women of Dutch extraction along with the members of the Anglo-Indian community, emigrated to England, Australia and Canada. Those few who are still in India today, are Indian citizens by birth, a small ethnic minority who speak the English language, dress in European fashion and marry members of their own community. The Vanspalls, the Cornelises, the Hoegwoerfs and others are

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the last remaining though scattered fragments of the Dutch society which once existed in and around Chinsura, Surat, Cochin, Quilon and along the Coromandel Coast from Tuticorin and Negapatam to Pulicat and Masulipatam. Along with the ornamental cemeteries dotted along the coast of India, they are the only reminders that the Dutch lived and traded in India for two hundred years.

The Dutch East India Company was formed primarily to trade. Initially it was not interested in acquiring territory or territorial influence; nor did it have any intention of founding colonies. It had also not given much thought to the spread of the Dutch Reformed Religion, Calvinism, outside the Netherlands, except to make provision for the spiritual needs of its employees and the maintenance of discipline on the long sea voyages to the East. The VOC soon realised that some form of territorial arrangement was necessary, if only for the safety of their merchandise and the protection of their staff. Once the Dutch settled merchants and built factories in India and elsewhere, the elements of a Dutch community were created. These communities were predominantly male, for, with the exception of the senior staff who had brought out their families with them, and possibly the ship's captains, the majority of Dutchmen whether merchants, mariners or soldiers were single men. It was not long however, before lowly but adventurous women found their way to the Indies, either disguised as sailors or in some other masculine garb, or as stowaways with the connivance of the ship's officers. Dutch senior merchants were reluctant to send these women home. Possibly their Calvinist upbringing led them to believe that any Dutch or European female was superior and more suitable as a wife than any Indian, Indonesian or Malaysian woman.

When Pieter Both, the first governor general of the Netherlands East Indies sailed for Bantam in 1609, he brought out with him Calvinist *predikants* (ordained preachers), craftsmen and 36 women. The Company's intention was apparently to provide suitable wives for their staff and to found a colony in Bantam. Three years later Both advised the Seventeen not to allow 'any more light women to emigrate from the Fatherland, since there were far too many of them here already, and these females led scandalous and unedifying lives to the great shame of our

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nation.' If the women in these colonies led scandalous and shameful lives it was in no small measure due to their menfolk who were a drunken, dissolute, lazy and improvident lot. The better class of Dutchman generally preferred to seek employment at home and only joined the VOC as a last resort.

The hazards of a six or eight-month voyage, the meagre salaries and the hardships of life in the tropics where little was known of the prevention of such deadly diseases as malaria, cholera and dysentery, discouraged the majority of Dutchmen from seeking a livelihood in the East Indies if they could get work in or near the Netherlands. The Seventeen could therefore seldom pick and choose their subordinates and had to make the best of those they could get, be they sailors, soldiers or merchants; Dutchmen, Danes or Germans; Calvinists or Catholics. Those who joined the Company were 'poor, ignorant, slavish-minded Netherlanders or debauched foreigners', who had no resources at all, who signed on for five years in the hope of returning with some money and a sea chest full of exotic Oriental goods. In this respect the Dutch formed a strong contrast to the Portuguese who had struck deep roots as colonists. As a Dutch corporal wrote in 1662, 'wherever they once come, there they mean to settle for the rest of their lives and never think of returning to Portugal again. But a Hollander when he arrives in India thinks only of when he will return home to Europe again.'

There were however several noteable exceptions to the general run of Company's servants. Men like Jakob van Neck who avowed that 'all his life long he had a desire to see foreign countries'; or Nicholas de Graaf, the ship's surgeon, happily married and comfortably installed in his home town, could never resist for long the call of the sea and the tropics; Antonio van Diemen, the undischarged bankrupt, who enlisted as a soldier and became governor general from 1636 to 1645; Francois Caron, a Frenchman and a ship's cook who became the director general in 1647; Johan Maetsuyker who spent 40 years in the East of which 25 were as governor general; and Jakob Mossel and Reinier de Klerk who started their careers as common seamen in the service of the VOC, ending as governor generals in 1750 and 1777 respectively.

Right from the beginning, the belief existed even among the lowliest of Europeans in the tropics, that the 'white man'

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Dutch Fort at Cochin



Dutch Coins

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Dutch Grave
at Pulicat



Dutch Doorway
in Cochin

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whether merchant, mariner or settler, should stand above and apart from the coloured races among whom he worked and lived. This implied that white women should emigrate in adequate numbers along with their menfolk. But the Dutch Company was either reluctant or ill-equipped to foster female migration. Some of the directors believed that European women seldom became acclimatised in the tropics, and thought it hopeless to expect Dutch women to brave the rigours of a six or eight-month voyage to settle in the East, where life was short for those bred in northern climes. Obviously the conditions which deterred many respectable upper and middle class Dutchmen from enlisting in the service of the VOC, formed a still greater obstacle to their womenfolk.

On the other hand, the knowledge that Dutch women of lowly origin had a good chance of making a rich marriage in the East, induced many working class girls to try and reach the Indies at any cost. It is this type of adventurous and undesirable emigrant that Jacques Specx, the governor general-designate referred to when he wrote to the directors, while aboard the ship taking him to Batavia in 1629, 'the crew are all fit and well and we lack nothing save so many honest girls and housewives in place of so many filthy strumpets and street walkers who have been found in the ships. They are so numerous and so awful that I am ashamed to say anything more about it.'

After Both became disillusioned with the Dutch women in Bantam, he advocated intermarriage with indigenous women according to the Portuguese precedent, as a better alternative to founding durable colonies, provided these women were later converted to Christianity. Since the majority of the Company's employees were interested in completing their tenure and returning to the Netherlands, these colonies never took root. So the VOC decided to allow time-expired men to settle in their townships and to trade in certain commodities such as rice and livestock or to pursue certain professions such as cultivators, blacksmiths, carpenters and tavern-keepers. A series of instructions were issued by the Seventeen and the authorities in Java, governing the conduct of these 'free' Dutchmen—they were to remain subordinate to the local chief merchant and were to abide by the rules and regulations issued by his factory council; they were liable for military service in time of emergency; they

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could marry only with the permission of the factory council, and then also, only to Christians or Christian converts; these brides should have a good knowledge of the Dutch language; and their children should be brought up as Christians.

Restrictions were placed on the acquisition of gold and precious stones, and on the remittance of capital to Holland Free Dutchmen who married Indian or Asian women were not allowed to return to the Netherlands, and those who had married Dutch or European women could only take home a single chest of clothing and personal effects.

In every respect these settlers were less advantageously placed than the Company's men. Not allowed to enter the inter-port trade for fear of repercussions on the VOC's own trade, being totally unsuitable for agriculture and unable to profitably compete with skilled Indian labour, the Dutch colonies did not evolve into a prosperous, self-supporting middle-class society. The only occupation a Dutchman seemed to be fit for was tippling and tavern-keeping, and money-lending to a lesser extent. Tippling houses were a prominent feature of Dutch colonial life from Manhatten to the Moluccas and to Masulipatam.

The settlers and their families soon got a bad name. Governor General Reynat alleged that 'the scum of our land were marrying the scum of the East Indies.' Dr Laurens Reael called them all dissolute drunkards to whom no respectable Asian father would give his daughter in marriage. He accused them of indulging in piracy, trading with the English and with other competitors of the company, and of smuggling spices and banned items.

Several high officials, with the intention of rectifying this state of affairs, advocated the emigration of married couples or families from the Netherlands as the only means of establishing reliable settled Dutch colonies in the East. Attempts were made to recruit families for emigration, but the response was negligible. The high mortality rate from tropical diseases aggravated by the addiction to alcohol soon liquidated those who did come out to the Indies.

Maetsuyker, who had spent 40 years of his life abroad, had quite early in his career become an admirer of the Portuguese system of promoting colonisation by encouraging Dutchmen to marry Asian and Eurasian women and to settle in the townships and territories of the VOC. He believed that the children

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of these unions were better acclimatised to living in the land of their birth, than those born of pure European parentage; and that after the second or third generation they differed little in complexion from pure Netherlanders. He admitted that many of these children turned out badly, but he attributed this to their upbringing by slaves from the day of their birth and the improper supervision of the parents, and not to any inherent racial defect.

Van Kittensteyn, who was governor of Sri Lanka for six years came to the conclusion that the Dutch settlers in the island would never do any hard work and their Sinhalese or Eurasian wives were basically vicious and immoral. Rijkloff van Goens held out the incentive of three months pay as a bonus to those who married Sinhalese, Tamilian or Indo-Portuguese women, but stipulated that the daughters of these marriages should marry Netherlanders, 'so that our race may degenerate as little as possible'. During his tenure, 300 Dutchmen in Sri Lanka married Indo-Portuguese women. The majority of the 'burgher' community of the island today are the descendants of these 300 families.

At one stage the Seventeen went so far as to urge Dutchmen to marry only high caste women of good social standing. This was easier said than done. Indian women, whether Hindu or Muslim (or Buddhist in Sri Lanka), lived in societies which permitted marriage only within certain well-defined groups. Any woman who married outside her caste, religion or race forfeited all claim to the respect and consideration of her family. Laurens Reael had unconsciously referred to this some years earlier when he pointed out that no respectable Indian or Asian father would give his daughter to a drunkard who fed grossly on beef which no caste Hindu would touch, or pork which is taboo to Muslims. The proviso that all women who married Netherlanders should become Calvinist believers or Christians, excluded most of these high caste ladies, for they seldom changed their faith.

The alternative to marriage was concubinage, and puritanical Calvinism in the East seldom objected to Dutch merchants and mariners and others keeping concubines of all races, Buginese female slaves from the Celebes being always preferred. 'The Bouginese women,' says Stavorinus, 'are in general much handsomer than those of any Indian nation. There are some among them who for the contour of their faces would be esteemed

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beauties even in Europe, and did they but possess the lilies and roses of our northern fair, they would be equal to the handsomest of the sex. They are all most ardently addicted to the sensual pleasures of love, and goaded on by the hottest fires of lust are ingenious in every refinement of amorous enjoyment. On this account the Bouginese girls are preferred throughout the East as concubines, both by the Europeans and the Indians. Mr van Pleuren who resided here for eight years and several other credible people informed me that among these people and those of Macasser were many, who in common with some of the Portuguese women at Batavia, possessed the secret of being able by certain herbs and other means to disqualify their inconstant lovers from repeating the affront to them, in so much that the offending part shrank away entirely with other circumstances, which decency requires that I should suppress.'*

The Dutch therefore, whether 'free' or Company's servants, were forced to take their wives, their concubines or their bedfellows from among women of either Eurasian, low caste or slave origins, just as the Portuguese had done before them and the English and French were to do later.

The children of these marriages were brought up by slaves from the day of their birth and spoke the mother's language or the language of the slaves better than they could speak Dutch. The girls became marriageable by the age of 13, and thereafter led indolent and listless lives. Illiterate, cruel and jealous of their own slaves, whom they punished unmercifully if they had the slightest suspicion that any of them had caught their husband's fancy, they chewed *pan*, gossiped and lolled about all day long. Free from all forms of social control, the demoralisation of these Dutch Eurasians could only be changed by time and favourable circumstances, but this seldom happened. The disreputable behaviour of the mothers affected the children who were generally considered to inherit the vices of both parents and the virtues of neither. They were regarded with contempt by the Europe born and bred Netherlanders who referred to them as 'piebald gentry', 'unbleached dungarees', 'cockroaches' and 'crows'. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, Maetsuyker

*J.S. Stavorinus, 'Voyages to the East Indies, 1768-1778', Vol II, London, 1798, pp 183-4.

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who was still governor general, was compelled to ban the employment of these Eurasian children in the Dutch factories on the grounds that, 'Asia is full of children of our own'. This ban remained in force till 1716 when orders were given that they could be employed if no suitable Europeans were available. It was only in 1756 by which time most of the Dutchmen in the Company's service and Dutchwomen, were born in the East either of Dutch parents or Dutch fathers and Portuguese Christians, slaves and concubines, that the Seventeen relented and gave instructions that Dutch Eurasians should be trained in the trades and used in the factories and offices.

If the attitude of the Dutchman to his own flesh and blood was openly contemptuous, this was more so in his dealings with the people among whom he lived. Few of the Company's servants treated the men with whom they worked and traded with respect, fairness and kindness. They were generally referred to as 'vile and mean', 'feckless barbarians', 'treacherous moors', 'blind heathen', 'black dogs' and 'dirt'. The Dutch, and this included all the other nationalities they employed, along with the Portuguese, the English and the French, all believed that a Christian European was superior to any other member of any other race, Christian converts included. Among the Calvinist Dutch this belief was strongest, for they were firmly convinced that they were the Elect of God and the Salt of the Earth.

The Dutch authorities had soon to face the problem of the orphans, whose numbers increased each year. The first Orphan Chamber, presided over by a councillor of the Indies, was opened in Batavia early in the seventeenth century, and others were established in all the important settlements. There were Orphan Chambers at Masulipatam, Pulicat, Negapatam and at Cochin. Partly financed by private donation and partly by the Company, they were run by the *predikants* and the lay preachers. When cholera, dysentery and malaria, unhygienic living conditions and the excessive consumption of alcohol took their toll, the first to succumb were the Dutch fathers. The Orphan Chambers took care of the half-caste children, who were brought up along with other orphans of pure Dutch descent. The children were taught the 'three Rs' and were instructed in the precepts of the Dutch Reformed Religion. The majority, when they left the Orphanage having to fend for themselves, became ship's boys, ordinary

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soldiers or common labour, for it was only towards the middle of the eighteenth century that they were allowed to work in the factories. A few did very well for themselves, such as Iman Willem Falck, nicknamed the 'Crow' because he was a dark man, who was appointed governor of Sri Lanka when he was 29 years of age.

The wives or consorts of the Dutchmen who married in India were thus mostly of Indo-Portuguese descent. Even those who were not, had been brought up under Indo-Portuguese influences. 'The Portuguese language is an easy language to speak and easy to learn,' reported Maetsuyker, 'this is the reason why we cannot prevent the slaves brought here from Arakan, who have never heard a word of Portuguese (and indeed even our own children) from taking to that language, in preference to all other languages, and making it their own.' Nicholas de Graaf, Johan Splinter Stavorinus and many other visitors in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries all comment on the extent to which Portuguese remained the lingua franca of the Dutch settlements despite all efforts to displace it in favour of Dutch. Many Dutch women born and bred of European parents spoke a creole form of Portuguese in preference to their mother tongue, in which they could express themselves but haltingly. One would have expected husbands and fathers to have insisted on the use of Dutch in the house, but unlike the Portuguese, the English and the French, most Netherlanders 'foolishly considered it a great honour to be able to speak a foreign language'. Added to all this was the fact that 'married men neither give themselves much concern about their wives, nor show them much regard. They seldom converse with them, at least not on useful subjects or such as concern society. After having been married for years the ladies are often ignorant of the world and of manners as upon their wedding day. It is not that they have no capacity to learn, but the men have no inclination to teach them.' This was Stavorinus's observation in 1778, when the Dutch had been in the East for over 170 years. It bears out the general opinion that the majority of the VOC's personnel were an ill-mannered boorish lot, who began their day with gin and tobacco and ended it with tobacco and gin and in the interval fed grossly, lounged about and did little business.

In the Dutch settlements in India, the curious spectacle

presented itself of a Dutch Calvinist male society uneasily wedded with a largely Indo-Portuguese female society. The daughters of these marriages took after their mothers or after their slave nurses who brought them up, rather than after their fathers. In this way the elements of the Indo-Portuguese colonial culture which the first women had brought with them were perpetuated and handed down in the Dutch colonies for nearly two centuries. A home atmosphere of this nature invariably affected the husbands who in the long run turned over to the religion, customs and habits of their consorts.

A newly married bride writing to her grandmother in Holland in 1689 described the duties of her 59 household slaves. Three or four youths and as many slave girls would accompany her and her husband whenever they left the house; another five or six men and as many maids stood behind their respective chairs at mealtimes. They had a slave orchestra which played the harp, viol and bassoon at dinner time. Three or four slaves attended on each of them constantly indoors, one sat at the entrance to receive visitors and to run errands and the remaining slaves were employed on various household, cellar and buttery duties and as grooms, cooks, gardeners and sempstresses.

These unnecessarily large slave households were maintained for ostentation and status, but the women who presided over them gave themselves the airs of princesses, not even stooping to pick up a handkerchief from the floor. A thoroughly spoilt and vicious lot of women, who adopted such habits as squatting on the floor instead of sitting on chairs; they ate their curry and rice with their fingers instead of using spoon and fork; they spoke little or no Dutch among themselves, but only a low form of Portuguese and the topics of conversation were the misdemeanours of their slaves and the savoury dishes they perpetually consumed. Whenever they went to church or appeared in public they were decked out in silks, satins and jewels and were followed by a train of slaves, but at home they squatted in their slips or in the most transparent underclothes, with their hair oiled and rolled up in a *konde* or chignon and held in place with several gold pins. Their pride and arrogance was exceeded only by their ignorance of polite society.

In Bengal where there were not many 'free' Dutchmen, the Chinsura staff led an easy life. A part of the morning was spent

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in attending to the Company's business, their own private business being of greater importance. Those who could afford to employ Bengali clerks on Rs 20 a month, spent even less time. The work of buying, inspecting and selling was entrusted to local brokers, leaving the best part of the day free. The average household expenses of a junior merchant varied between Rs 5,000-6,000 a year, excluding what he paid for provisions and other goods brought from Europe, whereas his salary was Rs 400 a year with a like amount in allowances. The greatest cause of expenditure were the wives, whose excessive demands on their husbands for jewellery and satins drove many a merchant, nay all of them, to make money in every possible manner. 'Domestic peace and tranquility must be purchased by a show of jewels, a wardrobe of the richest clothes and a kingly parade of plate on the side board. The husband must give this or the household would be too hot to hold him.' The women on their part did not pay the least attention to the management of their homes and left it to be run entirely by their slaves and servants.

