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RAMA KAMATI AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY.

BY SIR CHARLES FAWCETT.

[*N.B.*—The references in the foot-notes are to the following books, unless otherwise stated :—

*Anderson.*—The English in Western India.

*Campbell.*—Materials, &c.. Bombay Gazetteer, Vol. 26.

*Douglas.*—Bombay and Western India.

*Edwards.*—Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island.

*Malabari.*—Bombay in the Making.

F.R., L.B., O.C., and B.P.P. refer to records in the India Office.]

The name of Rama Kamati was conspicuous among the Indian inhabitants of Bombay for nearly 50 years at the end of the 17th and beginning of the 18th century. His memory chiefly survives on account of his trial for high treason and other misdemeanours by Governor Boone and his Council in 1720.<sup>1</sup> This afforded a contrast with his previous high position that had a sensational effect for some time. Thus Phipps, who succeeded Boone in January 1722, wrote in 1728 that “everyone of us I believe are

<sup>1</sup> An account of his trial and the connected circumstances is given by Malabari, pp. 328-354. This is largely based on Philip Anderson's comments on the trial in his article *A Chapter in the History of Bombay, 1708-1725*, in the Bombay Quarterly Review, (1856) Vol. III, pp. 48-52. The main relevant documents are also reproduced by Campbell, vol. I, pp. 144-150.

sensible that the downfall of Rama Comattee and his Family in the manner it was brought about, is still so recent in people's memorys, that the same is constantly objected as a reason why people of property oome not to seek an Assylum under this Government from almost the universall oppression of those around us." <sup>1</sup> In other words his fate was prejudicial to the good name of Bombay. But his prior history (especially the mode in which he achieved his great position and influence) is a matter of interest, on which little light has hitherto been thrown. The main purpose of this article is to add information, which the writer has elicited from records in the India Office, though for the sake of completeness it includes some already known.

So far as I am aware, the first mention of his name in the Bombay records occurs in July 1680. In June of that year a serious coinage fraud had been discovered. No less than 2,350 false *pagodas* <sup>2</sup> had been obtained from the town of Chaul<sup>3</sup> and passed into circulation in Bombay. Under prompt and effective pressure the Shroffs <sup>4</sup> concerned got the false *pagodas* exchanged for good money. New regulations were also framed, under which the number of Shroffs allowed to change money in the Bazar was limited, and those selected had to give security that they would change only "good coins and such as are allowed to pass on the island." The Consultation entry about this continues:—

"To which intent four of the most ablest Shroffs were made choice off, who gave in security accordingly, and to prevent any abuses that may be put on the treasury by bad money being paid in by any person"—for a considerable number of false *pagodas* had been found in the treasury—"it was thought highly necessary that an understanding and able

<sup>1</sup> Secret Consultn. of 23 February 1728, Bombay Public Proceedings (henceforth called B.P.P.), Vol. 6, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> A gold coin current in Southern India, generally reckoned as equivalent to 3½ rupees.

<sup>3</sup> A town on the coast of the Kolaba District, about 30 miles from Bombay, as the crow flies.

<sup>4</sup> Hindu money-dealers.

Shroff should be appointed to attend thereon, and soe *Ordered* that Rama Comaté should be taken into the Hon. Company's service for to attend on the Treasury, being an able Shroff and an inhabitant of very good repute to whome a convenient sallary should be allowed as hereafter shall be thought fitt."<sup>1</sup>

This post of Treasury Shroff was one that he held for fourteen years. The pay cannot have been more than about 25 Neraphins or some Rs. 20) a month; but it gave him opportunities of advancement, of which he clearly avail himself. The position was regarded as a responsible one, and "Ramajee Comettes Shroff" figures in a list of "Staff Officers at Bombay" in 1684.<sup>2</sup> He did not, however, confine his activities to his work as Shroff. In particular he rendered valuable service during the Sidhi's invasion of Bombay in 1689-90,<sup>3</sup> as we learn from the following passage in a letter from President Harris to Cooke, the Deputy Governor of Bombay, on 30th June 1690:—<sup>4</sup>

"On the Island is honest Ramajee Comattee, an old trusty servant of the Rt. Hon. Company, and one that has stood by them on the Island all the Warrs and has been very assisting on all occasions, not only in proocuring men but encouraging them to fight the enemy &c. He is one the Generall<sup>5</sup> had a great esteeme of for his good services, and knowing him to be a great sufferer by the Warr, promised him encouragement but we need not tell you this, supposing you know him better then most of us. But those that know him give him a very good charaoter, Wee desire you will give us your opinion about him, and after

<sup>1</sup> F. R. Bombay, Vol. 2, pp. 42-44, 46 and 47—Consultns. of 27 & 28 June and 12 & 13 July 1680.

