

place you use for pressing blue cloth. I will come and look at the place this afternoon.' I said it should be done, and then went to the nut-godown. Just then a man came from the toll-gate to tell me that a letter had been received from Bâhûr. It was eleven o'clock when he departed. I also heard that Madame Dupleix had ordered the letter to be brought to her, and made the bearer wait. I came home at twelve o'clock. It remains to be seen what will happen. [.]

*Thursday, August 15.*¹—I went to the Governor this morning as soon as he returned from hearing mass. He asked what news there was. I said I had heard nothing important.

I then interpreted to him as follows Vakîl Subbayan's letter written yesterday, Wednesday, the 14th:—'Anwar-ud-dîn Khân Sâhib Bahâdûr is encamped at Fattehpettai² near Gingee, and Mahfuz Khân, Khair-ud-dîn Khân and others have surrounded the Vêttavalam jungles and are camped there. Pandâri Periya Ayyâ has a strong force there. It is said that the Muhammadans find their task difficult, that the sound of hot firing has been heard, and they are trying to clear the jungles. No English have come here yet. I only arrived here to-day.' When he heard this, he said, 'The spies at Fort St. David told me that Nawâb Anwar-ud-dîn Khân had replied to the English that he would

¹ 3rd *Avâni*, *Vîbhava*.

² See above, p. 177.

consider their request in two or three months, as his territories were in confusion, as no arrangement could be made at once, and as he could not assist them for the present. Our vakîl arrived only after that letter had been written; everything must have been done before his arrival.' I considered within myself what answer I should make. It is not seemly to contradict him, and besides, that would require much explanation. If he asked me whether the brinjal would grow among rocks, I should reply that I had seen them in thousands of clusters and on creepers. So I now answered that what he said was true.¹ Then I went to the nut-godown. When I was coming home at noon, I heard that three English ships had sailed close in-shore, and at one o'clock that they had anchored opposite Virâmpattanam.

This news was reported to the Governor as he was dining at M. d' Auteuil's house by reason of its being Madame d' Auteuil's name-day; leaving his dinner, he at once rose and went upstairs, calling for a telescope. After watching the ships, he sent for the chief officers and ordered them to assemble all the Europeans on the sea-face and have the cannon ready.² He also sent for Shaikh Ibrâhîm

¹ The point of this remark is that the brinjal will not grow among rocks, its fruit grows singly and not in clusters, and it is a plant, not a creeper. Ranga Pillai is merely exemplifying the manner in which he agrees with everything the Governor says.

² This account varies in one or two details from that given by M. de Nazelle (*Défense de Pondichéry*, p. 157), where Dupleix is said to have been dining at his own garden-house. All reference is there also omitted to the orders which would very naturally have to be given.

and ordered him to tell all the toll-gate people to allow none to leave the town. Instead of answering that none should be allowed out without the Governor's orders, he¹ inquired what should be done with persons producing one of my passes. He sent me word by Vajram that the Governor had ordered none to be allowed out even with passes; but nevertheless he went to the toll-gate people and directed them not to hinder those who produced a pass from me. He is asserting (it is said) that the Governor sent for him and ordered him to guard the roads well, that he patted him on the back, and promised that henceforward he should hold a position of authority. Never before had the Governor sent for him and given him direct orders; he used to give them through me. But as to-day the Governor sent for and spoke to him, he is as proud as if he had been set upon the throne of Delhi, and he has forgotten who he is. But he cannot be blamed; it is only natural for a man who used to stand at a distance with folded arms and serve for ten rupees to grow proud and forget his position when his master calls him and speaks to him. It is the Governor's fault for forgetting his dignity; and yet he is not to blame either, for he is by nature fickle-minded and incapable of fathoming the truth of things; moreover he has never lived among people who show gratitude for faithful

¹ I.e., Shaikh Ibrâhîm.

service. I can only blame myself for the regret that I feel. No one else is at fault. I think it must be due to my evil star.

