Chapter Six

DISEASES, MORTALITY AND HOSPITAL
DISEASES, MORTALITY AND HOSPITAL

Bombay as a port and settlement had a dual character, it was both welcoming and forbidding to Europeans. The site of Bombay had two major features: a natural harbour and a partly rocky and partly marshy terrain. The harbour itself was excellent, deep, without shoals, and sheltered from storms as it faced the mainland across Bombay creek, instead of facing the Arabian Sea directly. In fact, the Portuguese Viceroy of the Goa had opposed the cession of Bombay to the British on the ground that it was the best port in Portuguese possession, “with which that of Lisbon is not to be compared.”

The negative side was the unhealthy marshy site with feverish swamps, which took heavy toll of the European lives, and gave rise to the famous proverb: “two monsoons are the ages of a man.” Apart from the unhealthiness of the climate, intemperance of the early English, war with the political rival on the coast such as the Marathas, Sawantwadis, Sidi’s and other European companies, there was also a problem of finances for the maintenance of the island. All this added to the growing mortalities on the island to the extent that many Company servants were not willing to serve on the island.

The other negative effect can be seen in terms of the declining population of the island which remained more or less same in the first century of English rule on the island. Fryer in 1675 remarked that the population of the island was 60000 but by 1715 Cobbe remarked that the population had dwindled to 16000. This estimate may have been the result of the pestilential climate, coupled with disorders, thus giving rise to the commercial rivalry and the hostility of the Marathas, the Mughal’s and the Portuguese. The population remained approximately 60000 in the 1750’s.

The central purpose of this chapter is to show the various problems that the English faced on the island, and steps taken to overcome these problems such as constructing a hospital on the island.

1 Da Cunha, Origin of Bombay, Bombay, 1900, 5
3 G.B.C.1, I, 150-154.
MORTALITY ON THE ISLAND: VARIOUS CAUSES

"...For in five hundred, one hundred survive not; of that one hundred, one quarter get no estates; of those that do, it has been recorded above one in ten years has seen his country." Each year the monsoon winds of July and August bring rains on which Indian population depends, but for the early European travellers it was very unhealthy. Mortality rate was very high by modern standards. The sea voyage itself claimed a fair share of victims during the six or seven months journey and by the time they reached India contagions and other unknown causes of death awaited their arrivals. For instance, Ovington in 1690 writes: "... We arrived here, at the beginning of the rains, and buried of the twenty four passengers which we brought with us above twenty before they ended; and of our own ships company above fifteen; and we stay'd till the end of the next month, October, the rest would have gone a very hazardous fate, which by a kind of providence ordering our ships for Suratt's river mouth was comfortably avoided...a fortunate escape indeed! Because neither the commander, nor myself were in any hopes of surviving many days....The most sovereign, nor the safest prescription in the physical art, could restore the weakness of our languishing decay'd natures and that thoroughly confirmed to us the unhealthful ness of the place...."  

Nor was this mortality confined to particular epidemic years. It was a regular annual occurrence. The survivors used to hold thanksgiving banquets towards the end of October to celebrate their deliverance. "What use sending trusty factors, and hardy soldiers there?" writes Anderson "They breathed the poisonous air but a few short months after their lives and services are lost to the employers forever. Three years was the average duration of European life." This and other such instances found continuous references in the early official records and travel writings during the closing years of seventeenth and first year quarter of eighteenth century.

HEALTH CONDITIONS AND DISEASES

There exists little evidence to throw light on the health conditions on the Bombay Island during the period preceding its cession to the English crown by the Portuguese.

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4 Roe Thomas and Fryer John, *Travels in India 17th century*, New Delhi, 1993, 242
5 Ovington, *A voyage to Surat*, 86.
Heitor da Silveira named it the “Island of Good life”, which he would scarcely have done, if the climate had proved very deleterious. While Fryer in 1673 spoke of the country people and the Portuguese in the old days lived a long life, which he believed to be largely due to their temperate habits. But Bombay under the English acquired an evil reputation mainly because of the mortality which rose at an alarming pace.

“I reckon the people of Bombay live in the charnel houses,” wrote Fryer in 1673 “the climate being extremely unhealthy, as first thought to be caused by bubsho, rotten fish; but, though that be prohibited, yet it continues as mortal. I rather impute it to the situation which causes an infecundity in the earth, and a putrid ness in the air, what being produced seldom coming to maturity, where by what is eaten is undigested; whence follow fluxes, dropsy, scurvy, barbiers, gout, stone, malignant and putrid fevers, which are endemical diseases.”

More fatal was the disease known as the “morshideen” to the Portuguese which was choleric in nature and also called “Chinese death”. It was divided according to their system into four types. The first type was simple choleric and its only symptom was severe gripping. The second was attended with diarrhoea as well as pain; the third with pain and vomiting, purging and intense pain were symptoms of the last type
supposed by Thevenot to be cholera morbus and generally brought its victim to swift end within the twenty four hours.\textsuperscript{13}

The remedy upon which the European relied was applied to the ball of the sufferer’s food. If he winced, it was expected that he would recover but if he showed no signs of pain he was given over by his attendant.\textsuperscript{14} Manuchi, a Venetian physician had discovered another cure by which he gained vast reputation at the Mughal court, where he resided for forty years. His infallible remedy was this: “Take an iron rod about an inch and half a meter in diameter and then heal it with red hot fire, extend the patient on his back, and apply the ring to his naval, in such a manner that the naval may be as the centre to the ring. As soon as the patient feels the heat takes away the ring as quickly as possible, when so sudden a revolution will be brought in his intestines that his pain immediately ceases.”\textsuperscript{15}

The native remedy mentioned was to apply a twin red hot rod under the heel until the patient screamed with pain and then to slap the same part with the sole of the same shoe- to drive the pain centre of the body to an extremity. Thus the treatment of the diseases was more terrible than the diseases themselves. Such however seems not the case with flux, as the remedy is to take “two branches of the torrified rhubarb and a branch of cummin seed; all must be beat in to lime water or (if in that wanting) in the rose water. The common people in the Indies have no other remedy for this distemper, but the rice boiled in water till to be dry, they eat it with milk turned sour and use no other food as long as distemper lasts; but the same they use for the bloody flux…”\textsuperscript{16}

The climate instead of improving became more pestilential year by year. In 1668 many of the soldiers were sick of ‘the flux’ (dysentery).\textsuperscript{17} The Company records regularly refer to the sickness of the place, this fury of nature was aggravated by the lack of supply of medicines and the need for which is constantly referred to in the factory records. For instance a letter of 1668 refers about this island as “This island we find much more sickly then other places, the rather (as we conceive) for that the

\textsuperscript{13}Sen Surendranath, \textit{The Indian Travels}, 151
\textsuperscript{14}Ibid, 62
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid, Fn.2, 62.
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid,151.
\textsuperscript{17}Flux was the epidemical disease of this place, for which the best and the most approved remedy is the marmalade of Bussora. E.F.I, 1668-69, 68.
water hereupon is very bad, where for that which we commonly drink is fetched from Salsette, there being no spring upon the island. The private soldiers pay extends not to that charge, and therefore they are incident to several diseases (for the relief of which we have supplied them with part of our store of wine etc.), in so much that the doctor's complaint is that the medicines are very scant and not proportionate to the maladies, representing also to us the necessity of two able surgeon to reside on this place.\textsuperscript{18}

The quality of water was so bad that the letter of 1668 again refers to it and asked for some rose water from Persia for entertainment of strangers and also asked for some Shiraz wine "to encourage our water, by the badness whereof and the malignity of the air we have had diverse sick, towards whose recovery we have on all occasions furnished them with wine according to doctor's directions."\textsuperscript{19}