<sup>2</sup> O. C. 5178.

<sup>3</sup> For an account of this invasion see Anderson, pp. 245-9 and Edwardes, Vol. 2, pp. 83-5.

<sup>4</sup> F. R. Surat, Vol. 92, p. 104 and O.C. 5717.

<sup>5</sup> *I.e.* Sir John Child, who in 1684 was appointed by the Co. "Captain General of all our forces by sea and land in the North of India," and was consequently thenceforth always addressed and referred to by the title of "General."

discourse with him advize us what you think wee ought in charity and honour to doe for one that deserves soe well as he ; for his oarts &c. wee hear were outt and spoyled because of his serveing us."

In addition to this agricultural damage, Rama suffered in person. The Diary of the Siege, under date the 14th February 1690,<sup>1</sup> records—" This day Ramojee Comattee Shroff was wounded in the Legg by one of our Shells which broke as soon as fyred out of the Mortar." He must, therefore, have been in the firing line and this indicates some courage on his part. In spite of his losses he was evidently well-off at this time,<sup>2</sup> possessing garden-lands and engaged in money-lending. Thus we find that one Mullah Boppagee (Bapaji), a batty merchant, had been imprisoned in Bombay for some debts owed to " Rammagee Comattee and Mr. Devenish "<sup>3</sup> and Harris ordered his release, as he deprecated arrest or imprisonment for debt in the absence of a Court of Judicature.<sup>4</sup>

The President's recommendation for Rama's official advancement had, however, no result for four years. Bombay was then in a very depressed condition—the revenue for instance had fallen from 62,500 to 17,000 Xeraphins, chiefly because of the destruction of the palm trees, which then formed the main source of agricultural income.<sup>5</sup> Sir John Cayer, who became Governor in 1691, saw the necessity of remedying this ; and one of the steps he took for this purpose was the appointment of Rama Kamati as Overseer-General of the Company's revenues upon the Island. In this capacity, he had control of all the " Purvoes " or Parblu clerks, and other inferiors.<sup>6</sup> This clearly shows the confidence that was felt in his abilities : and at the same time June 23, 1694) his military services were recognised by his

<sup>1</sup> F. R. Bombay, Vol. 3, Diary at the end of the Book, p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Thus the Bombay Council in February 1687 reported that they believed him to be " a moneyed man." Forrest's *Selections*, i p. 155.

<sup>3</sup> He was a factor in the Co.'s service at Bombay.

<sup>4</sup> Letter of 4 Aug. 1691, F. R. Surat, Vol. 93, p. 95. The Court of Judicature was in abeyance from 1689 to 1718.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Anderson, p. 273.

<sup>6</sup> Campbell, iii p. 282.

appointment as Muster-Master General of all the Hindu soldiers.<sup>1</sup>

The Consultation entry about this<sup>2</sup> is worth reproduction as it shows the high esteem with which he was regarded :—

“ Rama Comotin petitioning that we would take into our consideration how faithfully he had served the Rt. Hon. Company in the late warrs, and several years before and since, and how little sallery he had had for his service, the promises was ducly considered, and to our knowledge what he did alleadge was truth ; the same was proved by a certificate under the late Generall Child and Council's hands which said late Generall did severall times promise him that if he did survive the war that he would gratify him answerable to the meritt of his service. Now weighing all this and considering of what import it might be for our Rt. Hon. Masters' interest for the future that such persons who have soe eminently served them should be rewarded agreeable to their meritt for example to others, It was ORDERED that said Rama Comotin should be made Muster-Master Generall of all the Gentues &c. black souldiers belonging to the outguards upon this Island att the sallery of 30 Xs. per month.

