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DR WILLIAM FULLERTON AND THE PATNA MASSACRE OF 1763

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POLITICAL LIFE IN EAST INDIA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

The political history of India in the 18th century is a chronicle of kings, nawabs, zamindars (landlords), commanders, courts and their intrigues, struggles, battles and wars. It is not a story of national growth. The principles and methods of administration did not change appreciably in spite of the diversity of successive rulers including the English East India Company. But in the character and life of the rulers there is infinite variety and it is around these men that the chief interest of this period centres. There were more violent periods, full of deceits and killings, than peaceful ones. The East India Company was emerging as the paramount power and played a great role in the happenings of the period.

Doctors, usually called surgeons, were an essential part of the Company administration, required to look after the health of the employees, but when necessary they were also expected to participate actively in administration and even to fight. In combat, many suffered severe injuries and humiliations, were made captive or even killed. In one such tragic event in October 1763 known as the Patna Massacre, an entire group of Company employees including several doctors was killed, except for Dr William Fullerton who survived to tell the story.

Fullerton's career in India up to 1760

Fullerton was born in Symington, Ayrshire and came to India about 1745. His name is first mentioned in Fort William consultations of 19th August 1749¹ but he may have been posted in Bombay between 1746 and 1749. Dr Holwell had resigned his post as second surgeon in Calcutta on 30th April, 1750 and Fullerton applied for the job. The President of the Council sought to appoint Dr John Knox senior. The Court of Directors however refused to confirm this and ordered that William Fullerton be appointed. He held the post of second surgeon in Calcutta for over ten years and was in service at the siege of Calcutta and Fort William in July 1756. At the moment of surrender he was on board a ship, perhaps on duty, attending the sick women and children and the wounded. One of the sick was Mrs Mackett, wife of a member of the Council.

Fullerton was elected Mayor of Calcutta on 8th December 1757 for a year. He is reported to have made good money in Calcutta and received 230,000 rupees (nearly £30,000) as compensation as a sufferer in the siege and capture of Calcutta. He was also successful in his private business particularly in the saltpetre trade in Bihar. Early in 1760 he was transferred to Bihar and on 9th February he

*Physician and Neurologist.

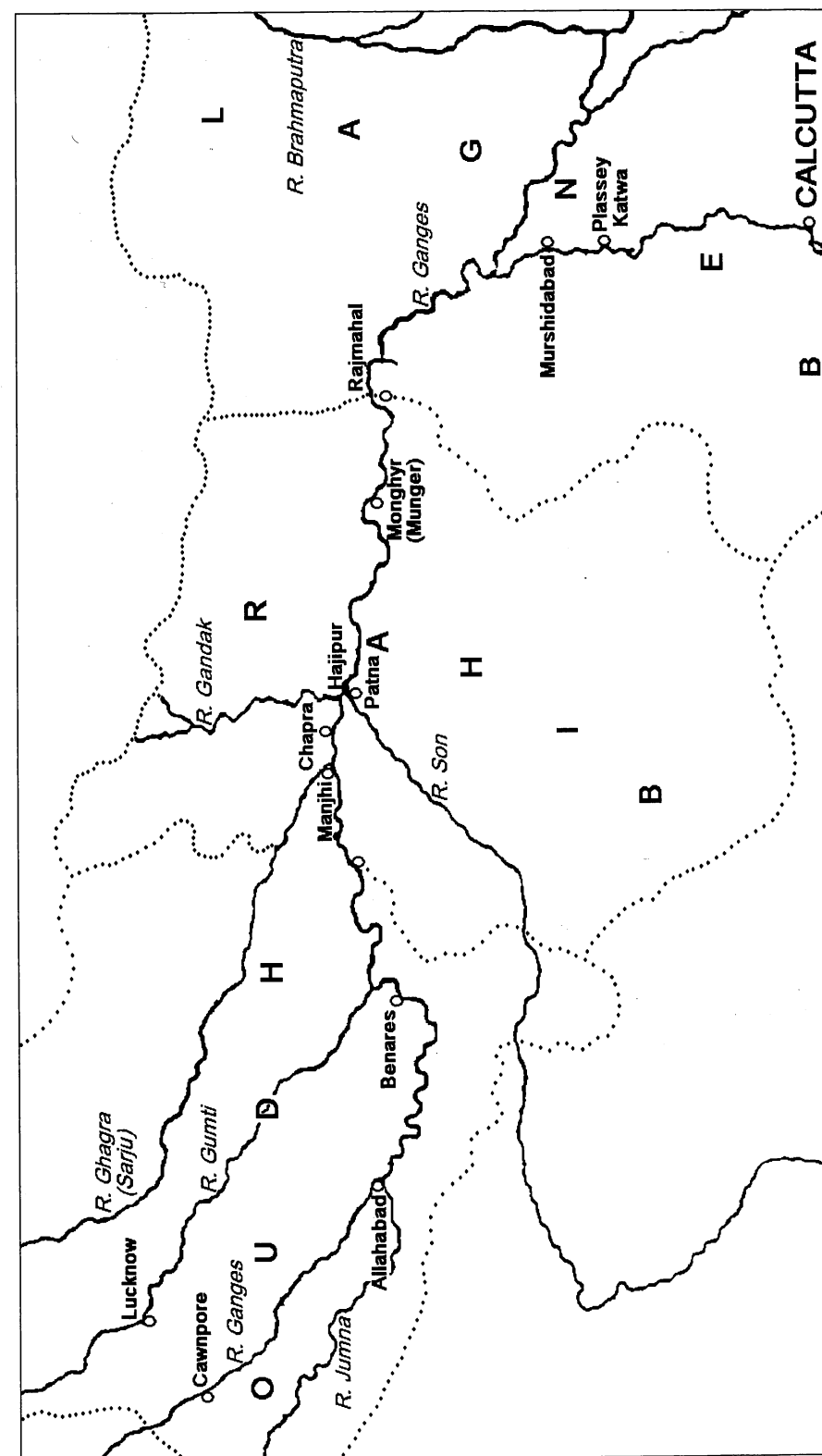
distinguished himself participating in an action at Mohsinpur, a village near Patna.