Seeing the mortality and sickness in Bombay there was an urgent need of a surgeon. Accordingly Bombay received its surgeon, Dr. John Bird.\textsuperscript{20} Unfortunately, the island continued to have disease, problems of fresh water, medicines. This was to the extent that even Dr. Bird did not want his wife to stay on the island. This becomes more evident from the letter sent to the Company "The surgeon you sent for Bombay makes a humble request that you would permit his wife to take her passage in the next ship that come forth ... the air or water or both, do not very well agree with the soldiers. The general disease of this island is the flux and looseness, which caused the great expense of the physic, but the surgeon, has sent a list of suitable medicines, which please to let them not fail of by the next shipping...."\textsuperscript{21}

Later in the same year Bombay again required another surgeon as John Bird, the assistant surgeon, was going home. His services had proved useful for the soldiers.\textsuperscript{22} Randolph, the surgeon of the ship Rebecca, however was willing to remain in India and might be induced to accept the post. Randolph was given the permission to stay

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, 72-73.
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid, 75.
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid, 68.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid, 86.
\textsuperscript{22} Ibid, 95.
back since the friend of John bird, Thomas Farley’s conduct was found unsuitable for the job.\textsuperscript{23}

In 1670, there was a considerable sickness and mortality among the European community, attributed largely to the late monsoon and lack of sufficient medicines. In July, the Bombay Governor Gray wrote: ‘tis now a sickly time for fluxes and feavours, yet praised be God, wee have buryed but one man these three months past’. But later in that month the deaths took place of Rev. James Hutchinson, the Minister, and John Martyn, the Secretary of the Council, whose place (Gray said) it would be difficult to supply with ‘a sober person and one that is qualified for it’. In August he wrote: “we have diverse people sick and tis a hard sayinge when the surgeons tell them they have no medicines to give them, occasioned by the improvidence of those (to whom) our Masters intrust it at home, that neglected sendinge any out by the last three ships, which falls out unhappily to the loss of the Company’s servant and alseoe to the greate encrese of these (through having to pay the ships double the amount that the medicines so obtained would have cost at home).”\textsuperscript{24}

Unfortunately this sickness and mortality continued in the year 1670 Charles Smeaton, an able accountant died within two months of his appointment.\textsuperscript{25} Another loss was the death of Rev. James Sterling on 15\textsuperscript{th} December\textsuperscript{26}. Babor, member in the Council also died from gout or some other illness.\textsuperscript{27} In September there was fortunately an improvement in this respect, Gary having purchased a medicine chest from Dr. Bird for Rs. 44, and received another which the Company had sent out on one of the ships, so that he hoped the supply would be sufficient till the next year’s shipping arrived.

Mortality did not get the respite in the coming years and it fell heavily on the new soldiers especially in the first few months after their arrival. Thus out of forty recruits put on the ships in March 1677, half had died by the following January.\textsuperscript{28} The sickness and diseases among the European’s especially among the English continued

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Ibid, 89.
  \item \textsuperscript{24} E.F.I, 1670-77, 19.
  \item \textsuperscript{25} Ibid, 5.
  \item \textsuperscript{26} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{27} Ibid.
  \item \textsuperscript{28} Ibid, 177.
\end{itemize}
without any partiality of their ranks. For instance, Aungier died of the dysenteric illness that attacked him in 1673 and eventually caused his death in 1677. Philip Giffard, the deputy governor of Bombay fell ill in early 1676 and in September of that year left for Surat, where he died two months later. John Petit who succeeded Giffard also fell ill in November 1676 and also left for Surat. In the months between October 1675 and February 1776, a hundred soldiers perished.

In 1676 Mr. John Child who later became governor of Bombay, had been appointed accountant of Bombay and second in the council by the President and Council of Surat, He pleaded his apprehension of the diseases & positively refused to accept the office. Phillip Giffard and John Petit writing in 1676 remarked “we have buried up to fifty men, most new men; they die of fluxes which for the most part will take all it seized by reason of the bad diet and lodging and ill government of our people in their sickness, and also they living so remote they can not be looked after as they ought…”

In 1676 there were seldom less than forty or fifty of the English soldiers sick and totally incapable of doing any duty. Seeing the sickness and mortality in the garrison the officers were finding it inconvenient to disband the old soldiers because each one of them was worth ten raw men as they hardly adjust to the climatic conditions of the island.

The Company thus seeing the growing mortality of the English on the island put forth the plan of the hospital, so that the sick might be provided with constant attendance and a regular diet. The proposed building was to be capable of receiving seventeen persons and the cost was not to exceed four thousand rupees. It was estimated that about a thousand rupees would cover the annual expenses of the establishment which

29 Ibid, xv, 5.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
33 Campbell, III, 544.
34 G.B.C.I, III, 162.
36 Ibid, 155.
was to be under the superintendence of a resident surgeon. But notwithstanding the high mortality rate, no definite steps were taken till 1675.

**HOSPITAL**

Aungier had during his visit in 1670 to Bombay marked out the convenient place for a hospital, and ordered one to be built at the Company's expense. Gray accordingly employed stonemasons, bricklayers and carpenters in getting materials ready for one, but no actual building appears to have begun during the year.\(^{37}\) In 1671 the progress was made with the building of the hospital, and in April its completion was reported to be in sight.\(^{38}\)

This was indeed an urgent requirement. The letters from Bombay contain frequent references to the sickness and mortality prevalent among the European residents. The Council was particularly affected. In January both Cotes and Captain Burgess were sick. Cotes in fact had a long and a tedious illness that ended in his death in November.\(^{39}\) Barbor, who had been very ill with gout and 'flux', apparently had a stroke in June, which rendered him speechless. In July provision was made by the Surat Council for Flower to succeed him at Mahim, if he died. He was, however, still alive at the end of the year, though apparently unable to do any work. Henry Chown, who had returned to Surat on the *George* from the discarded factory at Achin, took his place on the Council in June.\(^{40}\) The sickness prevailed heavily on the island especially in October. This becomes more evident from the factory letters:

7th October: Is a very sickly time with us, there being at least 45 soldiers were sick and both Dr. Powell\(^{41}\) and Dr. Boice\(^{42}\) given over- so that we have no person that knows how to apply anything to anyone's distemper, which does much discourage to our men.

13th October: We have a very sickly time of it here, not one of us enjoy our health hardly a week together. Dr. Powell is dead, and Thomas Boice given over long ago, so in much want of a doctor.

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\(^{37}\) Ibid, 16.
\(^{38}\) Ibid, 26.
\(^{39}\) Ibid, 27.
\(^{40}\) Ibid.
\(^{41}\) He was appointed at Bombay in July 1668, *Court Minute..., 1668-70*, 37-38.
\(^{42}\) He was formally employed in Persia. *E.F.I., 1668-69*, 41.
23rd October: We have still many of our men desperately ill and some die almost daily.

8th November: We find no abatement of those malignant distempers among us, which carry off daily one or other away- not two of us in the fort well, but some dangerously ill, which is a great hindrance to business and to the accounts. 43

Nor it was till the close of the year that the want of the surgeon was remedied. A competent surgeon was still wanted, and Dr. Bird, whom it was proposed to reengage, refused to accept the appointment, unless his emoluments were raised. 44 Once again in 1673 Aungier wrote a letter to the Company relating to some demands affecting the English population. One such demand was relating to the Hospital, to be erected partly at the cost of the Company’s cost and partly out of voluntary contributions. He explained that the house formerly built for the purpose was not conveniently situated and was more suited for the warehouse. He proposed, therefore, to build another one nearer the fort. The need for this had been stressed by Dr. Bird, the surgeon at Bombay, in his report of 1st January to the Company. Aungier complemented him, saying he had a very heavy task, because of the constant sickness in Bombay, especially in the months of May, June, September, and October. 45 He therefore welcomed the addition of another surgeon in the person of Dr. John Fryer whom the Company sent out on the Unity, one of the seven ships that arrived in December, 46 and whose published letters on India and Persia have made him famous.