And whereas we find that there is very great occasion to appoynt some person to supervise the Purvoes of the Company's revenues on this Island and that no person on the Island hath more knowledge of the Company's affairs than Rama Comotin hath, nor noe person like to serve them

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, iii p. 197. Hindu soldiers were first employed by Gerald Aungier at the time of the threatened Dutch naval attack on Bombay in March 1673, when 500 Rashboots (Rajputs) were raised ; but after the failure of the project, they were disbanded; F. R. Bombay Vol. I, pp. 26, 27, 39. In 1684 the Co. authorised John Child to raise two companies of Rajputs, but owing to objections made by Child they were not engaged; L.B. Vol. 7, p. 277, and O.C. 5206. The Sepoys here referred to were recruited during the Sidhi's invasion of 1689-90 (Bombay Consultn. of 24 May 1695, F.R. Bombay Vol. 4, p. 74; O.C. 5727; Bombay letter of 30 June 1690, O.C. 5717). They continued with variations as to numbers till the establishment of the Bombay Army, the well-known " Marine Battalion " being authorised in 1709 (Campbell, iii p. 151).

<sup>2</sup> F. R. Bombay Vol. 4, pp. 6, 7.

so faithfully, it was also ORDERED that the said Rama Comotin should be made Overseer General of all the Rt. Hon. Co.'s revenues at the salary of 40 Xs. per month, and accordingly commissions were granted<sup>2</sup> to empower him for the execution of both the aforesentioned Trusts, and it was also ORDERED that his brother Lolla Comotin<sup>3</sup> should succeed him in office of Shroff of the Treasury."

Thus Rama managed to keep up a connection with the Treasury, which subsequent records show lasted till his downfall.

His military office probably did not involve very heavy duties. It is mainly evidenced by monthly entries such as the following :—

" Ramajee Comotin and Dorab Nanaby, having brought in their Muster Rolls of the seven Jentoe Companyes, whose abstract amounted to 2,936 Xs. we ordered a bill to be drawne on Mr. John Gayer for the same."<sup>4</sup>

" The Rolls of the Gentue souldiers for the proceeding month being this morning brought in, and the abstracts duly examined and approved of, a bill was ORDERED to be drawn on the Rt. Hon. Co.'s Treasury, for the amount (of) Xs. 3793, payable to Rama Camoty and Dorab Nanabhy."<sup>5</sup>

He would probably, however, have to take part in checking irregularities and frauds, such as are mentioned in the next quotation :—<sup>6</sup>

" On the complaint of Capt. James Hammer that Ramajee Annat and Cresnajee his son Subedars of two Companyes of Gentue soldiers appointed to be continually

<sup>1</sup> It appears that Rama also got a commission on all collections of revenues : Co.'s despatch of 21 Feb. 1718, para. 17, L.B. Vol. 16, pp. 415, 6.

<sup>2</sup> These are reproduced by Campbell, Vol. 3, pp. 197 & 282.

<sup>3</sup> I have not come across any other mention of this brother. He may have been Raghu, father of the Narayan, who petitioned the Council in 1728 (see p. 24 *post*). If so, he appears to have died in 1702.

<sup>4</sup> Consln. of 1 Aug. 1698, F.R. Bombay Vol. 5, second book, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> Consln. of 24 May 1703, F.R. Bombay Vol. 5, third book, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup> Consln. of 29 Jan. 1715, B. P. P. Vol. 4.

employed at the Works of the Great Breach of Mallabar hill,<sup>1</sup> have been very remiss and negligent in their Dutys a great while, tho' frequently reprimanded, in suffering said Soldiers to absent themselves from their work or to make voyages in Country Boats and Shybars<sup>2</sup> tho' still in the Company's pay, and making false musters by others appearing only on muster day: Taking the same into consideration and unwilling to permitt such abuses without Censure, Agreed that said Subadars with their Coys. be broke and dismist the Co.'s service and that Capt. Hanmer see the same executed and no pay allowed this month of January, which was performed accordingly."

Rama's other office must have been a more responsible one. As already mentioned, Bombay lands were in those days mainly planted with coconut trees, and there was comparatively little batty, or rice cultivation. He had had experience of the former kind of farming, as he had leased the trees on Old Woman's Island for some 15 years.<sup>3</sup> He had probably also farmed batty-lands through tenants, as he did in 1706 when he took over "the lands called Puckerawoll lying near Mazagunn towards Bombay," in order to increase their cultivation.<sup>4</sup> In December 1694 he was authorised to farm all the oarts and batty ground belonging to "Moormen," who had assisted the Sidhi when he invaded the Island, "and to make the best advantage he could thereof for

1 This was the "Great Breach" at Mahalakshuri, which was eventually stopped by the *Hornby Vellard*. Its construction lasted for about 100 years (1680-1780), see Campbell, iii, p. 648 and my note in B.B.R.A.S.J., Vol. vii, (Aug. 1931), pp. 21 & 22. The work was actively going on at this period; and soldiers, as well as convicts, were employed on it. It was explained, however, that the former were practically labourers, who were given a military appellation in order that effective discipline might be maintained: Bombay letter of 10 March 1725, para. 65, in Vol. I of "Bombay Letters Received."