The battle of Mohsinpur

The battle was between Shah Alam, the Moghal Emperor of the time, and Mir Kasim, the Nawab of Bengal which then included Bihar. It occurred because the latter had declared himself an independent sovereign and severed all links with the court in Delhi. The Nawab's troops led by Raja Ram Narain (the Nawab's deputy governor at Patna) and assisted by a small British force were totally defeated.² Fullerton, as surgeon of the Agency of Patna, was a member of the British force and was the only European to survive. All other British officers who took part in the battle were killed. They were Captain Cochrane, Lieutenant Buck, Ensign Winderbeck and Volunteer Barwell. On the death of these officers, Fullerton assumed command and, discovering that the day was completely lost, began a retreat to Patna. He was surrounded by the enemy but by coolness and steadiness of conduct he marched on, keeping his adversaries at a respectable distance. On the way, one of his two gun carriages broke down and he was forced to leave it on the field. When the other turned over, Fullerton halted his soldiers, righted it on its wheels and resumed his march. With courage and determination, the small party reached Patna. The town was besieged by the Emperor's troops and Fullerton gave distinguished service in its defence.² The siege was planned by Monsieur Law, the Agent of the French Company in Patna who was acting as the military advisor and commander of the Emperor's troops. Law surrounded Patna on three sides, the fourth being the Ganges. He decided to launch an assault from the south, in broad daylight in a very sudden manner. He gave his troops ladders with which they started to scale the town wall before alarm of the attack could be given by the British troops. Fullerton hastened with some British soldiers to the spot, accompanied by several of the Patna factors, who volunteered their services. When they arrived, they found the ladders already planted and some of the French soldiers on the ramparts; rocket fire quickly drove them back. The Emperor's troops and the French were compelled to retreat with heavy losses. Shortly after the battle, Fullerton returned to Calcutta where he resigned from his post of second surgeon on 1st September 1760. He apparently intended to return to England the following year. Possibly he felt that his services had not received adequate recognition but instead of leaving India, he returned to Patna and so became involved in the events of 1763.

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY IN 1760

Robert Clive whose victory at the battle of Plassey in 1757 had established the British as rulers in Bengal, left for England on 3rd February 1760 and Vansittart took over as the Chief at Fort William, Calcutta. Mir Kasim was confirmed as Nawab (native ruler or governor) on 20th October 1760, by the Calcutta Council of the Company. He had replaced Mir Zafar, not because he was supposed to be a better administrator but because the Company and its servants wanted to expand their trade and profits. The Nawab was by now considered a convenient tool to serve the Company's commercial purpose and that of the private trade of its servants; if he proved obstructive, ineffective or unrewarding a change could be made. It is reported that the victory at Plassey made the



Map showing Patna and its position on the River Ganges.

SCENES FROM BIHAR DURING THE TIME OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY



On the Ganges near Monghyr



Houses of natives near Patna

SCENES FROM BIHAR DURING THE TIME OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY



Travellers and peasantry



Travelling dak (mail)

From: Bishop Reginald Heber. *Narrative of a journey through the Upper Provinces of India 1824-25*. 2 vols. London, 1828.

Company administrators swollen headed and they began to think that they could do anything they wanted. The size of their trade had expanded remarkably and they now wished for other kinds of commercial concessions.