The inimitable Stavorinus, who always had a special observation to make on each place he visited, had something to say of Bengal as well. 'I do not believe that there is any country upon the face of the globe where lasciviousness and intemperance and every kind of unbridled lewdness is so much indulged in as in the lower provinces of the Empire of Indostan. The contamination of vice is not solely confined to the two nations (Hindus and Mohammedans), who are natives of the country, but extends likewise to the Europeans who settle and trade there. The climate influences perhaps more upon the constitution here than in other countries.' Baranagar, the second village granted to the Dutch, 40 km south of Chinsura, was noted more for the large number of ladies of pleasure who lived there, paying a monthly fee to the assistant fiscal of Baranagar, than for the coarse blue handkerchiefs which were made there.

The senior appointments in the factories and headquarters in India were invariably filled by merchants who at some time or other served in Batavia. When these men were transferred to their new stations in India, they brought with them their entire household—servants, slaves, furniture, silver-plate, household effects, chests of the richest cloths and caskets of jewellery. Accustomed as they were to the privileges of their rank in the

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capital, they were determined to maintain the same style and splendour in their new appointment, more so if they were members of the Council of the Indies. The authorities at Batavia sanctioned this display of ostentation to uphold the status of their representatives, and to impress the local population and their rulers with the wealth and power of the Company. While such a display of grandeur and opulence was intended to reflect the prestige and dignity of the Company in the person of the director or chief merchant, these individuals endeavoured to reproduce on a smaller scale the pomp and ceremony with which that august personage, the governor general of the Netherlands Indies was surrounded.

The governor general held court in a manner that some European monarchs might have envied. He gave public audience much like an oriental potentate, on Mondays and Thursdays. He was inaccessible to everybody; could not be spoken to unless on matters of the greatest importance and urgency; and the man in the street was not allowed to pass his residence. He seldom left his capital except to sail home. When he rode out in his carriage he was escorted by a company of horse guards in scarlet and gold uniform, with outriders and trumpeters to precede him and announce his presence. All those whom he passed had to alight from their own carriages, bare their heads and bow deeply, or curtsy if they were ladies, till he went by. When he entered the church, everybody without exception had to stand and remain standing till he took his seat. The governor general's wife received the same honour and respect whenever she appeared in public.

The councillors and their wives were also entitled to several courtesies. They were preceded by two mace bearers and all who passed them had to stop and bow until the councillor's carriage had passed. When they entered the church only the men present were required to stand and to remain standing until the councillor or his wife took their seats.

In addition to this pomp and ceremony, distinctions of rank and precedence were minutely observed in all the Company's establishments on all occasions, whether they were public functions, state visits, private get-togethers or funerals.

'Every individual is as stiff and formal and feelingly alive to every infraction of his privileges in this respect as if his

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happiness or misery depended wholly on them. Nothing is more particularly attended to at entertainments and in companies by the master of the house than the seating of every guest and drinking their healths in the exact order of precedency. The ladies are particularly prone to insist upon every prerogative attached to the stations of their husbands; some of them if they conceive themselves placed a jot lower than they are entitled to, will sit in sullen and proud silence for the whole time the entertainment lasts.

'It does not infrequently happen between clergymen's wives, who chancing to meet in their carriages, one will not give way to another though they may be forced to remain for hours in the street. Not long before I left Batavia this happened between two clergymen's wives, who chancing to meet in their carriages in a narrow place, neither would give way, but stopped the passage for a full quarter of an hour, during which time they abused each other in the most virulent language, making use of the most reproachful epithets, and whore and slave's brat were bandied about without mercy. The mother of one of these ladies, it seems had been a slave, and the other I was told, was not a little suspected of richly deserving the first appelation. They at last rode by one another continuing their railing till they were out of sight. But this occurrence was the occasion of an action which was brought before the council and carried on with the greatest virulence and perseverence.'

To provide against disputes of this nature, the Council of the Indies issued an Order of Precedence wherein the rank and status of all the senior officers of the company was defined. Included in the resolution were regulations governing the pomp of funeral processions, the jewellery ladies of rank should display according to their husband's status, the type and decoration of their clothing, the number of attendants and even the use of parasols and umbrellas.

There were 131 articles to this act, which covered all the smallest details such as carriages, horses and chairs which could give rise to disputes. As one author described it, it exhibited a strange picture of meanness and illiberality in the midst of affected grandeur. The eighth article even stipulated how a child's chair should be decorated; whether it should be gilted or painted according to the rank of the parents; who was to wear

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embroidered clothes; and who should display lace or velvet coats. The thirty-first article banned the use of parasols in the vicinity of the castle by all below the rank of *koopman* or merchant except when it was raining. Another article regulated the value of jewellery which the ladies could wear, stipulating that those whose husbands were below the rank of councillor could display jewellery worth no more than Rs 12,000; wives of senior merchants being limited to Rs 8,000; merchants Rs 6,000; and junior merchants' wives, Rs 2,000.

Besides specifying the number of female attendants a lady could take with her and the dress and jewellery of her attendants, orders were issued regarding the size of diamonds to be used in earrings, whether the hairpins should be of gold or silver, petticoats and jackets of gold or silver cloth or of silk, as well as girdles and chairs. Another article specified what musicians each rank was allowed when entertaining guests at home. A tax was imposed on carriages with a view to discouraging junior merchants using them. The rates were higher for juniors than for seniors and ranged from Rs 100 for councillors to Rs 250 for book-keepers, Rs 400 for Dutchmen who were not Company's servants and Rs 600 for 'natives'.

Being ever conscious of their rank and what went with it, it was no wonder when any of the councillors or other senior staff were transferred, they maintained the same status abroad. Adriaan Moens who was a councillor of the Indies kept up considerable style as commander of Cochin, which was subordinate to the governor of Sri Lanka. When he paid a state visit to the raja of Cochin or any of the neighbouring princes, he used caparisoned war-elephants with silver and gold trappings and rich tapestries, and a large contingent of Dutch troops armed with muskets and swords. Virtually every able-bodied soldier and sailor who was not in hospital, escorted the commander of Cochin in public.

Even in such secondary factories as Tegnapatam, which was one of several under the director of the Coromandel, the chief appeared in public with a suite of Indian standard bearers, trumpeters, musicians, 20 armed guards, a swarm of peons or orderlies, besides his bodyguard of 12 Dutch soldiers.

The director of Surat surpassed all others, mainly because of the pomp and ceremony maintained by the Mogul governors

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who were in several cases, princes of the blood. The director was specially authorised by the Company to appear in public with a great display of grandeur and show. Escorted by eight or twelve mounted troops, he himself would be carried in a glittering *howdah* on an elephant, sometimes with a second elephant similarly decorated, following, in whose train were ceremonial carriages, palanquins with trappings of silver and gold, trumpeters, and a large contingent of uniformed attendants with silver staffs. Even the furniture in the director's house was of inlaid mother-of-pearl and the plate on his table was of gold and silver.

From the moment the ship carrying the director-designate of Bengal, styled 'the Honourable Director of the Company's important trade in the kingdoms of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa', entered the river at Falta, a salute of 21 guns was fired from the Dutch settlement, followed by a salute of 19, 17 and 15 guns from the three ships which were always anchored there. When he departed a few hours later, the gun salutes were again fired. Sailing past Fort William and Chandernagore, he received 19-gun salutes from the English and French batteries and when he reached Chinsura he was welcomed with a salute of 21 guns from Castle Gustavus. He then inspected the guard of honour at the jetty and was carried in the state palanquin to the government house, where the garrison was lined up in two ranks, drums beating and colours flying. All along the route he was escorted by a bodyguard provided by the outgoing director, while the sound of trumpets and bugles and the tattoo of drums announced his presence.

Many writers, past and present have seen Calvinism as the main driving force in Dutch commercial expansion in the seventeenth century. While it did play a great role, its contribution is often exaggerated. As a religion it made little or no headway in the East, except in Amboina where it lasted till the present day, when thousands of Ambonese sought refuge in the Netherlands when Indonesia became independent.

Calvin and other Protestant reformers had given little thought to the spread of the Reformed Religion outside Europe. Under the charter granted by the States-General to the VOC in

1602, the Company was given the monopoly of trade and navigation east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan for an initial period of 21 years. The governing body, the Seventeen was empowered to conclude treaties of peace and alliance, wage war and build fortresses and strongholds, but no mention was made of spreading the light of the true reformed Christian religion among the benighted Papists and the blind heathen. Soon the directors realised that some provision had to be made for the spiritual needs of their staff, if only as a means of maintaining discipline and morale on the long sea voyages and during their stay abroad.

One of the specific instructions to Pieter Both, the first governor general in 1609 was to 'propagate the name of Christ for the salvation of the heathen, for the honour and reputation of our nation and for benefit of our company', for which purpose, in addition to the 36 Dutchwomen, two *predikants* accompanied Both to Bantam. But right from the beginning these preachers or ordained priests fought a losing battle against Roman Catholicism in the regions where the Portuguese had earlier established themselves. They could make no impression on such deeply rooted and established faiths as Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism in Sri Lanka. Nevertheless the Company recognised its obligations and in the two hundred years of its existence, sent out and maintained at its own expense nearly a thousand *predikants* and several thousand lay readers and teachers. It also provided funds for the building and upkeep of churches, founded seminaries and orphanages and paid for the printing and distribution of bibles and devotional literature on a large scale, in Dutch, Tamil, Sinhalese and other languages.

While the Company supported the true Christian Reformed Religion, it made sure that the overseas churches were subordinate to its authority. Governors and directors had the power to transfer and post *predikants* and their assistants and to decide how long they should serve in a particular region. The governor general and his council exercised the right to read and censor all correspondence between the *predikants* and the church councils in the East and the church authorities in the Netherlands. Since all these ecclesiastics were paid by the Company and not by the church, the Seventeen not only insisted that lay officials

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should sit on church councils, but regulated their order of precedence in the Company's hierarchy, with the lay readers at the bottom of the social ladder. Ordained preachers drew the same salary as senior merchants, 80 to 100 florins a month and the *krank-bezoekers* (sick visitors) and the *zieken-troosters* (catechists) drew between 30 and 36 florins, slightly less than a junior merchant, but very much more than a book-keeper or writer in the Company's service.

Friction between the ecclesiastics and the Company's mercantile staff was a regular feature, for these notoriously rough and ready mariners and merchants, often referred to as the dregs of Dutch society, resented the privileges, salaries and perquisites of the priests; but when the interests of the Company and the church clashed the former always prevailed. This attitude is revealed in a letter from the Seventeen to Maetsuyker in 1656: 'The nature of government is such that it cannot suffer two equally great controlling powers, anymore than a body can endure two heads, for which the civil power must always have free and unfettered control over the ecclesiastical.'

The difficulties of Calvinist priesthood were further aggravated by short tenures in parishes and communities. Apart from the personal inconvenience caused by frequent transfers if they were married, it usually gave them insufficient time to learn the local language, if they were engaged in mission work. Alternately, if after having stayed long enough in say Pulicat, a Tamil speaking area, the *predikant* was transferred to Chinsura in Bengal, all his knowledge was useless. They were also required to act as interpreters and to take an active part in the running of the schools, orphanages and hospitals in the Dutch settlements.

Complaints of the inferior quality of the *predikants* were frequent but still greater criticism was levelled against their assistants, the *krank-bezoekers* and the *zieken-troosters*, as these lay readers were called. Being recruited almost entirely from the working classes, many were ex-soldiers, tailors, cobblers, weavers and bakers. Few of them had more than the most rudimentary theological training and they were only allowed to read from the prayer book or to sing a psalm. They did the work of catechists, teachers, hospital visitors and other similar duties under the

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supervision of an ordained priest. Most of them were accused of private trading, and loose living and were often referred to as *drank-bezoekers*, drunk visitors. Relatively few became ordained ministers as few possessed a good knowledge of Latin which was an essential qualification in those days.

Calvinist orthodoxy in the Netherlands was strong enough to ensure that the directors of the East India Company issued instructions to the governor general and council in 1660, that the 'True Christian Reformed Religion should be followed under Your Honours' government in the East Indies without the public exercise of any other religion being allowed, above all, no toleration of Popery.' This was only possible where the Dutch had unchallenged authority, and in India these orders could never be enforced. When Cochin was captured in 1663 all the Roman Catholic priests were expelled from the territories the Dutch took over from the Portuguese and all the Christian communities of north and central Kerala were taken under Dutch protection. The Dutch however neither demolished the Roman Catholic churches and monasteries, nor converted them into Calvinist institutions. It was not long however before the Jesuit priests were allowed to return. The toleration which the Company extended to the Roman Catholics of Kerala evoked the following letter from Pope Clement XIV, to the vicar-apostolic of Malabar:

'Greetings to our Reverend Brother! Our beloved son, Stephen Boyd, Secretary to the Congregation for the Propagation of Christianity has communicated to us in detail, the attention paid and the trouble taken by the Dutch governor for the safety of the Christians who are there yonder; and as such Christian acts of kindness concern us greatly, and as on their account we are indebted to him, so it is our earnest desire that at least our feelings of gratitude for the same be made known and clear to this man. Therefore to show our gratitude we have hereby to recommend to your reverence to assure him of our grateful sentiments in the most forcible and the most striking manner and at the same time to testify that we feel ourselves so much more indebted to him for what he has done as we flatter ourselves that he will continue in this way to lay the Christians and us under further obligation.

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Given at Rome, the 23rd July
in the 4th year of our Papal reign. Stephen Borgia.'*

When the Dutch established themselves in India they found a large number of indigenous Roman Catholics in the vicinity of their factories and settlements. While a large number of them were 'rice Christians' who accepted Christianity or reverted to Hinduism without much difficulty, a much larger number remained loyal to their faith. *Predikants* would be left preaching to an empty church, while they heard mass celebrated or had their children baptised by a passing Roman Catholic priest, sometimes in disguise. There were at all times more Catholic priests in India, whether Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian or Indian than there were Calvinist ministers. Unlike the Dutch clergy, they were celibate, spent almost all their lives in their parishes and were extremely fluent in the local languages. In 1647 there were only 28 Calvinist priests in the region extending from the Coromandel to Formosa and the Moluccas. In 1670 in Batavia which had a population of 20,000 there were only six *predikants*; Cochin had one minister to cater to the needs of over 800 Company servants spread over 360 kilometres.

The colourful cult and gorgeous ceremonial of the Roman church made a greater appeal to most Asians than the harsh words and whitewashed churches of Calvin. Moreover the external observances of Roman Catholicism were in many ways strikingly like some of those in the Hindu and Buddhist beliefs, which it had sought to replace—the use of images, of rosaries, the cult of the saints and so forth. The veneration accorded Hindu brahmans and Buddhist bhikkus (*bhikshus*) was paralleled by the respect felt by the Roman Catholics for the sacramental and sacerdotal attributes of their own priesthood. It contrasted strongly with the unimpressive status of Calvinist *predikants* and *krank-bezoekers*. The sacro-magical elements in the three popular religions gave their respective believers a feeling of spiritual security which Calvinism was both unable and unwilling to supply in a similar way.

The proselytising activity of the Dutch was therefore directed against the Roman Catholic community, for the *predikants* were

*K.M. Panikkar, 'Malabar and the Dutch', pp. 128-9.

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neither numerous nor knowledgeable enough to work effectively among the Hindus and the Muslims. Even in this direction they were unsuccessful, for those who switched over to Calvinism to obtain employment or to gain preferment in the Company's service needed the faintest of excuses to return to their own faith. Among their own ranks were those who had married Roman Catholic women, who were more likely to adopt the religion of their wives, than for the wives to become good Calvinists. The Dutch however were never guilty of acts of forcible conversion, religious persecution or desecration of places of worship; on the contrary, periodically, instructions were issued to the heads of establishments to set an example to their luke-warm brethren. The commander of Cochin was told that he should attend public worship regularly; to show his partiality to those who excelled in learning and to encourage the lay preachers in their work. He was also instructed to ensure that the garrison was marched to church in an orderly manner every Sunday, and for those who were on duty or in hospital, a psalm should be sung and night prayers said every evening in the barracks. He was to take pains that 'Sunday should not be desecrated, but on that day which is set apart from a general to a particular day, all public trades and crafts are suspended (necessary cases and extraordinary circumstances exempted), so that everywhere in and outside the town, you may see it is Sunday.' How far the commander of Cochin followed these rules is doubtful, but we do know that the Dutch church there was frequently used as a slave godown.

A recurrent theme in the correspondence between the Seventeen and their representatives in the East was that the men who served the Company were of inferior character. As one Dutch scholar remarked, 'the inhabitants of Asia came into contact with the dregs of the Dutch nation, who treated them with almost unbearable contempt, and whose task it was to devote all their efforts to the enrichment of a group of shareholders in the Fatherland. The servants of this chartered company, kept all too short by their employers, but not less greedy than they, displayed a picture of corruption which overshadows the worst of what Oriental people are accused of in this respect.'

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There is a large element of truth in this statement, for the VOC were never able to employ the type of merchant and mariner they wanted. Low salaries and harsh conditions of service discouraged most Dutchmen from leaving Holland, but since ships' crews, soldiers and mercantile staff had to be recruited, the Company signed on whoever applied for a position. These men of inferior character, surrounded by wealth, grandeur and power, yet being fully conscious that they were superior to all the coloured races with whom they came in contact, behaved like the worst type of oriental despots.

Pieter Vuyst who was born in Batavia in 1694, was a talented, learned and excessively vain man. When he was appointed governor of Sri Lanka, he covered his left eye with a black patch, saying that only one eye was sufficient to supervise the Company's affairs there. Vuyst turned out to be a tyrant and sadist of the worst kind. Among the excesses he was guilty of was the suspension of the Court of Justice and the unmerciful flogging of the entire garrison of Colombo, because of a rumour that some of them were behind a series of robberies. Many of the punishments he ordered on the Sinhalese residents and the Company's subordinates, such as impaling and whipping, he carried out himself. He was arrested in 1730, taken to Batavia in chains and tried for having put 19 persons to death. He was publicly executed, his body quartered and his property confiscated. Possibly Vuyst could misuse his position because the governor general, Diederik Durven himself set no better example of honesty and integrity. Durven was recalled in disgrace being implicated in a smuggling ring in Batavia.