In the second half of the year an illness suggestive of influenza had ‘swept away a great many people by violent fevers and pains in the head’. Aungier was among the victims, but he had recovered by the end of July. In October and November he was again on the sick list with ‘colleck’ (colic); and a consultation of 5th November records that the Governor, the Deputy Governor, and some others had been ‘of late much indisposed as to health, so that for some time the Council could not all meet. On the 24th, however, Aungier was ‘somewhat recovered from his violent distemper’. 47

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43 Ibid, 28.
44 Ibid, 40-41.
46 Fryer, op.cit., 30.
47 E.F.I, 1670-77, 81-82.
Aungier had long wanted to have a hospital built\textsuperscript{48} but was awaiting the Company's reply to the proposals in his letter of 15\textsuperscript{th} January 1674, where he specified them among the four principal 'wants' of Bombay.\textsuperscript{49} 

Seeing the mortality on the island the Surat Council wrote to Bombay on 18\textsuperscript{th} December 1675 regarding the need for a proper hospital. The letter reads that the Surat Council is determined to erect the necessary building with all speed without waiting for any order from England for the island. The Surat Council further directed the Bombay government to collect materials without further delay on the Company's charge and also proposed to supply the material for building.\textsuperscript{50} 

The letter further reads that the Surat Council had considered the two models for the hospital for the island but it seemed to Council that they were too narrow to have a yard room. Even the rooms for the surgeon and his family and for attendants were not spacious as they ought to be. The Council thus asked for another model to be drawn out which was to be larger and airy and consequently healthier for the sick people. The Council also asked the Bombay government to first look for the place where it is to be built as they were not much inclined to the place formerly designed by Colonel Bake fearing that the air was not so good there and it was too near the sea. The Council advised the Bombay government to choose a place in line of fortification and with space for gardens. They also advised that the foundation of the building to be of good stone and lime and the ground to be raised to three or four feet high. The walls, they recommended, should be built of sandstone and lime and raised to a convenient height.\textsuperscript{51} 

In 1676, the Bombay Council suffered severely from illness, resulting in the death of two of its members - Giffard, the Deputy Governor, and Captain Ustick. Petit also was ill for several months. Towards the end of January he went for a week's change. 

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\textsuperscript{48} Ibid, 16, 42 and 81. \\
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 129, 141. A clear instance of Aungier's desire to improve the conditions for Europeans at Bombay was his request to the Company to send more medicines to that place than to Surat. He pointed out that former had nearly 300 Englishman on shore and ships as against some 30 at Surat. In February he engaged two surgeon mates, in view of the large amount of sickness in the garrison. The principal surgeons at this place were Dr. John Fryer and Dr. John Bird, Ibid, 131. \\
\textsuperscript{50} F.H.S, I, 74. \\
\textsuperscript{51} F.H.S., I, 74 
\end{flushleft}
of air to the mainland, but it did not do him much good, as at the beginning of February he was still ill and ‘very weak and much spent’. It was noted later on that month that he and Giffard ‘still linger under a tedious flux, and are both now very weak and reduced to that extremity that, if they recover, they will not be capable of performing their duties for some considerable time’.52

At the beginning of March Giffard became much worse and in such pain from an internal ulcer that he could not ‘stir off his cot’. Even when the pain abated, he had to stay in bed and was so weak that he could transact no business, not even by dictating a letter. This continued to 8th September, when at his request he was allowed to go to Surat, in the hope that the change might save his life, but it ended there on 22nd November.53 Meanwhile Captain Ustick died on 30th July after a month’s illness. The brunt of the work, therefore, fell on Petit, the ‘second’ of the Council, though he was himself ‘under violent distemper for 8 to 9 months, which brought him to the point of death’.54

The scarcity of cash and high cost of materials necessarily hampered building operations, and in November the Surat Council limited these to work on the fort and hospital.55 In January 1676, the Surat Government reminded Bombay about the place of hospital and its design. The Surat Council enquired about the model they suggested and wanted the hospital to have proper wards, surgeons' lodgings and the surgery rooms to be one story high. The Council also asked for the supply of chunam through boats in order to keep expenses under control.56 Surat on 17th January 1676 again sent the plan of the hospital which will accommodate about 70 persons with overall charges not more than Rs.4000 to Bombay. The Surat Council also wrote that its yearly maintenance would amount to about Rs.1000 and would to be governed by the chief surgeon and his mates who are to reside there.57

52 E.F.I., 1670-77, 144.
53 Ibid, 272.
54 Ibid, 144, 151.
55 Ibid, 161.
56 F.H.S., I, 78.
57 Campbell, III, 543.
Giffard however, wanted to get the bastion work pushed on first, and the proposal languished until he and Petit suggested a feasible alternative. They had jointly built a large house and some shops at their own expense, for which they each received Rs. 1,500 as an advance of salary under the rules for the encouragement of building that had been sanctioned by the Company. They proposed that the Court of Judicature be shifted to this new house and be taken for the hospital.

This proposal found favour with Aungier and his colleagues, and the house and the ground attached to it, which were valued by a committee at Rs. 7,400, were acquired accordingly in October. The work of building a wall round the other house then proceeded, but that of fitting it up as a hospital was held over till the end of December, when Dr. Thomas Wilson arrived from Surat. He was a fellow of the London College of Physicians, who had been sent out by the Company in the hope that he would improve the health of its servants. The Surat Council appointed Physician-in-Chief at Bombay. It appeared that the proposed building was never erected and that instead a new court of judicature was built in the bazaar, while the old court situated on the esplanade to southeast of present Cooperage was transformed into a hospital in 1677.

A Hospital that had been provided in 1676 proved to be of great use to the 'poor sick soldiers', as the surgeons could give them better attention and prevent them taking 'hurtful things'. The general health of the island also appears to have been

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58 Letter of Surat Government to Bombay, 19th July 1676 “We like well your proposition of making the present Court of Judicature and hospital and the Deputy Governor’s and Mr. Petit’s house the Court of Judicature. At the same time we would be further satisfied how the Deputy Governor and Mr. Petit mean by sparing their house to the Company whether they design renting it annually to them or selling it outright; if the first, then what rent they demand, for we would not put the Company to too great a charge. If they wish to sell, then how will they oblige themselves to the Company for the money they have received on account of their arrears of salary, for at present we look upon the house as sufficient security which is also agreeable to the Company’s order. But let the house be valued by any indifferent persons and the valuation thereof sent us and then we shall be able to give a more definitive answer”. F.H.S. I, 98-99.

59 This was ‘a fair large brick house tiled, built in the line of the town in that part where the English colony is to be’ which was acquired in 1675. Ibid, Fn.

