

THOMAS CURGENVEN

AND THREE NEPHEWS

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MADRAS:
PRINTED BY HOR & CO. AT THE "PREMIER" PRESS.

1930

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INTRODUCTION.

When Richard Curgenvén was born (1615) at Uny Lelant in the County of Cornwall, Queen Elizabeth had been dead only twelve years, and Shakespeare was still alive. The parish registers have enabled a genealogical table to be constructed, with Richard as common ancestor, from that day to this; but unfortunately, with the disappearance of the earlier registers, the traces of pre-Jacobean Curgenvens have vanished. Probably we should find little to relate of them except that they owned farms and lived and died in their native County. But though no Curgenvén has found himself in the limelight, it was no bad stock that produced men like Peter Curgenvén and his uncle Thomas.

Having no information to the contrary, we may conclude that Richard too spent his days on his farm called Beersheba in the little coastal parish of his birth, which lies across the estuary from Hayle. He had three sons, Thomas, William and John, born in 1644, 1645 and 1650 respectively. Of the two younger sons a number of descendants exist, my own branch of the family deriving from John, who was my grandfather with five 'greats' prefixed. We are concerned here with the eldest of Richard's sons, Thomas, and with three of Thomas's nephews, William's sons Thomas, Peter and John. The elder Thomas, whom to distinguish from the younger I may call Uncle Thomas,

married a sister of Thomas Pitt, who became Governor of Madras; and it was this connexion which secured for each of these three nephews—who were the junior-most of William's five sons—a footing in India. In those days male Curgenvens were given birth to more freely than now, and it must have been no small relief to find for them openings abroad. Uncle Thomas, himself childless, in his abounding good nature worked the Pitt connexion for all that it was worth. We get glimpses of the brothers in some of the contemporary records, in the correspondence of Thomas Pitt, and elsewhere. The incident of Peter's capture by the pirate Angria, and his long imprisonment at Gheria, has been more than once described in print, as well as upon his monumental tablet at Great Waltham, but the versions were so defective and difficult to reconcile that all but the bare outlines of his story remained obscure. Much of the information which follows, other than that obtained from the India Office records and the Scattergood papers, was got together by my father, John Brendon Curgenven, and upon his notes, in particular, I have relied for the family tree which it must have cost him much inquiry and labour to construct and which my nephew, Mr. William Jeffcock, has most usefully printed. My father left the results of his researches in manuscript, and it has seemed worth while to save them from the fate which usually overtakes such collections by putting all the available information into print. The odd coincidence that the three brothers preceded me to Madras by about two hundred years, and that, so far as I know, no Curgenven made his residence in that city during

the interval, creates a bond between us which makes it not inappropriate that I should perform this pious labour. I hope that members of the family, for whom alone the compilation is intended, will not find the fare too unappetizing by reason of the numerous extracts from old documents which I have allowed, as far as possible, to speak for themselves, resisting, for the most part, the temptation to fill in the gaps with guesswork. Some picture, I think, emerges of each of the four characters, but especially of the elder Thomas and of Peter. They were dependable fellows, endowed with a marked stability of character,—‘stayers’, as they say in America. The younger Thomas died early, and although he gets his word of praise from the pen of Tempest Ellingsworth we perhaps feel we know his widow better than himself. John had rather a knack of getting into scrapes and I am afraid a good deal of trouble came his way. Peace to his bones at Mocha!

THOMAS CURGENVEN, SENIOR.

A seventeenth century schoolmaster and divine. Born 1644, the year of the battle of Marston Moor. In 1662, he went up from the Exeter Grammar School, where he received his early education, to Exeter College, Oxford. Both School and College were of the foundation of Bishop Stapeldon, who made provision at Exeter College for eight scholars—'fellows' as they were originally called—from Devon and four from Cornwall. Thomas was assigned a Cornwall Scholarship, and it is probable that, but for the opportunity thus afforded, his father, who had two other sons, could not have supported him at the University. From the Register of Members of Exeter College I extract the entry :

Thomas Curgenven, poor scholar, 8th September 1662 to 12th December 1664. Matriculated 26th November 1662, age 18.

The remark is added 'Rector of Orcheston S. George, Wilts, 1690.'

It does not appear from this, nor have I discovered from any other source, that Thomas took a degree at Oxford, though he eventually entered holy orders. We hear of him next as Headmaster of the Free School at Blandford Forum, Dorsetshire. Thomas Creech, who published some translations from the classics into English verse, was born at Blandford in 1659 and must have attended the Free School under the Reverend Thomas, for, according to the D.N.B., 'His classical training was due to Thomas Curgenven,

Rector of Folke in Dorset, but best known as Master of Sherborne School, to whom Creech afterwards dedicated his translation of the seventh idyllium of Theocritus, and to whom he acknowledged his indebtedness for his instruction in the preface to his translation of Horace'. Creech was admitted a commoner of Wadham in 1675, became a Fellow of All Souls in 1683, followed the Reverend Thomas as Head Master of Sherborne in 1694-96, and committed suicide in 1700. I have in my possession a copy of his Theocritus. The verse, in heroic couplets, is typical of its age. The seventh idyll tells of a 'Musing Swain' named Lycidas; was it in Theocritus that Milton found the name? The dedication is to 'Mr. Thomas Curganven'. Idyllium XVI is dedicated 'To his very good friend John Dryden, Esq.'

Blandford Forum, an old market town, is situated upon the north bank of the Stour, and across the river lies the pretty little village of Blandford St. Mary, its church, parsonage and cottages standing secluded from the main road between Blandford and Poole. Up to the time of his death in 1672 the Rector of Blandford St. Mary was the Reverend John Pitt; and I infer that Thomas Curgenven came to Blandford before that date, because he eventually married the Reverend John Pitt's second daughter Dorothy. My father has noted the date of this marriage as 1680, which I have not succeeded in verifying. Hutchins (History of Dorset, Vol. IV) enters Dorothy in the Pitt family tree but omits to provide her with a husband. The present Rector, when I called on him

in his very pleasant rectory on 6th March 1928, was good enough to search the marriage registers but no entry rewarded us. It may well be that the wedding took place elsewhere, as it must certainly have been several years after John Pitt's death. Dorothy's baptism appeared under date 2nd August 1656, which would make her 24 at the time of a wedding in 1680.

To this marriage, as I have already said, were due the careers in the East, some account of which follows, of three of the elder Thomas's nephews. The Reverend John Pitt followed an obsolete fashion and had nine children. Thomas, his second son, had perforce to make his own way in the world, and sailed in some subordinate capacity in an East Indiaman. His subsequent career, as romantic and forceful in its way as Hastings' or Clive's, is narrated in Sir C. N. Dalton's 'Life of Thomas Pitt' and cannot be even summarized here. From sailor he became 'interloping' trader, from a defiant antagonist of the East India Company he ended, after a varied life at home and abroad, by becoming their Governor at Fort St. George, Madras; he amassed a fortune great for those days, and by no means solely derived from the famous Pitt diamond which, bought by the Duke of Orleans, then Regent for Louis XV, from Pitt for £135,000, was stolen during the Revolution, recovered and worn by Napoleon in the hilt of his sword, and is now, as the 'Regent Diamond', on view in the Louvre together with other Crown jewels. The two William Pitts, the most illustrious English Statesmen of the eighteenth century, were respectively

his grandson—son of his eldest son Robert—and great-grandson. Their fame has doubtless in some measure eclipsed his own.

During his absence in India, Thomas Pitt, whose wife, although in England, was a headstrong and extravagant lady, relied in no small degree upon the services of his brother-in-law Curgenvén for the management of his property and the upbringing of his children. 'It is clear from his correspondence', writes Dalton, 'that Pitt had a high regard for this gentleman, whom he consulted in after years in matters connected with the education of his children and made at one time their joint guardian with his cousin George Pitt, the head of the family'. The correspondence thus alluded to has been preserved in the British Museum.* I extract the following passages from it:—

I. THOMAS PITT TO HIS COUSIN JOHN PITT, DATED NOVEMBER 12TH, 1699. [John Pitt was Governor of the new English Company at Masulipatam. The relations between the cousins were not cordial: See Dalton.]

If your more weighty business will permitt, I should be glad to hear what is become of our Relations not having heard from one since I came out, but Brother Curgenvén.

II. THOMAS PITT TO THOMAS CURGENVEN, DATED FEBRUARY 20TH, 1700:—

Cozn. John Pitt is att Metchlepatam and as I hear very much down in the mouth for not being able to make his masters

* Addl. M.S.S. 22842-22852.

any return this year; he finds by this time he has not gott the start of me in honour nor Interest and till I do return I intreat the continuance of your care and assistance to my family, particularly the education of the two Boys; my hearty service to you, wishing us a happy meeting, I am

Your most affectionate Brother
and obliged humble servant,
THOMAS PITT.

III. THOMAS CURGENVEN TO THOMAS PITT, DATED FOLK,
DECEMBER 29TH, 1700:—

Dear Brother,

I have writ ye by Capt. Cradock that your letters to Mr. Tiffany were sent and not come to hand, this and last voyages, so that you must not blame me if anything is not done yet you would have done. I have sent it home to my sister [Pitt's wife] but she said she saw none

I doubt therewith comes another young fellow to the Fort and perhaps may bring this, whom I must beg you to let ship to Bengala to his brother my nephew.

Yours most affectionately,
THOMAS CURGENVEN.

The last paragraph will be found discussed when we come to Peter.

IV. THOMAS CURGENVEN TO THOMAS PITT, DATED FOLK,
SEPTEMBER 16TH, 1701:—

The Honourable Company is under disgrace for using bribery in a high degree to get into the House, and the Shepherds as the Chief Managers sent to the Tower expecting their doom,

Ridout * writ to my sister to tempt her with 600 guinnes for her interest in Old Saru for 2 honest gentlemen that were to be nameless, and therefore no doubt of the same Kidney. My sister was importuned by him to burn the letters, but I prevented that, and I hope they are reserved for your view.

I am sorry my kinsman [Thomas] hath neither your correspondence nor Commissions at any time, and is so far from advancing that through a groundless prejudice of the New President, he is deprived of the promised Subordinate, and everything else. It is common for men in the same posts to influence their brethren, and perhaps a soft touch of your [illegible] mollify the president.

The Blow in Italy is over, about the end of August, and the Germans have given a fatal Repulse to Villeroy and Catinat, who insulted their Camp. Admiral Rook is sailed with a Noble Navy towards the Streights, and Bembo † to the W. Indies with a New Governor for Jamaica, Brigadier Selwyn.

V. THOMAS PITT TO THOMAS CURGENVEN, DATED OCTOBER
22ND, 1701:—

I observe that you write of the two boys ‡ and earnestly entreat you that you would put 'em to some eminent school where they may be most improved in their Learning or else send 'em to Holland to the reformed Jesuit at Rotterdam where Robin was, whose name I have forgot. I would alsoe have 'em write excellent well, and learne Arithmatick, and Merchants Accompts, and all languages and Accomplishments that may render 'em acceptable in the World, and able to get their lively hood, for which I shall stand for noe charge My wife has writt me little or nothing though I positively ordered her. She writes me God knows what, that she is about purchases, but not a word of what some has cost, or others will cost. I have no manner of Accompt of what I left her or what it sold for, but all railing against one

* See Letter VI.

† Benbow.

‡ Pitt's two younger sons, Thomas, afterwards Earl of Londonderry, and John.

or other, which has very much exposed my busyness and done me a great deal of prejudice, soe that I find great inconvenience by trusting a woman with busyness, which I will avoid in the future

VI. JOHN RIDOUT * TO THOMAS PITT, DATED LONDON, MARCH 6TH, 1702 :—

.....I fear that unless you order Your Brother Curgenvén or some other friend to dispose of your money as you send it home, at your return you will not find as much as you may think you have. I do most heartily wish you and yours well, all your family is in good health here and your Lady and Cousin Essex † have been in Town all this winter. Your Brother Curgenvén I pass every week. I take him to be a very honest just man, and heartily for your interest.

VII. THOMAS CURGENVEN TO THOMAS PITT, DATED FOLK, NOVEMBER 20TH, 1702 :—

To

The Hon'ble Thomas Pitt, Esq.,

Governor of Fort St. George in E. India,

pr. Capt. Cradock.

Dear Brother,

In my last by the ship in December 1701 (which I left with Mr. Ridout to Bridport) I advised you that your letter never came to hand, and my sister said she received none from me, only that in which you mentioned my kinsman's arrival, the death of Gould and your intentions to remit his small effects over by the Bedford. At the arrival of this year's ships I expected a letter but none is come, so that if there be fowle play in detaining, you cannot blame me if any of your desires are not fulfilled.

Gould's widdow (who is left in mean circumstances) desires to know how her husband's small Bale of Goods came to be yours;

* Pitt's Agent.

† Daughter.

for Mr. Ongly hath sold them for your account and paid your Lady the money. I presume you had given me satisfaction in this matter in the last letter, but pray to content the widdow, and my Nephew of Bengall who lent him money to invest these goods (which as Mr. Ridout said were 59 pieces of Muslen). I beg a particular Accompt from you pr. next.

It is a great pity that your son * is not satisfied with that profitable post in which you have got him without hankering after England with some passion, as I find by his letters to his Mother, but I hope that fit is over.

The campeign hath been glorious this year on the confederate side, and Chattan Renaalfo Squadron with the flota reduced to Ashes at Vigo in Gallicia, and the Rich cargo secured to the English and Dutch, as you will see by the enclosed print. A fortunate step to the humbling the Gallician Monarch.

The P. of Bavaria hath infamously defended the Emperor's Confederates, but it makes for us, for as much as all the Estates of the Empire, who before inclined to neutrality, have since unanimously declared against France, Spain and their Adherents, and are arming vigorously to bring that Renegade P. to reason.

The E. of Sunderland is box'd up in earth. If anything of Moment happens between this and the ship's going expect it in a postscript.

from Sr. Yr. Most Affectionate Bror.

and Humble Servant,

T.C.

There are newly made those promotions to Honour. The E. of Marlborough made Duke of the same, Godolphin made E. of Bristol and Rochester and Normanby to be Duk'd also.

The little gentlemen are coming to St. Mas with me.

VIII. THOMAS PITT TO THOMAS CURGENVEN, DATED FEBRUARY 2ND, 1703 :—

Dear Brother,

Inclosed comes a copy of what I wrote you by my son, which I hope arrived safe to you, since which 'tis confirmed to us.

* Robert.

Ye news of the Warr, and reported here will speedily be in these seas a strong Squadron of French and Portuguese Men of Warr.

I wrote your nephew as I advised and here return you his answer, by which I leave you to Judge of him, so forbear to write more on the subject.

I hope you continue your care of my Boys, which Obligation I shall always acknowledge, as well as all others, so with my service to you and all our friends.

I am,
Dear Brother,
Your most affectionate Brother and
humble servant,
THOS. PITT.

IX. THOMAS PITT TO HIS SON ROBERT PITT, DATED SEPTEMBER 17TH, 1703 :—

.....My love to your Mother, to whom I charge you all to be very Dutyfull, and my blessing to you all, and I hope you'll follow my Advices to you of Sticking close to your Studies, and take those good courses I have soe often recommended to you, which will be advantageous to your selfe and a comfort to me. My service to Brother Curgenvén, whose Nephew came up and marry'd Mrs. Dobyns and carry'd her to Bengall. I hope you remember the advice likewise which I gave you in such affairs, for I am afraid he will repent it att leasure.....

X. THOMAS PITT TO THOMAS CURGENVEN, DATED DECEMBER 19TH, 1704 :—

.....Your niece arrived well here and was welcome to me, staying here about a month, and then proceeded to Bengall on the same ship. She behaved herself extraordinary well and reputable but poor girl dy'd soon after her arrival in Bengall.

I have been unable to discover who this lady is. The Court Book under date 22nd December 1703 contains an entry,

On the petition of Anne Curganden it is ordered that she be permitted to take her passage in one of the Company's ships to the Bay of Bengall, paying her passage and permission.

It looks as if Anne was a sister of the three brothers, and went out to join Thomas in Calcutta. In the next following letter Pitt apparently refers to the above letter of December 19th as conveying the news of her death, if we can assume that he wrote 'nephew' in mistake for 'niece'.

XI. THOMAS PITT TO THOMAS CURGENVEN, DATED MARCH 10TH, 1705 :—

Dear Brother,

I wrote you the 19th December last by the Duchess, who sailed not hence till February, when I advised you of your Nephew's death in Bengall, and do now, of your nephew Thomas, who dy'd the 25th of December, and as reported, his affairs involved by over-trading himself. The other two brothers are at Acheen and speedily expected here, to whom I will give my utmost assistance, as also their brother's affairs, to extricate them out of any trouble. This comes by the Martha, a late ship, so 'tis doubtful whether she will safe save her passage, which is the reason I sent not copies of my last. My hearty love and service to yourself and all friends.