Stephen Versluys who succeeded Vuyst in Sri Lanka, was found to be indulging in private trading and blackmarketing in rice on a large scale, as well as misusing the Company's funds. When ordered to appear at Batavia to answer the charges, he refused to leave Colombo. He also was arrested and taken to the capital where he was tried, heavily fined and dishonourably discharged. Adriaan Valckenier who was governor general from 1737 to 1741, who once surrounded his council with his private bodyguards because they had disagreed with his decision to send van Schinnen and de Haaze back to Holland in chains, was also responsible for the massacre of the Chinese in Batavia. He was tried in the Netherlands not for the massacre, but for gross

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maladministration and several miscarriages of justice, and was executed.

The higher ranks of the VOC were staffed by men who came from the middle and lower rungs of the burgher class, with a sprinkling from the urban patriciate. Representatives of the landed gentry were conspicuous by their absence. The only exceptions were Baron Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede tot Drakensteyn, Lord of Mijdrecht, the commissary general and later governor of Cochin; Baron Willem Gustaff van Imhoff, governor of Sri Lanka and later governor general of Batavia from 1743 to 1750; and Baron Jan Lubert van Eck who was governor of Sri Lanka from 1762 to 1765.

Yet the ladder of promotion could be climbed by men of ability. Jan Schreuder, a native of Hamburg who enlisted as a private soldier, rose to become the director of Surat and the governor of Sri Lanka. Jakob Mossel who started life as a seaman, switched over to being a merchant at Pulicat, became the director of Coromandel at Negapatam and ended his career as governor general in 1750. So also was Reinier de Klerk who rose from an able-bodied seaman to governor general in 1777. Iman Willem Falck, a Dutch Eurasian known as the 'Crow' because he was a dark man, was appointed governor of Sri Lanka at the age of twenty-nine.

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CHAPTER XI

Kerala

Differing considerably from the rest of India is Kerala, the realm of the Cheras. Its people bear little resemblance to those of the north. They dress differently and speak Malayalam, a Dravidian tongue which is peculiar to this strip of India. It is one of the smallest states in India, yet earns about one-eighth of India's foreign exchange. Its literacy is twice that of the whole of the country. In every respect Kerala is different; it lacks those elements of the caste system which are present elsewhere, for there are hardly any noble *kshatriyas* and no *vaisyas* at all. Also unusual was the matrilineal joint family system and line of succession from the ruler to his nephew (eldest sister's son), and the practice of polyandry which prevented widowhood from becoming the tragedy which it was and still is in other Hindu societies.

Traditionally, it was the new land which rose out of the sea when Parasurama cast his axe from the mountain tops of the Western Ghats. Geologists also agree that the foothills of the ghats and the flat coastal land of the Malabar are young in terms of the world's age—they were thrust up from the sea-bed by volcanic action long after the great land mass of India was formed. Even in historical times the wearing down of the mountains has produced new land in Kerala. Inland towns like Kottayam and Tripunithura, the old capital of the rajas of Cochin, were seaports when the Greeks reached the Malabar coast. These stretches of low lying country which separate the cities from the sea, were formed by the action of the currents off the Kerala coast, which sweep the sand and silt flowing down the rivers into long banks parallel to the shore. Eventually these sandbanks rise above the water level and trap the rivers into wide channels, known as backwaters and into great lochs

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like the Vembanad Lake of Cochin and the Ashtamudi Lake at Quilon. These beautiful island-studded and almost land-locked inlets form excellent harbours. The coastline constantly changes; a dramatic instance of this was when floods swept down the Periyar river in the fourteenth century, silted up the harbour of Cranganore, old Muziris, and broke open the channel around the island of Vypeen which is now the entrance to the Vembanad Lake. When the Portuguese arrived, Cranganore had declined to a minor trading centre, all the glories of its past forgotten, and Cochin had taken its place as the chief port of the Malabar coast.

The great inland lakes and long placid reaches of backwaters, bordered by swaying coconut palms lend a peculiar beauty to the Kerala coast. It is not merely geologically more recent than the rest of India; it seems to belong to a younger generation, richer, less exhausted and far more abundant and varied in its beauty than any region south of the Himalayas.

The villages of Kerala bear little resemblance to the tight squalid settlements of northern India, huddled together for protection. Because of its geographical isolation, the Malabar has rarely experienced invasions like those in the north, but for over 2000 years Kerala has experienced intrusions by sea from the Middle East as well as from the Farther East, more varied and more numerous than those experienced in the Punjab. The Greeks of Alexandria, the Romans, the Egyptians, Arabs, Iranians and Chinese all came to Kerala. The Italians from Venice and Genoa renewed the European contacts in the thirteenth century; they were followed by the Portuguese, the Dutch, the Danes and the French, and finally the English. All came to trade except the English who stayed to rule.

Forty per cent of the population of Kerala follow one or another Middle East creed; they are either Mohammedans, Christians or Jews, the latter a dwindling community. Yet all three religions received social recognition unparalleled in the rest of India. Even the Buddhists and the Jains flourished, till the Hindu revival under Sankaracharya. All through its history Kerala has been a land where religious toleration and equality existed. The finest Jain temple in Malabar is to be found near the village of Sultan's Battery, in the Wynad district. The rock carvings at Tiruchanattumalai in south Travancore and the

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seated Buddha at Mavelikara date from the tenth century, when Buddhism ceased to matter in the land of its birth.

Between the eighth and tenth century the *nambudiri* brahmans established cultural dominion in Malabar and froze the patterns of communities into a rigid and complex form. There are no less than 500 castes and sub-castes which fall into nine principal groups, in the following descending order: the brahmans; *kshatriyas*, the rulers; *ambalavasis*, the temple attendants and musicians; *samantans*, local chieftains; *nairs*, traditional warriors and feudal landlords ranking as *sudras*, but performing the function of *kshatriyas*; *kammalans*, a group of five artisan or craft castes; *ezhavas* or *tujyas*, toddy tappers and agrarian tenants; *mukkuvans*, fisherfolk; and out-castes, a miscellaneous group of highly untouchable communities.

'The Nayars' as K.M. Panikkar justly remarked, 'were not a caste, they were a race', for many customs and traditions distinguish them from their fellow Malayalis. They had their own marital customs, their own forms of inheritance, their own art of warfare, their own war goddess, their cult of ancestor worship and their highly original art form, the *kathakali* dance drama. As professional warriors they developed the art of swordsmanship and in time of battle formed themselves into suicide squads, called *chavais*.

The west coast of India in the seventeenth century was effectively controlled by the Portuguese who possessed a string of forts along the shore, some of them commanding excellent harbours. There was Diu* in the Kathiawar peninsula, Daman, Bassein (Bombay at that time was a cluster of seven small islands), Chaul and further south, Goa, Cochin and Quilon. A little to the north of Goa at Vengurla, the Dutch had built a small fort in 1636 under an arrangement with the sultan of Bijapur. The Dutch did not venture into Malabar until Portuguese power had declined, and after they had established themselves in Sri Lanka. This took nearly 60 years by which time they had expanded their commercial interests along the east coast of India into Bengal, Bangladesh and Burma and had established several factories and agencies in Gujarat and in Tatta in Sind, Pakistan.

*Goa, Daman and Diu remained with the Portuguese till 1961.

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As early as 1610 they were trading in Sri Lanka, their eyes being on the cinnamon producing areas of the island. To Raja Sinha I of Kandy they made the usual declarations of peace and friendship and promises of assistance in his struggle with the Portuguese, as they did to the zamorin in the early years of the seventeenth century. In 1638 the Dutch struggle for Sri Lanka commenced.

About this time certain political changes took place in Europe and in South America which had their repercussions in Sri Lanka and in India. In 1640 the duke of Braganza threw off the rule of Spain and was proclaimed King John IV of Portugal. This caused a setback to the Dutch Company as their attacks against the Portuguese possessions in the East were in reality directed against Spain. The Dutch had already secrued the major share in the sea-borne trade of Asia and any truce with the Portuguese would enable the latter to become dangerous competitors in the East Indies. The Seventeen urged the States-General of the United Provinces to exclude the East Indies from any truce which would be concluded with Portugal. Though the Ten Year Truce was signed with Portugal at the Hague in 1641, Governor General Antonio van Diemen and his councillors at Batavia showed the greatest reluctance to implement it in Asia and for over three years evaded the overtures of the viceroy of Goa. They captured Galle in the south of Sri Lanka in 1640 and three years later, Francois Caron, a Frenchman in the service of the VOC, captured Negombo. In November the Dutch belatedly proclaimed the truce in the East.

In 1646 a revolution broke out in New Holland, the Dutch colony in Brazil and that province passed from the Dutch West India Company back to the Portuguese. This was sufficient cause for the council at Batavia to recommence their schemes of conquest and expansion which had been interrupted in 1644 and which would give them control of the pepper, wild cinnamon, areca nut, nutmeg, coir and cotton piece goods of Kerala.

With the arrival of more ships and forces from the Netherlands the Dutch attacked and captured Colombo in 1656. Raja Sinha now realised, as the raja of Cochin was to discover a few years, later, that 'he had given pepper and had received ginger', a Sinhalese proverb concerning a man who makes a bad exchange. It was feared that he might reconcile himself with

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the Portuguese who still held Manaar and Jaffna in the north of the island. The Dutch could not feel secure until those regions in Sri Lanka, and Tuticorin and Negapatam in India were in their possession; till they had expelled the Portuguese from their last strongholds in India, and 'cleaned up that whole corner', which Rijkloff van Goens the Elder, a member of the Council of the Indies, himself set out to do. Manaar, Jaffna and Tuticorin were captured in 1658, and van Goens turned his attention to Quilon on the Malabar coast, which he made his first objective in Kerala.

Before the coming of the Portuguese, Quilon had competed with Cranganore as a leading port in the Malabar and a place of great commercial and political importance. It had settlements of Arabs, Nestorian Christians, Jews and Chinese. Quilon had given its name to the Kollam or Quilon Era, the year of the establishment of the Chera Empire in A.D. 825. That Chinese influence had been strong in Quilon may be seen from the design of its wooden palaces, resembling their sampan-shaped boats, to the method of fishing with counter-weighted dip nets, operated from the shore, which are still called Chinese nets. Even to this day large olive green Chinese water pots are in use in several old houses in Quilon, and pieces of blue and white porcelain can still be picked up on the beaches.

It was at Quilon that St. Thomas the Apostle founded one of his Seven Churches of Malabar. When Cosmas Indicopleustes ('the Indian traveller'), a Nestorian from Alexander visited Kerala between A.D. 520 and 525, he found many Christians in Quilon under the care of a *Persian* bishop. Subsequently two immigrant groups of Christians arrived in the eighth and ninth century. The privileges granted to them by the king of Vernad are engraved on five copper plates which are preserved in the Christian seminary at Kottayam.

Friar Jordanus, the Dominician, visited Quilon in the fourteenth century and found it a promising field for proselytisation. When he returned to Rome in 1329, Pope Paul XXII constituted Quilon as the first Roman Catholic episcopate in India and Jordanus returned as its first bishop. Marco Polo saw both Jews and Christians when he anchored there. It was in the time of Affonso de Albuquerque (1509-1515) that the Portuguese were allowed by the rani of Attingal to build a fort from where they

dominated the affairs of this little principality, as they dominated those of Cochin.

Rijkloff van Goens attacked and captured the Portuguese fortress at Quilon in December 1658. As he sailed northwards to Cannanore, he received instructions to return to Batavia. He had hardly reached Colombo, when the Portuguese assisted by a large *nair* force, counter-attacked and recaptured Quilon, forcing the Dutch garrison to withdraw to Sri Lanka.

When the Dutch appeared in Kerala there were as many as 46 petty chieftains and four ruling houses—the *kolathiri* of Chirrakal in whose territory were the seaports of Cannanore and Tellicherri; the zamorin of Kozikhode, later known to Europeans as Calicut; the raja of Cochin, and the raja of Travancore.

The *kolathiri* had ceased to count in the politics of Kerala. The area around Cannanore had passed into the hands of the Ali Raja, who had obtained the Laccadive Islands and who styled himself as sultan. The Ali Raja's influence was also insignificant.

According to a brahman tradition in Malabar, Vishnu incarnated as Parasurama or Rama with the Axe, was exiled to the summits of the Western Ghats. Subramaniam, son of Siva who under the name Murugan has always been a favourite deity in South India, interceded on Parasurama's behalf with Varuna the God of the Sea, who agreed to give him the land he could cover with the throw of his axe. Parasurama made his cast and the axe fell near Cape Comorin, and the whole strip on the seaward rose up from the sea. He settled 64 families of brahmans of the *nambudiri* sub-caste there, gave them laws and institutions to govern themselves, and advised them that if they could not agree amongst each other, to invite kings from outside the country to rule them. So began the line of monarchs called the Perumals. The same tradition says that the Perumals were chosen for 12-year periods, when they immolated themselves and a new king was chosen. This ceremony was known as the *mamankam* festival. In time, the act of self-immolation was performed by a proxy and the king would abdicate. A later renunciate king became the most famous monarch of Kerala,

who is said to have given up his throne in A.D. 825, the beginning of the Kollam or Quilon Era. He is known to history as Cheraman Perumal and on his abdication all the sects of Kerala, the Christians, the Mohammedans and the Jews, even the Buddhists and the Jains claimed him as their convert. Many European travellers refer to the *mamankam* ceremony which was performed in the various principalities of Kerala.

Maha-makham or *mamankam* was the greatest national festival of Malabar till about two centuries ago. The festival was held on the banks of the Periyar near Tirunavaye once in twelve years. A regular change used to take place in all offices, even in kingship, in all contracts and in all tenures after a twelve-year period. All existing relations between the princes and the people were adjusted. In the early centuries the kings used to abdicate in favour of their successors, but after the power of royalty had become prominent, this practice was abandoned.

About the beginning of the twelfth century, north and central Kerala split up into several small principalities, whose local *nair* or less frequently, brahman chieftains, set themselves up as rajas. Precedence was taken by the inland state of Ernad, who pushed down to the sea and seized a strip of the coast, where he established the city of Kozikhode.* Around the legendary fortress of Velapuram which he built to secure his possessions, grew up a great and wealthy trading centre to which came merchants from many parts of Asia. The Chinese came in their large floating hulks with 'huge wooden anchors weighted with stone, which hold in all weathers', bringing copper, gold, silver and spices from Indonesia, which they bartered for pepper, ginger and cottons.

Under the title of zamorin, *samudri*, the Ruler of the Seas, he claimed to be the 'residuary legatee' of the Cheras in Malabar, and sovereign of the whole region, setting the seal on his pretensions by taking over the *mamankam* ceremony. By the time the Portuguese came he had given reality to his claim through the superiority and strength of his *nair* armies on land, and at sea through the naval support of the Arabs.

For over 200 years the zamorins had been the acknowledged

*Literally, the Cock Fort. It was so small that a cock crowing could be heard all over it.

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leaders of the princes of Malabar and champions against foreign aggression. With the arrival of the Portuguese and their interference in the Arab trade, Calicut suffered. The zamorin bided his time till he could extend his sway southward to Cochin, which had become the main centre of trade in Kerala, and whose ruler the Portuguese had elevated to the status of an independent prince.

Cochin, on the other hand, had a fine harbour and good inland water communications. It was in every way superior to Calicut. Even today, it is the second port on the west coast, next only to Bombay. The first Portuguese fort built in India in 1503 was at Cochin, which remained their headquarters till 1530, when Goa became the capital of all their settlements and possessions in the East Indies, and the residence of the viceroy.

The kingdom of Cochin extended from Purrukad in the south to Chettwaye in the north. Cranganore and its ancient port of Muziris had lost its importance when a series of disastrous floods in 1340 swept down the Periyar, the largest river of Kerala and silted up the harbour of Muziris. The waters broke open the channel around the island of Vypeen which is now the seaward entrance to the Vembanad lake. Cranganore had lost its independence and was the bone of contention between Cochin and Calicut.

The zamorin had periodically invaded Cochin forcing its ruler to acknowledge his supremacy and to supply pepper and other commodities to the Mohammedan merchants of Calicut. Cochin was too ineffective to stand up to the zamorin and it is said that the raja of Cochin could neither mint his own coins nor tile the roof of his palace. When the Portuguese appeared on the scene the ruler of Cochin thought to ally himself against his long-standing enemy. While this saved Cochin from the depredations of Calicut, it also reduced it to the position of a Portuguese dependency.

Travancore was a little kingdom in the far south, which van Goens described as beginning west of Cape Comorin and extending along the coast, a two-hour walk to Taingapatam. Portuguese influence had never predominated in this state. It is said that the rajas of Travancore allowed the jungle to grow unattended for a number of years, till it formed an impenetratable belt of great depth. Through this were cut labyrinths

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which only his soldiers knew, and which rendered attack virtually impossible. To the north of Travancore were several minor principalities related to the house of Travancore, or semi-independent. During the hundred years of the Dutch age in Kerala, all these principalities were subjugated by Travancore.

The overriding aim of the Dutch was the extension of their trade into Kerala, or better still to establish a monopoly of such trade, to which end it was necessary to oust the Portuguese, as they had already done in coastal Sri Lanka. As one governor general remarked, 'if we are so lucky as to defeat them, the whole coast of Malabar and the pepper trade will be ours. For once the Portuguese are turned out of Cochin, they are turned out of India.'

In 1646, the senior line of the Cochin royal family, represented by Vira Kerala Varma, had proved insufficiently docile and had been dispossessed by the Portuguese in favour of the junior branch. Their cause was openly supported by the zamorin, several chiefs of central Kerala and by the Paliath Achan, the hereditary chief minister of the state of Cochin and its commander-in-chief. When the raja of Cochin died in 1658, the Portuguese once again nominated a Vettom prince, from the Tanur principality (also belonging to the junior branch of the royal family) to succeed to the throne. None of the princes of the Malabar attended the coronation which took place in the Cochin Cathedral, as the Vettom family was not as ancient and as noble as the *Mutta tavazhi*, the dispossessed branch, nor Vira Kerala Varma who had been sent into exile.

On the advice of the Paliath Achan, Vira Kerala Varma sailed for Colombo and laid his case before van der Meyden, the Dutch governor. This was the opportunity the Dutch had been waiting for. The zamorin was an old friend and through him the chiefs of Vadakumkar and Tekkumkar, as well as the chief minister of Cochin could be counted on for assistance; moreover the zamorin was promised Chettwaye and Vypeen the moment the Dutch entered Cochin.

