

CHAP.
XX.
1746.

Letter
received
from her.

This
reports
approach of
squadron
of M. de la
Bourdonnais
after a
battle with
English.

Great joy at
Pondichery
on receipt
of the news.

Reasons
for this.

Mascareigne, and was returning thence. "If so," I remarked, "she could not have come unaccompanied by others." He assured me that there was no doubt about it, and departed. A peon soon after brought a letter conveyed by the catamaran which had been despatched to her. It was received and read by M. Auger, who communicated to me its contents. These stated that the ship was the *Marie Joseph*, commanded by M. Champignon, and that she was laden with cowries, that she had come on in advance, leaving nine ships, including that of Admiral de la Bourdonnais, at a distance of seven leagues behind her, that these had on the way given battle with apparent success to some English men-of-war, and that they might be expected here either this evening, or to-morrow morning. Learning this, I returned in half an hour. The tidings of the arrival of the ships have awakened inexpressible joy in the breasts of the citizens of Pondichery. They manifested exhilaration such as though they had discovered a hidden hoard, or recovered a lost treasure; or as though their beloved dead had returned to life. They were all as gay as they would be on a wedding day, or when blessed with longed-for progeny, or when they had tasted the divine ambrosia. The following circumstances contributed to cause these universal rejoicings. Last year, no ships arrived at Pondichery from France, and none were despatched from this to that country. On the other hand, those bound for China, Manilla, and

CHAP.
XX.
1746.

Acheen, as well as sundry others, were all captured by the English. The consequence was the exhaustion of the Company's funds and of the resources of the merchants, and utter depression in all commercial transactions. Under these circumstances the news of the approach of the fleet, advised by this ship, was welcome, and it was hailed with acclamation.

This evening, some persons who ascended the flagstaff in the fort, declared that they descried ships, and in truth, at about two hours after sunset, eight were seen nearing the roads. As it was night, mortars and cannon were fired singly from the battery on the seashore, to the south of the fort, two or three of them being shotted for fear of a stealthy approach by English ships. The fire of the guns was entertained no doubt of having been recognised. In this way the people in the fort, and those in the ships, exchanged salutes until midnight. Just after 2 o'clock, M. de la Bourdonnais, the commander of the fleet, landed, went to the Governor, was closeted with him for an hour, and then stepping into a boat, returned aboard. This was the state of affairs to-day.

Soon after the arrival, at noon, of the *Marie Joseph*, the Governor despatched a message directing the return of the ship and sloop which had sailed for *Âlambarai*. These were the occurrences of this day.

On her way to Pondichery, the *Marie Joseph* had touched at *Kârikâl* and embarked M. Mainville and a detachment of fifty soldiers, who landed here.

Eight
ships
sighted.

M. de la
Bourdonnais
visits the
Governor,
and
returns.

Ships
which
sailed for
Âlambarai
recalled.

CHAP.
XX.1746.
Nine ships
in the
roads.Account of
their
voyage.The storms
which they
encount-
ered.Fleet
calls at
Point de
Galle.

Saturday, 9th July 1746, or 29th Ani of Akshaya.—
This morning, I found in the roads nine ships, being the eight which arrived last night, and that which reached this yesterday, at noon. At 8 o'clock, fifteen guns were fired from that which carried M. de la Bourdonnais, and the salute was returned by the fort.

The following is the information concerning these ships: Five of them set sail from France in August 1745, touched at Mascareigne on the 3rd of the following February, and there were strengthened by the addition of four country craft equipped for war. The fleet thus reinforced, together with the Bengal merchant-man *Marie Joseph*, bore up for the island of Madagascar. Here they took on board some provisions, and continued their voyage. On their way, they encountered a violent storm which carried away their masts, and broke their rudders to pieces; the leaks sprung by some endangering their foundering. But, thanks to God, the wind soon abated, the violence of the sea subsided, the rain ceased, and they righted. The injured masts were replaced, and the ships were in other respects repaired, and refitted for the voyage, which they then resumed. They, however, met with another burst of severe weather which necessitated repairs for a second time. This over, they again held on their course, until they reached Point de Galle, in the roads of which they remained for thirty or forty days. Resuming their voyage, they were off Negapatam, and a little to the south of

CHAP.
XX.1746.
Battle with
English
under
Commodore
Peyton.Repulse of
English
after a
gallant
fight.Reason why
French did
not pursue
their
advantage.Alleged
losses of
English.