60 Ibid, Fn.


63 Ibid, 162.
good, and ‘Physitian-General’ Wilson was accordingly spared in response to Aungier’s request for his services in April.\textsuperscript{64}

The records say little about the hospital, but Child highly praises Dr. Bird the surgeon in charge of it, for his skill carelessness, and experience, as well as ‘his exemplary quiet living’. A list of medicine was also sent to Surat in March, and a chest of medicine was also sent out by the Company. It also sent Dr. John Staveley and Dr. Bird seems to have had ample assistance as four other medical signatories (including the apothecary, John Kitson) testified in the case against Ensign Hughes.\textsuperscript{65}

With the functioning of the hospital the mortality rate started dropping which becomes evident from the letters of the Bombay council to Surat: “...our soldiers thanks be to god continue very healthful for where as last year from October to February there died hundred men, this year we have lost only fifteen most of which imposition in the liver, much of which benefit we must attribute to the new hospital ....our Bombay bills of the mortality have swelled to high, where as in the hospital nothing can come in or out without passing the doctors eye, that he have confidence this hospital will save our honours with 100 pounds yearly which the transport of soldiers exacts...”\textsuperscript{66}

Unfortunately, this did not continue for long and the rate of mortality again began to increase in the 1680s. Moreover, circumstances were not helped by the fact that the island was often destitute of physicians and consignment of medicines, which was spasmodically sent out by C.O.D, and they proved often to be bad.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1682, the hospital suffered from occasional want of doctors and drugs. At the beginning of the year Dr. Bird and Dr. John Stavely were sent to Surat. In April Dr. Bird badly wanted drugs as the quantities and kind of drugs required (rhubarb and

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid, 278. Petit and a member of his Council were exceptions. Mansell Smith during the second half of the year suffered from ‘a bone’, and thought he was not long for this world if he stayed on in Bombay. Petit’s case was much the same. His health had not improved. Ibid, 186.

\textsuperscript{65} E.F.I., 1678-84, 78.

\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{67} The first physician that was sent was Dr. Wilson appointed in 1676. In 1680 a surgeon on 45 shillings a month and an assistant on 30 shillings were sent from England; Edwards, \textit{Rise of Bombay}, Bombay, 1902, 67.
poppy heads) did not arrive from Surat before July. In July several men were ill and even Dr. Bird was confined to his chambers. Kitson, assistant surgeon also died during the same year. This made Ward ask for a surgeon for the island. 68

This need for a surgeon continued for a few more years as evident from the letters of the company dated 29th December 1686: "...enclosed is the list of the English deceased since or last to this instant with those that are living the mortality has this year been exceeding violent, and shall much want recruits by all opportunities; and chief reason that can be given the absolute want of the good Europe medicines that should have been yearly sent out fresh...year1682-83 which puts us to use the country physician, which serves only to augment the charge of the garrison and does more harm than good. For a supply what is necessary were now send a list or invoice here enclosed under the hand of the chief surgeon, and an account of what is wanting and necessary to the relief yearly of the stores and marine" 69

The situation in the following year further worsened and the Bombay government asked from Surat to send the medicines urgently for the garrison. According to the doctors list out of 35 soldiers sent from England that nearly 19 arrived on shore, 17 of them were sent to the hospital at once as they were suffering from scurvy, of which 2 died. 70 One of the reasons for the wretched conditions of these soldiers, who came on the ship ‘Worcester’, was that they were badly treated and starved on the voyage. Bombay wrote to the Company to send strongmen, otherwise most of them would die by the time they come to Bombay. It also instructed the Captain’s of the ships to supply bread and provisions properly to the soldiers on the voyage. 71 In 1690 it was reported that there were only 35 Englishmen in Bombay who were not ill. While in 1691 there were only 5 civil servants alive. 72

In 1702, Mr. Robert Bartlett, Doctor from England, offered his much needed service to the Company. It was much relief to the island as there was no doctor since the death of Dr. Skinner. Mr. Bartlett was thus allowed to serve on the island with a

68 E.F.I, 1678-84, 122.
69 F.H.S. I, 148.
70 Campbell, III, 77.
71 F.H.S, I, 150.
72 G.B.C.I., III, 162.
salary of $4 a month to be paid in Xeraphins according to the custom of the island
together with the same allowance for his diet as Doctor Skinner was allowed, and the
usual assistance belonging to the hospital. It was also decided to bear his charges till
he arrives on the island.73

In 1720, Bombay government was again asked to reduce the charges of the hospital.
The Bombay government thus appointed a committee comprising of B. Midford and
O. Phillipps in September to consider the means to lessen the hospital charges. The
committee proposed that the quantity of arrack used in drawing cinnamon water and
spirit of wine amounts to a considerable sum, so for the future a stock of it for the
whole year be laid in by the paymaster. The drugs should be purchased in quantities
rather than in retail to reduce the charges. The food for the sick can be kept in stock
by the barrack master rather than brought by the surgeon when required.74 On the
recommendation of the committee the Board ordered the land paymaster to provide a
quantity of drugs and arrack for making spirits sufficient for a year’s expense and that
for the future the barrack master victual the sick people in the hospital as formerly.75

The condition of the hospital however remained bad as it needed more servants and
assistant and small necessities for the sick. The Board in 1738 thus decided to take all
possible care of the sick people agreeing to appoint additional attendants. The list of
the additional attendants is as follows76:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Rs.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One Purvoe Book-keeper</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Hospital Assistant</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Ward Servants</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Out-door Assistant</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Bedding Servant</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>52</strong></td>
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73 F.H.S., I, 245.
74 P.D.D. 1-A of 1720, 233-234.
75 Ibid, 235. For their garrison and military, the Government had to purchase Goa and Batavia arrack.
Entries in the Diaries show the following prices: (1) Batavia arrack, Rs. 90 the leaguer of 150 Gallons
in 1731; Rs. 120 in 1735; Rs. 95 in 1736; Rs. 120 in 1737; Rs. 150 in 1744; and Rs. 225 in 1773. (2)
Goa arrack, Rs. 14 and Rs. 16 the hogshead of 50 gallons in 1735; Rs. 15 ½ in 1737; Rs. 20 and Rs. 26
in 1742; Rs. 27 in 1744; Rs. 26 in 1745 and 1748; Rs. 25 in 1749; and Rs. 23 in 1751. Campbell, III,
546.
76 Campbell, III, 547-48.
The board also passed several regulations to improve the condition of the hospital:

- The patients were to be entered under the care of each surgeon respectively as they go into the hospital, each surgeon taking one week.
- Both surgeons were to constantly visit the hospital and consult with each other in cases of danger.
- The surgeons should preserve good harmony and agreement with each other as the most likely method to contribute to the relief of the sick.
- The officers of the military and marine should duly visit the hospital as an encouragement to the sick and observe whether proper care was taken of them and report what they think may be amiss.\(^7\)

A month later, on the 2\(^{nd}\) August 1738, Government communicated their decision to Messrs. John Neilson and Michael Weston, Surgeons, in the following letter: Some irregularities in the hospital having been complained of and sundry conveniences being represented to be wanting for the better care of the sick, the President and Council have taken the same into consideration and thereupon make the following regulations and orders which I am directed to signify to you for your observance.

These regulations were:

- It being represented that the number of servants and attendants at present allowed are not sufficient to take due care of the sick.
- The President and Council have given orders to the paymaster for completing the ceilings of two of the rooms in the hospital already begun and to make two dozen screens to keep the sick from the sight of each other.
- The paymaster is also to purchase 100 banian shirts, as many drawers and caps, fifty beds, fifty quilts, 100 pillows with sheets and pillow biers for them for the use of the sick. That this number may be always kept up, and if possible without further charge to the Company, half a month's pay is ordered to be stopped from every soldier or sailor that shall go into the hospital with the venereal distemper to be applied for that purpose. And when any such soldiers or sailors are discharged you are to sign it to the land or marine paymaster respectively that their pay may be stopped accordingly.

\(^7\) P.D.D. 10-A of 1737-38, 244-45.
To prevent the ill-effects of people going out of the hospital and changing their diet too soon, a discretional power is hereby given you to in case of necessity to make some small addition to the present allowance of wine and fresh provisions when a patient is on the road to recovery.

It is ordered that as they go into the hospital the sick be entered under the care of each surgeon, each surgeon taking one week, but that you both constantly visit the hospital and consult with each other in all cases of danger.

That each surgeon have a key of the medicines.

As nothing can contribute more to the relief of your patients than preserving a good harmony between you, the same is positively enjoined.