2 This was a kind of coasting vessel, cf. Yule, *Hedges' Diary*, Vol. 2, p. 175, n. 1.

3 Surat letter of 16 Aug. 1691, F.R. Surat Vol. 93, p. 96.

4 Consltn. of 14 March 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 178. Puckerawol- probably represents Pakhadi (hamlet) Vol., which was part of the Mazagaol estate (Campbell, Vol. 2, p. 458).

the use of the . . . . Co." <sup>1</sup>. The lease of Butcher's Island, then called the Island of Cocoanuts or Robin the Butcher's Island, <sup>2</sup> used to be put up to auction annually, and Rama or his son Durga was the highest bidder for several years. <sup>3</sup> In 1706 his ortas, &c., were valued at 15,017 Xs. <sup>4</sup>. He considerably increased his agricultural ventures in 1709, obtaining a lease of all the Co.'s trees on the Island (with a small exception) for three years. <sup>5</sup> A return by the Verendors shows that the number of trees involved was 18,875. <sup>6</sup> Rama in 1712 alleged that he was a loser over the contract, but consented to a renewal of the lease for nine years at a reduced rental. <sup>7</sup> The extent of his commitments in 1719 is shown by the following account of the rent he owed the Co.:—<sup>8</sup>

“ 31st July. Rama Commatee on account Oart Rent for sundry Oarts rented by him for nine years as per Consultation of the 25 September 1712 at 2 larees <sup>9</sup> per tree the (first) six years and the 3 last at 2½ larees per tree, the Oarts being survey'd contains as follows *viz.*,

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, Vol. 1, p. 104. Sir John Gayer and his Council had held proceedings, in which the question of liability to confiscation for assisting the Sidhi was enquired into, see Bombay letter of 11 Feb. 1695, F.R. Bombay Vol. 11, p. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Campbell, Vol. 1, pp. 438, 9, gives reasons for thinking that “ Butcher ” is really a perversion of the Portuguese name for the island—Putachoes (properly Putegas), which in turn was derived from the Marathi name, Bhatiche Bet. The English name may have led to its supposed connection with a real or mythical butcher called Robin, especially as cattle used to be kept on the island for the use of Bombay.

<sup>3</sup> *E.g.* in 1705, 1706 and 1707: Conslns. of 15 March 1705 and 20 March 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, pp. 154 & 179, and Consln. of 27 Sept. 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Consln. of 25 April 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 217. A Xeraphin generally was worth about 12 annas, though in 1713 it was ordered that it should pass for no more than half a rupee: Consln. of 19 Oct. 1713, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Consln. of 25 Aug. 1709, B.P.P. Vol. 4, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup> Consln. of 24 Dec. 1709, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>7</sup> Consln. of 25 Sept. 1712, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Bombay Journal of 1718-19, p. 233.

<sup>9</sup> A laree was then worth about one-fifth of a rupee.

In Mahim Coconut trees 1323 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>6</sub> , viz.,	
5587 in sundry Oarts belonging to the Padre Superior at Bandura.	
2571 of the Padrees of Parell	
5078 of confiscated Estates	
<u>13236</u>	
2259 in Bombay.	
15495 at 2½ larees per tree and per Annum Rs.	7747.27
One Oart at Parell	
363 trees at per Annum .. .. .	180
One at Old Womans Island	
556 trees at per Annum .. .. .	120
Batty grounds at Bombay producing yearly 22 mora 18 para 5 adla at 152.40 per morah ..	354.23.
Mallabar Hill at per Annum .. .. .	36
	<u>8438—35 "</u>

The last entry relating to Malabar Hill is interesting: its subsequent use as a fashionable residential quarter could scarcely have been visualized.