I am,
Dear Brother,
Your most affectionate Brother,
THOS. PITT.

XII. THOMAS PITT TO THOMAS CURGENVEN, DATED DECEMBER 20TH, 1707:—

I received no letter from you by this year's shipping, so have little to say more than confirm what I wrote you last year, and wish I could hear that my daughters were well married, and if augmenting their fortune one or two thousand pounds will contribute thereto, I shall not be unwilling to give it.....

Thomas Pitt sailed for England in the *Heathcott* on 21st October 1709.

The Librarian of Sherborne School has kindly allowed me to see three letters, preserved in original, relating to Thomas Curgenven's candidature for the Headmastership. First in order of date is a recommendation by Lord Bristol.

SHERBORN LODG, 1st August 1683.

Gentlemen,

Understanding that you have appointed a meeting this day to regulate matters relating to the Free School of Sherborn I have thought fitt to send this to put you in mind of what the Bishop of Bristol lately recommended to me and some of you as appears by a writing under his Lordship's hand and seal, viz. That you speedily give notice to Mr. Goodenough that he leave the said school at Michaelmas next, and that you chuse a Loyal man in his place, for that being a Royal foundation and so well endowed, It were pitty any but a Loyal man should enjoy it and have the benefit of it, which certainly was the Intention of the Royal founder. And Mr. Goodenough by his siding and associating himself with dissenters and factious people (not to mention his relations in the plott* with whom doubtlesse he holds a correspondence) that he cannot be thought by any reasonable man a fitt person to hold any longer the place of master of the said school. And therefore If you are not præengaged, I have thought fitt to recommend to

* Perhaps the Rye House Plot.

Worthy Gentlemen.

I have some reason to believe at present (by the recommendation of some worthy men for whom I have a great veneration) I may be in it thought to succeed at Master of y^e Schole. If so I gratefully respect y^r kind intentions; and am ready to wait on you for a further conference as you shall appoint. It is not (Blessed be God) a necessity for me that makes me hungry after more, nor want of kindness that makes me undaunted. And as to the latter I must always own that the Genius of Blandford hath been still charming to me. So that to make me remove, profit is not the main inducement, but the assurance the I have of a Loyall and free conference among you, as well as a unanimous concurrence to my endeavours to gain a number to that Nursey, whose fame for some years hath been loud for nothing but Salary. As to my Stipulation, to omit all other Arguments, the tender respect I must have to the honour of those persons y^e are engaged for me, must persuade, that nothing shall be wanting on my part towards a vigorous and faithfull discharge of all that can be expected from y^e

Blanford: Aug: 13th 1683. The Most Obliged Servant
Tho: Curgenven:

your choice Mr. Curgenven of Blandford, whose fitness for the place is well known, by the many able schollars he has sent to the university.

And so leaving these things to your consideration, I rest,

Gentlemen,

Your Affectionate friend,

• BRISTOL.

Thomas's own application 'To the Worthy Governors off the Free Schole of Sherburn', which I reproduce here in facsimile, runs as follows:—

Worthy Gentlemen,

I have some reason to believe that at present (by the recommendation of some worthy men for whom I have a great veneration) I may be in your thoughts to succeed as Master of your Schole. If so I gratefully respect your kind intentions, and am ready to wait on you for a further conference as you shall appoint. It is not (Blessed be God) a necessitous storehouse that makes me hungry after more, nor want of kindness that makes me uneasy; And as to the latter I must allways own that the Genius of Blandford hath been still charming to me. So that to make me remove, profit is not the main inducement, but the assurance that I have a Loyall and Free conversation among you, as well as a unanimous concurrence with my endeavours to gain a number to that Nursery, whose fame for some years hath been loud for nothing but salary. As to my stipulation, to omitt all other Arguments, the tender respect that I must have to the honour of those persons that are engaged for me, must persuade, that nothing shall be wanting on my part towards a vigorous and faithful discharge of all that can be expected from you.

Most obliged servant,

THO: CURGENVEN.

Blandford, August 18th, 1688.

Lord Bristol sent a reminder to the Governors :—

SHERBORN LODG, 8th Octob. 83.

Gentlemen,

I have thought fit by this to mind you of a former recommendation I made you of one Curgenvén to succeed in the school. The great character which the Bishops of Gloucester and Bristol, and many other Gentlemen gave of this gentleman unto me Induced me to appear on his behalf. What you do for him will be taken very kindly from you by,

Srs.

Your Affectionate friend,

BRISTOL.

My next record is an extract from a manuscript history of Sherborne School, compiled about 1782 :—

1683.—Mr. Thomas Curgenvén from Blandford was elected Master, and then gave Bond, wherein he subjected himself to the Penalty of £400 payable to the Governors within fourteen Days after he was instituted and inducted into any Vicarage or Rectory whilst he was a Schoolmaster.

Thus it appears [comments the historian] it was then understood both by Mr. Curgenvén and by the Governors to be the true Intent and Meaning of the Statutes, that the Schoolmaster's Diligence and care should not be diverted from the school by means of his holding any Vicarage or Rectory. It is Pity this Precedent should have been discontinued, and I think it would be for the Benefit of the School to restore it to its primitive State and Force. Mr. Curgenvén was a Man of Eminence in his Station and the School was then in good Esteem.

The writer of this history, the Librarian tells me, was a Governor of the School whose purpose in compiling it was to attack a pluralist Headmaster; and an

odd commentary upon the passage extracted is the fact, which I discovered from the Exeter College Register quoted above, that Thomas Curgenvén held the living of Orcheston St. George; following this up, I obtained information from the present Rector of that Parish that his name appears as Rector from 1690 to 1694 in a list placed in the porch of the Church. The Rector writes, 'I do not think there can be any doubt that he was Rector, and the explanation of his being also Headmaster of Sherborne School is probably due to the vicious system of plurality which obtained in those and later days. No doubt he put a curate in to do the work, and collared the income himself!' Did this come to the ears of the Governors, and did he forfeit the £400?

One other document relating to this period, which I have seen in the original, is a claim by Thomas for the expenses of his transfer from Blandford to Sherborne :—

*Journeys taken and expenses therein, and otherwise,
in Order to my Remove.*

First a journey taken by my Selfe, and a man I hired for that purpose, when I was first elected.

2. A journey with Mr. Vaughan, in order to my better settlement, for which I was at the charge of 2 horses hire, &c.

3. A journey, when I came my selfe, to make preparation for the better the reception of my wife and other company, wherein I was at the charge of 5 horses for 4 dayes, and a man also, for conveyance of some bedding, &c.

4. My last journey when I fetched my wife, family and goods and was enforced to be absent and at charges for 2 horses 9 dayes, and for 2 more 6 dayes.

5. Payd the wayatmen (?) and William Daniel to assist them and myself (?) to J Dasby for horse hire £7-16s.

6. Left yet behinde as many chairs and stools as will make 8 horse ladings.

Some few goods yet at Blandford.

In 1694, Thomas Curgenvén resigned the Head-mastership on being appointed to the living of Folke, Dorset.

We get one further glimpse of the Rev. Thomas from the records of the S.P.C.K., * which had been founded on 8th March, 1699. Under date 2nd May 1700 is the entry :

Agreed that Mr. Curgenvén, of Folk, near Sherburn, be the corresponding Member for Dorsetshire in the room of Mr. Wright.

N.B.—Mr. Curgenvén writt but once to the Society and then seemed to decline the correspondence.

It looks as if corresponding Members^o were not easily come by. However under 9 May we read :

A letter from Curgenvén, the correspondent for Dorsetshire, read, accepting the correspondence.

An abstract of this letter, the original of which, preserved at the S.P.C.K. headquarters, Northumberland Avenue, I have inspected, runs as follows :

Mr. Tho. Curgenvén, from Folk, near Shirburn, Dorset, to Mr. Shorte, May 1st, 1700. Accepts ye correspondence, observes that for want of a pious application to catechizing, ye Deists etc. undermine our flocks. That every sect retains Discipline, whilst the Established and best Church is left precarious to an astonishment; and that concubinage is openly maintained particularly in ye Diocess of Wilts. That correction for practical Atheism is

the general cry, ye Church wanting no Champions for Doctrine and instruction. He desires to hear of some matters of fact, wherein a triumph has been gained over any great Patrons of Vice.*

A man of strict principle and earnest endeavour, I think we may say, in his parochial functions as in his family relations. He remained Rector of Folke until his death on 16th Dec. 1712, aged 68. The present Rector informs me that he can find no tomb or monument to him. His wife Dorothy must have predeceased him, for we find Thomas Pitt writing to his son Robert in Jan. 1708,† 'I would desire you to have some regard to your uncle and aunt Willis. She is the only sister I have alive.' It appears from a letter of Robert's ‡ in Jan. 1708, that Thomas Curgenvén "having fallen blind" was incapable of further undertaking the guardianship of Pitt's family. Old, blind, widowed,—it is not a very comforting impression we get of his closing years.

* See 'A chapter in English Church History: being the Minutes of the S.P.C.K., 1698-1704'. Rev. E. McClure, 1888.

† Dalton, p. 421.

‡ Ibid, p. 422.

THOMAS CURGENVEN, JUNIOR.

Third son of William Curgenvén of Beersheba.
Born 1678.

1696.—On 17th April the entry occurs in the Court Book of the East India Company :

Thomas Curgenvén recommended by Captain John Pitts to be considered for a factor.

And on 28rd December,

Mr. Thomas Curgenvén, recommended by Capt. Thomas Pitts, to be their Factor in India, for five years, at a salary of fifteen pounds per annum.

The two Pitt cousins, who later on were to fall out, also stood surety for the young man :

18th January 1696/7. Securities approved for Thomas Curgenvén : Thomas Pitt of Stratford, Essex ; John Pitt of London, Merchant.

1697.—Thomas sailed in the *Tavistock*, arriving at Fort St. George on 21st November, 1697. The date is given in a list of persons in the service of the Company, compiled in January, 1698, and printed in the Diary and Consultation Book of Fort St. George for 1697. The same book has the entry :

Att a Consultation
Present

Thursday
2nd [Dec. 1697]

[Names of eight Members of Council]

The Rt. Hon'ble Comps. servants and free merchants who came out upon ship Tavestocke being sent for produced their Indentures.

* * * * *
Thomas Curgenvén, 15th January 1696/7, for 5 years at £15 per annum.*

1698.—An act of piracy which soon after his arrival the young Factor must have heard all about and with the consequences of which he happened to be connected, is thus related in a letter from Fort St. George to the Dutch Governor at Negapatam (whose name, oddly enough, was Lawrence Pitt).

On the 5th inst. [Jan. 1698] a ship came into this road, piloted by one William Willock an Englishman, who gives us the following account of himself and the said ship. That in January last being master of a free ship [the *Satisfaction*] belonging to the English of Bengall he was in his passage from thence for Suratt, taken by two pirate ships near Cape Comorine, who taking out what they thought convenient sunk his ship, and detained him Prisoner aboard one of them, which in June last in the streights of Malacca took this ship [i.e. the ship which Willock brought to Madras] and (dismissing the merchants Passengers) carried her with them to the Island of Negrais where after they had careened and repaired their own ship with the help of this and her stores departed from Negrais on the 22nd December last, first permitting the said Willocks and severall other Prisoners of divers Nations which they had taken out of severall ships and vessells embarke in this ship and caused her to sail att the same time that they sailed themselves. Pilott finding the winds favourable for..... directed his course hither, and upon his arrivall declared to us very honestly that he pretends no claim unto the ship or Cargo; though given him by the Pirate, but offered to deliver them into our hands, that they may bee preserved for the right owners, whom he hath been informed is a Chinese who passeth under the name of the Captain of the Chinese of Japarra, whose son he saith was aboard the ship when taken, and being dismissed by the Pirates went with others to Acheen..... The Pilott further acquaints us that ye. ship had Dutch Colours and a Dutch

* Diary and Consultation Book, 1697, p. 141.

Passe when taken, but doth not remember either the name of the ship nor of the owner mentioned in the said Passe.....

They go on to say that since there is reason to believe that the ship belongs to some persons 'under the Government or Protection of the Rt. Hon'ble Netherlands East India Company' they are willing, upon the ownership being established, to give her up, and meanwhile have taken due care for the preservation of ship and cargo.*

The nature of the precautions taken to safeguard the vessel and cargo appears from a Consultation held at Fort St. George on 6th January 1698.†

The circumstances of this extraordinary case being considered, The Sea Customer and Paymaster are ordered to take care of the Ship and Cargo, observing the following directions:—

* * * * *

That tomorrow morning Mr. Curganven and the Gunner go aboard the ship with Mr. Willock with the following orders, Vizt.

[Follows a series of instructions for securing the cargo, maintaining the Lascars, etc.]

From an earlier Consultation Minute, dated 23rd May 1697, it appears that the first news of the capture and sinking of the *Satisfaction* to reach Fort St. George was derived from a member of that ship's crew, one Gregora de Cruz, who reported that when he was aboard the pirate vessel they discoursed that they intended to stay near Cape Comorin till they had taken the *George* and all other ships bound from Surat for Bengal, and then were to sail for that hornet's nest of pirates, Madagascar. Here we must drop the story.

* Letters from Fort St. George, 1698, No. 9.

† Diary and Consultation Book, 1697, p. 156.

Immediately after this incident, Thomas was ordered to go on to Bengal in the *Tavistock* :

[6—1—1698]

The Rt. Hon'ble Company having ordered a supply of Factors for Bengall, It is ordered that the following persons proceed thither on ship *Tavestocke* :—

Thomas Curganven—Factor.*

The letter accompanying the ship says :

Fort St. George, 17th Jan. 1698.

To

The Rt. Worpll. Charles Eyre,
Agent &Ca., Council of Bengall.

This comes by ship *Tavestock*, Capt. Samuell Jones
Commandr.....

By ship *Tavestock* wee have sent the following Persons servants of the Rt. H. Company unto whom is paid Pags. 6 each for their Provisions, because the voyage may bee longer than in the proper season, viz.†

Mr. Thomas Curganven.....Factor.

The *Tavistock* was 'detained by contrary winds and lay in sight many days after her despatch.' She carried a quantity of treasure, and when the rupees were counted at Calcutta, a shortage was discovered, and Thomas was called upon to certify.

Fort St. George to Bengal, dated 18—5—98.

* * * * *

Wee received your Attestation signed by Messrs. Russell, Curganven and Lloyd concerning the want of 184 rupees found

* Diary and Consultation Book, 1697, p. 156.

† Letters from Fort St. George, 1698, No. 10.

short in Chests No. 1, 18 and 19 per ship Tavestock. Wee return you the copy of an attestation by the Warehousekeeper signed..... who saw the rupees put into the (.....) to determine which of the attestation (.....) false.

1700.—Pitt, now Governor, was not long in finding an opening for Thomas by associating him with John Beard, who in 1701 became President of the Council of Fort William and was no doubt already a personage in the settlement. On 2nd April 1700 Pitt writes to Beard* :—

I hope you'll take it not amiss that I have joyn'd my kinsman Curgenvin in Commission with you, it is for his uncle's sake, to whom I am extremely obliged, who is a very worthy man and as true a friend as is to be found in this world.

There ensued a constant interchange of letters between Pitt and Thomas, largely devoted to the business which Thomas and Beard were transacting on Pitt's behalf. Unfortunately Thomas's contributions to this correspondence are wanting. On the same date as the letter quoted above, Pitt writes that he has sent them a parcel of *Tutenay Chauk*, whatever that may be, to sell,

Ye. Commission to be divided, 3 per cent to John Beard Esq., and 2 per cent to Mr. Thos. Curgenvin;

and a third letter, to Thomas himself, imparts some good advice :

Remember to avoid paying 12 per cent for money to trade with, for I know no trade yt. will bear yt. Interest. I wish you all health and prosperity and am

Sr. your assured friend to serve you
THO. PITT.

* This letter and other letters quoted are preserved in the Bri. Museum as Additl. M.S.S. 22842 to 22852.

On 4th May, Pitt writes sarcastically to Thomas :

You seem to be very busy for that you are always very short in your letters.

On May 7th to send him

beans and pease, some good Goats and Geese, for we have a barren place. I have now introduced you to commission with Mr. Beard and shall by degrees increase it.

And again on June 30th,

Pray if you can, send me some Goats and Geese by the Advice Frigate, and some Wax candles.

To conclude with the Goats and Geese, on November 8th, 1702, Pitt writes :

I thank you for the Geese and Goats sent me by the Hampshire, tho' but 12 of the former came to my hands, the rest dy'd aboard.