The officers of the military and marine are ordered daily to visit the hospital as an encouragement to the sick, and are to observe whether proper care be taken of the sick and report what they find amiss.

The Moody’s account of hospital charges having pretty much increased of late, you are to take particular care that nothing be charged therein but what is actually used for the hospital.  

The condition of the hospital remained pathetic with no proper bedding facilities, medicines, kitchen utensils required for preparing the diet of the patient for over two decades. In 1740, on the report of the inspectors of the hospital the President informed the board about the pathetic condition of the hospital. Thereafter in consultation with board he agreed to make sundry repairs, alterations and to provide it with other necessities such as bedding, patient’s cloths, kitchen utensils etc, and to make the proper arrangements which hitherto was not present and remained with out account. It was also agreed to make arrangements for frequent visits of the doctors and to meet their demands of medicines.

On the basis of the recommendation made by the President to the board efforts were taken. The dispensary and the medicine rooms were now well provided with facilities and arrangements were made for the frequent visits of the doctors to the hospital at least once in the day to prescribe to each person what medicine and diet is necessary. Now the hospital was also provided with native doctors who were also entrusted with

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78 Campbell, III, 548.
79 P.D.D. 13-A of 1740, 370.
the duty to visit the patient regularly. The diet for the patient also improved and they were given mutton, fowl and bread. Those who could not digest this food were given milk and other light food.\textsuperscript{80}

The other problem of the hospital related to various rooms in the hospital such as distillery, several wards being exceedingly wet and damp chiefly imputed to a large amount of water in the cook room and the compound wall which still did not have the proper drain for carrying it off. This and other such problems made the place unwholesome for the patient. Apart from it the provision for the purview or black doctor was proving of no use as enquiry proved. For instance the quilts, bed sheets, pillows and the supplies which were promised were not coming. The presidency was running short of the funds and required a large amount to cater to the needs of the hospital as a result of which the lives and the health of many European suffered.\textsuperscript{81} The president taking note of these problems laid before the board certain instructions for putting the hospital in order.

On 14\textsuperscript{th} March 1746 the Board read the letter from Thomas Marsh\textsuperscript{82} and others that on visiting the hospital they found the visiting hours of the surgeons as six or seven in the morning. This appeared to them an improper time as they visit but once a day and then order what is to be given, they cannot thus well know whether it will operate or not. Neither the patients can judge their own state or any alterations the night may have produced on them. They therefore think eight or nine o’clock a more proper time. By that time the surgeons can be informed if what was ordered the day preceding has had the desired effect and the patients will also be better able to give an account of themselves in all other respects necessary to be known before new prescriptions are given.\textsuperscript{83}

They also proposed that it might not be well to divide the patients between the two surgeons. As most of the doctor differ in their practice, if the same patient is prescribed indifferently by either, it may probably turn worse for the patient. In dangerous cases the surgeons should consult with each other for the common benefit

\textsuperscript{80} Ibid, 384-387.
\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{82} Hospital inspectors.
\textsuperscript{83} P.D.D. No 19-1 of 1746, 70-71.
of the sick under their respective care. "Taking notice to the surgeons of the large quantity of port-wine used in the hospital and enquiring whether there might not be cordials given to patients when on recovery that would be equally serviceable and be had on much easier terms, and finding that a cordial may be made of Batavia arrack with spices far preferable in many cases and much cheaper than port it induced us to recommend to the surgeons the practice of it in all such cases, in order to cause some saving in the article of wine. This they promised us to do," wrote Marsh. 84

The letter further reads that on examining the hospital abstract and computing the necessary services they judge three men may be spared and accordingly recommended the striking them off. Here they esteem it their duty to take notice that only two of these are real, the other nominal, whose pay of Rs.5 a month the head surgeon informs us was an indulgence of Mr. Morely’s to him. When these are struck off the allotment will stand thus 85:

- In the surgery I mate and 2 assistants ... 3
- A purvoe to take account of medicines
- Linen ... ... ... ... ... ... 1
- Ward Servitors two to each ward ... ... 12
- Vietdalman ... ... ... ... ... 1
- Washeman ... ... ... ... ... 1
- Barber ... ... ... ... ... 1
- Halalkhors ... ... ... ... ... 5
- Black Doctors, one at Mahim and one at Bombay ... ... ... ... ... 2

Total 26

They also proposed for separate cells for lunatics near the back gate of the hospital that may be fitted up at a small expense the better to secure these unhappy and sometimes disorderly patients. They also thought it very useful if the hospital servants could be moved all within the gates so that their service can be utilised in time of emergency. They thus asked the Board if the land paymaster may be ordered to allot them ground for their dwellings, and, if a month or two’s pay was advanced to them

84 Ibid, 72.
85 Ibid, 73.
on this account. These suggestions of the Hospital Inspectors were approved and forwarded to the surgeons as standing orders. 86

However it seems many things were in order abuses against the sick continued as evident from the dispatch of 1751 which asked for the monthly inspection of the hospital by the military and the marine paymasters along with the major to avoid any abuses that the sick might face. 87

THE OTHER PROBLEMS: WAR, STORMS, EPIDEMICS, FISH MANURE
The Mughal-Sidi and Bombay conflict were further adding to the problems. Ovington writes "...the sword has also done its work and so much were the constitutions of Europeans undermined by the deleterious air, that slight wounds were healed with great difficulty. All wounds and contusions in the flesh are likewise healed here; and if they are; tis with difficulty and extraordinary care; they happen generally to be very dangerous and cure admits of more delays and hazards in the healing, than what is usual in other parts. But the corruption of the air has a more visible and immediate effect upon young English infants; whose tender spirits are less able to resist its impression; so that one of the twenty of them live to any maturity or even beyond their infant days, were it otherwise...

Alexander Hamilton writing in the same period reported: "The number diminished with a rapidly and truly alarming rate of seven or eight hundred European who have inhabited before the war not more than sixty were left..." 89

Bombay during this period again gripped with the problems especially of plague, fever etc. 90 The Bombay correspondence contains the following information about the great plague which wasted western India between 1686 and 1696. Towards the end of 1686 the Bombay Council writes: "We have abundance of men sick and many of them die. We finishing the account of our majesty's ships phoenix but by reason of

86 Ibid, 74-75.
87 P.D.D, 24-B/ 1751, 578.
88 Ovington, A voyage to Surat, 89.
89 Hamilton, op.cit., 237.
90 The plague appeared in Aurangzeb's camp in 1684 and in 1689, at Surat in 1684 and 1690, at Bassien in 1690, and in Bombay at intervals fro 1689-1702; G.B.C.I, III, Fn.2, 164.
some of her men lying sick in the hospital, and we know not how God will deal with
them can not close the account to send up, which as soon as we can, shall be done." 91

In 1692, Bombay then had scarcely 800 European inhabitants but only 100 survived
the fever of that year. The plague bulletin further unfolded a story even more
gruesome that there was only one doctor to attend to the sick and sufferings further
increased with the death of Dr. Wilson. He too was the victim of the same disease.
This deprived the city of its only medical officer. The Council observed at Surat “for
as such as by the death of Dr. Skinner the island of Bombay was deprived of
physician and the island very sickly and a many poor people and soldiers laying in
danger of perishing for the want of, the help and the advice of a doctor we resolved to
entertain Mr. Barlett in the said station allowing him 4 pound a month to be paid in the
xeraphins, according to the customs of the island, together with the assistance
belonging to the hospital.” 92

The pathetic condition of the island is illustrated by the fact that the doctor, who was
expected to look after the health of the town, was merely paid fifty pounds a year. It
was little wonder that the death was knocking at every door on the island. The climate
of Bombay was more fatal to the European than the natives. Ovington once jokingly
observed: “As the ancient gave the epithet of fortunate to some islands in the west,
because of their delightfulfulness and health, so the modern may in the opposition to
them, dominate Bombay and unfortunate in the east, because of the antipathy it bears
to those two qualities.” 93 It was a sorry joke but true.