I cannot describe the difficulty felt by the townspeople, by people returning after selling their fuel and straw, and by others who come in and out of the town. It would not be wise to write what confusion there is in the town or what the townspeople are saying. If the Governor himself was alarmed at the sight of the English ships, and forbade them to go in and out, what must be the alarm of the ignorant? If he summons the priests and arranges with them for a place of safety in the Mission Church opposite my house, what of the poor Tamils, ignorant of war? Some Europeans, hearing of this, have decided to leave their houses, and even advised me to leave mine and lodge west of the Muttirai Choultry; others lament that the Governor will not permit them to leave the town. If the Europeans are so alarmed as to speak thus, I need say nothing of the Tamils.

I sent for Lingappan who distributes the passes, and forbade him to give any. I then came home at eight o'clock at night. []

*Friday, August 16.*¹—After I had gone to the nut-godown at seven o'clock this morning, Avây Sâhib, Imâm Sâhib's gumastah, came and asked why people were not being allowed to leave the

¹ 4th Avani, Vibhava.

bounds. I explained that the Governor had forbidden Tamils to leave the bounds, lest they should try to escape through fear of the English ships that anchored here yesterday. He replied:—‘People want to go out to buy straw, grass and firewood; poor people need to go out every two or three days to buy paddy, as none can be had in the town; people have come in to change fanams for rupees, and others have brought goods to sell and wish to return—if all these are hindered from going out, there will be great alarm and people will be put to great difficulty. Besides, those who everyday bring grain and other things into the town will not come for fear of not being allowed to depart. Then we shall be able to buy nothing and the town will be starved. People would of course complain if the English besieged the town and reduced it to starvation; but they have not, and people will surely complain aloud if they are put to such difficulties as I have already mentioned. They will say that he is doing this either because he wishes to get rid of them and seize their property or because he is ignorant. Of a surety his people are happy if he governs them thus! Should not the commander be both bold and discreet in such troubled times, distinguishing between what should and what should not be done, keeping the people at ease, protecting them, and devising ways of overthrowing their enemies? Should he not also be strict, and experienced and firm? But although he lacks these

qualities, he is fortunate. That is why he won glory when Madras was taken by M. de La Bourdonnais—without whom it could never have been captured. In the last two years he has tried half a dozen times to capture Fort St. David (which is no bigger than a brinjal) even when there were no soldiers there; but it has all been in vain. At last he himself marched against it, but retreated without even coming in sight of the bounds. Another time he sent, trusting to his wife’s spies, but his people were beaten and shamed, only escaping because not ten of the English sallied forth, and because the French are fated to win glory. If he entrusts everything to his wife, and on her advice so governs as to make the whole town tremble, of course he wins glory and success! But as the spirit of fortune favours him, however blindly he may behave, some use is sure to be found even for the pieces of a cloth he has torn. You can only endure such a state of affairs by God’s protection. He is ruining the town, and making of it a desert.’ He also spoke of the Governor’s ill-nature and his hindering the Company’s affairs by his negligence.

As it was then half-past eight I went to the Governor’s. He asked if paddy was coming into the bazaars. I replied that only twenty bullock-loads had come in to-day. He then asked at what price it was selling. I said, ‘It is only to-day that paddy has been received, and six days ago you

permitted them to sell at what price they liked. I cannot tell what the bazaar-price may be.' He then asked at what rate the price should be fixed. I told him that it was selling at six measures at Valudâvûr, and the price must cover its carriage to this place. Thereupon he ordered me to send for M. Delarche. Before he came, I told the Governor that two Pathans, Mamrêz Khân and 'Azmat Khân, whose ships sail from Covelong to the Tenasserim coast, and who took passes last year, had written to request new ones for this year in exchange for the old ones, which I showed him. He called M. Boyelleau, gave him the old passes, and ordered him to write two new ones.

When M. Delarche came, the Governor asked him the same question about the paddy as he had put to me. His answers were the same as mine, and he suggested that the rate might be fixed at five small measures. When I asked if we should reduce the measures by two, M. Delarche said that it was only a matter of five or six days, that much paddy would come in if the merchants were allowed to sell it as they pleased, and that a price might afterwards be fixed if necessary. The Governor agreed, and turning to me said that that might be done, and told me to distribute among the coolies the twenty or thirty bullock-loads now received.