Sometime in 1702 the partnership between Thomas and Beard came to an end. Beard continued to sell Pitt's stuff on commission and Thomas worked independently of them. Pitt refers in a letter to him to his 'Manilha adventure'. Thomas seems to have made some complaint to his uncle during the course of 1701 that Pitt was neglecting him, which evoked Uncle Thomas' observations in his letter to Pitt dated 16th September 1701.* Pitt took offence at this and wrote to Thomas, Junior, on 24th September 1702 :

I received a letter from your Uncle pr. the Colchester in which was the two paragraphs I now send you in a paper apart.

* See Letter No. 19, p. 8 supra.



V2E,8y7K68

N30

I suppose they are grounded from somewhat that you wrote, the reasons thereof I desire to know, that so I may justify myself, for I have reason to fear you have [not] made such due representations of my repeated kindnesses to you as I have justly deserved. At this time I have no more to add, but am

Sr. Your humble servant,
THO. PITT.

Pitt had anything but a mild temper, and this letter helps to explain how the rupture in business relations came about. In his letter of 2nd February 1703 to Uncle Thomas* he evidently refers to this affair.

Meanwhile, in December 1701, we get a glimpse of Thomas engaged upon his official, as distinct from his private, labours, and formally writing to Pitt as Governor and President of the Council.

Extract of a letter from the President and Council at Calcutta to Kasimbazar, dated Fort William, 23rd December 1701:

Just as we were sending Mr. Curgenven, the 20th Instant for Ballasore Road on the *Charles and Betty* Sloop, to dispatch the *Bedford*, had notice of the salt petre being near Hugly and therefore detained him in hopes to get enough petre to send the *William* smack away tomorrow or next day.†

To the Honble Thomas Pitt Esqr.,
President and Governour &ca. Council
(at Fort St. George).

Sirs,

In pursuance to my orders from the Honble. John Beard Esqr., President &ca. Council, dated in Calcutta the 24th Instant, I have delivered Captain John Hudson, Commander of Ship

* Letter No. VIII.

† Factory Records, Calcutta, Vol. VIII.

Bedford, his dispatch, on his signing the bills of lading, one of which comes here inclos'd.

The rice I have incerted in the bills of lading, being 500 baggs, but have no account of the quantity, cost or charges, so 'tis omitted in the Invoice. I humbly refer your Honr. &ca. to the President and Councils advice in that matter and remain

• Honble, Sir &ca.

Your most obedient humble servant,
THOMAS CURGENVEN.

Ballasore Road

on board ship *Bedford*.

the 30th December 1701.*

The next two records relate to a bill of exchange drawn in London in Thomas' favour:—

Despatch from the Company to Fort St. George, London, March 6, 1702.

We have since the *Wentworth's* dispatch drawn on our President & Council on the Bay the following Bills of Exchange, vizt. One for two Thousand four hundred [seventy] Seven Rupees six annas two thirds payable to Mr. Thomas Curgenven or..... value received of Mr. William Thorowgood.....†

Consultation at Calcutta 14th December 1702.

Mr. Thomas Curgenven producing a bill of exchange for two thousand four hundred seventy and seven rupees six annas and eight pice drawn upon us from England by Order of our Rt. Honble. Masters.

Agreed that it be paid him.‡

1703.—My next series of extracts relates to Thomas' marriage to Rachel, widow of Henry Dobyns,

* Factory Records, Calcutta, Vol. VIII.

† Despatches from England, 1701-2, p. 29.

‡ Factory Records, Calcutta, Vol. IV.

which was performed at St. Mary's Church, Fort St. George, on 2nd June 1703. Dobyons had arrived in Madras on 19th February, 1697, as a Factor, and was appointed Assistant to the Secretary. He married a Mrs. Rachel Baker in circumstances which Mrs. Penny, in her 'History of Fort St. George', narrates as follows (I have not verified her facts, and she seems to be wrong in describing him as a Free Merchant):—

He [Dobyons] came out as a free merchant to Fort St. George.....He was not in the Company's service, yet it was thought necessary to enquire into the facts of his private life. Report said that he had been married to a Mrs. Rachel Baker by a Roman Catholic priest. The rules made by Master * against such marriages were still in force, and Dobyons was sent for and examined by the Governor and Council. He resented their conduct and at first refused to give any information, but thinking better of it, he produced two witnesses, Mr. John Sewell and Mrs. Anne Masters, who testified to the validity of the marriage. He refused to give the name of the officiating priest, however, and it was solemnly ruled that he should not be allowed to live with his wife. The marriage register book of St. Mary's tells the sequel of the story by recording the union of Henry Dobyons with Rachel Baker according to the anglican rites, and later on the name appears in the baptismal register. But Dobyons did not long enjoy his conjugal bliss; he died a few years after his marriage, and his widow took a third husband named Thomas Curgenvén.

Thomas no doubt made the acquaintance of the couple when he was in Madras in 1697-8. Pitt tells him of Dobyons's death in a letter, dated 22nd July 1701, and writes to the father, William Dobyons of Lincoln's Inn, who was Pitt's Attorney, on 18th October 1701:—

I am heartily sorry I must write you the ill news of your son, who dy'd suddenly on the 7th of June last; he was grown

* Streynsham Master, Governor of Fort St. George, 1678-1681.

very fat and had been a little out of order, and in the morning was abroad in the garden for the air and dy'd at night. He has left two sons and his wife with child, who is since delivered of a daughter.

So Thomas took on a family of three. Dobyons, senior, is not going to be saddled with them, writing rather unctuously to Pitt:

I do not think fit to send for the children over, but desire that they may be bred there in knowledge and good manners, and, above all, in the fear of God, and I shall be glad to hear the mother does her part towards it.

On 17th September 1703 Pitt, writing to his son Robert in England, lets us know what he thinks of the match: See letter No. IX above, where he fears that Thomas will 'repent it att leasure.'

Fort William, in a despatch, dated 15th February 1703, advises Fort St. George of Thomas's trip to Madras: .

Mr. Thomas Curgenvén desired leave this vacation time to voyage to Fort St. George to visit the Govr. and some friends there, which was assented unto, considering his industry in discharging his trust as Bookekeepers assistant, promising withall to return by the *Mary* smack, or on the first conveyance, which wee expect he will, since wee shall have occasion for him on settling the Subordinations if the *Husbolhoocum* and our Masters ship arrives.

Thomas, back at Fort William with his newly-acquired bride (the children were left in Madras), resumes his mercantile exertions. The Scattergood papers afford us two letters from him to Mr. Francis Forbes, a Bombay merchant, and an extract from a letter, written at sea, from a Mr. Tempest Ellingsworth

I suppose they are grounded from somewhat that you wrote, the reasons thereof I desire to know, that so I may justify myself, for I have reason to fear you have [not] made such due representations of my repeated kindnesses to you as I have justly deserved. At this time I have no more to add, but am

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* Factory Records, Calcutta, Vol. VIII.

† Despatches from England, 1701-2, p. 29.

‡ Factory Records, Calcutta, Vol. IV.

to the same gentleman. The last contains a gratifying appreciation of Thomas's character and abilities :

Mr. Francis Forbes

Sir,

I have received yours dated the 23rd August last and your cotten, according to your advice. The returns shall come by the same conveyance according to order but that you mention by Captain Lott I can have no account off. I sent severall times to him to send your letter and to lett me know how he had disposed of your effects (for I was not upon the place at his arrivall), but I had no satisfactory answer, and as he is a person intrusted by you he give him no farther trouble.

I am a stranger to the Trade of your coast; however have sent you a small consignment; when I am better informd what will answer expectation I shall make some addition as there is a conveyance. In the interim

I am Sir

Your most humble servant

THOMAS CURGENVEN:

Fort William, 7th October 1708.

(Addressed) To Mr. Francis Forbes, Merchant in Bombay.

(Endorsed) Recd. per Capt. Lott, April the 12, 1704.

(Seal of arms—quarterly 1 and 4.) *

Mr. Francis Forbes

Sir,

I have dispos'd of your Cotton, which made here 11 md. 5 Seer Buzzar wyt, at 7r. 8a. per maund, which is rupees 88. 7. The returnes I designe per Captain Hawse according to your order.

I am Sir

Yours most humble

THOMAS CURGENVEN.†

Fort. Wm.

25th Novr. 1708.

* Scattergood Papers, III, 211-12.

† Scattergood Papers, III, 224.

P.S. Here is great apprehension of troubles from the Government.

Idem T. C.

(Addressed)

To Mr. Francis Forbes *

Merchant

In Bombay.

(Endorsed)

Recd. the 4th Aprill 1704.*

[Extract of a letter from Tempest Ellingsworth to Francis Forbes, dated "*Blessing*, 2 Leagues to the Southward of Callicutt roade," 8 April 1704.]

Mr. Curgenven gives his service to you and saith he would very gladly be concerned 3 or 4 Thousand Rupees with you in a small Vessell, and saith that he could as soone dispatch a ship as most in Bengall, and have goods att as cheape a rate. He is reputed to be a very honest man, and an expert Merchant, also a great Treader. I have heard severall in Bengall say that he could dispatch a ship as soone and sooner then the President, which I believe he could, and have goods att a cheaper rate, for there are every yeare a great many ships consigned to the President, all of which he trusts to the Broaker who is reputed to be a great rogue, also very slow in Bussnis, which wee found. The Cotton you sent to him by Mr. Lott he sent to demand it but Lott sent him word it was dammaged and rotten and he had disposed of it and would be accountable to you for it. He sent to spake with him but he would not goe, onely sent his Gunner with the same answer as before. Mr. Curgenven would have had him before the President but he knew Lott could make no satisfaction and that you could better deale with him att Bombay.*

[Note. Ellingsworth had sailed from Bengal in Jan. 1704].

* Scattergood Papers, III, 204-5.

1704.—About this period, the wasteful rivalry between the Old and the New East India Companies had become acute, and was put an end to by an agreement to amalgamate. Some of the servants of either company were allowed—or compelled—to fend for themselves as free merchants, others were kept on in the service of what was called The United Council. Thomas was among those so chosen :

The United Council's Service.

February 16th [1704]. They take into the service of the United Council eight of the Old and eight of the New Company's servants—

Old Company's Servants

Thomas Curgenvén

* * * * *

Next, an example of how Thomas was occupied :
1704.

[Extract of a letter from Fort William, Bengal, to Fort St. George, Madras, dated 9 March 1703/4.]

Mr. Thomas Curgenvén is ordered down to Rogues River to dispatch this ship (*Duchess*).*

In October Thomas makes a fruitless appeal for a rise of pay,—fruitless because whatever the Company at home decided he was dead before their pleasure was known :

An application is made by Mr. Thos. Curgenvén, who asks that he may have the salary of £40 per annum. He is only allowed a salary of £30 per annum as a junior merchant until advice has been taken of the Company at home as to what they wish their men to receive.

* * * * *

* Factory Records, Fort St. George, Vol. XXXV.

Thomas died at Fort William on Christmas Day, 1704. There are several references to the event in Pitt's letters,—see for instance his letter to Uncle Thomas of 10th March 1705,* where he conveys a gloomy impression of the nephew's finances, due to 'over-trading himself'. To William Dobyns he writes on the same day in the same strain :

.....few days past we had ye ill news from Bengall of Mr. Curgenvén's death, who married your daughter-in-law who, as 'tis said, have lately met with misfortunes in trade, so I fear has left his widow but in poor circumstances.

And on September 27 to the same

I know not how to answer every particular clause relating to your son's affairs, unless Mrs. Curgenvén was here, whom I expect in a little time, her husband dying soon after I wrote you by last ship.....

On 16th January 1706 to the same

I have received a letter from your daughter Curgenvén, who says she has received a letter from you, and being going, as I hear, to marry again, she has deferred her coming hither, and sent for the children down to her, who shall go by the first conveyance.

Mrs. Rachel, the account of whose tussle with John Curgenvén over Thomas's effects I give under *John*, found a fourth (or it may be a fifth or a sixth) husband in one Hoskins, if I am right in supposing her to be the Rachel Hoskins who received a legacy from Peter.

Two further entries in the Bengal records relate to poor Thomas. One refers to a posthumous payment of salary to Mr. Thorowgood, whom we have encountered before as the drawer of a bill of exchange :

* Letter XI.

[Extract of a letter from Bengal to the Court of Directors, dated Calcutta, 10 January 1704/5] *

Account Sallary payable in England to the Servants taken in to the United Service comes inclosed.....

Thos. Curgenven 101: 11: 11 (payable to)

Mr. Thorowgood.

The other record is concerned with what surely ought to have been a time-barred claim arising out of a brimstone transaction:

Consultation at Fort William 5 January 1712/18 †

Mr. Matthew Empson late of Fort St. George, Merchant, having in the year 1702 consigned 40 candys of Brimstone to Messrs. Ralph Sheldon and Thomas Curgenven to be disposed off by them for his account of which no account has hitherto been given, the case was brought before us and submitted to our determination, and it being proov'd by the testimony of Mr. William Soam that Mr. Curgenven disposed of a part of it to the amount of 600 Rs., and all the remainder was, after Mr. Curgenvens death, in Mr. Ralph Sheldons possession, of which, by Mr. William Soams testimony, he also appears to have sold the amount of 800 Rs., but whether all was sold for that money or that any of the Brimstone remained to Mr. Sheldon afterwards is doubtfull.

We therefore determine and appoint that Mr. Sheldons trustees pay Rs. 800 for what he sold to Mr. Charles Boon who has authority from Mrs. Elizabeth Empson, widow of Mr. Matthew Empson to receive it; but for the Rs. 600 disposed of by Mr. Curgenven, Mr. Boon is to demand that summ from Mr. Curgenvens executors and out of his estate.

* Factory Record, Calcutta, Vol. VIII.

† Bengal Public Consultations, Vol. II.

PETER CURGENVEN.

Fourth son of William Curgenven of Beersheba.
Born 1682.

1701.—Peter arrived at Fort St. George, Madras. We have his own authority for the year, in a petition to be set forth hereafter. In Letter No. III of the Pitt—Curgenven correspondence, his uncle writes, on December 29, 1700:

I doubt therewith comes another young fellow to the Fort and perhaps may bring this, whom I must beg you to let ship to Bengala to his brother my nephew.

On 30th June, 1701, Pitt, writing to Thomas Curgenven, junior, already at Fort William, says that he sends the letter by 'Your brother who came out a soldier on the *Bedford*.....I wonder yr. uncle would not send him out under better circumstances.'

Since the young man referred to in these letters is not named, and we do not know when or how John, the third brother, sailed to India, it is possible that the references are to him and not to Peter, though the dates make it probable that Peter is meant. If so, Pitt, who was then Governor of Madras, acting upon his brother-in-law's suggestion, sent him on to his brother Thomas in Bengal. Peter was then only 19, and pretty sure to have been without any capital. There is no evidence that he was even at the start in the Company's service, and certainly very soon he was engaging in his own trading ventures as a Free Merchant. Possibly Pitt himself, who was always ready to put a private iron into the fire, supplied him with funds. Whether or not he went in the first instance to Bengal, he made Madras his headquarters

throughout his trading career, though indeed his affairs kept him constantly afloat, sailing with his goods to Sumatra, to China, coastwise round India from Surat to Calcutta, once at least to the Persian Gulf, whence he travelled overland to Ispahan. Now he owns vessel and freight, now he sails as a supercargo with only a part interest; but it is substantially a seafaring life, and it is upon the sea that he meets with the great calamity of capture and imprisonment by the pirate Angria. Until the circumstances of his eventual release from that captivity brought him into prominence, the Company's records give us only a few glimpses of him, as he was not one of their servants. Miss Anstey, who searched these records at the India Office for me, and to whose knowledge and skill I beg here to pay a tribute, has however added to my debt by putting a singular piece of luck in my way. Peter happened to be a friend and, on occasion, trading partner of another notable Free Merchant of those days, John Scattergood, junior. Scattergood kept all the correspondence and accounts of his trade and when, like Peter, he died on reaching his native land, this mass of documents was produced in a Chancery suit. For nearly 200 years the papers lay buried among the Court records, and were only accidentally discovered by a kinsman of John Scattergood's, Mr. Bernard Scattergood, F.S.A. It so happened that Miss Anstey, when she undertook my work, was engaged in reducing these documents to order; and through the kindness of Mr. Scattergood I have been permitted to extract from them some interesting references to Peter.

1702.—On 24th January Peter, along with a large number of European residents of Madras, including the Governor and the Members of his Council, signed two petitions, one addressed to 'The King's Most Excellent Majestie in Council' and the other to the East India Company at Leadenhall Street. Several instances are given of the seizure of ships by Arab pirates operating from Jeddah and Muscat. The King is asked to 'extend your Royall protection..... in granting us your Letters of reprizall, or in such manner as in your great wisdom shall be thought meet'. To the Company the petitioners, after hinting that the Surat Factory has made some sort of discreditable bargain with the Arabs, proceed with indignation:

Wee have two much reason to be jealous that that unhappy misfortune at Judda [seizure of the *Diamond* with £.30 000 worth cargo] may be justly attributed to the infamous and hellish contrivances of some of our own contrymen, who have stuck at nothing in endeavouring to fix the Pyracies upon you and your ffactors abroad..... There are also many more dreadfull consequences to be infer'd from the late insolvences of these Nations, and if they be not speedily called to an accot. and forc't to restitution for what is past, 'twill most certainly end in the utter ruine of your trade in these parts.