Rama, however, farmed other things besides land. A letter of 5 February 1687 mentions his bidding for the "Tobacco Rent" and his punctuality in payment.<sup>1</sup> Though the Bombay Tobacco farm was put up to auction every year, he seems to have secured it continuously for many years, and the records of 1706 give a strong hint that his influence enabled him to put off other competitors. We read that, after the farm had been put up more than once without resulting in any bid, except on a condition that was held to be prejudicial,

" the Secretary askt 2 or 3 times the severall Casts of people present to make known the Reason why they had not offered for said Tobacco Farme and what they was inclined to propose (but they) made no reply, at which the Generall (Sir Nicholas Waite) sayes he was not surprized haveing bin informed yesterday that a Merchant at Mahim (of) Bramin or Banyan Cast, Person unknown to him,

<sup>1</sup> Forrest's *Selections*, i p. 155.

declared he came from thence last Tuesday the 26th Inst. with intention to give 27,000 Xs. or more for said Tobacco Farme if could not be obtained for less, but was Threatued and discouraged by Ramajee Comattee to proceed therein, and this day after wee arose and dismiss the company that appeared in the (Castle) Hall Ramajee Comattee by the mouth of Girderdass Broker offered first 21,000 then 22,000, 4,550 less then lett last year: The Generall Recommends to you Gentlemen maturely to deliver your Opinions whether 'tis not the Co.'s Interest to keep said Farme in their hands and thereby disipate such plain Combinations in Wrong and Prejudioe to the United Trade as seems to have bin in all the Revenues, which after a deliberate debate (was) Resolved (acordingly) . . . .".<sup>1</sup>

Two caste-fellows of Rama, *viz.*, Dolba Bandari and his brother Vissu, who are described as "accute landed Merchants at Mahim" were appointed to manage the Farm.<sup>2</sup> This attempt to break down the "combination" had, however, little success. Six months later, upon a complaint of watering the tobacco, which was substantiated, the two managers were dismissed and fined a sum fixed as equivalent to 25 per cent of that "wrongfully extorted from the Inhabitants."<sup>3</sup> The Farm was then put under the management of the Verendors,<sup>4</sup> but this resulted in a fall of profits.<sup>5</sup> Probably in consequence of this it was put up to auction again in March 1707 and was secured by Rama for his two sons Durga and Balkrishna, he being the only bidder.<sup>6</sup> He

<sup>1</sup> Consltn. of 18 March 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Consltn. of 19 Sept. 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, pp. 29-31. On 19 Feb. 1724 this fine was held to have been too severe and most of it was remitted: B.P.P. Vol. 5, second diary of 1724, p. 33.

<sup>4</sup> The Verendors corresponded to Village-officers and were a survival from the Portuguese time: thus the Verendors of the city of Bassein were among the signatories to the Deed under which Humphrey Cooke obtained possession of the Island. As to the origin of the name see Da Cunha, *The Grigin of Bombay*, p. 119 and Malabari, pp. 465, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Consltn. of 27 March 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, pp. 143, 9.

<sup>6</sup> Consltn. of 24 March 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 144.

continued to hold it at any rate up to 1714,<sup>1</sup> and again in 1719-20 up to the time of his trial.<sup>2</sup>

But Rama, as befitted one with a surname (Kamati) that primarily meant "Revenue-farmer,"<sup>3</sup> did not confine himself to the Tobacco business. In 1706, for instance, he also farmed the Customs of Bombay and Mahim in partnership with Mr. John Vandnuren, the Postmaster.<sup>4</sup> No one else presumed to bid against him, and he managed to get certain Ferry rights included, although these had already been separately leased.<sup>5</sup> Sir Nicholas Waite gave voice to his suspicions in the discussion about it as follows:—

"(It) is very plain to me as (it) has bin (for) Months past (that there are) untoward Combinations in wrong and prejudice to the Co. in their Revenues in Generall, which as (I have) often declared I have and shall acquiesce unto (only) till the Court of Managers' fixt Establishment so variously reported shall come out of England to Bombay."

This last sentence had reference to the reduced establishment of the Co.'s covenanted servants in Bombay, which then numbered only six, including the two Members of Council.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Constn. of 24 March 1708, B.P.P. Vol. 3; constns. of 21 March 1709, 15 March 1711, 14 March 1712 and 17 March 1713 in B.P.P. Vol. 4. The record of Constns. for 1714 is missing.

<sup>2</sup> Constn. of 5 Feb. 1719, B.P.P. Vol. 4; see also the mention of his Tobacco Farm in Constn. of 26 Feb. 1720, Campbell, Vol. 1, p. 144, and Malabari, p. 331. It was evidently a profitable business: thus the profit in 1706-7, when the farm was managed for the Co., is shown as Xs. 22,323 (Constn. of 27 March 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 149). The monopoly was also strictly guarded, and any tobacco unauthorisedly imported was liable to confiscation (Constn. of 18 Feb. 1707, Vol. 2, pp. 122, 3).