Preparations for the expedition were made by assembling a fleet at Pulicat and another in Colombo, with reinforcements from Batavia under Commodore Roothers. All this was not unknown to the Portuguese vicerory, Antonio de Mello e Crasto, who wrote to his king: 'We feel it our bounden duty to acquaint you

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with the position of affairs in India, and to inform you that unless we are properly assisted the whole of Your Majesty's possessions in India will be lost . . . . We earnestly implore Your Majesty to send us by next year adequate reinforcements, otherwise we shall not be able to resist the enemy at all.' But neither reinforcements nor assistance came from Portugal. Negapatam was captured, and on 5 December 1661 Quilon* was occupied by van Goens with little resistance. Johan Nieuhoff was appointed chief of Quilon, and shortly afterwards he obtained a concession from Travancore to purchase all the pepper grown in that state for 15,000 fanams (about Rs 5,000) a year, and a small quantity of arms.

Van Goens now sailed up the coast and laid seige to the Portuguese fort at Cranganore. It held out for 13 days, capitulating only after the zamorin's forces arrived. Casualties were high on both sides, which seriously affected van Goens' subsequent campaign.

The stage was now set to attack Fort Cochin, for which purpose the Dutch occupied the island of Vypeen, as a base for operations against Cochin, which van Goens realised would be a more difficult task than the conquest of Quilon or Cranganore. The seige of Cochin, a three-pronged attack from the south, west and north, dragged on for three weeks, during which time the Dutch suffered heavy losses in troops and equipment. The Jews and the Konkanis helped as spies and suppliers of provisions. The tide turned against the Dutch with the arrival of the troops of the raja of Champakasseri and five war ships from Goa. Van Goens decided to raise the seige and on 2 March 1662 retired to Colombo.

The second attack on Cochin was launched after the monsoon. The combined forces consisted of two fleets, the second under Jakob Hutsaart, a contingent of Sinhalese troops and a force of Konkani soldiers under van Rheede. Cochin was bombarded for 42 days. In the battle that raged round the Mattancherri Palace, the reigning raja was killed and the dowager Rani Laxmi, Vira Kerala Varma's sister, was taken prisoner. Don Ignatio Sarmento, the Portuguese commander realising that further resistance was only adding to his already

*The Portuguese stronghold was actually at Tengacherri near Quilon.

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large number of casualties, surrendered on 6 January 1663.

While the articles of capitulation were being drawn up at Fort Cochin, Hutsaart sailed to Cannanore, the last stronghold of the Portuguese on the Malabar Coast, which he attacked and captured a week later. The Portuguese era in Malabar had ended.

In brief, the terms of surrender were: that the town of Cochin shall be handed over to the Dutch governor general or his representative, with all its jurisdictions, old privileges, revenues and lands with their related documents, and whatever else stood in the name of the king of Portugal; all artillery, ammunition, merchandise, provisions and stores, moveable and immoveable property, as well as slaves and whatever else there may be, shall also be handed over; Portuguese nationals would be conveyed to Europe; all other Portuguese subjects and the wounded would be taken to Goa; the Roman Catholic priests would be allowed to take with them their images and church ornaments, except those made of silver or gold; and the garrison shall march out with colours flying and drums beating to a place outside the fort, where they will lay down their arms beneath the standard of Rijkloff van Goens, the representative of the Dutch governor general.

The United Provinces however, had made peace with Portugal on 14 December 1662. One of the clauses of the treaty was that all conquered places should be returned to their former masters immediately after the publication of the agreement. When the viceroy demanded the restoration of these places, van Goens replied that while the treaty was signed on 14 December 1662, it only came into force three months after its ratification. Cochin and Cannanore were captured in January 1663, and hence the Dutch were not obliged to surrender their conquests. In this he had the full support of Maetsuyker, the governor general, who during the Ten Years Truce (1641-1651) had refused to hand over Negombo, pointing out that they were neither servants of the prince of Orange, nor of the States-General, but of the Company, from whom they had received no such orders; nor when they shall receive such orders from the Company, will they surrender it, but by force.

As soon as the Portuguese were expelled from Cochin, van Goens who had now been appointed the governor of Sri Lanka,

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established himself in the fort. Along with Hutsaart, he took in hand the work of administering their new territories and organising their trade in Malabar. The 150 km strip of land between Cochin and Quilon gave them undisputed control over the richest pepper regions in India. The Malabar establishments were placed under the commander of Cochin who was directly responsible to the governor of Sri Lanka.

The position of the Dutch in Kerala differed considerably from that of the Portuguese in the early years of the sixteenth century. They had to build up political and commercial relations with the Malabar chiefs who were often openly hostile. They had to also contend with the powerful Mohammedan or rather Arab trading community who enjoyed the monopoly of the trade of the west coast. The Dutch, on the other hand, had found an established commercial and political system. By virtue of their conquest of Cochin, they claimed all the rights, customs and privileges which the Portuguese had on the Malabar Coast. The Arab traders and merchants were now practically non-existent, their place having been taken by the 'canarenes' or the Konkanis, a Hindu community from the south Konkan. These Konkani brokers, agents and wholesale merchants had settled in and around Cochin. When the Portuguese left, the Dutch retained their services, and assumed special and independent jurisdiction over them since they were not natives of Kerala. They also claimed the same rights over the Christians and the Jews.

Vira Kerala Varma was installed as the raja of Cochin and a golden crown bearing the insignia of the Dutch East India Company was placed on his head by van Goens. By a treaty which was witnessed by the Paliath Achan, the chief minister, and the other nobles of Cochin, Vira Kerala Varma accepted the VOC as his protector and promised to recognise its authority 'as long as the sun and moon exist'. He granted the Dutch the monopoly of the trade in pepper and cinnamon in his kingdom. The Dutch permitted him to retain the customs duties and other revenues which the Cochin rajas had collected in the days of the Portuguese. All the Christians were made subjects of the Company and Roman Catholic priests were debarred from entering Cochin. The Dutch were allowed to fortify Cranganore as an outer defence for Cochin. Two days after this treaty was signed van

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Goens made a similar agreement with the chief of Champakaserri (Purrukad) whose lands bordered the southern reaches of Cochin, whereby the pepper and cinnamon production of that principality would be sold to the Dutch and all the rights, properties and privileges of the Portuguese there would be transferred to the Company.

The zamorin now demanded Chettwaye and insisted that Cochin should acknowledge his primacy, as their predecessors had done before the Portuguese elevated them to independence. Van Goens ignored both the demands. As a result the Dutch fell out with their old ally and eventually involved themselves in a financially ruinous campaign against Calicut.

Van Goens returned to Sri Lanka, leaving Hutsaart to negotiate agreements with the chiefs of north and central Kerala, which he successfully accomplished with the help of Nieuhoff of Quilon.

The establishments in Kerala were not considered important enough by the Council of Batavia to be placed under a director or a governor. Cochin and its dependencies remained till the end under the governor of Sri Lanka, its chief being styled 'commandeur' (commander) of Cochin. It was only when the commander was also a member of the Council of the Indies that he was honoured with the title of governor. Such exceptions were Baron Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede tot Drakensteyn, J.V.S. van Gollenesse, Adriaan Moens and Johan Gerard van Angelbeck.

Ludolff Colster who became commander in 1671 concentrated his activities in securing the Dutch trade against competitors by imposing more rigid contracts with the Malabar chiefs.

From the earliest days of the Dutch in Kerala, there loomed in the background the competition of the English and the Danes. The French, though already established in Pondicherry, entered much later, when Bertrand Francois Mahe Labourdonnais, seized the town of Mayyazhi in 1725 which was named Mahe after him. As early as 1616 Keeling, who had transported van Deynsen's goods from Surat to Bantam had traded at Calicut. About the time the Dutch occupied Cochin, the English had opened factories at Tellicherri and at Purrukad, and at Vizhinjam a few kilometres south of Trivandrum. At Anjengo they had obtained permission from the rani of Attingal to open their

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fourth factory which was destined to become their largest and most prosperous on the coast of Kerala. They bought pepper at the market rate or at a rate much higher than the Dutch paid under their monopolistic arrangements. As a result every producer, if he could avoid the Dutch fiscals, sold his goods to the English.

The Danes who had settled at Tranquebar on the east coast in 1618 had opened small agencies at Calicut and at Edava near Attingal, exchanging arms for pepper. The French, as has been said, came much later. The Dutch had also to face the competition of freebooters who traded on their own. Towards the end of the seventeenth century Captain Kidd openly traded with the chief of Kayamkulam, regardless of the latter's treaties with the Dutch.

In 1673 Baron van Rheede tot Drakensteyn, usually referred to as van Rheede, was appointed governor of Cochin. Maetsuyker, the only governor general who held office for 25 years, felt that van Rheede would be able to tone up the administration of Cochin, and more fully implement the various commercial treaties the Company had entered into with the rajas and chiefs of north and central Kerala. Realising that their trade would prosper if the members of the Cochin royal family were excluded from the administration of the state, and that the *nair* nobility should be obliged to help the Dutch in their commercial transactions, the Cochin raja was 'influenced' to sign an agreement debarring these princes from holding any office. They were granted allowances or pensions, and the offices they held were placed in the hands of the Paliath Achan. Since the question of Vira Kerala Varma's successor would have to be settled sooner or later, he was prevailed upon not to adopt a successor without the approval of the Company. A separate agreement was made with the *nairs*, binding them to protect the raja of Cochin and the interests of the VOC, especially with regard to smugglers, freebooters and other trade rivals. Bawan Prabhu, a trusted Konkani subject, was appointed the treasurer or accountant of the state. But all these changes did not produce the required results, pepper was diverted from Fort Cochin to the English factors.

Van Rheede's governorship did not yield the desired results

which the Council of Batavia had expected. Rijkloff van Goens, who had now become the governor general decided that the only way to force the *nairs* to honour their commitments, was to make them liable to punishment (from which they were long immune), to exile the royal princes and to make the Paliath Achan directly responsible to the commander of Cochin. Cochin was now reduced to a vassal state, the raja having no say in any matter at all. Finally when the Paliath Achan died in 1684 leaving a minor son, Gulmer Vorsbuy appointed his own *tweede* Hendrik Reins, a senior merchant as regent till the boy came of age. With the chief ministership and the treasury in their hands, Cochin became a proprietary estate of the VOC.

Matters came to a head when the Cochin raja, with the concurrence of the commander, decided to adopt a member of the Chaliyur family as his successor. The *nairs* refused to accept the Chaliyur prince and supported a member of the Vettom family. Faced with what amounted to civil war in the state, with the majority of the nobles opposed to the ruler, the Dutch once again turned to the zamorin for help.

The zamorin was reluctant to interfere. Vypeen was still with the Dutch; Chettwaye which he regarded as a feudal right had not yet been handed over to him and the Cochin raja had refused to acknowledge his supremacy. Moreover, by aiding the Dutch against the Malayali nobles, he would be abandoning Calicut's traditional role as the resister of foreign aggression. The raja of Cochin's brahman emissary however succeeded in enlisting the support of the *nairs* of Calicut. A personal request by the commander himself with the promise of Chettwaye and all the expenses of the campaign, caused the zamorin to forget his traditional role and to take the field in defence of the raja of Cochin against his nobles. He marched on to Alwaye where he was joined by van Rheede who was specially sent to command the Company's forces. The Vettom confederacy was routed and defeated.

The zamorin received Chettwaye which he had long coveted, the position of the Dutch in Cochin was re-established and the power of the *nairs* had at last been broken. The 'War of the Vettom Succession' saw the reversal of the traditional role of the zamorin. By allying himself with the foreigner against

the Malayali princes, he sacrificed the position of leadership held by the Mana Vikramana* for over two centuries.

In 1693 Ravi Varma succeeded Vira Kerala Varma. In his short reign of five years he involved the Company with the zamorin over the possession of Chettwaye, found fault with the young Paliath Achan's administration and accused Bawan Prahbu of corruption. The Council of the Indies however decided to adopt a neutral attitude and informed Ravi Varma to settle all these matters with the new commander of Cochin, Hendrik Zwaardecroon.

Ravi Varma was succeeded by Rama Varma in 1698 with whom Zwaardecroon made a fresh agreement ratifying all the previous treaties. It was customary for each succeeding commander of Cochin to enter into a fresh treaty and to renew the existing treaties with the reigning ruler; as well as for the new ruler to ratify all the earlier treaties made by his predecessors, when he succeeded to the throne.

The main attraction of the Malabar, particularly the 150 kilometre strip of land south of Cochin was pepper, and all the Dutch efforts were directed to obtaining it, by inserting a clause in the agreements that pepper could only be sold to them. Such a system could only be maintained by political power, backed by the force of arms, whereby the princes and nobles would proceed against their own subjects if they sold pepper to anyone else but the Dutch. The VOC also claimed the right to approve of the successor to the throne of Cochin, and claimed sovereignty over the principalities of Cochin and the neighbouring chiefs as far south as Quilon. Such wide influence should have been sufficient for the Dutch to obtain all the pepper they wanted, but the monopoly broke down. The princes of north and central Kerala, regardless of their treaty obligations sold spice to anyone who would pay the best price for it.

The failure of their policy was all too evident, so in 1697 the Council of Batavia ordered a programme of economy. The strength of the garrisons was reduced and they withdrew from several outposts. Naval and artillery forces were transferred to Sri Lanka and Java and Cochin fort was reduced to half its size.

*Mana Vikramana is the name which the zamorin adopts on succeeding to the throne.

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The walls of the fortresses at Cannanore and Cranganore were foreshortened to include only the inner buildings and the towers, their garrisons were brought down to 56 and 79 respectively. Quilon suffered the same fate, its strength being fixed at 99 men. Their fortified stations at Purrukad and Kayamkulam were converted to undefended factories, the senior staff there being made responsible only for trade. Van Hoorn the director general of trade realised that the ostentation of great power had not succeeded in producing in the Malayali princes that degree of awe necessary for the Company to pursue an exclusive trade.

Though the zamorin had no further designs on Cochin his *nairs* recommenced hostilities against that state. Border incidents broke out and in desperation the raja appealed to the Dutch to intervene, which the commander was reluctant to do. Winckelman referred the matter to Hendrik Becker the governor of Sri Lanka, who passed it on to Batavia. The governor general's reaction is interesting, as it indicates the VOC's attitude. 'I do not know how much treasure and how much blood has been spent by the Honourable Company to aggrandize your family. But I do know one thing, Your Highness has lent your ears to the selfish councils of the Chetties, Nambudris and Pattars; still the Company are not averse to give support to Cochin, agreeably to our treaty, but they will not at all times send soldiers to fight Your Highness's battles. For the last 50 years Malabar has been a source of large expense and little gain.'

But the Company did intervene and informed Calicut that an attack on Cochin would be considered an attack on the Dutch themselves. At the meeting between the representatives of the rulers of Cochin and Calicut, which was presided over by the commander of Cochin, the zamorin was told to return Chettwaye. This infuriated his nobles who pointed out that if Chettwaye was fortified, it would be a standing menace to them. When the Dutch started to fortify Chettwaye, the zamorin turned to Robert Adams, the English factor at Tellicherri who had recently opened an agency there for the trade in opium, which was a banned item in Cochin. With Adams's assistance, the zamorin crossed the river one night when all the Dutchmen were asleep, and occupied the incomplete fort. When the news reached Fort Cochin, Barent Ketel took the field in person. The first attack failed, the second was repulsed and Ketel retreated

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to his headquarters. By the end of 1717 all the available forces in Malabar, the Coromandel and Sri Lanka, as well as some units from Batavia were assembled in Cochin under the command of Willem Jakobsz. The Ali Raja and the *kolathiri* of Chirrakal were asked to stand by. The Dutch forces were said to number 25,000 men, a mighty army for those days.

Jakobsz issued a proclamation to all the chiefs and princes of Malabar, that he had been sent to punish the zamorin and to humble his power. His first action was to attack Pappanetty and then Chettwaye. The superiority of the Dutch forces was all too apparent and the zamorin sued for peace. Jakobsz, if he wanted could have conquered Calicut. The zamorin paid an indemnity of 85,000 gold fanams, about Rs 30,000, and promised to exclude all other Europeans from trading in his territories. Chettwaye was retained by the Dutch and the border areas were handed over to Cochin. The Dutch were well satisfied with the Treaty of Chettwaye. It removed their most serious rivals from their vicinity leaving them the masters of north and central Kerala. But the campaign cost the company two million guilders, over one and a half million rupees.

The VOC had nine establishments on the Malabar Coast—at Quilon, Kayamkulam, Purrukad, Cranganore, Vypeen, Chettwaye, Calicut and Fort Cochin. In addition they had lodges at Taingapatam and Ponnani. With the exception of the fortresses taken over from the Portuguese, the majority of Dutch buildings, warehouses and godowns were dilapidated mud houses with thatched roofs hardly suitable for trade and totally inadequate against attack. In 1697 the Company's policy of economy resulted in most of the forts being reduced both in size and in the strength of the garrisons, Cochin being authorised a force of 300 men, Chettwaye 144, Quilon 99, Cannanore 79 and Cranganore 56.

Fort Cochin which was successively used by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English was built on the site of an earlier fortification which the rajas of Cochin had used as a defence against the raids of the zamorin. The Dutch named it 'New Orange'. Its walls were originally about eight kilometres in circumference. It contained churches, monasteries and a

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cathedral and 'quaint houses built after the old Portuguese fashion'. The first action of the Dutch when they occupied the fort was to reduce its size. The reduced semi-circular fort was served by six bastions and a tower on the southern or land side, the whole being surrounded by a moat. The walls were pierced by three gates, the Bay gate on the west, the New gate on the east and the River gate to the north. The Dutch demolished most of its old buildings or converted them into warehouses for merchandise and residences for their merchants and staff. The principal Dutch buildings were the Government House and residence of the commander, the church with its indifferent organ which was used as a slave godown when not for worship, and a hotel which was run on contract by a time-expired Company's man. The hotel charged one rupee a day for VOC employees and Dutch nationals, and twice that rate for all others. In front of the Government House was the parade ground, far too large for the small garrison, and across the ground were the barracks of the troops and a quartered guard. Cochin's harbour was 'large and commodious'.