Except for a promise to get diplomatic representations made at Constantinople, nothing seems to have come of this remonstrance.

1705.—Pitt's letter of 10th March, 1705, (see correspondence with Uncle Thomas, Letter No. XI) shows that in that year Peter, with his brother John, made a voyage to Acheen, in Sumatra, and on the date of the letter the brothers were 'speedily expected' back in Madras.

1707.—In the early part of 1707 Peter and John Scattergood made a journey together to Ispahan in Persia. Evidence of this is furnished by two accounts of their joint expenses contained in the Scattergood papers, dated in May of that year. These, I think, are curious enough to bear reproduction here :

PERSIA ACCOUNTS—1707-8.

Account Expenses between Mr. Curgenvven and myself for our Journey to Spahaune May the 20th, 1707.

Paid Edwards for sundry things bought for us	363. --
2 Gunny bags for the rice	4. --
for cocks	14. --
Paid Roy 4 months wages at 70 Shas. pr month	280. --
Paid for sundry things to the Company	938. --
2 shotters for 2 months wages at 70 shas.	280. --
1 cook 2 mo.	140. --
1 Horsekeeper 2 mo.	140. --
1 man to lead the Kedgway	140. --
2 Yockdans	130. --
1 pr Kedgway	130. --
5 Wappenges to cover it	100. --
2 ropes	8. --
for mending the Yockdans	16. --
paid a Talor for sowing the Kedgway cloth	3. --
Saddles for the Yockdans	75. --
A water pott for the Horses	36. --
for beasts for our lumber vizt.	
2 for 2 Yockdans	
2 for 2 pr chests	
1 for cookroomware	
1 for Kedgway	
2 for 2 pr Mufrages	

1 for Horse furniture	
1 for Wine	
2 for Rack	
2 for 2 Englishmen	
1 for lumber qt. in 2 wine chests	
15 mules at 190 Shas. Pr mule	2850. --
Callatte for 15 loads at 6 Shas. pr load	90. --
	5737. --
at 8 pr cent excha.	459. --
	6186. --

PERSIA ACCOUNTS—1707-8.

Account Charges Travelling to Spahaune [May 1707] Vizt.

To horse keeping and Gerah	356. 2.
To Provision on the road	225. 9.
To servants wages	495. --
To 7 Mules for our lumber and servants to ride on at 190 Shas. pr load	1330. --

Note—Here is a little glossary of the strange words, which I owe to the kindness of Mr. C. E. A. W. Oldham, Co-editor of the *Indian Antiquary*, and of Miss Anstey:

Callatte, calattee (Ar.)	Market-dues.	Mufrages	perhaps Ar. mifraash, carpet.
Coffala (Ar.)	caravan	Piscaroy	duty on goods.
Coz (Pers.)	$\frac{1}{10}$ Shahi	Rack (Ar.)	arraack, ardent spirits.
Gerah (Ar. & Pers.) hire		Sha (Pers.)	a coin worth about 4d.
Hamall (Ar.)	porter	Shotter (Ar.)	messenger.
Kedgway (Pers.)	Camel-litter.	wappenges (E.)	wrappings.
Lumber (E.)	obsolete term for baggage	yockdan (Pers.)	trunk for pack saddle.
Maund (Pers.)	a weight, either 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ or 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ lbs.		

To Calatte for 7 mules at 6 Shas. pr mule	42.	-
To Sundry necessities between Mr. Curgenven and self the whol being 2177 Shas. my half is	1038.	5
To a Palenken	500.	-
To 2 black chests	70.	-
To a small carpet	130.	-
To a horse	1000.	-
To an Ass for a servant to ride on	220.	-
	5407.	6.
To eight pr cent 5407 is	432.	-
Owners Cr.		
by the horse sold here	200.	
by the sale of an Ass	200.	
To John's wages at 140 Shas. pr mon. 7 months.	980.	
To Roy wages at 70 Shas. 9 months	630.	
	1610.	-
Charges on the Coffala to Spahaune	7017.	6.
	400.	-
	6617.	6.
	78.	7.
To Twine 10½ Maunds at 7.5 pr maund	100.	-
To Ropes 1007 at 10s. pr 100.	383.	2.
To Packing 479 bales at 8 coz. pr bale	95.	8.
To Cooley hire on Do. at 2 coz. pr bale	40.	-
To Do. for removeing bales too and thro	84.	-
To Victualls for cooleys and Packermen	14370.	-
To Piscarey on 239½ loads at 60s. pr load	1437.	-
To Calattee on Do. at 6 pr load	16588.	7.
To 8 pr cent		
To boat hire to bring the goods ashore 10 boats at 60 Shas. pr boat.	600.	-

PERSIA ACCOUNTS 1707 8.

[Henry Bradshaw's Account contd.]

MR. HENRY BRADSHAW DECEASED [1707]

Dr.		Pr Contra Cr.
To freight paid Sir George Matthews for goods brought from Bengall as pr Sir George Matthews' receipt	1091.	By amount of Mr. Bradshaw deceas'd wear- ing apparel &c. 2712.
To Dr. Stewart for looking after him when sick	400.	By the Produce of his Goods sold the Agent Mr. John Lock 172663.
To Capt. Dennis for the Taylor	86.	By the Nett Produce of his Cardinums &c. 20348.
To Peter Lilly for 3 mo. 8 days Wages	444.	By Peter Curgenven for his note 163½ ruprs. at 8 shas. Pr Rupee 1308.
To the Barber	20.	Advance in Proportion to what made on his goods 200.
To Hamalls to carry him to his grave	20.	
To Carpenters for making his coffin	20.	
To Grave digger	10.	
To Asses hire	464.	
To Mr. Beavis's bill for sundry things	3062.	
To Mr. Curgenven's bill for Piscarey for goods sent to Spahaune	5637.	1508.
	234.	2.
To 8 Per cent on 2925.3. being the ballance of his Account at Bunder	5871.	

From Ispahan Scattergood went on to Gombroon [Bandar Abbas], and kept a diary of the journey, which I am told is to be published in the *Indian Antiquary*. There is no evidence that Peter accompanied him on this further stage, and it is probable that he found his way back alone to India.

1713.—On 9th April, at St. Mary's Church, Fort St. George, Peter was married to Frances, daughter of John Rotheram, or Rotherham, Recorder of Maldon, Essex, who was son of Sir John Rotheram, a Baron of the Exchequer. The original Marriage Register has disappeared, but in the 18th century the entries were transcribed into a Register now in the custody of the Chaplain. This Register contains also a record of Thomas Curgenvén's marriage in 1708. I have not discovered how Peter met his bride.

1714.—(i) In a list compiled at Fort St. George Peter and John Curgenvén appear as 'Sea Faring Men not constant Inhabitants'.

(ii) In an account between Bernard Benyon and John Scattergood, dated Fort St. George, 5th June, 1714, occurs the entry :

Cr.

By Frances Curgenvén for which have Your Bond at 28 per cent on the *Amity* to China, Surat and hither..... Pagodas
500.

A trading investment of Mrs. Peter's in a ship belonging to, or chartered by, John Scattergood.

1715.—Two entries occur in Scattergood's accounts showing that he and Peter were jointly trading in *putchock*. *Putchock* is a fragrant root obtained

from the vicinity of Kashmir and exported to China, where it forms a chief ingredient of the *jostick*. It is probable, therefore, that Peter's visits to China had begun by this date.

1716.—Extract of "An Account of what Money I [John Scattergood] have abroad and what left behind me in goods &c. and what I carry on the *Kent* to England with me.

Putchuck I leave in your [John Maubert's] hands.....

This Putchuck please to sell next year as well as you can for our joynt account [that of J.S. and Mr. Wych], and if you cant dispose of it send my half to China as an adventure. Mr. Wychs half, follow his orders, which he has left, in case of his absence, to Mrs. Curgenvén.*

1717.—A Manifest of Goods, Merchandize and Foreigne Silver Lysenced by the Committee of Shipping of the Court of Directors of the United East India Compa. to be Laden on board the Ship King George, Capt. Samuell Lewes Comander, by the Several Persons as follows (Viz.)

* * * * *

John Rotherum Esq. E.

1 Box Wearing Apparel.....Value £.14.

Freight Free being for the use of Mrs. Curgenvén at Fort St. George.

* * * * *

East India House, 8th Janry. 1717.

The consignor is, of course, Mrs. Curgenvén's father.

1719 (i) Extract of a General Letter from Bengal to the Company, dated 20 January 1718/9.

Para. 16. Mr. Peter Curgenvén, a Free Merchant, desiring his wife may take her passage home on this ship *Grantham* [Captain Thomas Collet], having paid ninety six Rupees into their

* Scattergood Papers, VI, 6.

Honours Cash for her passage, we have accordingly given Captain Collett permission to receive her on board.*

Peter is projecting a voyage to China, and sends his wife home,—as it turns out, for good. An enviably cheap passage!

(ii) In November 1719 John Scattergood writes from Canton, in China, to his step-brother Elihu Trenchfield, who seems to have been in Madras, thus:

I have reflected about the 1500 Pagodos that I am concerned in the *Charlotta*, and judge I ought to have paid you that 1500 Pagodos in Madrass, but I have given Mr. Curgenven and Harnage a Note under my hand, wherein I declare that I will make good the interest of the said 1500 Pagodos to your Attornies on my arrival in Madrass, which will sett all matters right betwixt us as too that affair.

* * * * *

We have dispatched Messrs Curgenven and Harnage for Surratt about the 10th last month with a pretty good cargoe and have lent them 120 shooes of gold of our last years Contract for could not gett them a peice this except we would as I said before [pay] 110 sicee. Master Peter knows all the trade of China already and doth not question but of comeing again the next year and then to goe to England to live Gay and Grand with his Pretty wife and hir great Relations, Whilst Pell Garlick must druge two or three voyages more if God will spare me my life.†

As fate would have it, Master Peter's hopes of living in splendour at home were destined to be disappointed, and Pell Garlick, as Scattergood quaintly calls himself, might have foregone the envious comparison.

Writing to another correspondent, Stephen Orme, from Canton on 5th November 1719, Scatter-

* India Office Records Miscellaneous Letters Received, 17/19.
† Scattergood Papers I, 67, 70.

good, who seems to have bidden farewell to Peter in none too friendly a mood, says:

P.S.—Mr. Curganven, I understand, desings to buy up all the shirks finns and Sandall he can, therefore I must beg you to use your endeavours to be before him; and do not stand for a small matter in the price. He desings to touch at Mangalore as he goes up to Suratt, and leave a man there. Whatever you do for me, pray be very private, and consing the things to Mr. John Maubert.*

Sharks' fins were a table delicacy in China; into which of the competing merchants' hands they and the sandal fell does not appear.

I must now make a liberal draft upon the Scattergood papers to elucidate what happened to Peter and his companion John Harnage after they left Canton in October, 1719, and up to the date of their capture by Angria. They sailed 'with a pretty good cargoe',—including, as another letter shows, sugar,—for Malacca, but in what ship is not clear. What they were to do there is shown by the following extracts from a letter presumably handed to them by Scattergood in Canton:

Gentlemen,

On your arrivall att Mallaeca hope you will receive the Brigantine and Goods that Mr. Harnage and I bought. To pay for my share the Captain of the Clinaman will account with you. He has allready received 1/3 of 4000 Dollers left in his hands, and he has gott a bond of one Coge Arotoon Lazaro that went for Trigany, belonging to me, for 4875 Dollers, which will be due, I hope, by your arrivall. But if all this will not be enough and he will not trust me, then you may make use of the 10 shooes of Gold I here with Deliver you, poiz. ninety seven Tales six mace and 5 Canderines, but must desire you to use all your endeavours

* Scattergood Papers, I, 114-5.

to keep the Gold which I beg you will deliver Mr. Alexander Orme at Callicutt, takeing his receipt.....

P.S.—Sirs, Please act in my concerne about the Brigantine and Cargo that you carry with you from Mallacca as you doe for yourselves.....By Mr. Harnage have sent a pott of Tea, qt. 4 Catty and halfe a dozen fanns, which please deliver to Mr. Bonnell, and a pott qt. 2 Catty for John De Matt.

Yours
J.S.

To John de Matt, an Armenian at Malacca, he wrote :

The Vessell and goods that Mr. Harnage and I bought are for Mr. Curganven, Mr. Harnage and self in thirds. There [sic] two thirds they will pay, and my 1/3 hope the Armenian money which will be 4875 Rix Dollers and my 1/3 of the 4000 Dollers left in his hands, will be sufficient. If not, desire Jan Younqua to trust me for the remainder, which will be but little.

By Mr. Harnage I send you a pott of Tea.

He wrote also to Jan Younqua, who sounds like a Dutchman, to the same effect, expressing a hope that the brigantine and cargo were ready.

The name of this ship is nowhere mentioned, but it seems plausible to suppose, from the subsequent records, that she was the *Charlotta* in which Peter and Harnage were captured by Angria.

At Malacca, Peter and Harnage signed an agreement on December 8th with Captain Thomas Boone of the *Boone* frigate. Its purport was that on arrival at Surat the two former were to buy *putchuck* and bring it to Tellicherry in the *Charlotta*. Thence Boone was to carry it to Canton in his frigate, while the other two parties were to ship pepper at Anjengo, a West Coast port south of Tellicherry, and carry it

to China 'on the *Charlotta* or any other ship they shall go to China on.' The proceeds of these operations were to be shared between the three.

Peter and Harnage in due course reached Surat, probably calling at the West Coast ports of Calicut and Tellicherry *en route*. We next learn from a declaration made by Boone at Tellicherry on 30th April, 1720, that in execution of the agreement the two traders sailed from Surat in the *Charlotta* 'the Latter End of March', no doubt well furnished with *putchuck*, and that no further news of her had reached Tellicherry. She had in point of fact fallen into Angria's clutches on her way south, on 2nd April. Boone called upon Peter's and Harnage's Attorneys at Madras to declare whether they accepted liability for the transactions between him and their principals; which elicited an affirmative reply, dated 22nd June, 1720, from Mr. Richard Benyon of Fort St. George, on their behalf. At the same time Mr. Benyon wrote as follows to John Scattergood and one Thomas Harris, his references to Peter and Harnage showing that he had had news of what had befallen them * :—

[Fort St. George 21 June 1720.]

To Mess[rs] John Scattergood and Thomas Harris

Sirs

Mess[rs] Peter Curganven and John Harnage having in the Course of their Last Voyage had Severall Dealings with Captain Thomas Boone and among other things made a Contract relating to a Parcell of Putchuck, Copy of the said Contract, also Copys of Captain Boones Declaration, and my Declaration in Answer to it, I deliver you with this, besides the Bargain made between them about the Putchuck I have heard Captain Boone

* Scattergood Papers, III, 112-115.

took up of 'em at Surat Fifteen Thousand Rupees at respondentia and by the Latter part of his Declaration I am inclinable to believe there was also some ballance of Accounts due to them. Mr. Hart tells me that he saw an Account drawn out by Captain Boone at Callicut wherein the Fifteen Thousand Rupees I have mentioned to you is Enter'd, which Account was to have been left with Mr. Addams to be forwarded hither. I have not as yet received it, but have wrote to Mr. Addams for it. I judge that Account will give great Light into their Affairs with Captain Boone, but as I have it not, we must make what Shift we can without it. When you arrive in China, I desire you will get Captain Boone to give you a Declaration of the State of their Affairs with him, and as I doubt not he will be so Honourable as to Give you a Just Account, you will when you receive it be better able than I am now to Judge what will be most Necessary to be done for the advantage of those two Unfortunate Gents, Messrs. Peter Curgenv and John Harnage, who when they went to China, having left me their Attorney, I have by Virtue of that Power appointed you two Gent. to act for them in China and herewith deliver you a Letter of Attorney for that Purpose.

The Money taken by Captain Boone at respondentia I suppose is to run back on the Ship to Surat, but for what else may be payable in China, I desire you will receive it and remitt me in Gold by the *Bonitta*. These are as Particular orders as I am Capable of giving you for want of a better knowledge of their Affairs with Captain Boone, but as I would take all Possible care to avoid prejudicing their Interest, so I would not have you think your selves ty'd up by me, but leave it to you to act in all Respects in such Manner as you shall think most for their advantage.