The earliest storm of which records remains commenced on 15th May, 1618, and was
thus described by Cordara. 94 “The sky clouded, thunder burst, and a mighty wind
arose. Towards the nightfall a whirlwind raised the waves so high that the people, half
dead from fear, thought that their city would be swallowed up. Many provision boats,
which were lying at anchor off the shore, were dashed to pieces. In the city and the
villages, houses were thrown down and rendered unfit to live in. the monasteries and
convents of the Franciscans and Augustinians were utterly ruined. The three largest

91 F.H.S, I, 155.
92 Ibid, 245.
93 Ovington, A Voyage to Surat, 86.
94 G.B.C.I, I, 97.
churches in the city, and both the house and the church of the Jesuits were unroofed and gaped in the clefts almost past off the palm groves. Thousands of palms were torn out by the roots, and some the wind lifted through the air like feathers and carried great distances. The whole was like the ruin at the end of all villages.”

That it affected Bombay equally is clear from the following account of Faria e Souza in his Asia Portugueza, “In May 1618, a general and diabolical storm occurred in the neighbourhood of Bombay on the 15th of that month, and continued with such violence that the people hid themselves in cellars, it continued dread lest their dwellings should be leveled with the earth; and at 2 p.m. an earthquake destroyed many houses. The sea was brought into the city by the wind, the waves roared fearfully, the tops of the Churches were blown off and immense stones were driven to vast distances. Two thousand persons were killed. The fish died in the ponds and most of the Churches, as the tempest advanced, were utterly destroyed. Many vessels were lost in the port. At Bombay sixty miles sail of vessels with their cargoes and some of their crews founded.”

On September 30th, 1696, Bombay was visited by “a hard gust of wind from the east and south west with thunder and lightning and some rain”. In 1702-1703, a fearful mortality prevailed in Bombay. The natives suffered much, and only 26 Europeans were left. Following the calamity was a violent storm, which destroyed the produce of the island and wrecked the greater part of the shipping.

A terrific storm destroyed three garbs completely armed and equipped on 30th November, 1740, and it was succeeded again on 11th September 1742, by a cyclone, the force of which was such “as has not been expected in the memory of any one now on the spot.” A Government consultation of 11th September 1742, reads: this day had an exceedingly hard storm of wind and rain. The ships in the road drove from their anchors, and a large Moor ship parting her cables ran ashore between Cross Island and Dongrie. The Somersett and Salisbury ran foul, the Somersett breaking her

95 Ibid. this account refers chiefly to Bassein, and the ruin which it wrought there was still visible several years later. Cited from, GBCI, I, Fn.2, 97-98.
96 Faria e Souza in his Asia Portugueza, III, Cf. G.B.C.I, I, Fn.2, 97.
97 Campbell, 111.
98 Ibid, 139.
99 G.B.C.I, I, 98.
main yard and part of the quarter galley and receiving, it is believed, other damages; the Salisbury's head was carried away and part of the cut water. The gale was as excessive as has not been exceeded in the memory of many now on the spot.100

Three days later the President lay before the Council reports from the several outposts of the damage done through the late storm. The rain fell in torrents and all the ships in the harbour were forced from their moorings. The royal ships Somerset and Salisbury were damaged along with a large vessel belonging to a Muslim. The Mazagon fort was untiled, the thatched posts at Cooley and Sidi bandars were blown down. The Drong battery and houses and sheds at Suri (Seweri) were untiled and the guard rooms to the eastwards very leaky, though paved with stone cemented with mortar. Candala and Marine batteries were much damage and the soldiers guarding them were left with no shelters.101

The President went on to observer that Mazgaon was of no strength and the Cooley and the Sidi banders are all the same as the Drong battery. These places were of no further use than to prevent boats landing from Salsette or the main, and hindered people from going off this. No boats were permitted to land in any of the bays or creeks between Sion and Sewri or Sewri and Bombay without first having the permit from the customer of Bombay or Mahim. Sewri commanded a large bay and had been thought a necessary security that way. As he conceived all the pre mentioned small posts are requisite for answering the end proposed. He noted that making light cajans hutches or roofs with ordinary tiles only drew on the constant expense and in the end was much more chargeable then doing them well at first. Provided that they were thought necessary, he proposes to direct the engineer to estimate the expense at every place for rendering them firm and secure, subject only hereafter to the turning of tiles, which was but a small matter. To this the Board agreed, intimating that they will form their determination when the estimate was laid before them.102

In 1762, a very violent gale of wind did considerable damage to the small craft in and about the harbour, blew down coconuts trees and “in other respects damaged most of

100 P.D.D, 15/1741-42, 428.
101 Ibid.
102 Ibid., 438-439.
the oarts and houses on the island.” The storm became the basis of a petition from the Fazendars of Mahim and Bombay and the oart farmers, asking for the remission of assessment. The Veredores calculated the total damage at Rs. 14,330, but the Committee of Accounts reduced his estimate to Rs. 8,500, which amount was sanctioned by the Government.

Diseases were as usual prevalent at Bombay, Commodore Harland, finding that he could not agree with Sir Nicholas Waite who reached Bombay from Surat in 1704, implored the Court to have his son settled in Bengal rather than Bombay, a place of mortality, with out trade and shipping. There were then on the island eight covenanted civilians, including members of the Council and two more persons who could write and two youth taken from ships. The garrison consisted of six commissioned officers and forty European soldiers, civilians and soldiers were suffering from illness. The condition was so bad that they called Bombay, “the unhealthful, depopulated and ruined island.”

In 1707, civilians were reduced to seven and some were invalids. There were but six commissioned officers, two of them frequently ill, and not even forty English soldiers. In May seven civilians had dwindled to six and were deeply depressed by their conditions and they thus wrote: “it will be morally impossible to continue much longer from going under ground, if we have not a large assistance out before October.”

In 1710, Burnell wrote that health conditions had not greatly improved as can be seen from his description of the hospital and cemetery The former he described as “…Its enough to make a man die with the thoughts of going in to it …a strange ill fashioned contrived things …seldom empty; few above the degrees of soldiers and sailors

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105 Burnell, Bombay in the days of Queen Anne Introduction and Notes By T.Sheppard, London, 1933, xvi-xvii.  
106 Ibid, xvii.  
107 Anderson, English in Western India, 172.  
108 Burnell, op.cit., xviii.
entered in it... so many have gone in it ill and have come out so well that they never ailed anything after.”  

There was no exaggeration in Burnell describing burial ground as “a cormorant paunch never satisfied with daily supplies it receives, but is still gaping for more English bodies. It was my strange experience to stand among the closely packed bones that are buried here. The ground is full of bones as the valley that Ezekiel saw in his vision....”

Various reasons apart from diseases for the unhealthiness of the climate were put forth by the Company's representatives in Bombay. Writing in 1671 to the Court of Directors Company servants reported that it was due to the habit of manuring the coconut palms with putrid fish. Hamilton too has the same opinion in this regard; “They being laid to the trees putrefy and is a cause of most unsavoury smell and in the morning there is generally seen a thick fog among those both but little good water on it, and the air is some what unhealthful to the brains and the lungs of the Europeans and breeds consumptions fevers, fluxes. Similarly Ovington in 1689 remarked that fish manure is the mortal enemy to the lives of European.