At nearby Mattancherri was the Cochin raja's palace, built by the Portuguese in 1556 as a gift for the ruler. It is popularly referred to as the Dutch palace, though it was never built by the Dutch, but was probably repaired by them after the battle which raged round the palace in 1663. Mattancherri was the main settlement of the white Jews of Cochin.

The Dutch considered Fort Cochin to be the strongest fort in Malabar, just as they considered Fort Gustavus at Chinsura the strongest in Asia, and Naarden in Negapatam, the greatest. None of their forts were however built to last, and none can compare with the Portuguese fort at Bassein, 50 km north of Bombay, or even the Danish castle, the Danesborg at Tranquebar. By the middle of the eighteenth century most of the buildings in Fort Cochin were in need of extensive repairs. In 1771 the Cannanore fort was sold to the Ali Raja and in 1789 those at Cranganore and Vypeen were sold to the raja of Travancore.

In spite of its drab and dingy appearance, which is now more unprepossessing than it was ever before, an English visitor was impressed (it had begun to decline in the last years of Portuguese rule, but recovered considerably under the Dutch) by its harbour filled with ships, streets crowded with merchants and warehouses

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stored with goods from every part of Asia and Europe. He remarked on the industry, commerce and wealth of its inhabitants.

After the Treaty of Chettwaye the Dutch resorted to the policy of interfering and intervening in the affairs of the Malabar princes, mainly to block the increasing influence of the English. They even considered conquering portions of Malabar and holding them as estates; but political conditions in Java and inadequate forces at their disposal, made them unable to commence any large scale military operation. So they contented themselves by setting one Kerala prince against another, until the princes learnt that they also could play the English against the Dutch, and the French against both.

For nearly four centuries the old kingdom of Venad had steadily diminished and shrunk into a small state stretching from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin, ruled from its little capital of Padmanabhapuram. The principality of Attingal, ruled by a senior female member of the royal line remained a dependency. The rest of former Venad up to and beyond Quilon had disintegrated into a number of small chieftaincies acknowledging no loyalty to Padmanabhapuram. The *pillamar*, the council of temple brahmans, who collected revenues, sought greater economic power for themselves; the land was riven with warring factions in which every feudatory chief sought his own advantage; the nayaks of Madurai continually raided the region; and the reigning king was as often a fugitive from his enemies as a resident in his own palace. This was the state of affairs in old Venad, or as it is now more often called, Travancore.

Martanda Varma succeeded to the throne of Travancore in 1729 under these disturbed conditions. Six years earlier he had induced his uncle to come to an agreement with the nayak of Madurai, which not only stopped the raids but provided a force of troops independent of the *nairs*, whose loyalty was more to the feudal nobility than to the raja.

Shortly after his accession he replaced the Madurai mercenaries with an army of *maravars* from the Coromandel with which

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he set out to crush his enemies. The brahmans and the nobles instigated Padmanabhan Thampi, one of the late king's sons to claim the throne, even though he had no right to it, the line of succession being matrilineal, from the ruler to his nephew, the eldest sister's son, and not to his own son. He bought off the Madurai mercenaries who had been called in by the supporters of Padmanabhan Thampi, and with the help of his *maravars*, he crushed the conspiracy. Most of the rebels were executed, their houses destroyed and their women and children sold as slaves to low caste fishermen. The brahmans were banished. Martanda Varma went against all precedents of Kerala, which had regarded the *nairs* as being immune from punishment. He encountered no further serious opposition from the nobles and destroyed the oligarchy from which Travancore had suffered so long.

He now set about to absorb the semi-independent states into Travancore. In 1731 Quilon was overrun, the raja being taken prisoner to Trivandrum and his lands annexed. The rani of Attingal, who was related to the house of Travancore, was persuaded to resign her sovereignty in his favour. When Martanda Varma started to make preparations for the conquest of Kayamkulam, its ruler appealed to Cochin to organise a confederacy of the states of central Kerala against Travancore. The Cochin raja turned to the Dutch to take the leadership of this alliance. The response of the commander of Cochin was lukewarm, though quarrels between the princes of Kerala were by no means unwelcome as they served to strengthen the Company's hold on them. While Martanda Varma was marching on Kayamkulam, the ruler of Quilon escaped, and Travancore's attack on Kayamkulam failed. His second attack also failed and thereafter an uneasy peace reigned between the two states.

In 1734 he annexed Peritally, a principality to the east of Quilon. But when the raja of Quilon died, Kayamkulam took possession of that kingdom. This caused Martanda Varma to make preparations for a third time to conquer Kayamkulam. The Dutch now decided to act. Adriaan Maten conveyed the governor general's message to Travancore, to stop further aggression against Kayamkulam, Quilon and the eight principalities of Purrukad, Mangat, Parur, Vadakumkar, Tekkumkar, Maruthkulangara, Peritally and Attingal. Martanda Varma, accustomed to dealing with English traders at Anjengo, who took no interest

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in Malabar politics, was surprised at the Dutch attitude. He did not realise that the Dutch claimed political suzerainty over certain parts of Kerala. His reply was that the Dutch should not interfere in matters which did not concern them.

When Martanda Varma commenced the invasion of Kayamkulam a few years later, the governor general sent out Baron van Imhoff, the governor of Sri Lanka, to negotiate a non-aggression pact with Travancore. Van Imhoff was unable to come to any settlement. Martanda Varma's attitude was inflexible—he did not want any foreign interference in Kerala politics. Van Imhoff hinted at armed intervention to protect the eight principalities, to which the ruler of Travancore replied that there were forests to which he could retire in safety. Van Imhoff realised how expensive an indecisive and protracted campaign against Travancore could be. He broke off further discussions and returned to Cochin. The Dutch stations between Kolachel and Cape Comorin were fortified and reinforcements were called for from Sri Lanka and Batavia, but before this offensive could be launched, Martanda Varma attacked and defeated the Dutch at Kolachel, on 10 August 1741.

The Battle of Kolachel was a major disaster for the Dutch. It was the turning point in their career in Kerala. They woke up to the reality that if they were to remain in Malabar, they could only do so as merchants, without any political pretensions. Twenty-four prisoners were taken at Kolachel, among whom were Eustache de Lannoy, a Walloon and Doncaud a Frenchman, who were offered service in the Travancore army which they accepted. De Lannoy remodelled and reorganised the Travancore forces, trained a cavalry squadron and made the Travancore army equal if not superior to any force the Dutch could put into the field. He built forts along the boundaries of Travancore and erected the famous Travancore Lines which later held back Haidar Ali's army. De Lannoy served Travancore faithfully for 36 years.

The Battle of Kolachel removed the main obstacle to Martanda Varma's plans for expansion and within the next 12 years, the eight principalities as well as Kayamkulam and Quilon, whose cause van Imhoff had championed, were absorbed by Travancore, and all the agreements the Dutch had made with

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their chiefs became ineffective. The zamorin took advantage of the situation, attacked Cochin and regained all the possessions he had lost, including Chettwaye.

Beset on all sides by hostile forces, the Dutch realised that peace with Travancore was an immediate necessity. The raja of Travancore informed van Gollenesse that while he was fully prepared to continue his campaigns, he was willing to come to an agreement with the Dutch. A meeting was held at Mavelikara where the Dutch were represented by Ezechiel Rahabi, whose family on several occasions in the past arbitrated between the Cochin raja and his enemies, and Silvester Mendes, a Dutch subject of Portuguese extraction. In spite of the Dutch representatives agreeing to all the demands of the emissaries of Travancore, no headway was made. Negotiations were postponed, recommenced at Parur near Quilon, but all attempts at a settlement failed. In the meanwhile Martanda Varma granted extremely favourable concessions to the English merchants, and the Dutch could see the end of their trade in Kerala. Negotiations were again resumed and eventually the Treaty of Mavelikara was signed on 15 August 1753.

The main clauses of the treaty were: that the English factories in Travancore would be allowed to continue but no other Europeans would be permitted to establish themselves in the territories subject to Travancore; that the Dutch would give full military support in the event of any aggression on Travancore. The Dutch pledged themselves to remain neutral in any campaign which Martanda Varma or his successors undertook in Kerala. The Dutch promised to supply Travancore with Rs 12,000 worth of arms every year and Martanda Varma agreed to make available to the Company one and a half million pounds of pepper from Travancore, and a further 10,000 pounds from his conquered territories, at a discounted rate.

The Treaty of Mavelikara was unlike all the other treaties and conventions which the Dutch had made in the past. With the exception of Calicut, they had always claimed the right to arbitrate in the disputes of the Malabar princes. In Cochin they had even declared themselves overlords, taking on the burden of defending that state against its enemies. The surrender of these claims was a betrayal of their allies who now turned to

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the zamorin. The raja of Cochin bitterly complained to Batavia that the Company had abandoned an old friend and ally and violated all their contracts.

An important aspect of the treaty was the omission of all reference to the Christians whom the Dutch considered as their own citizens, and who enjoyed special privileges, one of which was the right to be tried by Dutch courts.

What had really prompted the Company to agree to the clause of non-intervention, for they had not suffered a crushing defeat at Kolachel, was the slump in their pepper trade, which they were anxious to revive. In 1726 they had exported nearly two million pounds of pepper, by 1746 this had dropped to 540,000 pounds. Since it was not possible to subdue Travancore and corner the pepper production, it was expedient to obtain the best terms for their trade at any cost. After the treaty they collected ten million pounds in the four years ending 1756. As Day remarked, 'certainly giving up their former allies for the sake of gaining four annas or six pence for every twenty-five pounds of pepper was an inglorious act.'

Cochin's position was now insecure, for if Martanda Varma chose to attack, the Dutch were treaty-bound to remain neutral. With Dutch neutrality established, Martanda Varma was free to march northwards. It was not long before Cochin was involved in the case of the disinherited princes, who sought the assistance of Travancore and not the arbitration of the Dutch. Travancore extended his territories to the Periyar river and using his *maravar* troops conquered the inland principalities. The subjugated princes, long accustomed to independence, saw the ruin of Kerala by a prince who drew his strength from Tamilian mercenaries. Rallying round the banner of Cochin they mounted an offensive at Ambalapuzha against the advancing army of Travancore. De Lannoy's infantry and artillery surrounded and cut off their lines of communication and pressed on to Cochin. The raja of Cochin sued for peace. In the meanwhile, the zamorin attacked Palghat which commanded the main pass through the Western Ghats. The ruler of Palghat appealed to the raja of Mysore for help. Haidar Ali, then in the service of the ruler of Mysore, was sent to relieve Palghat. The

zamorin's army was defeated and withdrew, and agreed to pay an indemnity of Rs 1,200,000.*

The rulers of Travancore and Cochin passed away in 1758, but the old feud between Calicut and Cochin continued. The new ruler of Cochin allied himself with Rama Varma, popularly known as Dharma Raja, who succeeded Martanda Varma, to regain Parur, Alwaye and Trichur which the zamorin had seized in the wake of the Battle of Ambalapuzha. Once again the Travancore army commanded by de Lannoy forced the zamorin's levies to withdraw. In 1762 peace was made between Cochin and Calicut. The Dharma Raja and the zamorin met at Padmanabhapuram, and the latter agreed not to attack Cochin again and to refer any disputes to Travancore. He also agreed to pay Rs 150,000 towards the cost of the campaign. The Travancore Lines were extended to Parur should the zamorin forget to keep his promise. In the following year, Haidar Ali, who was now the virtual ruler of Mysore conquered Mangalore† and Bednur and extended his sway into Kerala. He made himself master of Chirrakal which was handed over to the Ali Raja to administer, the *kolathiri* seeking asylum in Travancore.

When Breekpot became commander of Cochin in 1764 the authorities at Batavia recommended the dismantling of their fort at Cannanore on the grounds of economy. This was not done though the garrison was reduced. Breekpot, on the advice of Kroonenburg, the chief of Cannanore, offered to sell the fort to Raza Khan, Haidar Ali's general; but the Mysorean did not require it. From Chirrakal, Haidar Ali marched on to Calicut and demanded the remainder of the Palghat indemnity, which the zamorin was unable to produce. Calicut was taken, the zamorin committing suicide by setting fire to his palace. Haider Ali now claimed suzerainty over north and central Kerala. The Dutch having no further use for the Cannanore fort, sold it to the Ali Raja.

Breekpot, watching these events with anxious eyes, decided to send a mission to Calicut to request the Mysorean to respect

*Accounts vary as to the amount of the indemnity.
†The Dutch had an agency at Mangalore, which Haidar Ali spared.

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the Company's rights in Chettwaye and Mapranam, and that Cochin and Travancore should not be attacked, as they were allies of the Dutch. Haidar Ali suggested that the Dutch enter into an offensive and defensive treaty with him and provide 1000 troops. He also demanded an annual tribute of Rs 400,000 and eight elephants from Cochin, and Rs 1,500,000 and 30 elephants from Travancore. Cochin agreed, but Travancore ignored the demand. Breekpot informed Haidar Ali that since the commitments were extensive, he would have to refer them to Batavia. This met the situation for the moment as Haidar Ali had to leave Malabar to meet the Maratha invasion. In 1773 he was back again and in spite of the Company's protests, overran Cranganore on the grounds that it formed a part of the zamorin's territory.

In 1776 he declared his intention of marching through Cochin to attack Travancore who had not paid the annual tribute. Moens temporised by saying that he had not received a reply from Batavia. Chettwaye was captured, the Dutch garrison there being allowed to retire to Cochin. Sirdar Khan, the Mysorean's general however went back on his word and took them prisoner.

The long delayed reply came from Batavia early in 1777 which was forwarded to Haidar Ali, along with the customary gifts which one sovereign sends to another. Haidar Ali disowned Sirdar Khan's action, freed the Dutch prisoners and added that he had no unfriendly feelings towards the Dutch, and that all matters of dispute would be amicably settled.

Adriaan Moens, a member of the Council of the Indies who had been appointed governor of Cochin in 1771 realised Dutch prestige and influence in Kerala was on the verge of extinction. They had either to abdicate from Malabar or stand up to Haidar Ali, which, with the forces at his disposal he was unable to do. Moreover, he could expect no assistance from Travancore who had now allied himself with the English at Madras. Moens collected what forces he could and fortified the Hook of Ayyakotta (Azhikod). His defense of Ayyakotta and their fortress at Cranganore held out long enough to prevent Sirdar Khan reaching Cochin, when a rebellion broke out in Calicut which caused the Mysore forces to withdraw. Moens now opened negotiations with Haidar Ali, but before a settlement could be reached,

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war broke out with the English which prevented the former from taking any further action in Malabar.

Tipu Sultan who succeeded his father Haidar Ali in 1782, continued the campaign and was determined to bless the people of Malabar with Islam. 'Hereafter you must dwell quietly and pay your dues like good subjects, and since it is the practice with you for one woman to associate with ten men, and leave your mothers and sisters inconstrained in their obscene practices and are thence all born in adultery, and are more shameless in your connections than the beasts in the fields, I hereby require you to forsake these sinful practices and to be like the rest of mankind, and if you are disobedient of these commands, I have made repeated vows to honour the whole of you with Islam.'

Day describes Tipu Sultan's administration of Malabar: 'Many of his victims were hung, even mothers with their children around their necks, others were dragged to death by elephants. No mode of execution was too terrible, no torture too great to satiate his fiendish vengeance. Churches were plundered and the roofs of all places of worship were blown off, whilst Hindu and Christian women were compelled to accept Mohammedan husbands. No Hindu was allowed to wear the lock of hair on his head. The rack and starvation were used as instruments of conversion and those who refused to be converted by these persuasive agents were put to death.' Though the description is exaggerated, the consternation he created in Malabar was by no means small. His name could strike terror everywhere and for long he was remembered as *Mysore kaduva*, the Mysore tiger.

In 1778 Tipu Sultan proposed an alliance with the Dutch and offered to buy Fort Cochin and the other installations at Cranganore and Ayyakotta. He also proposed an alliance with Travancore, which the latter rejected on the grounds that he was debarred from doing so without the concurrence of the English. He then called upon Travancore to surrender the 30,000 brahmans who had fled from north and central Kerala and sought refuge in Travancore. This also the ruler of Travancore refused to do. Tipu Sultan then prepared to invade Travancore. The English informed the Mysorean that an invasion of Travancore would be considered a declaration of war against them.

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The raja of Travancore knew that if Tipu acquired Cranganore and Ayyakotta, his passage to his own state would be unhindered. So he purchased these forts and their property at Vypeen, allowing the Dutch merchants to continue trading there.

The sale of the forts at Cranganore and Ayyakotta was made after mature consideration. The Malabar had always been a matter of considerable anxiety to the Company as their income from trade and the revenues from their estates were never commensurate with the expenses of establishment. In fact, Jakob Mossel, the governor general, had once remarked that he 'would rather wish that the ocean had swallowed the whole coast of Malabar a hundred years ago'. Efforts to reduce their expenditure in Kerala had commenced in 1697, but successive commanders realised that such action would be detrimental to their interests there. When Tipu Sultan heard of the sale of these forts he claimed them, but Johan Gerard van Angelbeck replied that nothing could now be done as the transaction had been completed.

Tipu Sultan marched down from Coimbatore and came up against the Travancore Lines which held out against him. He made a second attack which was repulsed. As he marshalled his army for a third attempt, a large force under Colonel Hartley joined the Travancorean army. In the battle which followed, Tipu was thrown from his palanquin, his forces panicked, and he withdrew.

In 1790 he decided, once and forever, to destroy that 'contemptible wall' and brought down his crack troops from Seringapatam and Bangalore. He attacked Cranganore which he captured. He then took a pickaxe and set the example of breaching the wall. Once through the Travancore Lines, he pressed on to Travancore. But while camped on the north bank of the Periyar, waiting for the floods to subside, where 'his army had no shelter, no dry place to parade, and all their ammunition and accoutrements were damaged by the rain, and their provisions were washed away by the impetuous current of the flooded river', he received the news of a large army of English troops, the nizam's forces and those of the Marathas, under Lord Cornwallis, advancing on Seringapatam, his capital.

