

The 8th December 1791.

INDIA News.

Narrative of Mr. William Drake, formerly Midshipman of the "Hannibal," and other prisoners taken last war, who have lately made their escape from Tippoo.

On the 31st of July 1791, arrived at Hurry Heir, a Fortress on the southern banks of the Tumbuddra, acquired by the Mahrattas during the present war, Mr. W. Drake, formerly Midshipman of the "Hannibal," J. Skurry, drummer of marines, and John Jordan, seaman of the same ship, and William Whiteway, gunner's boy of the "Fortitude." The prisoners taken by the French in the "Hannibal," "Chaser," "Fortitude," "Yarmouth" "Raikes," and "Resolution," to the number of near five hundred, were landed at Cuddalore the 30th June 1782, sent from thence to Chillumbrum the beginning of July, where they remained prisoners with the French till August 12th, when they were delivered over to Hyder Ally Khan, and marched to Bangalore, the privates in irons; they arrived at Bangalore the 2nd September. The Officers were sent into the Fort the next day, and three days after were put in irons, with an allowance of one country Fanam, (something less than the third of a Rupee,) and a seer of rice each a day. Some of the privates were forced into Tippoo's service as mechanics at Bangalore (as per list No. 1), and others confined in Bangalore, Ossore, Ballapore, Dewanelly, &c. On the 19th October, the youngest of the whole, to the number of fifty-one (No. 2), were sent to Seringapatam, where they arrived the 31st October; they remained there till the 7th November, when their heads were shaved, and, on the 11th, all their things were taken from them, and they were circumcised; soon after Musselman names and dresses were given them, and they were marched about the parade. The Midshipmen had an allowance of two country Fanams per day, and the others one, with victuals cooked for the whole; thus they remained till November 1783, when, on a trifling misdemeanour of some of them, all were confined; and being rather clamorous with the Killedar for this treatment, some were beat, and all were bound on the parade, and rings (*boly*), the badge of slavery, were put into their ears; they were then incorporated into a battalion of Cheylas, where they remained till the 19th December 1783. They were then sent to Mysore with some other Europeans amounting to about 85 (list No. 3), where they remained in close confinement till April 1784 in two prisons, when they were brought back to Seringapatam, passed in review before Tippoo, and questioned as to their knowledge and qualifications as mechanics. The command of a company of Cheyla boys, with exercising musquets without locks, was given to Messrs. Speediman and Rutledge, and the others were made Havildars, having the command of six, with an allowance of about nine Rupees per month, of thirty-five or thirty six days; they were all distributed into two Battalions, and were sent to Chineroypatam, about twelve coss westerly of Seringapatam; they stayed there till February 1785, when they were again sent for to Seringapatam, and reviewed by Tippoo. He gave Battalions of Cheylas with fire locks to Messrs. Speediman and Rutledge, and a Battalion of boys with exercising muskets, to Sergeant Dempster, and made the others Havildars in those and other Cheyla Battalions. Mr. Speediman, who had ever been very low-spirited, cut his throat in about a month. The Battalions to which they were posted were four of Christians called Achmedy, and four of various casts called Assud Allye, all circumcised. Thus they remained till February 1786, when Tippoo, on the breaking out of the Mahratta war, collected his army, gave all the Battalions new arms and accoutrements, and marched to Bangalore with among his other Troops, twelve of those Battalions, and four old ones (Assud Allye). The Army,

consisting of eighty thousand fighting-men, commanded by Tippoo in person, left Bangalore in May, and proceeded towards Adoni, which they reached about the end of that month, plundered the Pettah, attacked the Fort, and in attempting to storm it, were beat back twice. On the advance of Mogul Ally Khan to the relief of Adoni, with a strong detachment from the allied army, to the northward of the Tumbuddra, Tippoo raised the seige and retreated five coss. The garrison of the Fort was withdrawn, and proceeded with Mogul Ally's detachment across the Tumbuddra to the main army; Tippoo came in sight of the Tumbuddra at Gurrygonaut, about sixty-four coss from Adoni and seven from Hurry Heir; all the European Cheylas, and many other Europeans, were then sent back to Seringapatam in consequence of the desertion that had taken place among them; the Europeans were then again incorporated into Battalions as Havildars, and a Battalion was given to Mr. Rutledge, and Serjeants Dempster and Smith. They remained in Seringapatam till June or July 1787, when Tippoo arrived there on the conclusion of the Mahratta war, and on reviewing them, he selected the Europeans to the number of eighty-six. They remained till December with out employment, when he dispersed them as follows: to Chittledroog, twenty-two Englishmen, one woman, and seven foreigners; to Bednore, twenty-two Englishmen and seven foreigners, and twenty-two English men and six foreigners remained in Seringapatam. List No. 4.