<sup>3</sup> See Appendix to this Article.

<sup>4</sup> The Co. in 1688 directed the Bombay Council to "erect a post-office" at Bombay: L.B. Vol. 8, p. 550. A vernacular history of Bombay states that postal arrangements were introduced in 1694, and this reference to the Postmaster shows that they were in existence at any rate in 1706. This goes against the surmise of Edwardes, ii, 372, 3, that no special postal organization started till about the middle of the eighteenth century.

<sup>5</sup> Constn. of 26 March 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 189.

<sup>6</sup> Constn. of 21 May 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 245, and Constn. of 19 Sept. 1706, *ib.* p. 34. Aislabie and Goodshaw were the two members of Council.

This hindered executive control of the Customs by Co.'s servants, one at Bombay and another at Mahim, as had been the rule since Aungier's time.<sup>1</sup> The farming of the Customs was, however, found to be prejudicial to the trade of the Island. Accordingly in March 1707 those at Mahim were put under an Englishman as before, and it was ordered that "in like manner shall Ramajee Comattee the Co.'s Shroff, for want of Co.'s servants, at present manage the Customs.....at Bombay, where every act may be better inspected then 'tis possible being done at Mahim, should the direction of the Customs be there appointed under Gentues."<sup>2</sup> He was at the same time put in charge of the Arrack Farms of Bombay and Mahim,<sup>3</sup> so that he had the running of no less than five of them,<sup>4</sup> in addition to his other numerous activities. The Arrack Farms were, however, probably not congenial to him, and his connection with them ceased after 1708-9.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand Rama evidently liked the authority and profit that he derived from control of the Customs, and in August 1717 he persuaded President Boone and his Council to let him farm them again, by offering 5,000 Rs. over what they had brought in the previous year.<sup>6</sup> The question was fully debated and the reasons for this step are given at length; but presumably its continuance was not considered desirable, as at the end of the year the Co.'s servants again took over the Customs.<sup>7</sup> The position of "Customer"—as the Customs-officer was then styled—was one of some dignity; and on the day that Rama took over the office he invited Boone and his Council to a dinner at the Customs House, where the President presented him with a horse and a *surpaw* "for his greater credit and incouragement."<sup>8</sup> This was an

<sup>1</sup> Thus the two "Customers" or Customs-officers of Bombay and Mahim had to preside over the two Benches of Justices under Aungier's orders of 2nd Feb. 1670: F.R. Surat Vol. 3, pp. 39, 41, and Malabari, pp. 146, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Consltn. of 24 March 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 144.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Viz.* Tobacco, Bombay Customs, Bombay and Mahim Arrack, and Butcher's Island.

<sup>5</sup> Consltns. of 24 March 1708 and 21 March 1709, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>6</sup> Consltns. of 9 August & 12 August 1717, B.P.P. Vol. 4, pp. 124-6.

<sup>7</sup> Consltn. of 31 July 1718, B.P.P. Vol. 4, p. 114.

<sup>8</sup> Consltns. of 12 Aug. & 16 Aug. 1717, B.P.P. Vol. 4, pp. 126, 9.

advance on the "six yards of fine scarlett," which were given him when he farmed the Customs in 1706.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to all this work Rama had charge of the Co.'s coining operations as Mint-Master at the Treasury. Thus we read of "Pillar Dollars"<sup>2</sup> being delivered to him in 1706 to be melted and made into Moghul rupees.<sup>3</sup> In 1712 he coins copper *Duccanees*<sup>4</sup> "as usual," and in *budgerooks*.<sup>5</sup> In 1719 he is consulted as to the issue of *abasses*<sup>6</sup> by the Treasury.<sup>7</sup> The "Treasury of Rama Comatta" was in fact a recognised part of it;<sup>8</sup> and Secretary Waters,<sup>9</sup> who was charged with breach of trust in his administration of Rama Kamati's estate, referred in his defence to "the Treasury Mint & Co., where he (Rama) and his son Baboo<sup>10</sup> presided, one as Head Mintmaster and the other as Chief Treasury Shroff until the very time his troubles commenced."<sup>11</sup> This shows that Rama managed to keep up a close connection with

1 Consln. of 25 April 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 217.

2 These were Spanish dollars, bearing the figure of the pillars of Hercules.

3 Consln. of 14 Feb. 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 135.

4 These presumably derived their name from the Deccan, i.e., the Table-land between the Eastern & the Western Ghauts, where they were coined. The name was sometimes spelt *Dugony*, cf. Strachey's, Keigwin's Rebellion, p. 32.