After this, M. Friell came, and all three began to speak of Madras affairs. M. Friell said that Coja Sattur from Fort St. David had told him

that the English ships recently arrived were short of men, and that they had fled on sighting twenty-two French ships. They were also saying that these had effected nothing by their attack on Mauritius and that our people had really captured five of their ships.¹ I was present all this while, and, when they all took leave and departed, I also took leave and went to the nut-godown.

At eleven o'clock to-day head-peon Muttu, a Palli, with twenty peons set out for Madras. I heard from passers-by that a Muhammadan boy and a Tamil had been seized and carried before the cruel woman. I shall find out who they are and write later.

At four o'clock this afternoon the Governor sent for me. When I was approaching his house, I heard that he had gone out in his palankin, watching the bazaar-people as he went along. So I went to the Madras gate, expecting him to return that way. He did so. On seeing me, he asked what had brought me there. I answered that he had sent for me. He thought for a moment, and, saying that he had not sent for me, walked on a little way.

¹ Boscawen appeared off Mauritius, June 23, and found no less than 14 vessels in harbour, fitted or fitting for sea. He could discover no suitable landing place, was ignorant of the French strength, and therefore abandoned the attempt, in order to make sure of reaching the Coromandal Coast before the monsoon. (Boscawen to Corbet, October 17, 1748. *P.R.O. Ad. 1—160.*) Grant, who was then residing on the island, says with all appearance of truth, that Boscawen exaggerated the French strength (Grant's *Mauritius*, p. 299). The capture of English ships is imaginary. The landing of wounded referred to below (p. 306) was a mere rumour arising out of the landing of sick men.

He then said, 'M. Law says that you have not 510 sepoy; why is that?' I replied that there could be no mistake, and gave an account of the 510 sepoy, —410 sepoy and 50 peon under Virâ Nâyakkan, and 50 match-lock people,—so that the number was right. 'Well,' he said, 'tell him so.' Accordingly, I went to the nut-godown and sent for Shaikh Ibrâhîm. Before the peon went to M. Law at the Fort to bring Shaikh Ibrâhîm, the latter came another way, and said, 'M. Law says that you should have 510 sepoy.' I explained that there were 410 who make 512 with Virâ Nâyakkan's people and the Carnatic match-lock people. As Shaikh Ibrâhîm said that M. Law had dismissed him saying that he would muster and count them to-morrow afternoon, I thought it unnecessary to go to M. Law and speak to him. Having dismissed Shaikh Ibrâhîm, I stayed at the nut-godown till nine o'clock and came home.

People say that some of the English ships set sail to-day, that some of the Europeans aboard the others were landed but then sent again on board, and that afterwards a thousand were again landed. Travellers report that twenty bazaar-people have been ordered to accompany the army when it marches. []

*Sunday, August 18.*¹—When the Governor returned from church, I heard the following news:—

¹ 6th *Avani*, *Vibhava*.

Three boats left the English ships and rowed opposite Virâmpattanam, where they fastened two large stones to a plank with ropes on both sides, with a spar fixed in a hole in the plank, and a red flag on it; and so it was left. When a man from the batteries¹ reported this to the Governor, he, M. Paradis, and some others, went upstairs to look. The Governor thought that as the ships were lying in twelve fathoms of water, and the spot which they had marked with the flag was six fathoms, they had done this to show how near the shore ships and sloops might anchor safely. He therefore ordered M. Auger to send some boat-people and carry off the plank with its small flag. But the latter said that boat-people, catamaran-men and coolies could not be sent at once, as the English boat-people were still near the plank, but that he would have it removed this evening. The Governor ordered him to do so.

He then sent for me and asked if paddy was coming into the bazaars. I told him that ten bullock-loads of paddy and eleven of rice had been brought in, that poor people were going out and buying four or six fanams' worth of paddy and that baskets of rice were to be bought in the town without trouble.

He then said, 'How is it that the Marathas have not appeared as expected?' Chandâ Sâhib too has

¹ Reading *Kottalakkâran* for *Kottakâikkâran*.