

south of the roads.¹ What further happens I will note afterwards.

Within these twenty-five days, since the English squadron arrived, a Bengal ship, wearing the Dutch flag, has been seized. Her cargo was landed at Fort St. David and five Frenchmen on board have been imprisoned in the Fort.² One is brother to Monsieur Delarche, and the latter has written to Muhammad 'Alī asking him to write to the Governor of Fort St. David about his brother. I forgot to mention this before.

This evening Monsieur de la Touche arrived from Madras.

Now the new year has begun, I believe my future to be bright and my troubles over. May God protect me this year, and help me to make large profits, pay off my debts and recover what is owed me, as the Vaippūr³ astrologer predicts.

*Tuesday, April 11.*⁴—Nothing important has happened to-day. On behalf of Monsieur de Bury's

¹ The effects of this blockade, which prevented grain vessels from reaching Pondichery, were severely felt, while plenty reigned at Cuddalore. *Cons. Sup. à la Compagnie. November 30, 1747 (P.R.—No. 7).* This was accentuated by the failure of the N.E. monsoon in 1746. The Pondichery grain duties were taken off early in 1747.

² The ship was called the *Rotterdam*. But it appears that the Dutch flag was a mere device to elude the English squadron. Dupleix appealed to the Dutch Council at Negapatam, but they answered that they knew nothing of the ship. Griffin offered to exchange his prisoners, and when Dupleix refused, sent them off to Europe. *Cons. Sup. à la Compagnie, October 11, 1747 (P.R.—No. 7).*

³ A village in Tanjore.

⁴ 2nd Chittrai, Prabhava.

son, we have written to the Killedar of Arni asking that Shaikh Muhammad Sharīf's family may be detained there; to Muhammad Tavakkal asking him to explain the matter to the Nawāb and get a letter sent from him to the Killedar; and also to the vakīl Subbayyan.

To-day I received a letter from Kandappan at Kārikāl, and Mr. Morse sent a Tamil letter to Madame Dupleix. The runner brought both together. Mine was addressed, 'The humble petition of Kandappan laid at the feet of M.R.Ry. Pillai Avargal.' Madame Dupleix saw this.

She thinks that if she were Chief Dubāsh, she would make a fortune out of it. Having got the Madras affair into her hands, she has taken Pāppana Pillai and the Brāhman Venkatarāman into her service—two cunning fellows, who have been trying to persuade the Madras merchants to come and settle in Pondichery; but as they demand five or six thousand pagodas as a present for her, all the merchants have refused to come. But Tirumangalam Duraiyappa Chetti has said he will give her 4,000 pagodas and the Governor 10,000 and signed a promise to that effect. This has made her think she is the mistress of the three worlds, and ever since she has been trying to find me out in some fault so that she can get rid of me. She thinks I am very cunning; that the Governor does all that I tell him; that I give him profits that might go to her; and that he in consequence does all the

business through me. So she has been hating me more than words can tell.

Now a month or so ago Tambi Chetti of Madras sent her a letter. It came late, about eight o'clock, and, thinking they would be at supper, I put the letter into my table-drawer, meaning to give it her next day, and went home. But I was very busy over the peace with the Nawâb, and I forgot all about it. Nârâyana Pillai came and asked me if I still had Madame's letter that had come the day before. I explained that I had been busy and forgotten it, and had forgotten even to read a letter of my own; and then gave him the letter. Madame Dupleix was furious. She exclaimed that she could get me hung for this, and would, were it not for my wife and children. She even called me shameful names before the dubâsh Appu, Varlâm, Nârâyana Pillai and a head-peon; and, as I was not there, she told them to repeat to me what she had said. They softened her words down a little. But I explained to them why I had not sent the letter, and, said I, 'Let me be punished if I kept it on purpose. Does she think I kept the letter to read? I knew what was in it beforehand. Did it accuse me of murder or theft that I should hide it? What reason could I have had to keep it back?' And so I sent them off. But now, she opens my letter from Kandappan, makes Appu read it, seals it up again, and sends it to me. As soon as I saw it I thought something was wrong with it, and sent for

the head-peon. He told me what she had done, and another person told me so too. I know not how God can permit such things. None should act so. Later, Appu came. 'A letter came,' he said, 'from Kandappan of Kârikâl; Madame wondered which Kandappan it was, and I told her he was your gumasta, so she was satisfied.'—'The pair of you,' I retorted, 'could only satisfy your curiosity by reading the letter.' He changed countenance at that, and stammered out, 'We are not the only people who make mistakes; great folks can always avoid consequences, though poor ones can't.'¹—'She wanted to hang me,' I said, 'for only keeping her letter a day; but what should be said about her opening and reading mine?' So he departed.

*Friday, April 14.*²—The Honourable Governor has given me written instructions about where the peons are to be posted. In the day time all are to be stationed at the Valudâvûr Gate. But at sunset fifty are to go by the Villiyanallûr Gate and along the beach as far as Alisapâkkam, returning in the morning. A hundred are posted at the Custom House³ to be on the watch for any alarm. Another fifty are to patrol from the Villiyanallûr Gate along

¹ In allusion to Ranga Pillai's not being punished for keeping Madame's letter.

² 5th Chittirai, Prabhava.

³ The old custom house was demolished when the defences were completed on the sea side. At this time a palm-leaf shed was being used as a custom-house, just outside the Sea Gate. *Reply of the Cons. Sup. dated January 10, 1749, to the Compagnie's letters of 1747 and 1748.* (P.R.—No. 7).