The Unhappy Circumstances [it] is believ'd Messrs. Curgenv and Harnage are in will make the trouble you will be at in this Affair a Deed of Charity, and as I know your Willingness to Embrace all such Occasions, I shall make no Apology. I assure you I shall gladly do you any Service here, and wishing you a Prosperous and Successfull Voyage.

I remain Sirs

Your most humble Servant,

RICHARD BENYON.

Fort St. George
June 21, 1720.

P.S. You will find by my Declaration in Answer to Captain Boones that in Case half the Putchuck was to be on Messrs. Curgenv and Harnage Their Account the Difference of Five Thousand and Fifty one Rupees worth of Pepper at Sixty Six Rupees per Anjengo Candy shou'd be made good to him in China, therefore when you come to adjust Accounts with him I desire you will Perform accordingly.

Idem RICHARD BENYON.

KANHOJI ANGRIA had for some years before the *Charlotta* became his prey been giving a good deal of trouble and anxiety to the English settlement at Bombay. He was no ordinary pirate, but rather an independent chieftain holding a number of fortified positions upon the West Coast; having risen from obscurity to that position by becoming in the first place admiral of the Maratha fleet and later, in the troubles engendered by a disputed succession, the victorious invader of Maratha territory. The Bombay Government used its best endeavours to keep on terms with this powerful freebooter, though from time to time the capture of trading vessels threatened a rupture. Eventually, in 1718, the seizure of the *Otter* led Governor Boone, brother to Captain Thomas Boone, to publish what was in effect a declaration of war; and during that and the following year unsuccessful attacks were made upon two of his strongholds, Khanderi and Gheria. Another expedition, undertaken against Alibag and Kolaba in 1721 by a larger force and in alliance with the Portuguese, proved an equal failure. The ships and men available were in truth unequal to so formidable a task. Accordingly during the period of Peter Curgenv's captivity, 1720-1725, Angria was in a position to defy his British neighbours and to hold his British prisoners to ransom.

It was not until 1755, long after Kanhoji Angria had been succeeded by his son Tulaji, that Gheria and the other fortresses were finally reduced.

Until the records at the India Office were searched at my instance, the known sources of the story of Peter's captivity were :

(1) the inscription on his monument in Great Waltham Church,

(2) a passage in Clement Downing's 'History of the Indian Wars', and

(3) an account, doubtless imparted orally by the widow, in Sir James Bland Burges's 'Letters and Correspondence'.*

The inscription, which I reproduce in its due place, states that Peter fell into Angria's hands when after a twenty-five years' absence he was preparing to return to his native country, which, since he arrived in India in 1701, would make the date 1726. Downing, whose little volume, first published in 1737, has been reprinted by the Oxford University Press, refers to the occurrence in the following passage :

I narrowly missed Angria's Grabs again; for before my Arrival at Bombay, he and the English had broke into War on the following Occasion. The "Anne" of Bengal, formerly called the "Sherbourne", whom Capt: Henry Cornwall commanded, had been taken by the French in her homeward Passage for England, carried back to Bengal, and there sold to the English Merchants. This ship now belonged to Mr. Crewganwell, an eminent Bengal Merchant, who was coming from Surat to Bombay, to dispose of some Merchant Goods he had on board this Ship. Angria's Grabs

* Letters and correspondence of Sir James Bland Burges (afterwards Lamb) Bart. Sometime Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, with Notices of his Life. Edited by James Hutton, London, 1885.

beat up the Coast with all speed, took the said Mr. Crewganwell's Ship, Captain Wade Commander, with several English they had on board. They mounted 18 guns, and made a tolerable Defence for four or five hours, when they boarded and carried them. At that time our Fleet was beating up from Carwar, and could not come to their Assistance. As Angria was at peace with the Island of Bombay, he imagin'd we should not concern ourselves with the Shipping of Bengal and Madrass. As for Captain Wade, he, with the chief Mate and Boatswain were sent to Golabey [Kolaba] and Mr. Crewganwell to Gerey; which is the chief Harbour he has for Strength. However, the Boatswain and two more of the Men made their Escape to Bombay, and gave an Account of the whole Affair. The President and Council had several Consultations concerning setting the said Prisoners at Liberty by Force of Arms; we now being very strong at Sea.

'Crewganwell', as Downing's latest editor surmises, must be 'Curgenvén'; and though bearers of the name are inured to seeing it variously garbled, I am afraid that Downing's grotesque perversion must be deemed but typical of the errors with which his narrative teems. The occurrence, according to him, took place in 1716 or 1717, about ten years earlier than the date suggested by the memorial tablet; and, as his editor shows, no other record exists of a ship called the 'Anne' being captured by Angria.

The version of Sir James Bland Burges is as follows :—

Having amassed a very large fortune and being desirous of returning to his native land, Mr. Curgenvén set about arranging his affairs. As the variety of his engagements rendered this an operation of greater length than he had anticipated, he sent his wife to England by herself and determined to follow her with all his wealth as soon as possible. About a year or so later he succeeded in winding up his affairs and chartered two vessels, one of which he loaded with the greater part of his rich effects, and with the residue of his property he himself embarked in the other.

He had not sailed, however, many days when, by some accident, the accompanying ship took fire and was consumed before his eyes, with everything she contained. The loss of more than half his fortune, earned by a long life of toil and exile, was a severe blow, but he bore it with fortitude, resigning himself to the Will of Heaven, and comforted by the reflection that much riches still remained to him. Brief and ill-founded was this consolation. The morrow's sun had hardly risen when he found himself surrounded by the fleet of the famous Eastern pirate Angria, by whom, after a short resistance, he was taken prisoner. His property was carried to Gheriah, while he himself was chained to a bench in Angria's galley, and obliged to row as a slave. A long time elapsed before he was able to send intelligence of his misfortunes to England; and it was longer still before Angria, who knew the value of his prize, could be brought to accept his ransom. Nearly ten years passed before he regained his liberty, and then only on payment of a large sum of money. At length he reached England, and rejoiced the heart of his wife, after such a long and bitter separation; but their troubles were not yet at an end. The iron bolt by which he was fastened to the chain had so worked into the flesh of his thigh that, within a week after his return to London, mortification set in, and it was judged expedient to amputate his leg as near as possible to the body. The operation was successfully performed, and for a week afterwards there was every reason to expect his recovery. One evening, however, as his wife was sitting by his bedside, he uttered a sudden exclamation and threw off the bed-clothes. The great artery had burst, and before any assistance could be procured he bled to death.

The story here embraces two ships, and Peter's captivity extends to nearly ten years. No date is given as its commencement, but since Peter died in 1729 it could scarcely, according to this account, have been as late as 1720.

Further research has established the main facts beyond doubt, though I cannot help feeling a pang of regret that the rather dramatic story of the capture occurring when Peter was on his last voyage homeward with all his wealth is thereby exploded. As we have

seen from the Scattergood papers, he was setting out for China, though it may be that he hoped, when that voyage was over, to 'goe to England to live Gay and Grand with his Pretty wife and hir great relations.' Of the precise circumstances in which the capture took place we have nothing more authentic than Downing and Bland Burges. It occurred, as already noted, on 2nd April 1720. Peter, with others of the Ship's Company, was imprisoned at Gheria, a rocky fortress, now known as Vijiadrug, on the Bombay Coast, until 20th March 1724. Thence, at his request, he was removed to Colaba, where he was detained until 28th January 1725, when he ransomed himself and his shipmates by payment of a sum of Rs. 9,500. News of Peter's release is given to the Company in London by the Bombay Council in a letter, rather more complacently phrased than the success of their operations warranted, dated 10th March, 1725 :

Angria is become so straitned thro' the methods [that] have been taken with him that he has been at length induced to hearken to a ransom for Mr. Curgenvin and his people, in number thirteen, whose release he did obtain the latter end of last month for about ten thousand Rupees. There remains four Europeans and about thirty Lascars and Sepoys that has been taken belonging to the place still prisoners with him, whose redemption we hope now some way or other speedily to accomplish.*

After his release Peter reached Bombay on 20th March 1725, and at once set about obtaining the Governor's sanction to a composition with Angria, securing an exchange of prisoners, Angria releasing as many as 109 persons against 95 set free by us, and a refund of ten thousand rupees out of twelve thousand

* Bombay Letters Received, Vol. 1.

paid as ransom to the pirate. The Bombay Council made good to Peter his Rs. 9,500, upon certain terms as to security in case the Directors at home disapproved their action.

This is in outline the course of events depicted in the following six documents, which originated after Peter's arrival in Bontbay. The fifth of the series of itself has amply rewarded my efforts, being nothing less than Peter's own version of his misfortunes,—though I wish he had told us more of his experiences on the inhospitable rock of Gheria.

I.

*Consultation at Bombay Castle, 29 March 1725.**

The Honble. William Phipps Esqr. President and Governor.

The President represents to the Board that Mr. Peter Curgenvén, on his arrival here from his imprisonment with Conajee Angria, did signify to him, as the request of said Angria at his departure, the desire he had of making peace with the English; that he did verily believe, on our agreeing to an exchange of prisoners, Angria would refund the money he had taken for ransom of himself and people, as well as for sundry others belonging to this place, which he had released, and that Sanjee Muckanjee, Banián, inhabitant of Caranjah, employ'd on Angria's affairs, had orders (when permission was given) to come hither to know on what terms an exchange of prisoners would be agreed to on our side.

Whereupon he, the President, had given leave for said Banian to repair to him, from whom, having heard it was Angria's desire to come to an accommodation, and to begin with an immediate exchange of prisoners on both sides, the President acquainted him that we could hearken to nothing Angria could propose untill he had refunded the money he had taken for the ransom of such he had already released, which being to the amount of about twelve thousand Rupees, if he would agree to return that sum, with the

* Bombay Public Consultations, Vol. GI, 1725-1729.

rest of our people remaining with him, to be paid and delivered unto our order at Caranjah, he might then hope of our doing the like by his people that we have prisoners here, with which message the said Banian was dispatch'd.

And being this day returned with a Letter to Mr. Curgenvén of thanks for the interposition, and the Banian being called in declares before us Angria's answer and resolution to the Presidents message sent by him, which is that, he condescends to refund the sum of twelve thousand Rupees, which he will send in a Gallevat of his own, on our giving him a passport with what people of ours remain with him prisoners to Caranjah, and there to be exchanged for such as we have belonging to him.

Debating thereon, 'tis concluded that Angria's Proposals for Exchange of Prisoners and refunding the sum of twelve thousand Rupees be accepted of.

Directed that a Proclamation be forthwith published requiring such inhabitants or others as have any friends that have been taken at any time in any boats belonging to this Island, remaining now with Conajee Angria, that they deliver unto the Secretary a list of their names in the space of twenty four hours, in order for obtaining their release, and at the request of the Banian a list of Angria's people, prisoners here, is order'd to given him.

II.

Bombay Diary, 26 April 1725.

Sail'd our Gallivats with Angria's prisoners on board to Caranjah, to which place Angria had sent ours with him to be exchanged, and whither Mr. Curgenvén has been gone some days before in order to see the same fairly executed and receive the twelve thousand Rupees to be paid by Angria, as so much before taken for the ransom of said Mr. Curgenvén and some others.

III.

Bombay Diary, 27 April 1725.

Returned our Gallevats from Caranjah with one hundred and nine people belonging to this Island deliver'd up by Angria in lieu of ninety five of his.

Consultation at Bombay Castle, 30 April 1725.

The President then acquaints the Board that according to the hopes that had been given us from Mr. Peter Curgenvén for effecting an exchange of prisoners between us and Conajee Angria, the same was completed on Tuesday last by Angria's delivering up at Caranjah one hundred and nine prisoners belonging to this Island in lieu of ninety five of his people deliver'd up by us; That the same being negotiated by Mr. Curgenvén, he brought with our people ten thousand Rupees of the twelve thousand said Angria had agreed to return, being what he had before taken for the ransom of Mr. Curgenvén and others.

A petition from said Curgenvén is then read setting forth his capture, long imprisonment and damage he had sustain'd during that time both in person and estate, being obliged after many years to pay nine thousand five hundred Rupees for ransom of himself and people, with hopes at that time given him the same would be returned upon a general exchange of prisoners being effected, which being now happily brought to pass, requests our condescending to reimburse him the sum of nine thousand five hundred Rupees, which he was oblig'd to redeem himself and people withall, as per said Petition enter'd hereafter will more fully appear.

Taking the same into consideration and debating thereon, it is observ'd that on Angria's first offering a general exchange of prisoners, before Mr. Curgenvén's redemption, it was accepted so far that on his sending hither our people who were prisoners with him, those we had belonging to him should likewise be released, when no money should have been received or paid by either side; But Angria, as we believe, thinking it might be too great a condescension to rely altogether on our courtesy, chose rather as most secure on his side to agree with Mr. Curgenvén to ransom himself and people for a certain sum, giving hopes of returning the same on bringing about a general exchange, the which being now complied with, except two thousand Rupees for which Angria's Banian remains as security, and Mr. Curgenvén offering to give an obligation for refunding the money in case our Honble. Masters shall disapprove of our returning him said sum of Rupees nine thousand five hundred, in consideration that he

has also taken much pains in bringing to pass this general exchange of prisoners between us and Angria.

It is unanimously agreed that the said sum of Rupees nine thousand five hundred be return'd him on giving his own bond for refunding the same in case it be disapproved of by our Honble. Masters, and the Treasury is hereby directed to pay him said sum.

V.

To the Honble. William Phipps, Esqre.,
President and Governor &ca. Council
of Bombay &ca.

The Humble Petition of Peter Curgenvén, Merchant,
Sheweth:—

That whereas your Petitioner having inhabited at Madrass from the year 1701, and from thence traded under the protection of the Honble. Company to sundry parts of India untill the year 1720, when your Petitioner on his return from the Port of Surat, the 2nd day of Aprill in the year above specify'd, was with his ship and cargo, value about ninety five thousand Rupees, belonging to Joseph Collet Esqre, [seized] and made capture by the fleet belonging to Conajee Angria and carried into the Port of Gereah on the Coast of Malabar, where your Petitioner was detain'd a prisoner with several more of the ships company untill the 20th day of March 1723/4, when your Petitioner obtain'd permission of being removed to Callaby where, after nine months confinement, your Petitioner with some difficulty prevail'd so far as to be set to ransom for nine thousand five hundred rupees, with the rest of the ships company then remaining, which your Petitioner paying the 28th day of January last, was then set at liberty, and some time after the remainder of the ships company, who were then at Gereah, was sent him to Caranjah, with whom your Petitioner landed on this Island the 20th day of March, and being given to hope if could bring about a general exchange of prisoners that the money your Petitioner had paid for his and peoples ransom should be return'd, Your Petitioner therefore laying such proposalls before your Honour &ca. as you were pleased to condescend to admit of, and in pursuance thereto your Petitioner was by your Honour &ca. permitted to negotiate that affair in conjunction

with Sangojee Muconjee, Banyan of Caranjah, appointed by Conajee Angria on his part to concert the same, the which we happily concluded the 27th Instant, and with one hundred and nine prisoners, receiv'd in lieu of ninety five deliver'd him, paid into the Honble. Companys Cash the aforesaid sum of nine thousand five hundred Rupees, with some other that had been formerly paid on account of ransom of some people belonging to this Island.

Now, as having been long an inhabitant, trading under the Honble. Companys protection and a great sufferer both in person and fortune by the loss of the ship and length of his captivity, your Petitioner humbly hopes that your Honour &ca. will not think it any ways conducive to the honour of the Company to make any advantage by reserving to themselves the said sum of nine thousand five hundred Rupees now return'd, but will adjud[g]e the same of justice and right to belong to your Petitioner, and your Petitioner humbly craves that your Honour &ca. will order the same to be repaid him. And further, in case your Honour &ca. should be any wise apprehensive that the Honble. Company should hereafter adjudge the said sum of right to be appropriated to their use, your Petitioner is willing to give such bond and security for repayment of the same as your Honour &ca. shall please to require, in which case your Petitioner humbly hopes your Honour &ca. will allow the allegations of this Petition to be reasonable and just

And your Petitioner as in duty bound shall ever pray.

Bombay 30th Aprill 1725.

VI.

Extract of a General Letter from Bombay to the Company,

dated 11 September 1725.

Para. 39.—Agreeable to what we had advised your Honours in our overland letter of having determined an exchange of prisoners with Angria on his refunding twelve thousand Rupees that it was esteemed he had received for Mr. Curganven and others whom he had before released, the same was effected the 26th April at Caranjah, whither Mr. Curganven at our desire went for that purpose and there received ten thousand Rupees and one hundred and nine prisoners in lieu of ninety five of Angria's people return'd him, a Banyan of Caranjah giving good security for the other two thousand rupees,

Para. 40.—Mr. Curganven afterwards setting forth in petition to us the charge of rupees nine thousand two hundred which he had before been at for his and people's redemption, from which ensued this general exchange, requesting said sum might be returned to him and offering to give bond for repayment in case of your disapproving thereof, We considering the trouble he has taken in this affair and believing your Honours will not think it suitable to your character to make an advantage of the price of their liberty, We have granted his request in paying him said sum of Rupees nine thousand five hundred, he having given bond for refunding the same on your pleasure being known for his doing so.