that port, when they fell in with an English fleet of six sail commanded by Mr. Peyton, which offered battle. The combat lasted from 4 in the afternoon to 7 in the evening, and took place three days ago. The French ships which engaged the English were those of M. de la Bourdonnais and M. de la Selle, and they appear to have fired 5,000 rounds. The English, some of whom were veteran warriors, and who had a force of six men-of-war, are said to have fought gallantly. They, however, were repulsed, and escaped only owing to their having the advantage of the wind, whilst the French had an unfavourable position. This incident however resulted in considerable loss of property, which was enhanced by boxes of ammunition in two of our ships having exploded. As the latter had on board a large quantity of silver, broad-cloth, wine, and other European articles, and as the French could not be certain of the ultimate result of pushing their victory home; and further as they were only within ten leagues of their destination, they considered it prudent to make the best of their way hither. Taking advantage accordingly of the confusion and dismay created amongst the enemy by the defeat which they had sustained, they hastened to Pondichery. It is said that two of the English ships were either sunk, or were damaged beyond repair, and that their crews perished. It would further appear that even amongst those on board the four which remained there was serious loss. This

CHAP.
XX.1746.
B. de la
Mourdon-
nais lands
and pro-
ceeds to the
residence
of the
Governor.Who
receives
him at the
sentinel's
post.Treasure,
etc.,
brought
by the fleet.Passengers
who came
by it.Arrival of
M. Paradis.Chinna
Mudali and
diarist visit
M. Dulaur-
ens.
Rumour of
dismissal of
certain
officials.

evening at 5, M. de la Bourdonnais disembarked, and as he did so, fifteen guns were discharged by his ship.

Another salute of fifteen guns was fired on his arrival at the sea-gate, where he was met by the Deputy Governor and other members of the Council, and by the captains and other officers—M. Duplex alone excepted—and was escorted by them to the Governor's residence. On M. de la Bourdonnais entering this, the Governor received him at the sentinel's post, with an embrace, and conducted him into the courtyard, when a salute of fifteen guns was again fired. They afterwards conversed together for a while in the open space on the other side of the verandah.

Silver weighing 40,000 marcs, and gold worth a lakh of rupees, were brought by the ships. The exact quantity of the broad-cloth and brandy aboard, is not known. Nor is it certain whether a chest of coral has come.

Two of the sons of M. Dulaurens, the one aged twenty-one, and the other eighteen, came as passengers: another is said to be in France living with M. Dumas. This information has been furnished to me by M. Miran.

At 7 this night, M. Paradis arrived by boat from Kârikâl, with a detachment of 140 soldiers.

Chinna Mudali and I visited M. Dulaurens, whom we congratulated on the arrival of his two sons.

It is rumoured that orders have been received for the dismissal from the service of the Company of the Deputy Governor, and M. Guilliard.

This day, the chests of silver which were on board the ships, and a few of the wounded, were brought ashore.

Sunday, 10th July 1746, or 30th Âni of Akshaya.—After dawn to-day, the remainder of the wounded, and some bales of broad-cloth were landed.

In the morning, Chinna Mudali and I paid a visit to M. de la Bourdonnais, and welcomed him.

Monday, 11th July 1746, or 31st Âni of Akshaya.—Singrâ Châri my priest, and those who had brought presents from Bommarâja pâlaiyam on the 7th of Vaigâsi [17th May], departed for that place, at 10 this morning. The following is an account of the gifts which I made them:—

For delivery to Venkata Narasinga Râjâ; a large horse which had been held in common by Kanakarâya Mudali and me during his life-time, but which I subsequently purchased for my own use, crimson brocade, a Guzarâti girdle, a silk turban, and a jewel for the same.

For delivery to Nârana Bhattan, the Brâhman in the service of the Râjâ; two yards of superfine crimson broad-cloth; and to his wife, a cloth and a bodice, costing Rs. 19.

For delivery to Pedda Aiyavâr, the Râjâ's writer; two yards of Mocha* broad-cloth.

* This was the popular name for "Londrin" or "London" i.e. English broad-cloth. See foot-note at page 264.

CHAP.
XX.1746.
Silver
and
wounded
landed.Chinna
Mudali and
diarist visit
M. de la
Bourdon-
nais.Departure
of priest of
diarist, and
others.Details of
presents
made to
them by
him.