John Barrett, Drummer, Mathew's Army
John Bradfall, Seaman, *Fortitude*
Francis Brown, Seaman, *Hannibal*
Alex. Bruce, Fifer, Mathew's Army (King's) – escaped
Rob. W. Coods, Seaman, *Hannibal* – dead
W. Drake, Midshipman; *Hannibal* – escaped
____ Groves, Soldier in Major Brath. Detach. – dead, prisoner
Thomas Hall, Marine, *Hannibal*
Joshua Hart, Seaman, *Resolution*
Thomas Hewson – escaped
J. Jordan, Seaman, *Hannibal* – escaped
John Leaverley, Seaman, *Hannibal* – escaped
Robert McKenzie, Drummer, Bailie's Det. – alive
George Madden, Servant, Mathew's Army
Wm. Malone, Seaman, *Fortitude*
John Mullock, Drummer, Mathew's Army
William Richardson, Seaman, *Hannibal* – escaped
James Rock, Seaman, *Fortitude*
J. Skurry, Marine, *Hannibal* – escaped
William Whiteway, Seaman, *Fortitude* – escaped
John Wood, Seaman, *Chaser* – escaped

Drake's List IV (excerpt) – European prisoners thought to be at Chittledroog in 1787. [*The Times*, 10 Apr 1792, p. 3]

Those to Chittledroog and Bednore were sent in irons; the Chittledroog party reached their destination the 27th December, and were incorporated into four Cheyla Battalions that were at that place; the first commanded by Abdul Ghunney, who had been in Captain Kelly's Battalion, second Abdul Khan, third Ayaz Khan, fourth Kurrum Khan; Mahomed Ally Beg, formerly in the

[Source: Seton-Karr, W. S. (1865) *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, Vol. 2, pp. 311-316]

service of the Nawab of Arcot, commanding the whole. Here they were all privates on four and a half Rupees per month, or sixteen country Fanams, and seer of rice per day for one year and a half, and afterwards their allowance was seven Rupees per month of forty-six days, and they were treated in every respect very severely; they did duty in the Pettah, till about one month before the fall of Bangalore, when they were put into the lower Fort, and had to build their own habitations. On the Mahratta parties coming into the neighbourhood of Chittledroog, several detachments were sent against them from the Fort, and in February 1791, the Europeans also were employed on this service, at which they were very happy, thinking it might afford them an opportunity of making their escape. Dowlut Khan, the Killadar, in person, with three thousand five hundred men, one thousand of them Horse under Rubur Jung, proceeded to Tul Rurah, seventeen coss towards Royroog, in the hands of some revolted Beydars who offered to pay tribute, but would not surrender; three unsuccessful attempts were made to storm, but on a breach being made, the fourth succeeded, and almost every man in the place was put to death. One European Cheyla was killed, and one wounded. Mr. Le Sage received a ball through the body from some of his own party, which killed him on the spot. Upwards of two hundred of Dowlut Khan's people were killed and wounded; they were several times out in the neighbourhood of Chittledroog, and Dowlut Khan after wards marched to Warral Kyrach, seven coss from Chittledroog, but hearing of the Mahrattas being in force there, he determined to return. Before the party got back to the Fort, the afternoon was far advanced, and the weather was very cloudy. Taking advantage of this, Mr. Drake and the others loitered as much as they could, and dark coming on, with rain, before they had got within the centinels, they separated from the party, and moved on all night, hiding themselves in the day-time till they had got within the Mahratta districts. John Leavessey and William Richardson, Seamen, and Thomas Jones, Marine of the "Hannibal," and Alexander Bruce, Drummer of the 100th Regiment, made their escape out of Chittledroog the 9th of September 1791, and proceeded to Hurry Heir. These two parties, amounting to nine, joined Captain Little's detachment, eleven miles and a half north of Chittledroog, the 21st of September. George Bush and Thomas Foresides, both of the "Yarmouth," made their escape from Bednore, arrived at Hurry Heir the 3rd of September, and have since proceeded to Bombay.

At Seringapatam, General Mathews was in confinement, James Skurry was sent for one day to the Cutcherry there, and some pewter plates, with marks on them, were shown to him to explain; he saw on them words to this purport, "I am indebted to the Malabar Christians, on account of the public service, forty thousand Rupees; the Company owes me (about) thirty thousand; I have taken poison, and am within a short time of death; whoever communicates this to the Bombay Government, or to my wife, will be amply rewarded."(signed) Richard Mathews. Part of the Guard that were posted over the General have assured Mr. Drake and the others that poison was given to him in milk. Colonel Baillie died the 11th of November 1782, but whether by violence or not cannot be asserted with confidence, though the general opinion was in the affirmative.