What meanwhile had been the fate of John Harnage, Peter's friend and fellow-prisoner? Less than a year after the capture, on 12th February 1721, he made a will at Gheria from which I make the following extract :—

In the Name of God Amen. Whereas I, John Harnage of Madrass, Merchant being called by my lawfull occasions to cross the seas, was, in my returning from the Port of Suratt, most unfortunately, the second day of April last, taken by the fleet of Angaria, ever since which time I have been detain'd at this place. Now, having a due sense of the instability and uncertainty of life, and not knowing when it may please Almighty God to take me, I hope with faith, to himself out of this transitory and wicked world, I doe by these presents Will and Bequeth the Estate it has been our Almighty Creator and most bountifull Protectors good will and pleasure to bless with, among my relations and friends in manner as is underwritten.

* * * * *

Item, I give and bequeath to my worthy friend and at present Fellow prisoner, Mr. Peter Curganven, the sum of three thousand Rupees to lay out in two diamond rings, the one for himself, the other for his Spouse Frances Curganven, both whom I entreat to accept thereof As a Token of my Gratitude and good will. . . .

Item, I give to Captain John Bell, if he lives to be at liberty, five hundred rupees. Item, I give to Mr. William Reeves if he lives to be at liberty, five hundred rupees. Item I give to Neale, our Second Mate, if he lives to be at liberty, Two hundred and fifty rupees. Item, I give to Mr. Paul Bouillard, if he lives to be at liberty, Two hundred and fifty rupees. Item, I give to my other fellow Sufferers in the prison among which number I include the English or Europeans not already nam'd our servants, the two Lascars that return'd with the Letter from Bombay and that Lascar call'd Faquir who was formerly a Ship mate with me, the sum of Six hundred Rupees to be shar'd among them all equally on their releasement from this imprisonment.....

Moreover, I doe hereby impower and appoint for my Trustees, for the execution of whatever is necessary or needfull in India, my very good Friends Mr. Peter Curgenvén and Mr. Richard Benyon, whom I beg cheerfully to accept of that trouble.

Given at the Goal [sic] in the Fort Gereca on the Coast of India the twelfth day of February in the Year of our Lord and Saviour one thousand Seven hundred Twentyone. Witness my hand and Seal

John Harnage.

Sign'd, Seal'd and declared and published in presence of us, where no stamp paper is to be had. W. Scott, Jno. Gallaway, John Vaines, Ephraim Roberts.*

The dispositions in favour of his fellow-sufferers do credit to the heart of John Harnage. From the circumstances that no mention is anywhere made of his release, and that the will was produced before the Fort St. George Council by Richard Benyon, Peter's co-executor, on 3rd February 1725, shortly after the other prisoners were set at liberty, we have I fear to conclude that Harnage ended his days in captivity.

* Col. Love prints this extract in his *Vestiges of Old Madras*, Vol. 11, p. 208.

1725.—Even while the negotiations with Angria were in progress, the indomitable Peter was in treaty with the Bombay Board for the ship *Morrice* :

*Consultation of Bombay Castle, 4 April 1725.**

The President informing the Board that Mr. Curgenvén had made some proposalls to him for employing Ship *Morrice* to Bengall, he is called in and told that said ship could on no account be let out but with a positive assurance to return so as to proceed early enough from hence to save her passage round the Cape.

He then engages to dispatch her by the 1st of November from Bengall, in case we consent that he touch and stay eight days at Madrass in his return, or if he finds he shall have no occasion to call at Madrass, that then he be not obliged to depart from Bengall before the 15th of November to proceed directly for this place or Surat, but then to have her on conditions accordingly since her dispatch must be so early.

Debating thereon and considering that no freight we can expect will be equivalent for risking her return early enough to save the season for getting about the Cape, and Mr. Curgenvén not being to be brought to give more than twelve thousand Rupees, It is agreed she be let to him for that sum on terms of charter party, and in case the ship be dispatched the 1st of November, he have liberty to call in and stay eight days at Madrass, and not otherwise, and not to exceed the 15th of that month for her return directly to Surat; and in failing of his dispatching her so as she cannot return to sail hence in time to save her passage round the Cape, that then he shall be liable for four months demorage according to charter party, in consideration of the loss of the monsoon.

Directed that Contracts be prepared accordingly.

Pursuant to this arrangement, Peter chartered the *Morrice*, which sailed from Surat for Bengal on 6th May, 1725. She reached Bengal on 3 July, 1725, but now comes a puzzling discrepancy in the records

* *Bombay Public Consultations*, Vol. VI, 1725-1729.

relating to Peter's voyage back to Surat. The Tellicherry Factory records contain the following entry :

29 November 1725. Ship *Effingham*, 250 tons, 18 guns, John Bell Captain, Peter Curgenvén Supracargo, From Bengall. Sailed 9 January 1726 for Surat,

while a Bombay Consultation, dated 20th December 1725, opens thus :

Mr. Peter Curgenvén, who is proceeding on the *Morrice* to Surat.....

This tallies with an entry in the Surat Diary dated 22nd December 1725 :

Arrived at the Bar an Honble. Master's ship *Morrice*, Captain Eustace Peacock, with the *Effingham*, Captain John Bell Commander, and Mr. Peter Curgenvén Supracargo,..... from Bengall and Bombay.

The only solution I can suggest is that the *Morrice* and *Effingham* sailed together from Bengal, and that they left Tellicherry not on 9th January but on some earlier date,—perhaps 9th December. Tellicherry does not mention the *Morrice*, but they reached Surat in Company. The next record is

Surat Diary, 25 January 1725/6.

Received into the Right Honble. Company's Cash (of Mr. Peter Curgenvén, Supracargo of the *Effingham*) on account of the Honble. Wm. Phipps Esq: Rupees sixty thousand, which sum was at the same time paid Loldass Vituldass on his account at Interest.

William Phipps was the Governor of Bombay who had authorised the exchange of prisoners with Angria.

While Peter was at Surat he, with two other fellow-merchants, had to resist an attempt by the

Company to prescribe the manner in which "private traders" — Free Merchants — should sign their contracts :

Consultation at Surat, 1 February 1725/6.

Messrs. Peter Curgenvén, Heron Hart and William Mitchell came in the Factory to answer the Notifications given them the 1st of November and 27th December past, and yesterday, advising them when they make any contract, to have the same confirmed with the merchants and broker, in the presence of the Chief.

Note.—The notification of 1 November was made to Captain Heron Hart and William Mitchell, who were informed that no private trader would be permitted to remain in Surat "longer than the season for their ships residing at the Bar." On 27 December the orders were repeated to Messrs. Hart and Mitchell and the Secretary was directed to "signify the same to Mr. Peter Curgenvén, arrival here on the *Effingham*, Captain John Bell, the 28rd Instant." On 31 January the "gentlemen Supracargoes &c. having taken no notice of the Notification, the following "writing" was sent to each of the three concerned "and since left with Mr. Peter Curgenvén, Vizt. To Messrs. Peter Curgenvén, Heron Hart and Wm. Mitchell &c.

Gentlemen,

You having had a Notification from our Secretary dated the first of November past, and another dated the 27th Ultio. apprising you of the orders we had received from the Honble. President and Council of Bombay, directing that all Supracargoes be required on making any Contract, to have the same confirmed with the Merchants and Brokers in the presence of the Chief, which as yet not being complied with by you Gentlemen (altho' several Contracts have been made by you) we desire you would on receipt hereof give us your reasons for the same, that we may give account thereof to the said Honble. President and Council.

We are &c.

John Courtney

&c.

Surat. Jan. 31st 1725/6.

We now desiring them again to give their reasons for their not obeying the aforesaid orders, the said Gentlemen replied that they were ready and very willing to comply with all the orders of the President and Council of Bombay, but in this case they find it impracticable, the Merchants absolutely refusing to come into our Factory to confirm any Contracts that they make, alledging it will be of ill consequence for their sales, being made publick; and if they should insist thereon, it would occasion the loss of their sales aforesaid, which they hope is a satisfactory answer to shew it impossible to be done, without great prejudice to their affairs.*

In March he sails again for Bengal :

Surat Diary, 16 March 1725/6.

In the morning Mr. Peter Curgenvén, Supracargo of the *Effingham*, with the Commander Captain John Bell, took their leave off the Chief, in order to repair on board their ship at the Bar, for Bombay and Bengall.*

The *Effingham* in due course calls at Tellicherry :

12 April 1726. Ship *Effingham* 250 tons 18 guns John Bell Captain, Peter Curgenvén, Supracargo. From Bombay. Sailed 12 April for Bengal.

That is an extract from the Tellicherry Factory Records. We now go to Bengal Public Consultations, Vol. 6, for evidence of Peter's presence again at Fort William (Calcutta). From certain entries in the Consulate Accounts of that Port he appears to have disposed of the *Effingham* there in 1726, as the later payments in respect of the ship are made by other persons. He was still at Calcutta in October, when he succeeded in obtaining a refund of tonnage paid at Surat upon the vessel :

* Factory Records, Surat, Vol. 11-A.

1726. Consultation at Fort William, 10 October 1726.

Mr. Peter Curgenvén now delivered in a Petition requesting that the Tonnage paid at Surat for Ship *Effingham* be paid back.

Agreed that the President pay the same and that his Petition be entered after this Consultation.

To the Honble. Henry Frankland Esqr. President and Govr. of Fort William and President for Affairs of the Honble. United English Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies and the rest of the Gentlemen of Council.

Honble. Sir and Sirs

Ship *Effingham* whereof I was Owner having taken out a Pass and paid the Honble. Companys Tonnage being two hundred Rupees in October last in this place which I was then informed was in full of the demand of the Tonnage for said Ship for the term of one year but contrary to that information on adjusting the Accounts of the Sales of said Ship at the Port of Surat in the month of March following I was again charged with the same Duty of Tonnage which I have been informed is contrary to the intent of the Honble. Companys Orders that requires the payment of said duty no oftner than once per annum and that the same has been returned to severall Owners that have paid it twice, which if true I hope Your Honour &c. will do the same justice to me in ordering the said Tonnage of two hundred Rupees over paid to be repaid me which I shall esteem as a particular favour done to

Honble. Sir & Sirs,

Your most obedt. humble Servt.

PETER CURGENVEN.*

Calcutta, October 10th, 1726.

1727.—Two Surat entries (Factory Records, Vol. 12) show that Peter was at that place in the early part of this year. A Patamar is a country vessel. Whether he accompanied the momentous news to Bombay is not clear.

* Bengal Public, Consultations, Vol. 6.

Consultation in Surat, 6 April 1727.

This [the confinement at the Darbar of three of the Company's subjects] being a matter of great consequence.....the Chief told the Board that he has acquainted the Honble. the President of the whole affair in his letter which is to go (to Bombay) by Mr. Curgenven's Patamar.....

At half past eleven a clock before noon (per Mr. Peter Curgenvens Patamar) wrote a letter under this date to the Honourable President and Council of Bombay.*

Surat Diary, 15 May 1727.

Paid to Loldass Vituldass on his account at interest, Rupees two thousand four hundred thirty three, being the subscriptions made towards Parell house by the following English Gentlemen and Country Brokers.*

By the English Gentlemen, vizt.

* * * * *

Peter Curgenven 100 Rupees.

1728.—Peter is still, or again, at Surat.

Surat Diary, 12 January 1727/8.

Given (by the Secretary) a Certificate to Mr. Peter Curgenven that ten bales of Chettygong Baftas, exported on the *William Galley* for Bombay, have paid here by him the Honourable Company's Customs.‡

Of the next two entries, at Surat and Bombay respectively, the latter suggests that Peter is remitting home some of the proceeds of his trading ventures, preparatory to his own departure. The earlier entry perhaps does not relate to his own funds:

The Honble. Company's Cash, Surat, March 1728.

14 March.—Received of Mr. Peter Curgenven, for which have given him a Bill on the Honourable President and Council in favour of John Hope Esqr. Rupees 14700-0-0.§

* Factory Records, Surat, Vol. 12.

‡ India Office, Records, Factory Records, Surat, Vol. XIII, p. 81.

§ India Office, Records, Factory Records, Surat, Vol. XIII, p. 45.

Extract of a General Letter from Bombay to the Company, dated 30 Sept. 1728.

Para. 211.—At the request of the following persons we have drawn bills on your Honours at two shillings and six pence per Rupee payable after sixty days sight, vizt.

One in favour of Mr. Peter Curgenven for pounds three thousand, being for Rupees twenty four thousand received of him.....24000.*

These are the last traces of Peter in India so far discovered; and in view of the date of his death it is to be inferred that he sailed not later than the autumn of 1728, though I have been unable to discover in what ship.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Curgenven seems to have been doing a little trading on her own account. The extract is from the Court Book preserved at the India Office:

Court of Directors, 4 September 1728.

Ordered that Warrants be made out to the persons and for the sums following:

Curgenven, Mrs. Frances £.8. 10. 3 for goods sold.†

For what befel Peter Curgenven on arrival home we have to rely upon Sir James Bland Burges's account, already transcribed, and upon the epitaph. Sir James had learnt the facts, or rather a version of them in many respects inaccurate, as grandson of Lord Somerville, Mrs. Curgenven's second husband. The epitaph, upon a mural table in Great Waltham Church, Essex, runs thus:

Near this place lyeth the body of Peter Curgenven. Erected by his widow. He was sent in his youth to the East Indies, where,

* Bombay Letters, Received, Vol. 1A.

† Court Book (India Office, Records), Vol. 58, p. 92.

attaining a thorough knowledge of the India trade in all its branches, he acquired a plentiful fortune, and, withal, what is more valuable, the universal character of a man of great honour and honesty, of inviolable faith and integrity, which virtues he adorned with an uncommon affability and politeness. Preparing after a twenty-five years' absence to return to his native country, he unfortunately fell into the hands of Connajee Angria, Admiral to the Sou Raja, then at war with the English at Bombay, and remained in a miserable captivity about five years, during which time with an unparalleled patience, generosity, and greatness of mind he continued not only comforting, assisting, and supporting his fellow-sufferers, but even refusing his own deliverance without that of his companions in misery. At last, having freed himself and the rest by his own industry and management, he embarked for England in hopes of sitting down in quiet and enjoying the fruits of his labours. But see the uncertainty of all things here below! Just before his landing, a violent fit of cramp seizing his thigh, though the effects were hardly discernible, yet was he forced soon after his arrival in London to have his thigh first laid open and then cut off almost close to the body. Scarce ever was the like operation performed! Never any undergone with more resolution and firmness, without so much as a groan, or the least motion to express his anguish. He outlived this operation twelve days, when the wound, bleeding afresh, he resigned his last breath with a surprising sedateness and unconcern at leaving this world, being fully persuaded he was going to exchange his perishable for everlasting riches. He died on the 26th of June, 1729, in the 47th year of his age. He was the son of William Curgenvén, a gentleman of good family in Cornwall, and married Frances, daughter of John Rotherham, of this parish, Esquire, whom he left his sole executrix, having no issue, and who erected this monument over his grave, as a token of her affection and gratitude.

One does not write epitaphs upon oath, but Peter's magnanimity as a captive is in truth shewn by the well-authenticated fact, mentioned by his epitaphist, that he did not rest until he had secured the release of all his fellow-prisoners. The tablet does not confirm Sir James Bland Burges's statement that the injury to his thigh was caused by his labours at the oar.

By his will, proved July 1729, Peter Curgenvén "late of Fort St. George in the East Indies and Soho Square, London" bequeathed a legacy of one thousand pounds to his brother Richard,^o two hundred pounds each to his two nephews and one niece, children of his deceased brother William, and two hundred pounds to each of his sisters, Rachel Hoskins and Mary Rawling. The residue of his property he left to his wife, Frances Curgenvén. I do not find Peter's sisters mentioned elsewhere. Perhaps Rachel Hoskins is the remarried widow of his brother Thomas. I have not seen the will, but make this summary from my father's notes.

In 1736 Peter's widow married, as his second wife, James, 13th Lord Somerville. We get a sketch of her from the pen of Sir James :*

The second^o Lady Somerville had a fortune of about £20,000. She was a very worthy and uncommonly sensible woman. Her understanding was strong, and she had read much. From having seen a great deal of the world, and from having lived in the highest company, her natural wit and cleverness had received an additional force. Her heart was excellent and her friendships vehement. Her temper, however, was warm, and her quickness of apprehension led her sometimes into sallies which were entertaining to everyone except to the person who was the object of them. With the greatest good nature she could say very severe things which, as they always were witty, were remembered and repeated. Unfortunately for her own happiness her husband became the subject of her observations. These affected his consequence and disturbed his temper. When her ladyship was pungent, his lordship was angry; and though he knew and acknowledged her merits, his behaviour was oftentimes stern and unamiable. In truth they lived together by no means happily, and, with mutual esteem and good opinion, they felt little mutual attachment.