By the Treaty of Seringapatam (1792) Tipu Sultan lost all his possessions in the Malabar. The Cochin raja was restored and

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taken under the protection of the English Company and his age-old agreements with the Dutch were respected. But as van Angelbeck pointed out in his memoir to the governor general, 'if the English were allowed to thrust their little finger into these regions, they would not rest till they had thrust in their whole arm.' It was only a question of time before the Dutch were thrust out of Malabar.

When Jan Lambertus van Spall became the commander of Cochin in 1793 all that remained to the Dutch was Fort Cochin and a few hectares of land in Quilon. Most of their forts had been sold, their trade had collapsed, Travancore had not honoured its commitments in supplying pepper, their warehouses were empty and in ruins and the harbour once filled with ships carrying the Dutch ensign was now used by the English. There were 22 Company's employees in the fort, including the commander, a Calvinist minister and nine apprentices. At home the VOC was on the verge of bankruptcy, and the United Provinces were in turmoil as the resentment against the hereditary Stadtholder steadily grew worse.

The revolution in the Netherlands caused William V to flee to England. In a last attempt to save the colonies from falling under the new Batavian Republic which had been constituted on the pattern of the French Republic, the exiled Stadtholder issued a proclamation on 7 February 1795 to all the Dutch governors and commanders overseas. 'We have thought it necessary to write to you that His Brittanic Majesty's troops shall be admitted and take possession of the forts in our colonies, and that they are to be considered as the troops of a kingdom in friendship and alliance, in case these colonies should be summoned by the French.'

In India, the Dutch factory in Surat had ceased to matter, its trade hardly covering the cost of rentals and salaries. Chinsura was quietly handed over in June, and Pulicat surrendered on 16 July. Van Spall however was unwilling to hand over Fort Cochin to the English and made preparations for its defence, a foolhardy effort as he no longer had the support of the raja of Cochin, nor any troops of his own. When Stevens, the English factor reported the commander's attitude, Major Petrie, with three battalions of the 77 Regiment, was instructed to march down from Calicut and to take possession of the fort. On

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6 September van Spall agreed to hand over Cochin, but changed his mind the following day, saying that he required the consent of his council. On 19 October, with the arrival of more English troops from Tellicherri, Petrie decided to storm the fort. In the first salvo the powder magazine was blown up and van Spall capitulated.

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Commanders of Cochin

Jakob Hutsaart	1663
Pieter de Bitter	1666
Charles Valkenberg	1669
Ludolff Colster	1670
*Baron van Rheede tot Drakensteyn	1673
Jacob Lobo	1677
Martinus Huysman	1680
Gulmer Vorsbuy	1684
Issac van Dielan	1687
Hendricus Zwaarde-croon	1693
Pieter Cocszaart	1698
Magnus Wickelman	1698
M. Moerman	1705
Barent Ketel	1709
Johannes Hertenberg	1717
Jakob de Jonge	1724
Adriaan Maten	1734
*Julius Valentyn Stein van Gollenesse	1735
Siersma	1743
C. Stevens	1748
Abraham Cornelis de la Haye	1750
C. Cunes	1751
C. de Jonge	1757
Godfried Wayerman	1761
C. Breekpot	1764
C.L. Senf	1769
*Adriaan Moens	1771
*Johan Gerard van Angelbeck	1781
Jan Lambertus van Spall	1793-1795

*Governors, being members of the Council of the Indies.

Articles of Capitulation for the Surrender of Fort Cochin

The Governor in Council of Cochin proposes to Major Petrie of the 77th Regiment, Commanding the detachments of the King's and the East India Company's troops to surrender this place on the 20th of this month and requests at the same time that all hostilities may cease.

The garrison of Cochin will be prisoners and the fort will be given over to His Great Brittanic Majesty tomorrow at twelve o'clock at which time the Bay Gate and the New Gate shall be delivered over to such detachments as Major Petrie will order to take possession of them.

ARTICLE 1

The officers of the garrison and the military that have defended Cochin will with all the honours of war march out from the Bay Gate together with their arms, baggage, flying colours, beating of drums and lighted matches as also two cannons with their appurtenances.

The garrison will march out as requested and lay down their arms on the Esplanade, when they must retire back as prisoners of war.

ARTICLE 2

All officers and soldiers which are of the garrison of Cochin will with as little delay as possible be transported either to

Cannot be granted. About the garrison, it will be disposed

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Batavia or Ceylon at the expense of the English government in English vessels.	of as the C-in-C may deem proper.
ARTICLE 3 The said officers and soldiers will take with them all their effects without being liable to any search, their servants and slaves; whilst those that are married will likewise be at liberty to take their families with them.	Allowed, excepting with respect to slaves, a name unknown in the British dominions.
ARTICLE 4 The Governor, the members of Council and all servants of police and trade, Churchmen, Military and Naval, and other servants in the pay of the Dutch Company as also all the inhabitants of Cochin either European or natives will be at liberty to hold their persons and property moveable and immoveable, merchandise and other effects, without being molested or obstructed on any account whatsoever.	All private properties will be sacred.
ARTICLE 5 Among the foregoing is also understood, regarding the liberty of the Factor and Resident of Porca, J.A. Scheits, who is now employed here in keeping the Company's mercantile books and he must be allowed to return to his station to receive his office.	A reasonable time will be allowed to him to settle his affairs, but he must be considered as a prisoner of war.
ARTICLE 6 The Governor, the members of Council and all the servants of police and trade, the Churchmen and further servants in pay will be at liberty to take their families, male and female slaves and also their	This is replied to in the second article.

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possessions either to Batavia or Ceylon and they will be granted thereto at the expense of the British government the necessary ships and transports.

ARTICLE 7

The funds belonging to the Orphan College and the Poor House will not be confiscated or seized upon, they being the money of the orphans and the poor.

The funds mentioned in this article will belong to His Great Brittanic Majesty, in so far that he will appoint persons over them for their management.

ARTICLE 8

All mercantile articles, ammunitions, artillery, goods, arms, provisions and other articles which belong to the Company and are found at this place will faithfully be made over according to a specific statement to the commissaries that will be appointed to receive them and the specified list will in duplicate be duly delivered to Major Petrie.

Everything mentioned in this article will be faithfully delivered over to such persons as Major Petrie will appoint hereafter to dispose thereabout agreeably to the direction of His Great Brittanic Majesty.

ARTICLE 9

All officers and servants, civil and police of the Company who may wish to remain at this place as private individuals shall be granted the protection of the British flag.

All the inhabitants who are willing to take the oath of allegiance to His Great Brittanic Majesty will in every respect be treated as British subjects.

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ARTICLE 10 The fortifications, the government houses, all magazines and other public buildings belonging to the Company will be kept as they are at present and not be demolished.	Regarding the fort of Cochin and all other public buildings, they will be disposed of as the C-in-C or the Commanding Officer will think proper at the time.
ARTICLE 11 The free exercise of the reformed religion as usual in the Dutch Church where divine service is performed will be permitted.	Allowed.
ARTICLE 12 The convent at Verapoly and all other Romish Churches as also the heathen temples will receive the protection that they have hitherto enjoyed under the Dutch Company.	The British Government everywhere protects religious exercises.
ARTICLE 13 All topasses (half castes) and inland Christians, as also the Banyans, silversmiths, painters, washers and shoe-makers who are subjects and vassals of the Dutch Company will retain their property and also all privileges and protections which they had always enjoyed of the said Company.	Answered in the fourth and eighth articles.
ARTICLE 14 All documents, charters, resolutions and other papers belonging to this government will without any search being made of them be delivered over to the Governor, Mr van Spall in order to be	All public documents and papers must be delivered over to the persons appointed to receive

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carried with him wherever he may be moved to.

them, but Mr van Spall will have authenticated vouchers of those which concern himself during his management of Cochin.

ARTICLE 15

No one will occupy the Government House during his, Mr van Spall's stay at Cochin, but he will remain in it unmolested.

Answered in the second article.

ARTICLE 16

In the case of any English deserters being found in the garrison of Cochin, they will be pardoned.

All deserters will be absolutely given over.

ARTICLE 17

All public papers, notarial or secretariat deeds which may in the least be to the security of the possessions, belonging to the inhabitants of this place will be respected and preserved in the hands of those who hold that office, in order to be made use of whenever required.

Answered in the fourteenth article.

ARTICLE 18

The auctioneer of the town, the Sequester and the Curator (Trustees) will be supported in the recovering of all outstanding money and be therein protected by the usual officers of justice.

All inhabitants who remain in Cochin will be subject to British Laws.

ARTICLE 19

After this capitulation shall have been signed, the New Gate shall be made over to an English detachment of 50 men to

The gate of the fort of Cochin will be taken possession

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which an equal number of Dutch soldiers shall be added, to whom it will be charged that no Dutch soldier may get out and no English one may rush in, and next day all the gates will be taken possession of by the English troops and the garrison of Cochin will retire to a certain place and remain there until their departure for Batavia or Ceylon, laying down their arms as usual with the exception of the officers commanding them, who will retain their swords.	of by a detachment of British troops tomorrow noon at 12 o'clock. The garrison will be lodged as conveniently as circumstances will allow, until it can be disposed of there agreeably to the second article. The officers may retain their swords.
ARTICLE 20 All servants of the Company, the Police, the Military, the Navy and others in pay, will be supported by the English government until they are taken in English vessels to the place of their destination, either Batavia or Colombo.	Major Petrie is of the opinion that he has not the power to enter into such an agreement on account of the Hon'ble Company. The last part of this article has been answered in Article two.
ARTICLE 21 All sick and wounded, now in the hospital are to be treated and maintained by the English Government.	Allowed.
The fulfilment of all the above-stated articles and the manner of capitulation agreed to are to be faithfully observed and signed respectively by Major Petrie, the Governor van Spall and the Council of this place.	Major Petrie consents to a cessation of arms until 4 o'clock in the morning, at which time Mr van Spall should declare whether or

not he will accept the aforementioned articles of capitulation.

19th October 1795

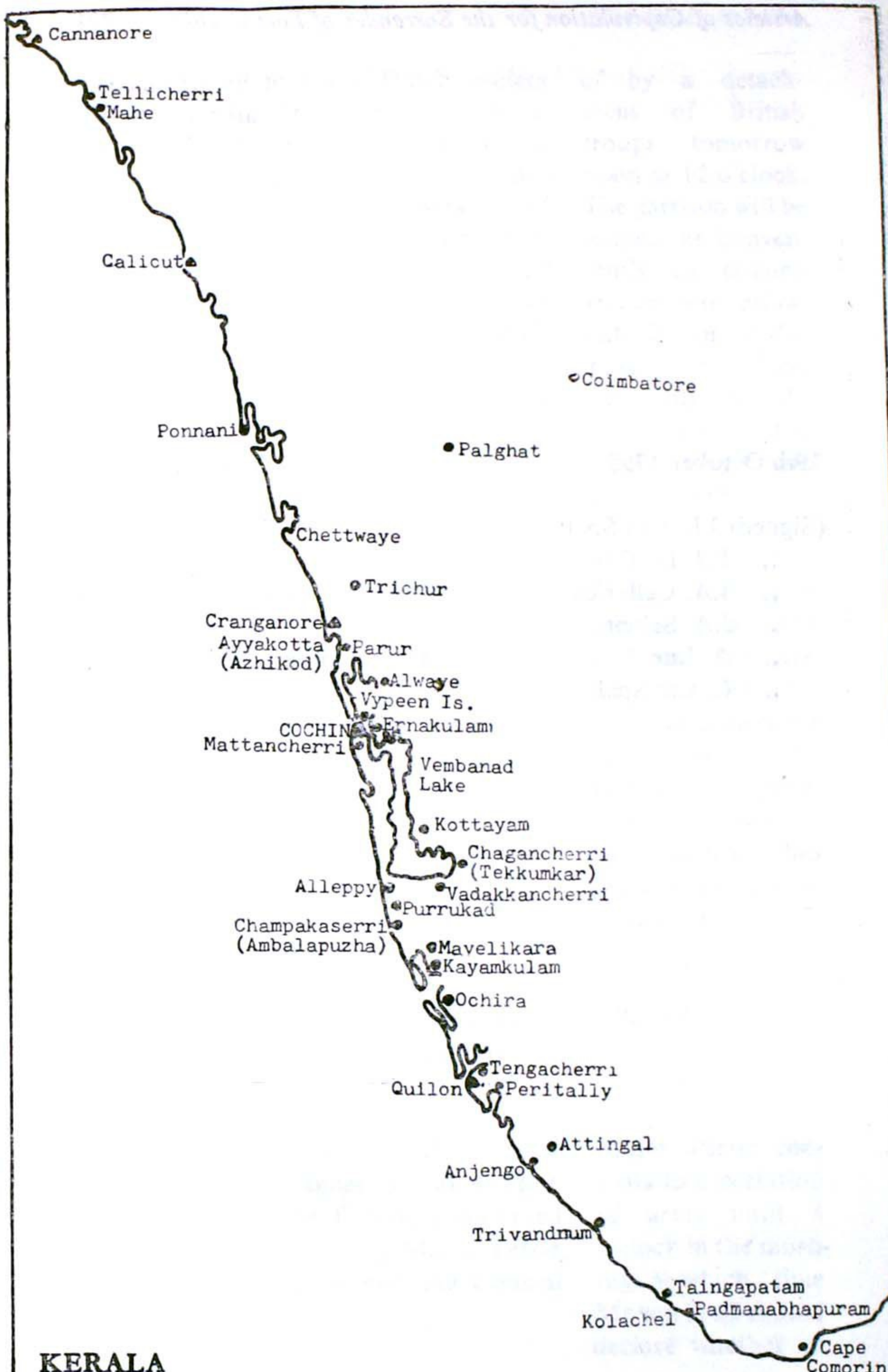
(Signed) J.L. van Spall
„ P.J. De Can
„ I.A. Cellarius
„ J.A. Scheits
„ A. Lunel
„ C. van Spall

11-30 P.M.

19th October 1795

(Signed) G. Petrie
Major,
Commanding, 77th Regiment

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Cannanore
Tellicherri
Mahe
Calicut
Coimbatore
Ponnani
Palghat
Chettwaye
Trichur
Cranganore
Ayyakotta
(Azhikod)
Parur
Alwaye
Vypeen Is.
Ernakulam
COCHIN
Mattancherri
Vembanad
Lake
Kottayam
Chagancherri
(Tekkumkar)
Alleppy
Vadakkancherri
Purrukad
Champakaserri
(Ambalapuzha)
Mavelikara
Kayamkulam
Ochira
Tengacherri
Quilon
Peritally
Attingal
Anjengo
Trivandrum
Taingapatam
Padmanabhapuram
Kolachel
Cape
Comorin
KERALA

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CHAPTER XII

The Eclipse of the Dutch

'One of the reasons that the Dutch East India Company flourishes and is become more rich and powerful than all others, is, it being absolute and invested with a kind of sovereignty and dominion, more especially over the many ports, provinces and colonies it possesses in these parts. For it appoints magistrates, admirals, generals and governors, sends and receives embassies from kings and sovereigns, makes peace and war at pleasure and by its own authority administers justice to all.' Yet within forty years of this observation, a flourishing and powerful Company, great as an empire builder and able as merchants, faded into obscurity.

During the eighteenth century, the Dutch Company in Java and the English Company in India ceased to be commercial corporations and became territorial colonial powers. While British sea-power accompanied and protected the growth of the English Company, the sea-power of the VOC and the United Provinces declined. The Dutch navy, which under Admiral de Ruyter had defied the combined fleets of England and France, was a shadow of its former self a century later. The War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713) broke the Dutch Republic as a great naval power in Europe, and the three Javanese Wars of Succession in Indonesia undermined the Company's naval strength. The large scale growth of smuggling and piracy in the East which was a natural reaction to the oppressive commercial monopoly, which the VOC tried to maintain in the areas which it claimed to control, completed the destruction of the Dutch Company's maritime power.

In the purely naval sphere, the decline was also seen. In the first half of the seventeenth century, Dutch ships had been more economically manned than those of her competitors, but a

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hundred years later the situation had been reversed. Thunberg, a Swedish traveller observed, 'the Dutch have also occasion for a greater number of men to work their ships than other nations, as their rigging is made after the old fashion with large blocks and thick cordage, heavy and clumsy in every respect.' Once the leaders of the technique of high-seas navigation, the production of charts, the foremost shipbuilders of the world, and shipwrights with whom Peter the Great of Russia (1672-1725) was proud to study, 30 years later the Dutch had to import English shipwrights to teach them improved techniques.

Rear Admiral Stavorinus also confirms the old-fashioned and time-wasting methods which were still in existence. 'It is really to be lamented that so powerful a body as the East India Company, and whose prosperity so much depends upon the safe and prosperous voyages of their ships, should trouble themselves so little with the improvement of navigation in general and their correction of their charts in particular. I could adduce many instances of their faultiness, both with respect to the Indies and to the coast of Africa. Other nations pursue this object with indefatigable assiduity, especially the English, whose maps are, in general infinitely preferable to ours.' He goes on to say that Indiamen of other nations, 'not being bound to follow any particular instruction or sailing orders with respect to their navigation, generally perform much shorter voyages, both to and from the East Indies, than the ships of the company. Hence too the commanders of Dutch ships, impeded and fettered in their proceedings, cannot possibly make as much progress as others in the improvement of navigation; and to this, it may also in my opinion, be greatly attributed, that the English, the French and others so far outstrip us in the making of improvements, new discoveries &c, although our East India trade might reasonably be supposed to be an excellent nursery for seamen and a school for the greatest nautical improvements on account of the number of ships it employs and the distance and diversity of the voyages.'

Another reason for the decline of the VOC was the growing disinclination of Dutchmen to seek a livelihood at sea or in the Dutch colonies abroad. In 1724 when the States-General needed to equip a squadron of 20 vessels, recruiting agents had to be sent to Bremen, Hamburg, Copenhagen and to other ports. When

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this drive and the offer of a higher enlistment bounty did not produce enough men, the ships' complements had to be made up with prisoners from the Amsterdam jail. Out in the East, the problem was no better and a large proportion of the VOC's naval and military personnel were not Dutchmen. This reached its climax when two entire regiments, the German Wurttemburg and the Swiss de Meuron, had to be recruited particularly for service in Sri Lanka.