In 1673, Aungier remarked in his report that after the first intermission of the rains in May and after the total ceasing in October the air and the water are unwholesome by reason of the crude pestiferous vapours exhaled by the violent heat of the sun into the air and vermin created in the wells and tanks which renders those months most sickly to the inhabitants especially the European. Ovington too held the same opinion about the monsoons, “The prodigious growth of vermin and of venomous creatures, at the time of monsoon do abundantly likewise demonstrates the malignant corruption of the air and the natural cause of its direful effects upon the European. For spiders here increase their bulk to the largeness of the man’s thumb, toad are not of a much less

110 Ibid, 24-25.
111 Hamilton, A New Account..., 184.
112 G.B.C.I., III, 162-163.

239
size than a small duck."\textsuperscript{113} Burnell, who visited this place in 1710, also validated the fact.\textsuperscript{114} Ives too gave the same opinion.\textsuperscript{115}

**BOMBAY AND THE PROBLEMS OF BREACHES**

One of the other chief reasons was the gradual silting up to the creeks which divided Bombay into groups of islets. At high tide the sea swept through the breaches, overflowed the major portion of the island and laid the pestilential deposits highly productive of malaria.\textsuperscript{116} In 1675 a proportion for draining the swamps was submitted to the Court of Directors by the Bombay government and subsequently several surveys were conducted apart from this authority to commence the work was given.\textsuperscript{117} Court of Directors between 1684 and 1710 constantly emphasised the need of stopping up the breaches at Varli and reclaiming the drowned lands.\textsuperscript{118} Burnell however informs us that the breaches were completed in 1710 especially in the north between Sion and Dharvi between Mahim and Dharvi and between Mahim and Worli.\textsuperscript{119}

In 1711, began the work for the great breach between Worli and Mahalaxmi. Brunell however made no mention of the attempts to close the great breach, though he noted how the sea came through it almost to the foot of the hills on the eastern side of the island.\textsuperscript{120} He also gave the detailed account of the "noble large dam" between Sion and Dharvi and a brief account of the dam between Dharvi and Mahim. Between Mahim and Worli there was, he says a small ferry boat. "When I left the island they were about damming up this breach, designing to go through with all that remains open to oceans invasions."\textsuperscript{121}

\textsuperscript{113} Ovington, *A Voyage to Surat*, 88.
\textsuperscript{114} Burnell, op.cit. 5.
\textsuperscript{115} Ives, *A voyage from England to India in the year MDCCLIV and an historical narrative*, 42-43.
\textsuperscript{116} Anderson, *English in western India*, 62
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid, 63
\textsuperscript{118} G.B.C.I, III, 56
\textsuperscript{119} Burnell, op.cit. xix.
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid, 70.
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 80.
THE EARLY EUROPEANS AND THEIR LIFE STYLES

Added to such natural causes was the dissolute life led by the majority of the Europeans during this epoch. “I can not” wrote Ovington “with out horror mention to what a pitch of action and the enormities were grown in this place. Their principles of action and the consequent evil practices of the English forwarded their miseries and contributed to file the air with those pestilential vapours that seized their vitals and speeded their nasty passage to the other work. Luxury, immodesty and prostitute dissolution of manners found still new matters to work upon…” 122

Intemperance was ripe to the degree that grog shops flourished exceeding in the city. In report to the Company at the beginning of 1671, Giffard wrote: “Several persons of ordinary sort come out of both sexes, whose lives and carriages not being enquired in to, prove when they arrive hear so strangely debauched and factions that they are not only dangerous and troublesome, but are also a disgrace both to there country and religion.” 123 This led the officers to ask for English women for the soldiers on the island in order to put a check on such activities. 124

The Company in 1669 had sent out single women, not only of a class suitable to the soldiers’ wives but also ‘some gentlewoman’, who had been recommended for such treatment and respect ‘as their virtues shall deserve’ . 125 But this also did not solve the problem as many women failed to get husband. This becomes evident from Giffard’s remark which shows that some of them did not succeed in getting husbands, viz. “The ladies that are unmarried begin to despair and desire leave to go home if they were not more successful in the following two months.” 126

122 Ovington, A Voyage of Surat, 86.
123 E.F.I, 1670-77, 19.
124 This is also corroborated by Fryer “To propagate their colony Company, sent out English women, but they beget the fickly generation and as the Dutch will observe, those thrive better that come of an European father and Indian mothers, which (not reflect on what creatures are sent abroad) may be attributed to their living at large, not debarring themselves wine and strong drink, which immoderately used, inflames the blood and spoils the milk in these hot countries as Aristotle long ago said…” He further says ‘not withstanding this mortality country people and naturalised Portugal’s live to good age, supposed to be reward of their temperance, indulging themselves neither in strong drinks, nor devouring flesh as we do. But I believe rather we are here, as exotic plants brought home to us, not agreeable to the soil; for to the luftier and fresher, and often times the temperate, the climate more unkind; but to old men and women it seems to be more suitable” Fryer, op.cit, 69.
125 E.F.I, 1668-69, 69, 241.
126 E.F.I, 1670-77, 19.
The pleasure seeking habits of the English soldiers seems to have continued as in 1673 Aungier again suggested the Company should send out English women “of meaner sort, but of honest reputation, for the soldiers do frequently converse with the Country women, whom we force them to marry for preventing sin and God’s judgment thereon.”\textsuperscript{127} In response to the Aungier’s suggestion, in 1675 the Company had sent out a considerable number of ‘sober young women of the meaner sort that may be fit for soldier’s wives. Some of them declared that, “They had been promised for lodging and diet at the Company’s cost for a year and a day...”\textsuperscript{128}

Giffard proposed they should be given this, as had been done in 1668,\textsuperscript{129} saying they had nothing with them and must either starve or do worse, unless this was done. Also he thought they would not be chargeable long, ‘as they goe pretty fast, some married, some sure (and) some in a fair way (to matrimony)’. Aungier and his Council, however, held that the allowance they asked for could not be granted without the Company’s order for it, and only sanctioned a charitable pittance of 8 xeraphins a month for those who could not subsist without it.\textsuperscript{130} Giffard on the other said he could get out one to diet them at the rate and feared they would be turned out of their lodgings, ‘which will be a new trouble’.\textsuperscript{131}

This refers to another source of worry: a few of the women by scandalous behaviour ‘not only daily dishonour the nation and their own sex, but declare they will use their utmost endeavour to make their impudence more notorious. The President and the Council ordered such women to be warned that, unless they reformed, they would be confined and put on bread and water, pending deportation to England.\textsuperscript{132} Another

\textsuperscript{127} Ibid, 73. The previous experiment of this kind was had not been altogether successful as in the year 1669, ... we do not only send you English soldiers and their wives but also single women, that may become wives to our soldiers and others there. And the entertaining of the person of the quality above the soldier, who intended to proceed with his wife, had also encouraged some gentlewomen, who though we did not invite thereto, yet being engaged therein we do recommend them unto you, that they may be there civilly treated and have that respect from you as their virtues shall deserve, EFI, 1668-69, 240-41.
\textsuperscript{128} E.F.I, 1670-77, 139.
\textsuperscript{129} E.F.I, 1668-69, 247.
\textsuperscript{130} E.F.I, 1670-77, 139.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid, 140.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid, 140. Anderson criticises Aungier for showing in this matter ‘much protestant zeal, but little Christian love’. Against this is Giffard’s statement that they were going ‘pretty fast’ towards matrimony, and would probably have reported the matter if Aungier’s orders had the ill effects suggested by Anderson. The extant correspondence contains no further reference to this subject. Anderson, English in Western India, 217-218.
difficulty was that women who 'come out yearly, be what they will, at their arrival all pretend to be gentlewomen, high born, (of) great parentage and relations, and scorn to marry under a factor or commissioned officer, though ready to starve. He wanted 'poor country girls or hospital girls' to be sent out instead, after a strict enquiry into their lives and conversation.\textsuperscript{133}