Captain Rumley and Lieutenants Sampson and Fraser, of the Madras Establishment, were seen by Mr. Drake, and many others carried over the parade of Seringapatam in covered doolies; one of them said to the European boys then at exercise there, "God bless you, lads! We know not where these people are taking us;" On the arrival of the European Cheylas at Mysore about two months after, one of the Wurdywalas assured them that those Officers were poisoned there; many others confirmed this; Captains Landrum and McCulloch lost their lives, it is not known

how, at Gopauldroog. It is to be remarked that the water of Gopauldroog at the top of the rock is very generally reported to be of a poisonous quality, which, in a short time, kills all who drink it. The town below is a good one; they had not heard any particulars of the other Bombay Officers who are missing; Mr. Rutledge mentioned to Mr. Drake and the others that Kishin Row, Head Bramin of the Regular Infantry (not the person killed by Tippoo), had informed him that twenty-five British Officers, on pretence of marching them from one place to another, had been by night forced into a pit and smothered. The two prisoners that escaped from Chittledroog met, on their way to Hurry Heir, with one Smithey, who informed them that, on the capture of Bangalore, all Englishmen in Seringapatam, except himself (who practised physic), were sent in small parties to different Forts; that he himself likewise was soon after sent away under a Guard; and supposing they intended to put him to death, he took a favorable opportunity of seizing one of their swords, with which he cut down two or three of them, and the rest ran away; that he soon after fell in with fourteen other Europeans under a Guard, and urged them to endeavour to extricate themselves, which they did; and after a long conflict with the Guard, in which fell four Europeans, they made their escape, and reached a detachment of the Nizam's Troops; that a letter from Mr. Rutledge, while in confinement at Narrowdroog, having been intercepted, and the names of Sergeants Dempster and one Green being mentioned, they were put to death. Smithey is well acquainted with the country languages, and being also a deserter, preferring a wandering life to any other, left his comrades. He dresses in the Mahomedan habit, and goes by the name of Booden Beg. Thomas Jones, one of the mechanics that were detained at Bangalore, and who is among those who have lately escaped from Chittledroog, was sent under a Guard from Seringapatam to Chittledroog about August 1784. He says that, on a correspondence carried on by Mr. Rutledge with the Carnatic being discovered, fifteen natives concerned in it were put to death, and Mr. Rutledge was sent to Narrowdroog, about seven coss north-west of Seringapatam, when orders for his death were given to the Killedars, who behaved at first very kindly to him, but the orders being repeated, he was shot. The latter part he learnt from one Oliver and others, whom he met close to Narrowdroog on his way to Chittledroog. Oliver also acquainted him of there being at that time two private Europeans in confinement at Narrowdroog; of the mechanics sent from France, about 30 arrived at Seringapatam, of whom 10 or 12 have died. They are of little or no use, and have often expressed a wish to return, but Tippoo will not permit them; none of them who have now made their escape know any thing of Lieutenant Hamilton, or any other Officers who have of late been confined in Ossore. There are now doing duty with Tippoo a great number of Native Officers and Privates who have formerly belonged to the Lower Carnatic, in the service of the English, or Mahomed Ally Khan.

Those who have made their escape from Chittledroog report the garrison of that place to be, to the best of their knowledge, as follows:

Four nominal battalions of Cheylah, consisting of about 800; twelve nominal battalions of Regular Infantry, consisting of about 2,300; about 3,000 peadas stationed in the upper Fort called Maldroog; 1,500 peadas stationed in the lower Fort; two Companies (120) of Goolandaze Native, and one Company (60) of Goolandaze, stationed without the Fort, consisting of Europeans, deserters, and Native Christians; 300 or 400 Irregulars, armed with swords, pikes, clubs, bows, and arrows; Seyed Hussun commands the troops under Dowlut Khan. To give more full and satisfactory information of the Europeans who have been in service or in confinement with Tippoo, and are not noticed above, a list is subjoined (No. 5). Several European boys were taught

[Source: Seton-Karr, W. S. (1865) *Selections from Calcutta Gazettes*, Vol. 2, pp. 311-316]

dancing in the country style, and forced to dance in female dresses before Tippoo. It is said that of late, as they grew up, they have been transferred to the Cheylah Battalions.

Memorandums in writing by those who have escaped could not be kept during so long and rigorous a confinement, and memory alone can not complete the lists so accurately as could be wished. The country names given by Tippoo to such of the Europeans as were circumcised are inserted in the lists with a view to facilitate the enquiry and recovery of those who are still alive. They have occasionally been altered. The account of the Europeans yet alive in Tippoo's country is collected generally from the whole of them who have made their escape. Those in Seringapatam, in particular, from Thomas Jones, as late as August 1790; and to late period, from the report of Smithey, to the two men who escaped from Bednore. Those at Bednore to about August 1791, from the above two men's report to those who have joined Captain Little's detachment from Hurry Heir. Those at Chittledroog to September 1791. The above-mentioned list will be given in our next.