It was this deplorable state of affairs in the Company which prompted the governor general, Baron van Imhoff to complain, 'I am afraid to say how things are with us, for it is shameful... everything is lacking, good ships, men and officers, and thus one of the principal props of the Netherlands power is trembling in the balance.'

This did not however mean that the Company's trade had dropped to insignificance. The homeward bound Dutch Indiamen were as richly laden as ever, though with tea, coffee and porcelain more than with spices and textiles. The volume and value of its maritime commerce was still impressive as the following figures show:

	Homeward bound Indiamen (ships)	*Total value of cargo (in florins)*
1599–1650	352	80,747,000
1651–1700	643	179,785,000
1701–1750	1412	333,731,000
1751–1780	830	306,209,000

Annual dividends were regularly paid, the shares were 215 per cent above their original value and from 1770 to 1780 the average annual sales exceeded 18 million florins. To all intents and purposes the Company was sound. Actually profits had been declining since 1693 when the net profit was 48.3 million, but by 1724-25 the results of its operations showed a net loss, and by 1779 this loss had reached 84.9 million florins. When funds were not available to pay dividends, the Seventeen borrowed money in Batavia where the interest rates were much higher and

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where such a transaction would be less likely to be known to the general public at home.

From the beginning the VOC's accounting system was defective, and as the years passed no attempt was made to correct it. Two sets of books were maintained, one at Batavia and the other in Holland and these were never balanced. Batavia calculated profit on the difference between purchase prices and the price goods *would* fetch at the prevailing market rate in Europe, whereas the Company's accountants worked out profit between the invoice price and actual sales. Moreover, what was never clearly indicated was the Company's profits as a trader and its revenue and expenditure as a sovereign power, shown as 'charges' in the table below for eight establishments in 1760-68:

	Trade profits	*Territorial revenue*	*Total revenue*	*Charges*
Coromandel	6,407	511	6,918	6,111
Bengal	2,909	653	3,562	7,967
Surat	6,050	19	6,069	1,928
Malabar	2,455	938	3,393	3,471
Cape of Good Hope	324	1,409	1,733	4,125
Samarang	988	2,315	3,303	3,068
Sri Lanka	3,055	6,453	9,507	23,101
Batavia	22,000	9,318	31,318	31,373
Total	44,188	21,616	65,803	81,144

Note: All figures are in thousands of florins.

A true picture of the Company's working was not known till 1779 by which time it was too late to rectify the outdated system or to remedy the defects in the organisation.

Spice, for which the Dutch Company had been founded, formed a large and valuable part of the homeward cargoes during the first half of the seventeenth century. The monopoly of this, which the Dutch tried to control by the force of arms, was not only the cause of considerable expenditure, but had turned out to be a failure. While the demand for pepper, cloves, nutmeg, mace and cardamom in Europe lasted, the Dutch were

able to reap considerable profit. By the end of the seventeenth century the European demand for textiles, cotton piece goods and Bengal, Persian and Chinese silks supplanted the requirements of spice to a great extent. In the eighteenth century, the tea and coffee* trades became more important than the textile group and the relative value of pepper and other spices declined still further. Moreover, these plants were cultivated in lands controlled or ruled by nations other than the Dutch. These changes in the European markets and the changed conditions in the East adversely affected the business of the VOC. Added to all this was the Industrial Revolution which brought into existence a class of the people who desired to sell goods to India, whereas the Dutch had nothing to sell and were solely interested in buying Indian products.

Besides smuggling and piracy, the widespread corruption in the Company's ranks dissipated much of its profits. It was said that for every rupee of profit earned by the Company, its servants made 100 rupees illicitly. Everyone from the governor general to cabin boy indulged in private trade on the side, and everyone knew it. A governor general on 700 florins a month could bring home a fortune of 10 million florins, and a junior merchant would pay 3,000 florins to the appointments board for a posting carrying 40 florins a month, and amass 40,000 florins. A fiscal entitled to one-sixth the value of contraband detected could make much more by turning a blind eye. A shortage of one million florins in the treasury at Batavia was only discovered when the chief cashier suddenly died. In Bengal corruption and dishonesty was rampant. It had caused Mossel to lament: 'For a series of years a succession of directors there have been guilty of the greatest enormities and the foulest dishonesty; they have looked upon the company's effects as a booty thrown open to their depredations. . . . We will will not add that the whole of the company's profits on silver have been embezzled, but they have not for many years been forthcoming.' Instances of defalcation and embezzlement were numerous and it was not surprising that

*In 1616, the first Dutchmen to land in Mocha noticed a bean, 'used to make black water, which they drink warm'. It was exported to Holland 50 years later and in 1696 attempts were made to cultivate the plant in Java. The first consignment of Javanese coffee was shipped to Europe in 1713.

the failure of the Company was attributed to corruption. Its initials VOC (Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie) were interpreted as 'Vergaan Onder Corruptie' (perished by corruption).

Corruption was no less or no worse in the English Company. Pitt as governor of Madras drew a salary of Rs 200 a month, yet paid Rs 200,000 for the Regent or Pitt Diamond. Corruption and a defective accounting system were common to both Companies, but the English Company survived whereas the Dutch Company failed.

Indian affairs were a living issue in English party politics. The British Company could never escape parliamentary control, for men like Burke could throw a fierce light on British Indian administration. In the Dutch territories, factories and possessions where supervision was lax, corruption could flourish with impunity, for the VOC had become a State within a State, and the Netherlands government had little or no control over it. The bureaucratic system, which Elihu Yale a century earlier considered so good that it should be followed in all the English factories in India, which rigidly subordinated all the outlying establishments to Batavia, had become so incompetent that Batavia could now only complain of corruption and dishonesty, but was incapable of taking any action against its erring officers.

Another factor which contributed to the downfall of the Company was the recurring defections from the Company's ranks to that of the English. There was no real need for these officers to defect. The Batavian authorities had more or less resigned themselves to the improbity of their own officers, for they themselves were no better. Possibly these merchants, mariners and soldiers were worried about their future in the Netherlands and preferred the security of service in British factories. The War of the Austrian Succession (1747-1748) in which the republic was involved, brought an invasion of Holland by France. The growing resentment of the middle and working classes (to which category the VOC's employees belonged) to the regent oligarchy, led many of the Company's servants to transfer their loyalty to the English in India as well as in England. Desertions from the ranks of the troops were understandable, for Dutch discipline was particularly harsh with the rank and file. Sentences and

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punishments were invariably converted to fines, as a result of which a number of servicemen drew no pay for several months. When the first opportunity presented itself, they deserted. At the seige of Cochin in 1662, 200 troops went over to the Portuguese as their salary for six and a half months had been withheld as a punishment for failing to defend Tonan in Java. Desertions lowered Dutch prestige in the eyes of Indian rulers, merchants and businessmen.

Finally, the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War of 1780–84 and its catastrophic effect on Dutch trade and colonial power closed all their markets in India and even in England.

In 1781 the Amsterdam Chamber, once the major investor in the Dutch East India Company asked for a moratorium to pay its outstanding loan to the States-General; the debt grew rapidly until nine months later, a committee of enquiry was appointed to go into the finances of the Company. The VOC had been living on its great reputation and while its servants were amassing colossal fortunes, the Company was advancing towards bankruptcy.

The American War of Independence saw Holland lined up with France and Spain against Britain. To neutralise any combination of French and Dutch forces in India, the English seized all their settlements on the east coast. Ross surrendered Chinsura to Fort William, Surat had ceased to matter and the commander of Cochin was too deeply involved in defending his outposts against Haidar Ali, to constitute a menace. Only Negapatam held out which had to be taken by force. The peace of 1784 saw the restoration of all these places with all their ancient rights and privileges, except for Negapatam, which was retained until the Dutch could offer an alternative, which they were unable to do.

In the Netherlands only a public guarantee of its shares enabled the VOC to carry on. Everybody realised that the State must take a hand in the affairs of that body, but Holland was too shaken by internal dissensions to be capable of energetic action. The United Provinces and the Dutch East India Company had risen, prospered and grown old together, and both collapsed about the same time. Survivals of an age of privilege, they fell victims to the new enthusiasm of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity which was spreading out from France.

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Revolution in the Netherlands in January 1795 and its subsequent conquest by Napoleon, caused the Stadtholder to take refuge in England. A proclamation was issued to all colonial governors and directors to permit English troops in their settlements, forts and factories, to prevent them falling into the hands of the French, and to treat these troops as the forces of a friendly nation. Without waiting for compliance, the English occupied all the Dutch establishments in India, except for Cochin which offered slight resistance before capitulating. While the English took over the Dutch colonies and trade in the East, the French overran their country. The United Provinces gave way to the Batavian Republic which dissolved the East India Company and took over its debts which had now amounted to 135 million florins. By the Treaty of Amiens of 1802, all the Dutch settlements in India with the exception of Cochin and Sri Lanka were restored to Holland, but the outbreak of hostilities again placed them at the disposal of the English. The Batavian Republic lasted till 1806 when Napoleon placed his brother Louis on the throne of Holland. In 1810 Napoleon persuaded his brother to abdicate and Holland was absorbed into the French Empire. Little remained of the Dutch seaborne empire except Java, which was placed under the French captain-general of Mauritius. When the English arrived to take over the island shortly after the capture of Mauritius, they took it over from the French and not from the Dutch. Napoleon surrendered to the English on 17 September 1811. By the Convention of London (1814) between Great Britain and the Netherlands, Java and its dependencies were restored to the Dutch. Three commissioners arrived to take over Batavia from John Fendall, the British Lieutenant Governor. In 1816 Baron van der Capellen, one of the commissioners, was appointed governor general of *Netherlands India*. Neither the Dutch government at home nor the governor-general made any attempt to revive their settlements in the Indian sub-continent. On the contrary van der Capellen, faced with the prospect of having to pay the rents on districts taken over from the Javanese states, borrowed 20 million florins at nine per cent from a firm in Calcutta, pledging as security 'the revenues, incomes, territorial possessions and all the property of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands'. Van der Capellen was immediately

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recalled by King William. To clear a part of this loan, the Indian settlements were sold to Britain in 1824.

One hardly talks of a Dutch era in India, as one refers to the era of the Portuguese or of the English. They were not great builders of castles, mansions or cathedrals; they founded no libraries or colleges. Their castles and forts have disappeared, their churches have been taken over by other denominations, and most of their buildings are in ruins. While the Portuguese built in Cochin as if they were building a future metropolis—a massive fort, numerous churches, monasteries and convents, colleges and palaces—the Dutch reduced the area and pulled down most of the buildings. Their structures were devoted to commerce, and if we are reminded of the Portuguese by the great churches they left behind, we remember the Dutch by their warehouses along the waterfront at Mattancherri and the merchants' houses in Fort Cochin.

The first phase of Dutch activity, which spans the seventeenth century, was one of adventure, expansion, achievement and of great enterprise. Hendrik Brouwer had discovered the Roaring Forties in 1611. Great voyages of discovery were undertaken as far as Korea and 'down under' to Australia, when Willem Jansz, skipper of the *Duyfken* (sister ship of the *Delft* which reached Masulipatam in 1605) sailing along the south coast of New Guinea, swung over to the west of the Cape York peninsula in March 1606. This was the first European discovery of the Southern continent. During the first half of the seventeenth century, agencies, factories and forts were established in the Spice Islands, Indonesia, India, Borneo, Taiwan and numerous other places. On the ruins of Jakarta the new capital of the Netherlands Indies was built, and Portuguese naval, territorial and commercial supremacy was destroyed. By the middle of the century Sri Lanka had been taken, north and central Kerala were under their control, and inland factories were opened at Agra, Patna and Golconda Trade was opened with Bengal, Burma and mainland South-East Asia. During this century of achievement one thousand ships returned to the Netherlands with cargoes valued at over two hundred and sixty million florins. The port-to-port trade and the Indian trade was correspondingly enormous. The

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Dutch were more powerful and more influential than all the other European traders taken together; they buoyed the Hugli; they had the right of precedence at the nawab of Bengal's *durbar*; and they guaranteed the pilgrim traffic to the Red Sea. They were not only the biggest partners in India's overseas trade, but in the trade of most of the kingdoms of monsoon Asia.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the tide began to turn against these seafaring people. The policy of commercial monopoly was a failure, their officers were more interested in amassing personal fortunes than attending to the Company's legitimate business. The rise of the coffee and tea trades which had supplanted to a great extent their commerce in spice and textiles, and which they could not engross, diminished their profits. Ships had become outdated and uneconomical to run; good men were no longer forthcoming from Holland to manage their factories and to staff their garrisons; their astute commercial diplomacy was a thing of the past; and the ostentation of great power and show, no longer impressed and overawed the local princes and people. Retrenchment and the reduction of their establishments naturally followed. Though the Company's performance was still impressive, 'what was chiefly lacking', as one Dutch writer remarked, 'was the spirit of adventure, the courage to attempt great deeds and the power to sustain hardship and disappointment. . . . We resembled another ex-colonial power, the Portuguese—we had become a curiosity, a picturesque people in clogs and baggy breeches, and the only merchants were shopkeepers, who sang behind their counter, while waiting for their customers.'

The first setback to the Dutch in India was their defeat at Kolachel in 1741. By the time the Treaty of Mavelikara was finalised, Masulipatam, their first settlement in India had been granted to Dupleix. Within a few years they were stripped of all their influence, first at Surat and later in Bengal, where they were defeated by the English. The authorities at Batavia even disowned the actions of their captains and commanders.

Throughout the two hundred years the Dutch lived and worked on the shores of India, they showed no ambition to 'win land for their God'. In fact they were ill-equipped to do so. Very few Indians forsook their religion for that of Calvin. One of the reasons why the Dutch were the only European

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traders allowed in Japan for over two centuries after Japan was declared a closed country (the purpose being to suppress Christiantity), was because the Dutch brought no missionaries with them. Nowhere in India, not even in Kerala, where they were more than just merchants, were they guilty of mass conversions, persecution, barbarities, or destruction of places of worship. Their attitude was one of liberal toleration—Syrian Christians, Jews, Mohammedans and Hindus were free to pursue their own beliefs. Even the Roman Catholics were treated with such liberality, that Pope Clement XIV thanked the commander of Cochin for his Christian acts of kindness.

It was a tolerance close to indifference. The Dutch were not interested in bringing the benefits of the West to the people of India or anywhere else, except by way of trade. It was this attitude which lost them Australia, for the aborigine wanted nothing from them, and the land apparently produced nothing of commercial value, which the Dutch could trade in the Archipelago, India or Europe. It may be interesting to reflect how the history of Australia might have been changed, if the Dutch had followed up their discovery of the west coast, by establishing a settlement on it. Dedel, who accompanied Houtman on his third voyage hoped that the shores of Shark Bay may prove gold-bearing, would have been disappointed, but inland exploration might have anticipated the West Australian gold strikes by a couple of centuries. A party looking for a site for a settlement would have found one on the Swan river near Perth or Fremantle. If such a settlement had been made in the seventeenth century, immigration would have been extended beyond those of the Caucasian race, for the Dutch would have moved Indonesians to Australia. There would have been little rivalry from other nations for Australia's shores, far less than the Dutch encountered elsewhere in the world, where they spent their colonising resources only to see them taken over by Great Britain. The Dutch were more interested in commerce than in colonisation, and the aborigines of West Australia were left undisturbed till the nineteenth century.

The only monument to the Dutch in India is in Malabar. It is a book: not a baroque poem extolling their achievements, but a botanical treatise, the 'Hortus Malabaricus', in 12 folio volumes, which describes the medical properties of the plants

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of Kerala. It was prepared by Malayali, Portuguese and Dutch scholars under the direction of Baron van Rheede tot Drakensteyn, who was the governor of Cochin from 1673 to 1677. It was a work of scholarship and artistry, but eminently utilitarian.

The only other legacy is the Dutch Records, the exemplification of the VOC's bureaucratic system. The variety and volume of these records are incredible. The microfilm copies which the National Archives of India have acquired cover several hundred thousand pages, but they account for only a portion of the material available. The main series are the documents known as 'Papers Received' (*overgekomen Brieven en Papieren*) which are originals or copies of letters sent from Bantam and later Batavia to the authorities in the Netherlands. Every year the governor general and the Council of the Indies reported on the state of trade in Asia. Some of these reports extend to over a thousand pages of manuscript, and describe in detail, region by region, the VOC's affairs in the East Indies. They have summaries of the information contained in letters issued by the heads of directorates, governments and factories. The 40 clerks, two secretaries and their assistants in Batavia must have had to work very hard to prepare these reports. Annexed to these reports were letters in original or copies from subordinate factories to the capital, or between the factories themselves, extracts from accounts and factory registers, invoices of ships' cargoes and memoranda describing the trade and other relevant matters of a particular region, which a retiring director left for the guidance of his successor.

A second series are the 'Outgoing Letters' (*Uitgaande Briefboek*) the correspondence between the authorities in Batavia and their establishments in Asia. The resolutions of the Seventeen, though less concerned with Indian affairs refer to the market for Indian goods in Europe. There is also the Dagh Register, a day-to-day journal maintained in Batavia, now Jakarta. Lastly, there are a valuable set of documents in the Madras Record Office which concern the Company's administration in Malabar.

The Dutch Records do not only cover coastal India from Bengal to Sind in Pakistan, but also the regions around their inland factories at Agra, Patna and Golconda. The primary importance of these documents is for the study of economic

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history, particularly matters connected with India's overseas trade. They furnish much inside information on the trade of the other European companies, Asiatic merchants and the political situation in the area, besides production methods, local administration, transport, earthquakes, storms, floods and famine. They also fill in gaps in administrative and political history, for the seventeenth century chronicles of India are comparatively silent on the outlying provinces of the Mogul Empire, like Bengal, the sultanates of the Deccan and the Hindu principalities in the far south. The political ups and downs in these regions are described in detail by the Dutch merchants, whose observations on the great events of the day provide supplementary evidence of the main trends of political history. This nation of merchants unconsciously left to posterity, the largest source of information of the early modern history of India.

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APPENDIX ONE

The Ostend Company

The Treaty of Utrecht of 1713 which concluded the War of the Spanish Succession brought the southern Lowlands into the Austrian Empire. In their new sovereign, Charles VI, the inhabitants of what is now Belgium, found a patron who was quite prepared to support them in their efforts to obtain a share of the Eastern trade. The emperor dreamt of establishing an imperial mercantile marine on the profits of Indian commerce, which would counter-poise the naval supremacy of the Dutch as well as of the English.