In 1677, the Company sent out twelve young women, intended as wives for the soldiers, saying they had taken care to choose only 'civil' ones and they had not been able to get any 'country girls' of the kind asked for.\textsuperscript{134} In view, however, of the trouble these women gave and the scarcity of these women gave and the scarcity of the English soldiers, both the Surat and Bombay Councils would have preferred fewer women and more men.\textsuperscript{135}

It seems the problem of intemperance among English soldiers remained as in August 1694 John Wright applied for and gained permission to keep a tavern in Bombay and no doubt drove a roaring trade. The authorities tried to check intemperance, but it was grown beyond control. The legislature passed as such during that period of lawlessness had ordained that "if any man comes in to a victual house to Bombay drink, punch, he may demand one quart of good Goa arak, half a pound of sugar, and if the bowie be not marked with the clerk of the market's scale then the bowie may be freely broken with out paying anything either for bowie or punch."\textsuperscript{136}

In order to check these Company officers were demanding again that the English women be sent on the island. Along with this they also tried to introduce strict measures to control these habits. In 1674 for the moral reformation of the Englishmen Aungier introduced regulation against excessive gaming and keeping punch houses. He also took steps to check brothels and prevented soldiers from keeping wenches or loose women in their house.\textsuperscript{137} Giffard tried to check drunkenness by the proclamation prohibiting the supply of drink to soldiers, except for ready money.\textsuperscript{138}

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 177.
\textsuperscript{136} Malabari, The Making of Bombay, 227.
\textsuperscript{137} E.F.I, 1670-77, 111.
\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, 28.
In the face of dramatic mortality, it was hardly surprising that the small community of European adopted an eat, drink and be merry attitude which only created yet another source of death: "its true that many Englishmen die here very suddenly, but in my opinion the fault is chiefly their own, they eat much succulent food particularly beef and pork, which the ancient legislation have forbidden for good reasons to the Indians; they drink very strong Portugal wines at the hottest time of the day; in addition they wear as in Europe light fitting cloth which are useless in these countries since they are much more sensitive to the heat than the Indians with their long and flowing garments.\textsuperscript{139}

In 1676, mortality was high amongst the new soldiers mainly after the initial months of their arrival on the island, occasioned chiefly by their immoderate drinking of punch and 'toddy'. Aungier had five files of them sent up to Surat on the ships in September, hoping this would 'preserve and inure them to the climate'. The recruits included several artificers and some Germans, such as Aungier had asked for\textsuperscript{140}, and the Company called for a report about the behaviour of the foreigners in the corps. Petit said there were but few Germans, who were all civil, quiet persons, as were also (so far as he could learn) the other foreign men sent out. They were, moreover in general more frugal and hardy, and less given than the English, 'who can’t live without flesh and strong drink'.\textsuperscript{141}

In 1685, the deputy governor attributed to the actions of the native Christians, Indo-Portuguese with whom the soldiers were quartered, who discovered dhatura and other poison as the surest medium for revenge for the outrages upon their wives and families.\textsuperscript{142} Attempts were also made to check the later evil by building barracks and by encouraging soldiers to marry women of the country.\textsuperscript{143} But orders of this nature made little impression on this class described by the Council at Surat as composed of "debauched broken tradesman and renegade seaman."\textsuperscript{144}

\textsuperscript{139} Neibure as cited from Percival Spear's \textit{The Naboobs, New Delhi}, 1963, 66-67.
\textsuperscript{140} E.F.I, 1670-77, 73.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid, 153.
\textsuperscript{142} Anderson, \textit{English in Western India}, 213-214.
\textsuperscript{143} The women of this class after marriage were compelled to continue wearing their native dress except in the cases, where they paid to the Company for the right to wear the Company's attire.
\textsuperscript{144} Court to the Directors to Bombay, 14\textsuperscript{th} July 1680, G.B.C.I., II, 259.
The other cause of this unhealthiness of Bombay was largely attributed to the old standing practice of buckshaw, i.e. manuring coconut trees with putrid fish.\textsuperscript{145} The Company in their dispatch of 22\textsuperscript{nd} February expressed the similar view that this was prejudicial to health, and called upon the Surat Council to consider whether it could not be forbidden. Accordingly notice was given to the inhabitants of Bombay to discontinue it. But both Aungier and Giffard anticipated there would be difficulties about it; many years were to pass before the prohibition became effective.\textsuperscript{146}

The second decade of the eighteenth century however began to augur well for the island. One of the chief reasons was the policies which the Court of Directors began to take in the middle of the eighteenth century. For instance they advised the Bombay Council to issue orders prohibiting the “buckshowing” of the toddy trees in The Mahim and the Worli woods to allow free perflation of the western breeze to stop the breaches. To burn the continual fires manure was universally prohibited, dry manure being permitted up to 1766 when it was discovered that the indulgences was turned to bad uses and this practice also was discontinued.\textsuperscript{147} (The ill-effect of this practice has been reported by many early travellers, but the Council did not want to diminish the scale of cutting down the trees while the Company derived revenue for Rs. 25 per thousand. Coconuts presented this dilemma of either losing the coconut revenue. The Council corresponded with Bombay for many years and finally abolished this practice).

Despite all these difficulties, the English continued to fight with the unhealthiness of the island that was compounded by their lifestyle. In 1720 a dam had been constructed across the great breach at Mahalaxmi and a considerable area of marshy ground had been drained. This gradual reclamation of the land from the inroads to the sea coupled with better medical attendance and a more temperate style introduced a considerable change for the better, and by the middle of the eighteenth century Bombay began to lose its reputation of insalubrity and was accounted for as a tolerably healthy station. Cobbe, who visited this place in 1715 also reported the same i.e. that the climate was

\textsuperscript{145} Fryer,68-69;Hamilton, I, 181;the fish used is the small one known as bummelo, which in its dried state is famous under the name of Bombay duck E.F.I,1670-77, 28, Fn.3.
\textsuperscript{146} E.F.I, 1670-77, 28.
\textsuperscript{147} Spear, Percival, The Nabooobs, 63.
healthier compared to the earlier days because of stopping of the buckshow and repairing of several sea breaches.\textsuperscript{148}

Another reason that could be cited as the improvement in the European’s diet and manners of living and also to the place being provided with more skilful physicians than earlier who were also well paid.\textsuperscript{149} Grose in 1750 remarked that, “the climate is no longer fatal to the English inhabitants as it used to be and is incomparably more healthy than that of many of our settlements in India ... this is no longer to be dreaded on account, provided any common measure of temperance be observed with out which the tenure of health’s in any climate be hazardous.”\textsuperscript{150} Edwards Ives visiting Bombay in 1754 also held the same opinion about the place: “the island of Bombay of late have been healthier than it was formally and ....could be justly styled as “the grand store house of all the Arabian and Persian commerce.”\textsuperscript{151}

In spite of Grose and Ives’s remarks still Bombay had not come out of the clutches of mortality. For instance in 1757, there was serious epidemic among the labourers employed on the fortifications which necessitated the appointment of the country doctors, whose medicine met with great success.\textsuperscript{152} In fact according to the consultation of 18\textsuperscript{th} November the town had became so dirty that the Bombay government decided to appoint a member of the Board to the office of the scavenger and to defray the cost of the sufficient number of labourers and scavengers carts by a tax upon the town people.\textsuperscript{153} The mortality rate was high till this date but still the island was much safer than what it was in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century which led to the saying “two monsoon were the ages of man”.

\textsuperscript{149} Grose as Cf. Douglas James, \textit{English and Western India}, 134-135.
\textsuperscript{150} Grose as Cf. G.B.C.I., III, 165.
\textsuperscript{151} Ives, \textit{A Voyage from England to India}, 31.
\textsuperscript{152} Campbell, III, 554.
\textsuperscript{153} G.B.C.I.III, 166.