Internal tariffs

Mir Kasim moved his court to Munger, previously called Monghyr, and Vansittart decided to visit him there and also to inspect the British factories at Patna and Chapra. The Nawab received him with the utmost honour and gave him a royal reception. The focal point of their discussion was an important and sensitive issue. Mir Kasim complained to Vansittart that under the name of the Company, a number of private British merchants passed their goods free from duty. By such a practice, whilst the British themselves reaped but a small benefit, his customs suffered a mighty loss. He further added that to put an end to such pernicious practices, it would be proper to submit all the private British traders to tax law control, leaving the Company to trade as freely as ever.³⁻⁶ Vansittart argued that the private British traders had at all times been accustomed to freedom from duties and he could not make a decision until he returned to Calcutta. Soon after Vansittart had left, the Nawab wrote to the officers in his kingdom announcing the agreement he expected with the British on duties on private trade. His overbearing customs officers did not keep these messages secret and immediately began checking the goods of private British traders in many places.⁵⁻⁷ William Ellis, who was chief of the Patna factory at the time, was incensed by the Nawab's customs officers and sent a force which seized some of them and brought them as prisoners for trial and punishment.

Vansittart returned to Calcutta and raised the issue of the Nawab's intention in the Council. He also gave his personal view that duties needed to be paid by the British merchants on their inland private trade. The majority of the Councilors did not agree with the governor and prevented implementation of the agreement. In disgust Mir Kasim in 1763 declared the whole inland trade, either by the natives or the Europeans, public or private, totally free of duty for a period of two years.^{5,8} This decision of the Nawab was interpreted by the Council as an expression of hostility rather than discontent. It cut away their advantages and their large profits at a stroke. They protested vigorously and said that this order was beyond the powers of the Nawab. Their argument was that the duties were imposed normally by the Moghal Emperor at Delhi and it was he, who had exempted them in favour of the Company and that the Nawab, technically only the Emperor's deputy, had no powers to interfere with imperial orders. In fact the exemption from duties was applicable only to Company's imports and exports and was not meant to cover its inland trade. It was also clear that the Emperor gave no privileges in respect of the trade carried out privately by the servants of the company. In practice, however, these imperial orders were not observed and private trade was tacitly permitted. The company, by permitting its servants to share the privileges of duty exemption in the inland trade of the province, was guilty of violating the provisions of the imperial prescript. Governor Vansittart and Warren Hastings (later to become the first Governor General of the Company) were the only members of the Council who continued to argue in the meetings that the Nawab was within his rights in issuing the order to abolish the duties.

The Calcutta Council deputed in April 1763 two of its members, Amyott and

Hay, to visit the Nawab at Munger and to give him a warning.¹⁰ Amyott and Hay were taken prisoner by Mir Kasim and there was another more serious incident. In May a fleet of boats laden with firearms and supplies, destined for the British garrison and factory at Patna, touched Munger on the way and Mir Kasim seized them.⁵ He was angered at the secret dispatch of arms to Ellis, chief of the agency in Patna, whom he strongly suspected was going to use them either to capture Patna or for some other mischievous purpose. Ellis who was strongly opposed to Mir Kasim had courage and resolution, but also a violent temper and possessed no qualities of political foresight or leadership, as proved by subsequent events in Patna.

Negotiations between the British and Mir Kasim failed because of the hostile attitudes of both the Nawab and Amyott. Apprehending danger from Company troops in Patna and from Ellis, Mir Kasim demanded that they be removed. He wrote to governor Vansittart, 'I have no objection to two or three hundred Englishmen remaining at Patna, but to keep such a force with Mr Ellis to ruin my affairs is very improper'.^{3, 5, 11}

With deadlock in negotiations, Mir Kasim eventually set Amyott free and allowed him to leave Munger on 24th June 1763. Hay was however detained as a hostage in a retaliatory action after the capture of some of the Nawab's officers by Ellis.

During his stay at Munger, Amyott had been in secret correspondence with Ellis at Patna. When the negotiations broke down, Amyott wrote to Ellis that he was going back to Calcutta and that the end of talks would mean a war. He asked Ellis to keep watch. This was exactly the opportunity Ellis was looking for. He calculated the time that it would take for Amyott to reach Calcutta and convince the Council to declare war on the Nawab. In a fit of misjudgment Ellis, determined to seize the Nawab's forts at Patna, attacked the city on 25th June and captured it. The Nawab's troops gave no resistance and the British soldiers plundered the houses of citizens without leaving in some of them so much as a bit of straw.⁵