The Ostend Company was not formally chartered till 1722, but commissions for single vessels had been granted as early as 1714. Many renegade Dutch captains and factors as well as several from England took service with the Ostenders, and for a while the trade continued as a temporary association of merchants. Ships were fitted out in Lisbon and Leghorn (Livorno), as well as at Ostend and some were even cleared from British ports. Charles VI envisaged establishing stations for the Indian fleet on the shores of the Adriatic Sea at Fiume (Rijeka-Susak, now in Yugoslavia) and Trieste, but this part of the scheme was not developed.

It was not long before the Ostend merchants agitated for a charter of incorporation. The scheme put up by de Merveille, a sea captain who had served in the English East India Company, was held in abeyance for a long time, as the emperor was reluctant to become involved with the Dutch and the English. Indian goods were smuggled from Flanders into England in longboats with 10 or 12 oars, which rowed from Ostend to the River Thames at high tide, and 'ran through the Bridge before the face of the customs-house officers'. Special acts were passed by the British parliament forbidding their subjects from trading

in the Indies under commissions from a foreign state, and prohibiting any boat with more than four oars from rowing on the Thames either below or above London Bridge.

In 1722, the emperor, against the advice of Prince Eugene, his governor of the southern Netherlands, granted a charter to the Company. The capital of the Ostend Company was fixed at 6,000,000 florins, and to attract foreign participation, a clause in the charter provided that the shares of foreigners would not be liable to confiscation in the event of war between Austria and their native country.

For the next nine years, the Ostend Company became one of the thorniest diplomatic problems in Europe. Though the charter was not publicly announced till 1723, the news leaked out. The Dutch minister at Brussels protested to the Austrian governor of the Netherlands, that under the articles of the Treaty of Munster (1648), Philip II of Spain, at that time sovereign of the southern Netherlands had practically renounced all part in the Indian trade via the Cape of Good Hope. The Dutch declared that the Austrian Netherlands continued under this prohibition, by the terms of the Barrier Treaty concluded at Antwerp in 1715 (under which they had consented to withdraw the closure of the Scheldt) and that they had assisted Charles VI to claim his sovereignty over the southern Netherlands, only on the footing of his right to the Spanish monarchy. He could therefore hold these provinces as the king of Spain had held them in the past. The English East India Company eagerly supported the Dutch. Pamphleteers of the day even raised the cry that Protestantism was in danger, and that if the Ostend Company succeeded 'the commerce and riches of one of the bulwarks of the Protestant interest would be transferred to augment the strength of a Roman Catholic state'.

Feeling in Holland was so bitter that the States-General threatened with the death penalty, any Dutchman concerned in the Ostend trade. Spain supporting Austria opened her American ports to Ostend ships, which led to France and Holland joining England in a treaty denouncing the company. For five years Charles VI and his Ostend Company faced stiff opposition in Europe. In the end he sacrificed the company, mainly to win the consent of the maritime powers to the Pragmatic Sanction conferring his hereditary possessions on his daughter, Marie

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Theresa. He suspended the company's privileges and in 1731 he suppressed the Ostend Company entirely, promising not to permit vessels to sail to India from any country that had been subject to Spain.

Attempts were now made by the Ostenders to shift their headquarters to Trieste and Fiume, ports on the Adriatic Sea which did not come under the prohibitory clause. When this fell through they turned to Scandinavia and in 1728, Frederick IV of Denmark granted a special charter which enabled members of the suppressed company to join the Danes in the Indian trade. An India House was set up at Altona, which then belonged to the Danish crown, but was close to the free-city of Hamburg. Other members enrolled themselves under a new Swedish company founded in 1731. The latter organisation was left more or less undisturbed, as their trade was with the Farther East, China and Japan, rather than with India. But in Denmark the Dutch and English ambassadors were ordered to protest against the new association, as being a revival of the Ostend Company. Though Frederick IV denied their contention, the India House at Altona was eventually closed.

The Ostenders carried on more than a port-to-port trade. They had a lodge at Surat and founded two settlements in India, one at Bankibazaar (Bankipore), three kilometres south of Chinsura and the other at Covelong, 43 kilometres south of Madras. The number of ships sent out had been steadily increasing and good dividends had been paid; but the Dutch from the beginning, in spite of all their diplomatic protests in Europe, had not scrupled to capture Ostend ships and to confiscate their cargoes. The English in Bengal had seized and imprisoned Hume, an Englishman, who was the chief of Bankibazaar. After the Company had been abandoned by the emperor, its settlements in India came to ruin. The isolated Bengal factory was attacked in 1733 by a Mohammedan official, who was stirred up to do so by Fort William, and its garrison was forced to surrender. The Covelong factory however lasted much longer, until it was taken by Clive in 1752 and destroyed. The Ostend Company became legally defunct only in 1793.

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APPENDIX TWO

Currency, Weights and Measures

The VOC's accounts were maintained in guilders or florins, local currencies being converted at conventional rates, which varied considerably. The guilder or florin contained 20 stuivers, twenty-four of which were equal to one Indian rupee. A *ton of gold*, an expression which often occurs in Dutch records meant 100,000 guilders worth of anything.

The most common European coin in the East was the Spanish *real of eight*. It was equivalent to two rupees or 48 stuivers. The *rix dollar* had the same value as the *real of eight*.

The *mahmudi* was the chief coin of Gujarat until Akbar introduced the coinage of rupees, though *mahmudis* continued as currency for very many years. Two *mahmudis* were exchanged for five rupees.

The gold coins of India known as *hun* were referred to as *pagodas* because of a temple or pagoda stamped on them. They were the regular currency of Golconda, Bijapur and the Hindu kingdoms of the south. Two kinds of *pagodas* were in circulation, the 'new' and the 'old'. The former were coined in Golconda and Bijapur, and in various Hindu, Dutch and English mints by permission of the authorities. The value of the *new pagoda* rose from roughly three rupees to three and a half rupees. The *old pagodas* were the surviving coins of the Vijayanagar Empire, and though they were of the same intrinsic value as the *new pagodas*, they commanded a premium, as certain transactions, especially revenue payments, had to be made in *old pagodas*. The melting of *old pagodas* was condemned by a superstition current at the time, and it was said that money changers paid the sultan of Golconda an annual sum to prevent their withdrawal for re-coinage. Its value was between four and five rupees.

Fractional currency employed with *pagodas* varied greatly

and the small gold coin called the *fanam* was reckoned at different times and places as 12, 16, 24 and 32 to the *pagoda*.

The *mohur*, an old Iranian or Persian gold coin was also current in western India till the end of the eighteenth century, being exchanged for fifteen rupees.

Cowries were used in Bengal, of which originally 2560 made a rupee, gradually rising to 4880 and 5200 at the end of the eighteenth century. During the same period, almonds were in use in Surat of which four thousand could be exchanged for one rupee. De Thevenot noted that 4352 bitter almonds could be exchanged for a rupee and that these almonds were obtained from a special shrub cultivated for this purpose in Iran.

There was never a general unit of weight in India until the metric system was adopted two decades ago. The Dutch or Amsterdam pound was 0.494 kg and the Dutch ton (60 cubic feet) or *last* (120 cubic feet or two tons capacity) were measures of shipping space. The *last* was also equated with two dead-weight tons. Two metric tons burden=1976 kilograms. The *last* however varied according to the commodity loaded, a *last* of pepper weighing 1186.6 kg, and of rice 1483.2 kilograms.

The *quintal* or *kintal*, a Portuguese unit of weight widely used in the East, was about 60 kilograms.

The chief Indian weight was the *maund* or *man* which contained 40 *seers*, but the weight of the *seer* differed widely and hence *maunds* at different times and places ranged from 14.97 to 34.93 kilograms. There were the akbari (25 kg), jehangiri (29.9 kg), and shahjehan (34.9 kg) *maunds*; the 'old' (15 kg) and 'new' (16.8 kg) Gujarati *maunds*: and the South Indian *maunds* which weighed 11.79 kilograms.

The *picul*, a Malayan name for a Chinese weight, was equal to 60 kg; 100 *catties* made a *picul*. *Catties* of nutmeg and mace however weighed 2.72 kg and not 600 grams.

There were also no standard Indian measures of length. In the north of India there was the *gaz* whose length varied from 81.3 cm in Agra to 101.6 cm in Patna. In Ahmedabad and other parts of Gujarat, the *gaz* for woollens was 91 cm, and for cottons 68.6 centimetres. But whatever the length of the *gaz*, it was divided into either 16 *girih* or 24 *tussaj*.

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The Portuguese on the west coast applied *covado*, their word for cubit, to whatever *gaz* was used, and the English *covad* or *covett* are corruptions of the word. On the east coast, the true Indian cubit, described as the *asta* by the Dutch (and *hasta* by the English), which was roughly 46 cm was in use.

Much of the cloth made in India was exported under its local name or the name of the place where it was manufactured. They are no longer known as such—bafts, calicoes, chintzes, dutties, dungarees, joories, mercoolies, semianoes, tussars, etc. These were made in lengths or pieces of between 11 and 15 metres and shipped in units of 20 lengths called a *corge* (or *score*). Those made in longer lengths went under the general name of *long cloth* (though *lungi* material was also called long cloth) and those broader than 69 cm, as *broad cloth*. Smaller lengths were also woven specially for use by negroes and Malayans under the name of *arse clouts* or *negro clouts*.

A considerable amount of merchandise was shipped in *bales*, *packs* and *fardles* or *fardels*. The size of a *bale* was a matter of convenience and depended on whether they were stacked at the wharfside or slung across camels and oxen. In the latter case, two *bales* of 68 kg composed a *fardle* or load, that of an ox being 136 kg and of a camel 227 kilograms. At the wharfside *bales* were repacked to about 136 kg each.

Indigo, saltpetre, sugar, silk and cotton yarn, as well as piece goods were transported in *bales*, that of indigo weighing 100 kg, sugar and saltpetre 134 kg and silk 65 kilograms. In the case of piece goods the *bales* and *packs* were made up of a specific number of lengths, usually between 100 and 110 lengths, though on the east coast a *bale* consisted of 25 pieces, each piece being 33 m in length.

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APPENDIX THREE

Chronology

1602 Foundation of the Dutch East India Company. De Wolff and Lafer in Surat.
1604 Van der Hagen's treaty with the zamorin of Calicut.
1605 Pieter Eyloff and Willemsz set up the first Dutch factory in India at Masulipatam.
1606 Willem Jansz reaches Australia. Van Deynsen in Surat. Van Soldt's mission to Golconda.
1609 Inauguration of the Ten Years Truce with Spain. Dutch factory at Hirado in Japan. Pieter Both appointed the first governor general of the Netherlands East Indies.
1610 Arend Maertenssen's treaty with the nayak of Ginji. Dutch traders in Sri Lanka.
1611 Hans Marcelis sets up a factory at Pulicat.
1612 Wemmer van Bercham appointed director of Coromandel.
1618 Danes settle at Tranquebar. Pieter Gillesen establishes a factory at Surat.
1619 Jan Pieterszoon Coen conquers Jakarta which he renames Batavia.
1620 Dutch open a factory at Mocha.
1621 Foundation of the Dutch West Indies Company. Pieter van der Broucke appointed director of Surat. Francisco Pelsaert in Agra.
1622 Massacre of Amboina.
1629 Jan Pieterszoon Coen dies in Batavia.
1630-31 Great famine in India.
1632 Dutch traders in Pippli and Balasore.
1636 Dutch settle in Vengurla.
1637 Governor general van Diemen makes an alliance with

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Raja Sinha of Kandy against the Portuguese in Sri Lanka.

1640 Dutch drive out the Portuguese from Galle in Sri Lanka.

1641 The United Provinces conclude a Ten Year Truce with Portugal which is not implemented in Asia.

1644 La Compagnie des Indes Orientales, established.

1645-50 Dutch trade on the Hugli river.

1648 Spain recognises Dutch independence by the Treaty of Munster.

1652 Jan van Riebeeck founds the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope.

1652-54 First Anglo-Dutch War.

1653-78 Johan Maetsuyker, governor general of the Netherlands Indies.

1656 Dutch capture Colombo.

1658 Portuguese expelled from Sri Lanka. Dutch capture Quilon, which is subsequently retaken by the Portuguese. Mathews van der Broucke appointed director of Bengal.

1660 Rijkloff van Goens captures Negapatam.

1661 Dutch retire from Taiwan (Formosa). Quilon, Cannanore and Cranganore taken from the Portuguese.

1663 Dutch capture Cochin.

1664 Shivaji's sack of Surat.

1665-67 Second Anglo-Dutch War.

1670 Shivaji sacks Surat for the second time.

1672 French occupy San Thome.

1672-74 Third Anglo-Dutch War.

1674 Francois Martin founds the city of Pondicherry.

1676 Danes at Serampore.

1687 Aurangzeb overruns Golconda. Dutch take possession of the town of Masulipatam.

1689 Directorate of Coromandel shifted from Pulicat to Negapatam.

1693 Ravi Varma succeeds to the throne of Travancore.

1697 General reduction of the Dutch establishments in India.

1698 Rama Varma succeeds Ravi Varma in Travancore.

1702-13 War of the Spanish Succession.

1707 Death of Emperor Aurangzeb.

1716 Dutch retire from Agra.

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1717 Treaty of Chettwaye. Zamorin defeated by the Dutch.
1729 Martanda Varma succeeds to the throne of Travancore.
1736 Phonsen, director of Surat defects to the English.
1741 Battle of Kolachel. Dutch defeated by Martanda Varma.
1747-48 War of the Austrian Succession. Dutch territories invaded by France.
1751 Masulipatam passes to the French (Dupleix).
1753 Treaty of Mavelikara between Travancore and the Dutch.
1756 The 'Black Hole of Calcutta'.
1756-63 Seven Years War in Europe. Dutch profit as neutrals but suffer considerable interference by the English on their sea-borne trade.
1759 Masulipatam taken from the French by Colonel Forde, who defeats the Dutch in Bengal later in the year. Surat taken by the English.
1762 Dutch attempt to take Surat, fails.
1763 Haidar Ali conquers Mangalore, Bednur and Chirrakal.
1765 Senf considers shifting the Dutch factory from Surat to Bassein, near Bombay.
1770-71 Dutch abandon their trade in Arabia, Iran, Burma, Thailand, Laos and Vietnam.
1774 Dutch retire from Ahmedabad.
1775 Commencement of the American War of Independence.
1778 Coalition of the French, Dutch and Spanish against the English. The English seize the Dutch possessions on the east coast of India.
1780 Dutch plot with the Marathas to capture Surat fails.
1780-84 Fourth Anglo-Dutch War with catastrophic effects on Dutch sea-borne trade and colonial power. Growth of anti-Orange feeling in the Netherlands among the self-styled 'patriots'.
1781 Ross surrenders Chinsura to the English. Negapatam taken from the Dutch after a show of resistance.
1783-84 Peace with England. Restoration of the Dutch settlements in India, except for Negapatam. Headquarters of the Coromandel transferred back to Pulicat. VOC on the verge of bankruptcy.

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1789 Tipu Sultan's first attack on Travancore.
1790 Tipu Sultan's second attack on Travancore.
1792 Treaty of Seringapatam. Tipu Sultan loses his Malabar possessions and Cochin is taken under English protection. Dutch influence on the verge of extinction.
1793 Dutch Republic involved in the French Revolutionary War. French invasion of Holland checked at Neerwinden. Jan Lambertus van Spall becomes commander of Cochin.
1794-95 Second French invasion of Holland. Stadtholder flees to England and the old regime collapses. France declares war on England and Holland.
1795 English occupy all the Dutch settlements in India to prevent them falling to the French.
1799 The Dutch East India Company dissolved by the Batavian Republic.
1806 Napoleon places his brother Louis on the throne of Holland.
1810 Louis abdicates and Holland is absorbed into the French Empire.
1811 Napoleon surrenders to England (17 September).
1814 Convention of London. Java and its dependencies restored to Holland.
1824-25 Dutch settlements in India revert to the English.

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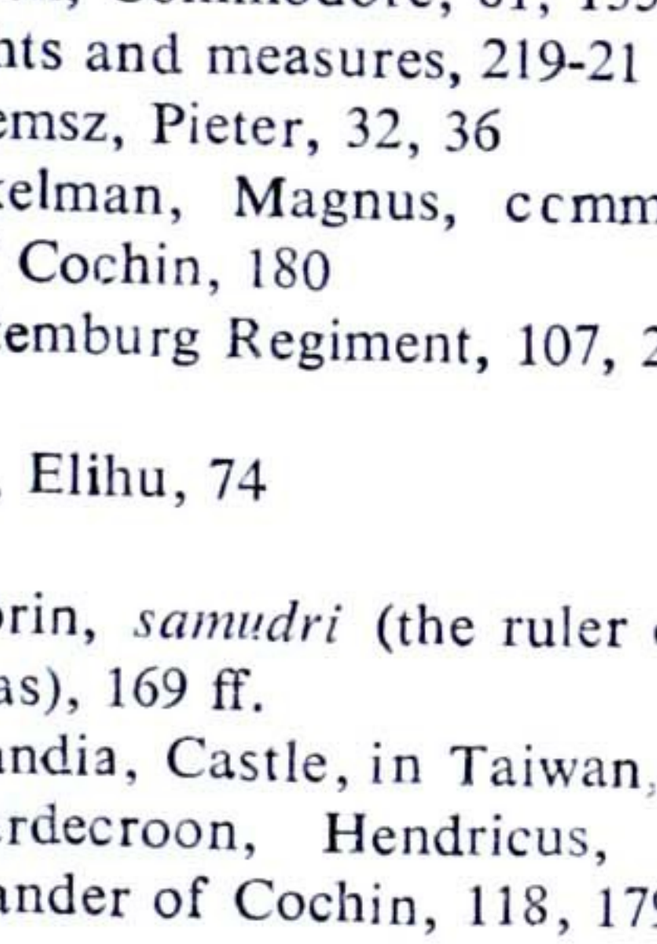
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