* p. 8, loc. cit.

Lady Somerville's conduct to her step-children was highly meritorious. During her whole lifetime she was their benefactress and kindest friend. Immediately after her marriage she took my mother from school, treated her with every indulgence and exerted herself to instil into her mind every principle which might qualify her to become the elegant woman and the good Christian. Notwithstanding the disparity of their years, the most unreserved communication (except indeed as to one subject on my mother's part to be presently noticed) was maintained between them as long as Lady Somerville lived.

Those who are interested in the further fortunes of this spirited lady will find in the Memoirs an exciting description of what befel her and her Lord during the 1745 rebellion, when their house at Drum, near Edinburgh, was invaded by the rebels. Upon the alarm of their approach, the plate was thrown out of the window into long grass, and Lady Somerville handed her step-daughter (Sir James' mother) a casket of diamonds, telling her to hide it. She buried it so effectually at the foot of a tree in the park that it was the devil's own job to find it afterwards. It was a common practice of East India merchants to transfer their wealth in the shape of diamonds, and these stones are likely enough to have been Peter's.

After Culloden, the Duke of Cumberland, surnamed the Butcher from the severity with which he dealt with the rebels surviving that battle,

having quitted the highlands, kept his Court for sometime in Holyrood House, where Lord Somerville had apartments in which he resided during the winter months.....The Duke showed the most marked attention to him and his family. He was much consulted upon every step that was taken while Lady Somerville at H.R.H.'s particular request presided at his table, and did the honours of his Court.

JOHN CURGENVEN.

I have not found the dates either of John's birth or of his arrival in India, unless he, and not Peter, was the soldier who sailed in the *Bedford* in 1701. The first we hear of him is as Peter's companion on a voyage to Acheen, in Pitt's letter of 10th March 1705.* Like Peter he was a free trader and not a Company's servant. After his return to Madras from Sumatra in the spring of 1705 he must have gone to Calcutta, where he engaged in a dispute with Thomas' widow over his deceased brother's effects.

The record of this dispute, to be found in the Bengal Consultations,† brings John and his sister-in-law so vividly before us that it deserves, I think, to be reproduced *in extenso*. Briefly put the facts are that Mrs. Curgenven was in possession of her late husband's house, chattels and accounts when John arrived and applied to the Council for authority to inspect them. Mrs. Curgenven making no answer to the Council's request that she should comply with John's desire, the latter took the law into his own hands and invaded the house with two sympathisers, ostensibly taken as witnesses. What ensued, both according to the widow's account and according to the versions given by John and his friends, is elicited in the inquiry conducted by the Full Council on 2nd June. John is accused of forcing the bedchamber door and presenting a naked sword at the lady's breast, and of other ungentle actions, but this is all denied by his wit-

* Letter XI.

† Also printed in 'The Early Annals of the English in Bengal' by C. R. Wilson, M.A., pp. 851-60.

nesses, one of whom stigmatises Mrs. Curgenvén as 'a notorious liar'. What seems a very reasonable adjustment of the dispute was proposed by the Council, but John stubbornly if not sulkily refused to be a party to it. 'Do as you please' was all they could get out of him. Eventually the widow was left in possession and given leave to realize the estate to pay her husband's debts, and John, we are to suppose, retired empty and discomfited from the fray.

DISPUTE IN THE CURGENVEN FAMILY.

APPLICATION BY JOHN CURGENVEN.

Received a letter from Mr. John Curgenvén desiring we would write to his sister to suffer him to inspect his
May 17th, 1705. deceased brother's books and papers of accounts, etc.

Wrote a letter to Mrs. Rachell Curgenvén, desiring her to comply with her brother's desire.

RACHEL CURGENVEN'S COMPLAINT.

Mrs. Rachell Curgenvén, the widdow of Mr. Thomas Curgenvén deceased, making complaint to us about five of
May 28rd. the clock of the evening that the house she lives in, and particularly her bed chamber, was forcibly entered and all her clothes and necessities taken out by Mr. John Curgenvén, brother of the deceased Mr. Thos. Curgenvén, assisted by Mr. John Calvert and Mr. Richard Smith. The complaint first reaching Mr. Ben. Bowcher he went, and quickly after him Mr. Robert Hedges went to Mrs. Curgenvén's house, where Mr. John Curgenvén, Mr. John Calvert, and Mr. Richard Smith aforesaid were, Mr. Calvert said nothing at that time, but Mr. Curgenvén and Mr. Smith stood on the justification of what was done, they lockt and sealed a chamber door in which they said all that Mr. Curgenvén had siezed was put, and Mr. Hedges ordered two soldiers to wait

in the house and see nothing be removed till the Council meet and direct what is to be done. And being now mett, 'tis unanimously agreed and ordered that Mr. John Curgenvén, Mr. Jno. Calvert, and Mr. Richd. Smith be immediately sent for and examined about the same.

JOHN CURGENVEN'S STATEMENT.

Mr. John Curgenvén being first called for says, in justification of himself, that he had applyed himself to us for justice which he thought we delayed, therefore would right himself, which obliges us to insert the application he speaks of and 'tis in substance as follows:—Mr. John Curgenvén in a letter dated and deliv'd to us in Council on Thursday 17th currt., desires his sister may be informed that he has as much power as she and perswaded to have the books of his brother and her deceased husband made up and to give him an account of what she had already disposed of, and that Council 'did the same day, in compliance with his request, write to Mrs. Rachell Curgenvén, declaring he ought to have the inspection of the books of accounts and all papers whatsoever relating to the estate of her deceased husband, and she ought to give him a satisfactory account of whatsoever goods she had disposed of, of the estate of her deceased husband, which was all he seemed to desire at that time.

We expected an answer from her, but he being impatient, could not wait a day or two longer till her answer came, but violently seiz'd on everything in her possession, as is before related.

RICHARD SMITH'S STATEMENT.

Mr. Smith being next called in says Mr. Curgenvén call'd him to take account of and wittness what he removed, but both Mr. Hedges and Mr. Bowcher do testifie he was very active in counselling Mr. Curgenvén; for instance he said he ought to let her have more wearing cloathes out of the chest, but nothing else. Mr. Bowcher also testifies, and so does Mr. Ralph Woodriffe, that they saw Mr. John Curgenvén force open the door of Mrs. Curgenvén's bed-chamber, which they believe was lock'd being close shut and a spring lock on it, but Mr. Smith affirming the contrary, Mr. Hedges caused the door to be lock'd to try if it could be forced open without breaking the door or lock, and was

twice forced open without breaking either. Mr. Smith spoke reflectingly on us all, saying we were friends of the widdow and not to justice, but he reflected most on the widdow, telling Mr. Bowcher if he believed her, nobody would believe him, and he called her a notorious liar with much more such ungentle expressions. He at last told us he would not answer us to any more questions till we were a full Council.

JOHN CALVERT'S STATEMENT.

Mr. John Calvert was called in. He says Mr. John Curgenven desired him to go with him to be a witness, but he absolutely refuses to answer further till a full Council meets.

LET US WAIT FOR A FULL COUNCIL.

On the consideration of all which 'tis resolved and unanimously agreed, that Mr. Bowcher and Mr. Edwd. Pattle do take Mr. John Curgenven with them, also Mr. James Williamson and Mr. Ralph Emes for witnesses, and in their presence, take an account of all they find of what Mr. Curgenven seized on, and after that account is taken and attested by the witnesses present, they are to deliver to Mrs. Rachell Curgenven, her wearing clothes and such other necessaries as she has present occasion for.

Ordered that further consideration of this matter be deferred till the rest of the Council come from Hugly, or at least till a majority is present.

JOHN CURGENVEN OBSTRUCTIVE.

Messrs. Bowcher and Pattle, as ordered in yesterday's consultation, sent for Mr. Jno. Curgenven and

May 24th. desired him to go along with them to take an account of the goods he had seized, but he declared he would not permit them to open the door or taken an account of anything.

FULL COUNCIL.

Mrs. Curgenven's letter to the Council being before us, the persons accused were sent for and examined.

June 2nd. Their examinations are annexed to this consultation, and considering that the widdow has been abused, for her present satisfaction 'tis thought fit that Mr. John Curgenven, in the presence of Mr. Ben. Bowcher and Mr. Edw. Pattle, do deliver the plate and goods taken out of her bed-chamber into

the said bed-chamber again, into her possessions according to the list already taken, and that she deliver up the books and all papers relating to Mr. Curgenven's estate, into their possession, to be seal'd up in Mr. Curgenven's scutore till persons are agreed on and appointed to adjust the said Curgenven's books, by which all things may be cleared and the account of what goods belonging to said Curgenven's estate in said house be taken by them and that she as speedily as possible, do deliver into the Council an exact account of everything she has disposed of belonging to the said Curgenven's estate, that the said account may be delivered John Curgenven for satisfaction according to his former application and that Mrs. Curgenven is askt immediately on delivery of each chest or scutore whether she has recd. the contents of each, and if she makes exceptions, that then they immediately overlook such chest or scutore, and take a particular account of everything therein, and when the whole is delivered, she is to acknowledge the same for a discharge to said Curgenven, but in the case she makes exceptions of want of anything of value, that she will not give the said Curgenven a discharge for the whole taken away, then the goods are to be kept entire, as they are and not to be deliver'd her till farther order.

WIDOW CURGENVEN'S LETTER.

To the Honble. Council for affairs to the United Engd. East India Compy. in Fort William, Bengall.

Gentlemen,

I suppose by this time you have all heard the story I am going to relate, but because 'tis fitt you should be acquainted with all the circumstances of it, and especially from me, who am the sufferer in it, be pleased to take it as follows, vizd. :—

On Wednesday about 4 in the afternoon, being in the house of my deceased husband Mr. Tho. Curgenven, and in my bed-chamber, Mr. Jno. Curgenven, together with Mr. John Calvert and Richd. Smith, came into my said bed-chamber, and then and there the aforesaid John Curgenven demanded of me the keys of all my chests, boxes, scrutories, for that he said he must take an account of all that I had. I knew of no authority that obliged one to satisfy such unreasonable demands, so refused him the keys, upon which Mr. Calvert and Mr. Smith told me they had an order to remove all my goods into my brother's possession; that

I must not think it hard, he must have the use and possession of them since I had enjoyed them so long, so to work they went as fast as they could to remove my goods. I desired them to forbear till I could get Mr. Bowcher or somebody to take an account of what they carried away, but finding nothing would prevail, I made all the resistance I was able. But the aforesaid John Curgenven with a naked sword in his hand pointed to my breast, uttering several horrid oaths, said that if I touch'd or meddled with anything or call'd anybody to my assistance he would stab me, and if Mr. Bowcher came into the house, he would run him through. Upon this I went to Mr. Bowcher and beg'd him for God's sake to come and see how barbarously I was used. By that time I came back, they had conveyed away all my plate, jewels, ready money, bonds, bills, and other writings, to a great amount, almost most part of my other household goods, insomuch that scarce anything was left me in my bed-chamber except a chest of drawers in which my clothes lay. Upon Mr. Bowcher coming, my brother and he having some dispute, I got possession of my bed-chamber and lock'd the doors in hopes keeping my wearing apparell, but John Curgenven soon broke open my door and took hold of my chest of drawers, and because I opposed him carrying of it away, laid violent hands on me and gave me such a blow with his fist as almost beat me backwards, at the same time threatening with a horrid imprecation if I touched anything he would beat my brains out; after this they lock'd up the door of my bed-chamber, so that I was forc'd to be beholden to a neighbour for a lodging that night and ever since, otherwise must have lain in the street. Thus I have been robb'd of all I had in the house, and not only so, but have been violently assaulted and put in fear of my life.

Gent. I have barely related matter of fact, and that I have done without the least aggravation sevl. gent. in this place will bear me witness. These are crimes, gentl. of such a nature and consequence, and call so loudly for justice, that I can't in the least question that you, who by virtue of a charter from the Queen of England, have taken upon you the civill government of this place, will do me the Justice which I have a right too by the laws of our Native Country.

I am gent. yor. obliged servant,
RA. CURGENVEN.

Calcutta, May 26th, 1705.

EXAMINATION OF JOHN CURGENVEN.

Mr. John Curgenven being examined by Mrs. Ra. Curgenven's letter, his answer thereto is as follows, vizd.:—He acknowledges he demanded the keys (as the widdow mentions) in presence of Calvert & Smith, and she refused them.

He denies that Smith and Calvert spoke to the widdow that they had orders to take her goods and give them into his possession.

He says that he himself, or by his orders the Cooleys, removed the goods out of her bed-chamber into another room. He farther says his sister only said he should not remove them but that she would send for Mr. Bowcher.

He denies that he ever threatened his sister with a naked sword or presented it to her breast, or that he ever threatened Mr. Bowcher to run him through. He acknowledges that he removed some plate, sevl. chests, and any jewels, bonds, or ready money.

He says that after Mr. Bowcher came into the house, she went into the bed-chamber with one slave wench, and he finding the door shutting too, he set his foot against it, and forc't it open, & he acknowledges he took the chest of drawers and sevl. other things and put them into the chamber aforesaid.

He denies that ever he set violent hands on her or struck her a blow, or ever he threatened to beat her brains out, with any horrid Imprecations.

He says he lockt the door within side and went through another chamber and lockt the outward door, but had not the key of her bed-chamber.

Mr. Curgenven was askt the following question, vizd.:—

Q.—Who counselled you to remove the goods?

A.—'Twas on my own head and my own act.

Q.—By what authority or by whose instigation did you seize and take away the goods out of your sister's room?

A.—'Twas to secure myself, but had not any authority, nor was I persuaded thereto.

Q.—Were not the books in your possession or where you could come at them when you wrote to the Council about getting the accounts, ect., adjusted?

A.—I could come at them then.

EXAMINATION OF JOHN CALVERT.

Mr. John Calvert being examined by Mrs. Ra. Curgenvén's letter, his answer thereto is as follows, vizd.:—He says he was not in her bed-chamber when Mr. Curgenvén demanded the keys of her chest, ect., but that he heard him demand them and said he came to take an account of all she had, but she denied him the keys.

He denies that ever he told her he had orders to put all her goods into her brother's possession.

He says he never heard her say she desired him or them to stay till Mr. Bowcher came to take an account of what they carried away.

He denies that he ever heard John Curgenvén threaten to stab her or saw him present a naked sword at her breast, or that he said if Mr. Bowcher came he would run him through.

He also says he saw no jewels, ready money, bonds, bills, or other writings, carried away, only some plate, chests, ect., contents not known and put them into another room in the same house.

He says he cannot be positive whether the door was lockt or not, but Mr. Curgenvén hearing the door shutting too, turned about set his foot against it and pushed it open, a slave wench standing behind at the same time.

He also says that he did not see Mr. Curgenvén strike her or lay hands on her or use any imprecations, saying he would beat out her brains.

Mr. Jno. Calvert was askt the following questions, vizd.:—

Q.—Why did you go to the house with Mr. Curgenvén?

A.—At his request to witness what past.

Q.—Who took an account of the things that were moved?

A.—I took an account of everything that was taken out for my own satisfaction, being not desired thereto, the chests and scrutores not being then open.

EXAMINATION OF RICHARD SMITH.

Mr. Smith's answer to Mrs. Curgenvén's letter:—He says he was in her bed-chamber with Mr. Curgenvén and heard him demand the keys of her chests, ect., saying he must take an account of all she had, she at the same time refusing the keys.

He says he never assisted or helped any one to remove any goods out of her bed-chamber or elsewhere.

He never heard her say anything to desire her brother or them to stay till Mr. Bowcher or any one came to know or take an account of what they carried away.

He says Mr. Curgenvén did not present a sword at her breast, nor utter any oaths, that if she called in any one to her assistance, he would stab her. Neither did he hear him say that if Mr. Bowcher came into the house, he would run him through. He also says he saw no jewels, ready money, bonds, bills, or other writings. There was only some plate, chests and scrutores being not opened, which were carried out of her bed-chamber and put into another chamber in the same house.

He says that the widdow with her slave wench went into the room after Mr. Bowcher came there, her slave wench shutting the door. Mr. Curgenvén sett his foot against the door and forced it open, but he knows not certainly whether the door was lockt or not, but to what he saw he thought it might not be lockt.

He says he never saw Mr. Jno. Curgenvén strike her or lay violent hands upon her, or threaten her with any imprecations to beat her brains out if she toucht anything.

Mr. Smith was askt the following questions:—

Q.—Why did you go to the house with Mr. Curgenvén?