THE PATNA MASSACRE

When Mir Kasim in Munger received the news of the seizure of Patna, he was furious at what he felt was an act of treachery.¹² But even before the capture of Patna by the British forces, he had guessed Ellis's designs and had dispatched a powerful army from Munger. His troops received news of the seizure of Patna while they were still 15 miles from the city. They rushed on following the river route (Ganges) and recovered the town. The British were now in a dilemma; they could not remain in the factory because they were too weak to hold it against the Nawab's forces. They could not go down the river to Calcutta, because then they were certain to be captured by the Nawab's men at Munger. They were forced to go up the Ganges into Awadh, a territory to the west of Bihar under the control of Nawab Shujaudaula. Ellis and Carstairs, the military commandant, retreating into Awadh met with great difficulty on account of the river flooding and the current being against them. At Chapra, a town on the northern bank of the Ganges, a large number of their *sepoys* (native soldiers) deserted. Within a few days Ellis's forces were surrounded by the Nawab's troops near Manjhi, a small town on the river Ghaghra (a tributary of the Ganges and

also called Sarju) a few miles west of Chapra. A battle took place at Manjhi on 1st July 1763. The British were badly defeated and Carstairs mortally wounded.¹³ He died at Hajipur, a town on the eastern bank of the Gandak (another tributary of the Ganges) on 3rd July. The British were surrounded, captured and taken to Patna on 6th July and later to Munger.

The success of his army in Patna had revived the spirits of Mir Kasim who was until then in a fit of shock and depression. When he heard the news, he ordered a military band to strike up which awakened the whole town of Munger. The next day, he wrote letters throughout his dominions, informing his officers of the victory and giving them orders to seize the British throughout Bengal and put them to the sword. The British factory at Kasimbazaar, a small town in north Bengal, was plundered by the Nawab's people and the officials carried off as prisoners to Munger. Amyott who on 3rd July was at Murshidabad, on his way to Calcutta, was surrounded by the Nawab's troops led by Taqi Khan the commander at Murshidabad, who is reported to have hacked him to pieces together with all other Englishmen on board. Amyott had prayed to be sent to Munger, but Taqi Khan cut off his head and sent it to the Nawab, in Munger.

This catastrophe caused a great ferment among the British in Calcutta. Governor Vansittart, shocked beyond measure, wrote a threatening letter to Syed Mohammed Khan, the Nawab's deputy governor at Murshidabad, asking him to explain how the murders had been perpetrated almost under his eyes. The incensed councillors in Calcutta, exclaimed with one voice that their only wish was to revenge Amyott's death and to punish Mir Kasim for his cruelty. Vansittart with his usual coolness tried to pacify the angry councillors, cautioning them that a number of British men, officers, civilians, and soldiers were still captive in Mir Kasim's fort in Munger and that they would all be killed, the moment the Nawab heard that an army was coming from Calcutta. He suggested trying to come to terms with Mir Kasim until the prisoners could be released out of his hands after which there would be time for war and revenge. This speech made no effect on the councillors and they declared war on the Nawab on 7th July. They also immediately dismissed Mir Kasim from the Nawabship and made Mir Jafar (Mir Kasim's father-in-law and a previous Nawab) the new Nawab.

A large force was sent to Bihar under the command of Major Thomas Adams, which completely defeated the Nawab's troops in three separate battles, at Katwa (Bengal) on 19th July, at Gharia (Bengal) on 2nd August and at Udwa Nala near Raj Mahal in Bihar on 5th September. On receiving the news of the defeat at Udwa Nala, Mir Kasim now in Patna was in a state of despondency and did not know what to do.⁵ One day he abruptly decided to leave Patna at 4 o'clock in the morning, got upon his elephant without speaking a word to anyone and proceeded to Munger. His soldiers having heard of his departure followed him. Arriving at Munger, he stopped for three days to review his army and take out of the fortress a few effects he had left there. Perhaps he also waited to judge the loyalty and preparedness of his troops. At this stage his friends advised him to release the British prisoners, particularly the women and to send them in boats to Major Adams. He and his commander Ghurgin Khan (an Armenian) did not pay any regard to these proposals and he returned to Patna, taking with him the British prisoners including Fullerton, Hay, Ellis and Lushington. Back in Patna he heard that the British had captured his fortress at