5 Conslns. of 21 March & 3 May 1712, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

The budgerook (Portuguese, bazaruceo) was a coin of a low denomination and varying metal, see Yule's *Hobson-Jobson* (1903) p. 121.

6 These were Persian coins, so named after the Shaha Abbas I (1587-1629) and Abbas II (1642-1666) cf. R.S. Poole, *coins of the Shahs of Persia*, pp. 21 and 26.

7 Consln. of 16 March 1719, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

8 It is thus mentioned in an account of 3 July 1712 as to the coining of Duccanees in B.P.P. Vol. 4.

9 He was Chief in Persia, when various charges were brought against him, and was recalled to Bombay to answer them (Consln. of 11 Oct. 1728, B.P.P. Vol. 6). They resulted in his dismissal (Consln. of 24 Jan. 1729, B.P.P. Vol. 6).

10 This was Balkrishna: Cf. Conslns. of 19 March 1725 and 22 Dec. 1727, B.P.P. Vol. 6, where he is referred to as "Baboo Comatec."

11 Consln. of 17 Jan. 1729, B.P.P. Vol. 6.

the Treasury, and he was generally referred to as "the Co.'s Shroff,"<sup>1</sup> although he had resigned that office in 1694.

He appears indeed to have done a good deal of Shroff's and Broker's work for the Co. Thus he accepted bills for the Co.,<sup>2</sup> and assisted in the disposal of their damaged goods.<sup>3</sup> He sometimes collected fines and other dues for the Treasury,<sup>4</sup> and acted as a mediator in arranging payments.<sup>5</sup> He supplied plate for the reception of a Persian envoy.<sup>6</sup> He also had of course his own commercial business to attend to. The India Office records naturally show only transactions that he had with the Co. Among these we find purchases of lead,<sup>7</sup> iron,<sup>8</sup> tin<sup>9</sup> and sugar,<sup>10</sup> and permission to load 18 chests of opium on one of the Co.'s ships.<sup>11</sup> Judging from the fact that he owned several ships, he must have had a big business. No less than four are mentioned as belonging to him, *viz.*, the *Blessing* of about 180 tons,<sup>12</sup> the *Union*,<sup>13</sup> the *Bombay Merchant*,<sup>14</sup> and the *Recovery*, which he sold to the Co. for Rs. 17,000 and was reported to be "extraordinary well fitted with all manner of stores."<sup>15</sup> The *Union* was commanded by an English mate, supplied by the Co.<sup>16</sup> He also had a *Ketch*, which traded with Gombroom, the modern Bunder Abbas.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *E.g.* Consln. of 23 April 1706, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 214; Consln. of 18 Feb. 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 145; and Conslns. of 1 Oct. 1708 and 14 Oct. 1708 in B.P.P. Vol. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Consln. of 26 Jan. 1711, B.P.P. Vol. 4, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> Conslns. of 24 July & 25 July 1717, B.P.P. Vol. 4, pp. 114, 5.

<sup>4</sup> Conslns. of 26 Aug., 2 Sept., and 14 Oct. 1708, B.P.P. Vol. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Account as to "Cattle for the Troops," B.P.P. Vol. 4, p. 111.

<sup>6</sup> Consln. of 13 Dec. 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 3.

<sup>7</sup> Conslns. of 28 Feb. 1709 & 27 Nov. 1712, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Consln. of 21 Nov. 1700, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>9</sup> Consln. of 17 Aug. 1713, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Consln. of 7 Oct. 1713, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Consln. of 11 Sept. 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 3.

<sup>12</sup> Consln. of 21 Jan. 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid* and Consln. of 13 Feb. 1707, B.P.P. Vol. 2, p. 116.

<sup>14</sup> Consln. of 18 March 1708, B.P.P. Vol. 2.

<sup>15</sup> Consln. of 9 Dec. 1712, B.P.P. Vol. 4.

<sup>16</sup> See *fn.* 13.

<sup>17</sup> Consln. of 20 April 1709, B.P.P. Vol. 4.