A.—It was at his request, that I might see what past that there might be nothing more laid to his charge than he really did.

Q.—Did you take an account of any goods that were removed or attested that an account was taken?

A.—I took no account myself, but witnessed the account that was taken and saw 'twas right.

MRS. CURGENVEN PUT IN POSSESSION.

Mr. John Curgenven being called and desired to go with

June 4th. Mr. Bowcher and Mr. Pattle & deliver the goods back into the possession of Mrs. Ra. Curgenven which he irregularly seiz'd and took from her, he seemed resolv'd to stand on his own justification & not deliver back anything. 'Tis therefore unanimously agreed & ordered that Mr. Robt. Nightingale and Mr. Edward Pattle do put her in possession as last consultation ordered, tho' Mr. Curgenven should refuse to consent or go with them.

Mr. Robert Nightingale and Mr. Edward Pattle according to order of consultation of this day went to Mrs. Rachell Curgenven's house and sent for Mr. John Curgenven to be present at the delivery of the goods (he had seized) to Mrs. Rachell Curgenven.

JOHN CURGENVEN STILL RECALCITRANT.

Mrs. Rachell Curgenven relict of Mr. Thos. Curgenven, having, 28th ult. sent us the account of goods left in her possession by her deceased husband, that is to say, of what she had disposed of and what still remains with her, the account was sent to Mr. John Curgenven, brother of the deceased, by Mr. Pattle, Sectry.; but Mr. Curgenven refused to look into it, pretending the Council took the management out of his hands, which we declare we neither did nor intended to do, neither did we any action tending to it, but his pretence arises from our opposing his seizing, without any reasonable pretence, on everything that she had wherever he could find it, not excepting her wearing apparell, and because he might not take the violent course that seemed best in his own conceit, resolves not to trouble himself with any of the accounts & there being sevll. debts due from the deceased Thos. Curgenven to the Old Compy. Mr. John Johnson deceased and others, which are demanded, Mr. John Curgenven was askt whether he would give his consent to the dwelling-house of his deceased brother, ect. goods & chattles might be sold, in order to the payment of the debts, he answered he would have nothing to do, nor give any orders about it, but that we might do as we pleased.

Mrs. Rachell Curgenven having, in a letter delivered to us, 16th of this present July, requested that the dwelling-house and some merchandize of Mr. Thos. Curgenven's deceased (her late husband), may be sold

in order to the payment of debts due from the estate of her deceased husband, she having already desired the concurrence of Mr. John Curgenven (Brother of the deceased) in writing, & his reply to her that he would give her no answer, Mr. John Curgenven was sent for, who, appearing, was askt whether he would consent that the house and merchandize of his said deceased brother be sold in order to the discharging debts, and whether he would take any care to appoint anybody to make up the books, to which he refused to give any answer, only that we had askt him the same question before, and we knew what he answered then, & he would say no more now, which last answer was the second of this last July; in these words, he will have nothing to do nor give any order about it, but that we might do as we pleased, that Mr. John Curgenven might have time to consider very well whether he resolves obstinately not to give any other answer about the disposall of his deceased brother's house, ect., goods, resolved that he be sent for again to answer before us next Monday or the first day we meet in consultation.

THEY DISPOSE OF THE PROPERTY IN SPITE OF
JOHN CURGENVEN.

Mr. John Curgenven sent for a third time to know his resolution whether he would do anything in the disposing of the estate of his deceased brother joyntly with his sister, to which he answered as before that he would not concern himself with it. Agreed that since Mr. John Curgenven will not comply with his sister for the selling of the house, ect., clearing his debts, ect., depending accounts belonging to the deceased Thomas Curgenven (notwithstanding our perswasions & directions) that we write to Mrs. Curgenven a letter advising her to sell the house and dispose of the goods, ect., belonging to her deceased husband, in order to pay the black merchants and others, adjusting all things in this place relating to said estate.

It being ordered the 28rd day that Mrs. Rachell Curgenven may dispose of the late dwelling-house & other goods in her possession of her deceased husband, ordered that Mr. Nightingale and Mr. Pattle do take the seal off the scrutores containing the writings, which were sealed up by order in a former consultation and deliver the same up

to her, that she may be able to have all accounts relating to the estate of her deceased husband adjusted.

* * * * *

After this escapade, we lose sight of John until 1712. In September of that year he sailed in the *Marlborough* from Madras to Bengal. We were as usual at war with France, and on her way she fell in with two French ships which had already in their hands a prize, the *Sherborne*. After several broadsides and a long chase the *Marlborough*, which carried half a million rupees and other cargo, got clear, but at the expense, among other things, of John's chest, which was thrown overboard. So Captain Stibs lost the 'corgie of fine Pollicatt* Stockings' which John Scattergood was sending him from Madras. The incident is documented by three letters from Scattergood to Stibs, and extracts from two General Letters, of Fort St. George and Fort William respectively :—

Madras, 26 Aug. 1712.

Captain Hibbs (sic, Stibs).

Sir,

This serves only to acquaint you that by Mr. John Curgenvin have sent you a Corgie of fine Pollicatt Stocking(s). It come [s to] ten Pagodos, which I hope you will received and be to your mind. By the *William* I sent you 8 ps. of gingams.

I am now a littell busey, so shall not trouble you at this time, but remain

Your Most Humble Servant,
(J. S.)

Madrass, the 26 August 1712.

P.S.—Pray give my Serves to Mr. Brown, and tell him the Guns are ready and will send them down by the *Mairmaid*.†

* Pulicat, a town on the coast a few miles N. of Madras.

† Scattergood Papers, 11, 120.

Madras, 14 Sept. 1712.

Captain Barth(olomew) Stibs

Sir,

I sent you down by Mr. Curgenvin a Corgie of fine Pullicatt Stockings and by Captain Blacorn 8 Ps. Gingall, which I hope you have received. Your Account Currant comes inclosed and the ballance, being 5 P. 23 f., please to pay Mr. Charles Boone and his Receipt shall be your Discharge.

I remain,

Your most humble Servant,

(J. S.)

Madrass, the 14 September 1712.*

Extract of a letter from John Scattergood to Captain Bartholomew Stibs, dated Madras, 8 October 1712 :—

I sent you your Account Current by the last ships and a corgie of Pollicatt Stockings by Mr. John Curgenvin on the *Malborough*, but they meeting with the French, his chest with all the things was thrown overboard, in which was your stockings, as you will find per inclosed certificate.†.....

Abstract of Fort St. George General Letter to the Company, dated 14 October 1712 :—

Para. 221.—The *Marlborough* on the 4th ultimo near Point Palmeras mett 3 French ships, 2 of 50 to 60 guns and 1 of 26 guns. Severall broad sides exchanged and after 3 days chase got clear of them. Her treasure unladen. Captain Martin requested 2 per cent of the cargo for his ships Company defending the ship, which leave to the Company's consideration.‡

* Scattergood Papers, 11, 120.

† Scattergood Papers, 11, 150.

‡ India Office Records, Coast and Bay Abstracts, Vol. I, p. 369.

Abstract of Fort William General Letter to the Company, dated 10 December 1712:—

Para. 4.—The Marlborough coming from Madrass for the Bay on the 5th September between Jaggerdenaut and Point Palmeras fell in with two French ships and the *Sherborne* their prize, but got clear. She had aboard in Rupees 504000, 121 bales goods and 151 candy red wood. *

1713.—A Fort William General Letter to the Company, dated 3rd December 1713, records that 'the *Joseph* hir'd by Mr. Curganven is in the Bay preparing for Mocha'. Henceforward John, it seems, made Mocha his headquarters. Here I cannot resist inserting a contemporary description of the place which I lighted upon in an old book in the Bodleian,† for the benefit of those who will enjoy the whiff of perfume of Araby it conveys, and its Biblical flavour, as well as to show how our John was circumstanced:

Mocha was built for an Emporium or Mart for the Trade of India to the Red Sea, and was mightily forwarded by the Perswasion of a Sheck, who bore the Character of a Saint among his Country-men.....It is situated close to the Sea, in a large, dry, sandy Plain, that affords no good Water within 20 Miles, all the Wells near the City being brakish, so that nothing of Fruits grows near it, but a few Dates and Water Melons. The Water for drinking comes from Mosa, about 20 Miles off, and by the time we get it to the Town, it costs us as dear as small Beer is sold for in England.....

Mocha is a Place of good Trade, notwithstanding its bad Situation; for besides the Commerce with Sues and Judda, the English and Dutch Companies have their Factories there, besides a Trade from India, carried on by English free Merchants, Portugueze, Banyans and Moors, and by vessels from Bossorah, Persia and Muskat in Arabia petrea. The Country of itself affords or produces very few valuable Commodities, besides Coffee, and some Drugs, such as Myrrh, Olibanum or Frankincense from Cassin,‡ and Aloes Soccatrina from Soccotra, liquid Storax, white

* India Office, Records, Coast and Bay Abstracts, Vol. I, p. 380.

† 'A New Account of the East Indies' by Capt. Alexr. Hamilton, 1727 (Hamilton was in the East from 1688 to 1723).

‡ S. E. of Aden, on Coast.

and yellow Arsenick, some gum Arabick and Mummy; with some Balm of Gilead, that comes down the Red Sea. The Coffee Trade brings in a continual supply of Silver and Gold from Europe, Spanish Money, German Crowns, and other European Coins of silver; also Zequins, German and Hungarian Ducats of European gold, and from Turkey, Ebramies and Mogradies, Gold of low Matt.

Hamilton goes on to describe how for many years the pirates infested the mouth of the Red Sea, 'committing frequent Robberies and Barbarities'. They attempted to establish themselves on the Island Prim, which lies within gunshot of Babelmandeb; but after digging through 15 fathoms of hard rock could find only brackish water: so they removed themselves to St. Mary's Island on the E. side of Madagascar.

1716.—Further news of John at Mocha is contained in a letter, dated 25th January 1716, from a correspondent at Madras. Things were not going too well:

After our long stay at Mocha, Wee have not been able to dispose of all our Goods, soe brought a small parcell back; wee have been oblig'd alsoe to leave about 15 or 16000 Dollars behind us in the Gover[n]ments hands, which I hope is very secure; Mr. Curganven has left 35,000 Dollars in the Merchants hands which I think very dubious. Wee have brought enough with us to devide Principle, which when the Governour is at leasure shall divide and make an end of that affair.*

In the same year, the Company took steps to establish a Factory at Mocha.

* Scattergood Papers, III, 359-360.

Abstract of Fort William General Letter to the Company, dated 13 September :—

Para. 11.—The *Successe* and *Anne* sent to Mocha with Mr. Hill &ca. to settle a Factory there with above £22000 stock; have settled at Chittoa.*

The *Anne*, so re-named, was no other than the *Sherborne* which we have seen in the hands of the French, by whom she was restored or re-sold. Downing asserts, wrongly as I have shown, that it was in this very ship that 'Mr. Crewganwell' was captured by Angria. All efforts to connect the ship with Peter Curgenven have so far failed.

The factory had not been long established before John, who had a genius for getting into scrapes, came into conflict with the local Supervisor and his Council. There was a French Factory there too, and, unlike ours, the French servants, it seems, were prohibited from engaging in private trade. They got round this rule by employing Master John as a cloak to their transactions, the French Governor, it is alleged, being squared in the usual manner. Hence a remonstrance from Mocha to the Court of Directors, and the somewhat high-handed instructions of the Court, which I reproduce below, to deport John to England if he should fall into the Company's clutches. The sequel is unknown, but one imagines John, if he knew of these friendly intentions, snapping his fingers at them.

By Our last Letters from Mocha we have received Complaints that Peter Adams, Master of a Ship from Calicut and who was second mate of the *Chandos*, had left her, had sold his ship to one John Curgenven, who had resided at Mocha above two years, and intended to freight her for Bengal, That this Curgenven mannages the Frenches private trade which their Company have most strictly prohibited to be drove by any of their Servants, and has also been friendly and assisting to the

* India Office Records, Coast and Bay Abstracts, Vol. II, p. 70,

Ostenders, and to all this had often acted in defiance to the Factory, had assumed to himself a liberty of applying to the Governor in direct Opposition to Our and the authority of Our then Supravisor and his Council, Openly declaring it was a free Port wherein he had as much Liberty as We, and standing in defiance to Our People so that the said Adams was encourag'd in refusing to come to the Factory though they civilly sent to speak with him, When the Supravisor complain'd to the Governor of these Proceedings, he could get nothing but good words and a promise that it should not be so hereafter. What mischievous consequences may attend such Proceedings is not easy to determine, for the Governor will take and it is not doubted but he has taken Money on both sides, the least to be expected is that Our Reputation and Authority there will be much lessen'd if not lost (and Reputation in India is Power) wherefore We hereby direct that you give Publick Notice to all Ships bound to Mocha wherein you are concern'd, or any others under Our Protection as you have opportunity, that they carefully avoid all such like Mis-carriages and let them know that whenever you have plain and full proof of their being guilty, you have Our orders (as We hereby give you) to remove them out of India, and send them for Great Britain by the first Shipping. If this Curgenven should come to Madragg, as very like he may, secure him, till there is an opportunity of shipping and send him to England, and if you hear of him in Bengal advise Our President and Council that they may Comply with these Our orders.*

Before the end of 1725, John had died at Mocha. It seems from Hamilton's description to have been an insalubrious spot. Peter who, with Harnage, had a share in the *Dolphin* which John was running, applied to the Company to wind up his brother's affairs, but the Company, suspecting that things were pretty desperate, declined the proposal :

Consultation at Bombay Castle, 20 December 1725.

Mr. Peter Curgenven, who is proceeded on the *Morrice* to Surat, leaving behind him a packet to this Board, the same is

* Despatches from England, 1722-1728 (Vol. XXV), pages 40-41.

now presented and tis found to be his request under date the 16th Instant with respect to his &ca. owners of ship *Dolphin* their demands on his brother John Curgenven deceased at Mocho, enclosing copies of his said brothers advices to the owners and their accounts as signed by him, that what already owing or may be so afterwards received into the Honble. Companys Cash at Mocho of the said Mr. John Curgenvens effects may be divided among the creditors, hoping he will adjudge them to receive their proportions according to the true accounts and demands as there stated, and not according to the fictitious ones made by the deceased when he found himself incapable of paying their just ballance.

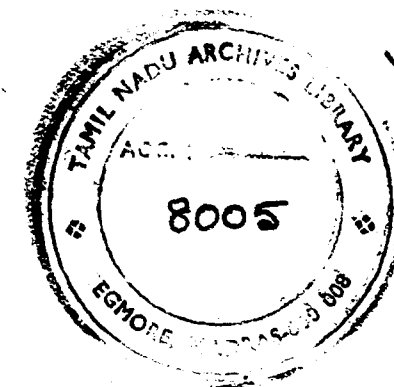
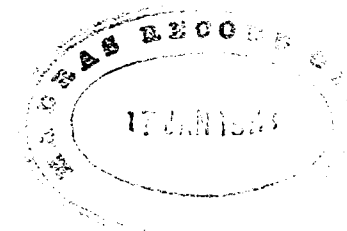
Examining of Mr. Cowan what he knows of these affairs, he acquaints us that the year before he arrived at Mocho, Messrs. John Starke and Charles Benyon were empowered from Mr. Richard Benyon as attorney to Mr. Peter Curgenven to demand such sum and sums of money as were due to the owners of the *Dolphin* and Messrs. Peter Curgenven and John Harneage and does think that accounts were then filed between them and notes past from the said John Curgenven to Messrs. Starke and Benyon for a certain sum, he then charging more than fourteen thousand dollars of bad debts, and now having upwards of twenty thousand dollars still outstanding, which may be justly esteem'd desperate :

That there is received and is in the Shroffs hands of the deceased effects upwards of sixteen thousand countrey dollars and he is indebted to the said Shroff between nine and ten thousand Spanish dollars, besides about a thousand Spanish dollars to divers other people at Mocho.

Considering on the same that there may be demands made hereafter that we at present know nothing of and that it is not at all incumbent on us by receiving the produce of the deceased's effects into our Honble. Masters cash to take the trouble of making a dividend thereof, when there is so near a relation as a brother in India, who as such and the most considerable creditor can justly claim to administer.

Resolv'd that we embarrass not our Honble. Masters or ourselves with the affair further than receiving and keeping what can be recovered of the deceaseds effects into our Honble Masters Cash untill proper powers by vertue of administration are produced to demand the same, and that Mr. Peter Curgenven be acquainted hereof, and that we give direction to Mocho accordingly.

That concludes my gleanings about John. I think he was not endowed with the steadfastness and business capacity of his brother Peter; but we must be careful how we judge him upon the account of his quarrel with Mrs. Thomas, which necessarily bulks overlargely among his remains. The incident occurred when he was still very young, and perhaps had not fully reached the age of discretion.



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