Munger on 1st October. His temper burning beyond measure, he gave orders to put to death all the British prisoners.^{15, 16} Rienhardt,* a German then serving with Mir Kasim, carried out the order without regard to the religious, cultural and racial ties that bound him to the unfortunate prisoners. On the night of 5th October 1763, he came to the house, then called Haji Ahmed's house, where most of these prisoners were confined, and without hesitation or remorse, ordered all of them to be killed with musket fire. It is reported that some of the prisoners faced up to their murderers and with empty bottles, stones and brickbats fought them until they were killed.^{15, 16} It is said that Henry Lushington, although severely wounded, ran at the man who had shot him and having wrenched the sabre out of his hands, cut him down. Next morning when the Nawab's soldiers came to bury the dead in a well, they found another prisoner, Gulston still alive. They were thinking of saving him, but Gulston boldly began to abuse them and even threatened severe revenge if he lived. In response, he was thrown alive into the well with the others. Seven others, who had been kept separately from the rest in another house known as *Chihal Sutun* (the house with forty pillars) were murdered on the 11th October.^{15, 16} Of all the prisoners, not a man remained alive, save and except Dr William Fullerton. How he was saved is described below. The total number of British who lost their lives in the Patna massacre, the battle at Mohsinpur, the attack on Patna and in prison in Munger, including Mr Amyott in Murshidabad, was sixty-five.¹⁸ Fifty-one were murdered in the Patna massacre including sixteen civilians and thirty-five serving with the army. Among the civilians were Ellis and Hay, both members of the Council, seven factors, including Henry Lushington and seven writers. Among those who belonged to the armed forces, were six officers of the artillery, eighteen of infantry, three surgeons and eight British merchants, who were temporarily serving with the forces.^{4, 12, 16, 17} There were some women and children taken prisoners with the men at Patna. Among them was Lady Hope, wife of Lieutenant Sir William Hope who died in the massacre of 5th October. It is probable that the women and children were released. Rienhardt is reported to have killed a young child of Mr Ellis but Lady Hope was allowed to live in the Dutch factory.^{17, 18}

Doctors killed in the massacre

At least four doctors were killed in the massacre or the wars immediately connected with the massacre and these were Clement Croke, John Ham, William Anderson and Peter Campbell. Apparently two others a Dr Smith (probably a Swiss) and a Dr Harling (or Harlan) were also killed.^{15, 16}

Clement Croke was a native of St Kitts in the West Indies and he took the MD degree of Edinburgh in 1753 with a thesis entitled 'De Pleuritite'. He entered the service of the Company and was surgeon at Chittagong in 1761-62. He was appointed head surgeon at the Presidency in Calcutta on 8th April 1762 and accompanied Amyott and Hay on their failed mission to Munger. Setting out

*Walter Reinhardt, known as Somru, was a German and a Lutheran who had come to India under the employ of the French East India Company. Somru was the corrupt form of Le Sombre the name given to him by European colleagues on account of his grim and silent ways. He later served with the Raja of Bharatpur (near Agra) and with the Emperor Shah Alam, who later gifted him a big estate at Sardhana (in Uttar Pradesh). He married a beautiful slave girl in Shah Alam's household, Begum Joanna Nobilis Zeb-un-nissa, known as Begum Somru.

with Amyott to return to Calcutta, he was taken prisoner when Amyott was killed at Murshidabad on 3rd July and sent first to Munger and then to Patna a few days before the massacre in which he was killed.¹⁷ Fullerton however states that he was dangerously wounded in the head, when Amyott and his party were captured at Murshidabad and died a few days later.¹⁸

John Ham was appointed surgeon to the factory at Kasimbazar on 23rd May 1763 replacing surgeon William Stuart, who had died of a stroke. Ham was taken a prisoner with other officials at Kasimbazar and sent to Munger, where he probably died in prison, but the company records give his name as among those killed in the Patna massacre.¹⁵⁻¹⁷ This may be a mistake.

William Anderson went to India as surgeon's mate on the ship *Edgbaston* in 1753 and was posted in Madras until 1756. It is not clear, how and when he moved from Madras to Bengal. In 1763 he is reported to be in service as a surgeon to the Company troops at Patna. After the battle of Manjhi on 1st July 1763, he accompanied Captain Carstairs, Captain Wilson, Surgeon Campbell and Ensign Armstrong and McKay in a boat, destined for Hajipur but they were forced to surrender. Carstairs died at Hajipur on 3rd July and the others were taken prisoner. They were sent to Patna and from there to Munger, but they were killed in *Chihal Sutun*, in the second round of murders on 11th October. The prisoners in *Chihal Sutun* were not allowed to see those confined elsewhere.¹⁵⁻¹⁷

While in prison Anderson wrote a letter to his friend Dr John Davidson, surgeon at Chittagong in which he asked Davidson to settle his affairs after his death.^{2, 15-17} How these letters were smuggled out of the prison is mysterious but it is presumed that they were carried by a Dr Nicola, a black slave boy who served as a dresser under Anderson and later was appointed an assistant surgeon. Nicola risked losing his life in the service of Anderson. In fact he was arrested for trying to communicate with other prisoners but was later released. In one of the letters Anderson writes:

Patna, 6th October 1763

'Dear Davidson, Since my last, His excellency (Mir Kasim) has been completely defeated, and in consequence, obliged to retreat to Jaffer Cawn's Gardens yesterday and proposes coming into the city today. Sumroo, (Rienhardt) with the sepoys arrived here last night, and I suppose to effect his wicked designs, for last night Mr Ellis and 48 gentlemen were murdered, and as about an equal number remains of soldiers and us, I expect my fate this Night. Dear Davidson, this is not a surprise to me, for I have all along expected it. I must therefore as a dying Man, request of you to collect and remit home my Fortune as soon as possible, and write home a comforting Letter to my father and Mother. Let them know I die bravely, as a Christian ought, for I fear not him who can kill the body, and nothing more but rejoice in hopes of a future Existence through the merits of my Saviour. O Davidson, be not over anxious for a Fortune; let mediocrity satisfy you and go home and comfort your friends and mine. Endeavour to recover Mr Ellis's money is possible, but I believe the 14,000 Rupees with Hancock is safe, which will be a help for my poor friend. You have full Instructions in my other papers. You may give Nicola, if he comes to you, 200 rupees and if you can, provide for him, for he is a good boy. Now Dear Friend, I take leave of you, hoping that the Friendship will still subsist for while may there not be the same friendship in a future state, Friendship will still subsist for ever

Fare you well, and may God give you satisfaction in Life, and Joy in Death, Yours William Anderson'.

Davidson later was head surgeon in Calcutta but because of ill health returned to Britain. It is said that he was still alive and residing at Restalrig, near Edinburgh

in 1772, when he handed over copies of Anderson's diary and letters to John Bruce, the historian with the East India Company.^{2, 15-18}

Peter Campbell had been a surgeon on a Company's ship and served during the fighting in Patna and Manjhi. He died with the rest at *Chihal Sutun*.^{2, 15-18}

There is some doubt as to how many European soldiers and civilians were taken prisoner and murdered in the Patna massacre. Different accounts give different figures. All Europeans were not British and some were French, German or of another nationality. Some were killed in fighting and some deserted. It seems likely that all the British prisoners were murdered.

HOW FULLERTON SURVIVED THE PATNA MASSACRE

Fullerton associated with Indian gentlemen more than was the practice among the British in Bengal and Bihar. He involved himself in the political and administrative intrigues of the local gentry. Saiyid Ghulam Hussain, author of the book *Seir Mutkharin*, a rich historical account of the political events of north central India of the 18th century, claimed him as an intimate friend.⁵ Fullerton encouraged Ghulam Hussain to go to Mir Kasim in Munger to plead for some honourable employment. Hussain had so much trust in Fullerton that he accepted his advice and succeeded in entering the service of Mir Kasim. Fullerton knew the vernacular well and was appointed as an interpreter at the famous enquiry held in Patna into the conduct of Nand Kumar a high ranking employee of the Company. This brought unhappiness to him because Vansittart, the Company governor accused him of misrepresenting facts.¹⁴ Nawab Mir Kasim, himself had used Fullerton's services to translate letters of some native chiefs so that copies could be sent to Vansittart.

Fullerton lived in a house in the middle of Patna and often had reason to be suspicious of Mir Kasim's designs. After the battle of Mohsinpur in which Patna was recovered from the hands of the British, the Nawab had made some sarcastic remarks about Fullerton before his friend Ghulam Hussain. In a conversation at the Munger court in the morning after the victory, he turned to Ghulam Hussain and added, 'Your friend the doctor can use his friends very ill, in a very strange manner, indeed. He has introduced troops secretly through his house and it is he that has given rise to these disturbances, which you have doubtless heard of'. Upon this Ghulam Hussain answered quickly 'And who am I, my Lord Nawab, to be so great a friend of theirs? The doctor was an acquaintance of your Highness and your friend; and it becomes us, your servants to be friends of their master's friends, as well as enemies to his enemies. If the doctor be your friend, his friend I am from that moment, and if he be your enemy, I become, his mortal enemy likewise from that moment'. To this the Nawab Mir Kasim made no comment.³

After Patna had been retaken by Mir Kasim's forces, Fullerton was a member of the group that retreated to Manjhi and was in action there on 1st July 1763. Ellis, Fullerton and the others were brought back to Patna on 6th July and then taken to Munger on 8th July where Nawab Mir Kasim was in residence. Fullerton was kept separately from the rest of the British and he was allowed to treat Captain Turner, another prisoner, who died from 'flux' (dysentery). This was perhaps the only occasion he saw any of the other prisoners.

Ellis had been sent to Munger with all his followers. All the artillery, arms,

and effects that had been taken, either in the factory, or in the camp or at Bankipur, a part of Patna town, where a new European settlement had developed, were also sent to Munger. Ellis was placed in the care of Ferhand-Ali who was some sort of a jail superintendent. Mir Kasim took all the other British soldiers and people under his own control and kept them confined near his palace.

Ghulam Hussain was in Munger and Fullerton sent him word from the prison through a messenger, requesting his help in softening the Nawab's angry attitude towards him and other prisoners. Hussain wanted to help him not only because he was a friend, but also as a matter of political policy, because he felt certain that the Nawab was aware of the secret message that Fullerton sent him. So Ghulam Hussain went to the Nawab and pleaded on behalf of the doctor. Mir Kasim replied 'I have no objection to your interference; it is for a friend. There is no harm in taking notice of his distress at such a time as this'. This was more than honest. He was hinting at Hussain's connections with the British, particularly Fullerton. To this Hussain answered, 'My Lord Nawab, the doctor is still more a friend of your Highness than he is of mine, and you were studious to oblige him. It is for that reason, I have supplicated you in his behalf. Please your Highness to inform me what favour you choose to confer upon him, that I may act accordingly. If he be your culprit, I have nothing to say to him; do with him as you shall think best'. At this the Nawab smiled and calling for Ferhand-Ali, the prison superintendent, looked at him, and said, 'The doctor has sent a message to Ghulam Hussain Khan, and as that nobleman is my friend, he has of his own motion given notice of it. For aught I know, he may have sent a hundred such messages to a hundred more persons; and you that have him under your charge, know nothing of the matter. Be more upon your guard and take care that your prisoners suffer no hardships either in their victuals, clothing or anything necessary; take care also, that no messages of their or of his go through the army, for fear they may in time, produce some mighty mischief'. Ghulam Hussain did not continue the dialogue and kept quiet. The British prisoners including Fullerton, continued to be strictly guarded and watched till the time when the Nawab went to Patna.

In September 1763, Fullerton and the other prisoners were sent from Munger to Patna. He was confined alone in the fort there. The morning after the first massacre, Fullerton was called to the court of the Nawab where his friend Ghulam Hussain had been sitting quite unaware of the events of the previous night. Fullerton came in Indian dress and presented in compliance with the custom of the country a few rupees as a *nazar* (gift) to the Nawab. The Nawab declined to accept them and said, 'there was no such customs between you and me hitherto' and having embraced him, he bid him to sit with Ghulam Hussain, his friend. Looking at him he said, 'Fraud with friends and treason with acquaintances; what did you mean by that? You have received under your roof within the town, a number of armed men as sick, and have let them out again in the night in which they have surprised the city walls'. Fullerton, answered in a firm voice. 'My Lord Nawab, I do not fear death. You have killed all those countrymen of mine. Do kill me likewise, you may; you are the master. But never will I admit that I am guilty of treason. I have not done that. If it be proved against me, I am content even now that you order me to be put to death'. He then pointed at a nobleman, Akidutmund Khan, whose house in Patna

was separated from that of Fullerton's by only a wall and continued, 'That nobleman is my neighbour. Ask him; enquire from whom you please'. As the accusation was baseless, this nobleman vouched for the doctor's innocence and said that he was not guilty. At this assertion, the Nawab paused and then told Fullerton that he could go to Calcutta or stay with him in Patna⁵ Mir Kasim now thought of a plan to use him as an envoy to governor Vansittart. His idea was to come to some honourable agreement and avoid further British attack but he found that Fullerton was reluctant to go to Calcutta. The Nawab turned to Ghulam Hussain and said 'The man must be made to understand this offer to go as the mediator, but you shall do that by yourselves'. Ghulam Hussain then took Fullerton behind a curtain and spoke to him as he had been directed. Fullerton refused to act as mediator and said that, after Mr Amyott's murder, it was impossible to think of peace. Over and above that his countrymen had been put to death the previous night. When the Nawab was told of Fullerton's reply, he called him again for consultation. Fullerton answered 'all that, is utterly impossible; first because the army which is actually on the road, will not allow me to pass, but suppose, that I shall find no obstacle, still my going would not answer no purpose at all. The murder of Mr Amyott, a man quite innocent, is so infamous an action as will for ever render ineffectual every proposal for an accommodation'. The Nawab now hopeless of any diplomatic success replied, 'Since you cannot go, you may remain where you are, please'. The Nawab then told a courtier Ali Ibrahim Khan, to take care of his friend Dr Fullerton and provide lodgings for him in the city, with the precaution, of putting some trustworthy persons at his door, to prevent him communicating with anyone outside his house. He added that he must also take a security from the doctor. Fullerton hearing of this produced another nobleman, Mirza Himmat Ali, who acknowledged himself as a security in writing under his signature and seal. Lodging was then provided for Fullerton but guards were posted at his gate. These were removed two days later and Fullerton was then a free man.³

Mir Kasim on hearing that the British, after having taken the fort at Munger, were marching towards Patna began preparations to leave. But before going he was told by Mir Abboo, a minor nobleman in disgrace for his connections with Mir Zaffer, the former Nawab, that it was improper to leave Fullerton under the control of Ali Ibrahim Khan. Mir Kasim became more suspicious than ever and asked Ali Ibrahim Khan to hand over the doctor. Ibrahim Khan reminded him that he had himself ordered the guards to be dismissed and on his order, they had been removed, but if the Nawab wanted them appointed again, then he would do that. This new order of the Nawab was conveyed to Fullerton secretly and seeing new guards, he suspected that something was in the offing and thought it was time for a quick plan to extricate himself. He refused to admit the new guards into his house under the pretence that without an order from the Nawab, he could not allow them in. Mir Abboo then instigated some of the court officers to tell Mir Kasim that, in defiance of his order, Ali Ibrahim Khan had not made Fullerton over to him. But Mir Kasim, realising his declining fortunes did not insist on fresh guards to watch the doctor.

During these intrigues at the Nawab's camp, Fullerton visited the Dutch factory in Patna, where he managed to hire a condemned boat to ferry him over to Hajipur on the north bank of the Ganges opposite Patna where he knew there were some British troops under Major Adams. He got into the old vessel with

his bodyguard, Mir Himmat Ali and put off from the shore. On seeing him leave in a boat, the Nawab's guards stationed on the south bank set off in pursuit. But Fullerton's boat was already in the middle of the Ganges, and the British on the other side of the river noticed the ancient boat trying to make an escape. They hastily boarded some boats and rushed to his assistance. The Nawab's guards intimidated by their appearance allowed Fullerton to land amongst his friends.

Thus Fullerton found himself, for the second time the sole survivor of a force to which he belonged. Earlier he was the only British officer at Mohsinpur who was not killed in action and now he was the only officer of the force at Patna who was not murdered.¹⁷

There is some confusion about the date of Fullerton's escape from Patna. Some reports indicate that he was allowed to stay in the Dutch factory by Mir Kasim until the Nawab fled on 14th October; he made his escape on 25th October, joining Major Adams the same night.

Fullerton remained in Patna for over two years after the massacre, but not in peace. He was accused of helping Nand Kumar, minister of Nawab Nazmuddaula, who had succeeded Mir Zafar. Nand Kumar had been charged with financial and administrative scandals by Carnac, who succeeded Adams as military commander. Fullerton acted as interpreter for the commission of enquiry into Nand Kumar's misconduct because he knew Hindustani so well. He was accused of deliberately misinterpreting an important letter written by Nand Kumar to Raja Balwant Singh of Benares (now called Varanasi) suggesting a plot to overthrow British rule in Bihar and asking him for help. The enquiry continued for over a year, during which time Clive had returned to Calcutta, this time as Lord Clive, with full administrative powers of governor given by directors of the East India Company. Fullerton's responses to the charges against him were not accepted by the Calcutta Council and he was censored for his misconduct. He sent in his resignation on 21st March 1765 and asked to be sent to England.¹⁷ His resignation was accepted within three days and he sailed for England in April 1766 in the *Ponsborne* which went aground while going down the river and her passage was delayed. He did not return to India and was known to be alive and in good health until 1781.^{17, 18}

William Fullerton was popular amongst some of the Indian noblemen of the time. His departure from India was regretted by several who had known him personally in Patna. Saiyid Ghulam Hussain writes in his book; 'he promised to come back again, on his being able to obtain certain conditions and stipulations for himself. It appears that his intention did not tally with the decrees of Providence, for he has not yet appeared although there is intelligence of his being alive and in health. Wherever he may be, God Almighty preserve him in peace of mind'.¹³

MEMORIALS

After the recapture of Patna, the Council in Calcutta obtained from the next Nawab, Mir Jaffar, the houses in which the massacre took place. They were demolished and a monument was erected in memory of those who died there, to Amyott who was killed in Murshidabad and to Peter Carstairs who died in Hajipur.¹⁷⁻¹⁹

With neglect and effects of time, the monument has disappeared and on the

site now stands the female ward of the Patna city hospital. In a corner of the old Patna cemetery there is a pillar with an inscription that gives names of twenty-eight of the people who were killed. This was erected in 1880 on the orders of Sir Ashley Eden, Governor of Bengal. Historians point out that there are some inaccuracies in the list of names.

Chihal Sutun (p 287) was at one time a palace built by a grandson of Aurangzeb, the last of the great Moghals when he was the governor of Bihar. Shah Alam, the Moghal Emperor at the time of the massacre had lived there, when he was prince Ali Gauhar and a fugitive. *Chihal Sutun* was located near the Madarasa Mosque and had been damaged during an uprising in 1748. The palace complex originally covered a very large area extending to the present day Patna City railway station in the south. The main building had vanished even when Francis Buchanan visited Patna in 1810. A small portion of it was later acquired and renovated by a local businessman, Radha Krishna Jalan. The present mansion with a view of the Ganges is now simply called the *Quila* (fort) and the neighbouring area is also known by the same name.

The Bengal Medical Service was established soon after the Patna massacre on 1st January 1764 when Fullerton was still serving in India. Similar medical services were established in Bombay and Madras and together they came to be known as the Indian Medical Service, though the three services were not formally amalgamated until 1897. Dr William Fullerton may be regarded as an original member of the service.

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