

INTRODUCTION.

THE present instalment of the Diary covers the period from May 3, 1751, to December 8, 1753. As will be seen from the list of entries, they are very irregular. No reason can be assigned for this, as it has not been possible to check the Madras transcript with the original Diary which was formerly preserved at Pondichery, or even with the transcript made by M. Gallois-Montbrun. Mr. Singâravêlu Pillai, to whom the discovery of the MS. was originally due and to whose courteous and learned aid I have often had recourse, informs me that the Gallois-Montbrun papers were irreparably damaged by the cyclone which raged at Pondichery in 1916, and that the original Diary for this period has long since disappeared. More than one passage in the Madras transcript is evidently corrupt; but the most important cases of this are indicated in my foot-notes.

The eighteen months covered by the present part of Ranga Pillai's Diary include much of a most dramatic nature. In May 1751, South India seemed at the feet of the French. Nâsir Jang had been slain; the Subahdari of the Deccan was held by a nominee of the French, supported by a French army. All that visibly

remained to be done was the reduction of a few small jaghirdars in the Carnatic and the capture of Trichinopoly. It was not thought that the English could offer serious opposition to this programme; and should they attempt it, their previous military record in the Carnatic augured no great power of resistance.

Accordingly, after reducing a few of the Carnatic grandees to obedience and the payment of tribute, Chandâ Sâhib set out with a body of French troops under the unenterprising command of d'Auteuil to attack Trichinopoly. Attempts had already been made to induce Muhammad 'Alî to acquiesce in the new state of things. In the very month in which this volume of the Diary opens, a cowle from Salabat Jang was sent to him with a letter from Dupleix, offering him the Government of the six circars under Chicacole. These documents are not mentioned by the diarist; probably he had no knowledge of them; they are printed, it is believed for the first time, in the Appendix. But the terms offered were not good enough. They included the remission of all dues owing by Muhammad 'Alî's father; but it appears that this was interpreted not to include the arrears of the *chauth* owing to the Marathas. Accordingly Muhammad 'Alî amused Chandâ Sâhib and

the French by continuing the negotiations, but at the same time he wrote urgently to the English at Fort St. David for their assistance in defending Trichinopoly.

This was given, but not in the most effectual form. The senior English officer, Captain Rudolf Gingens, was sent out with all the troops that could be spared from the English garrisons, but his idea of defending Trichinopoly was to march as fast as possible under the walls of that fortress and there remain. Nor could he be drawn out into the open either by the near approach of Chandâ Sâhib or by the urgent commands of the English Council. On his march to Trichinopoly he had had indeed a couple of skirmishes with the enemy; and they seem to have inspired him with such distrust both of his own capacity of successful command and of his troops' fighting powers that perhaps it was as well that he refused action until a more confident and competent officer could control operations.

But the French were under the leadership of an officer whose chief claim to command was his family connection with the Governor. D'Auteuil was a fair match for Gingens. Both could be trusted to take the greatest care not to come within striking distance of the other; and if that happened by accident, to get out of reach as fast as possible. Time and again

Chandâ Sâhib complained of the inaction of the principal French leader. He refused to cross the Coleroon. Even when the French had been encouraged by the distribution of 2 lakhs of rupees, they still lay motionless in their encampment. In vain did Dupleix scold Madame d'Auteuil and write angry letters to his brother-in-law. At last in September 1751, he recalled him, and entrusted the command to a much younger officer, Jacques Law.

It is curious to consider that all this time Dupleix had under his hand at Pondichery an officer of undoubted military talent. This was the Chevalier de la Tour. "La Compagnie ne sçauroit trop ménager de pareils officiers," the Pondichery Council had written of him in 1744. He had speedily proved the justice of their praise by demonstrating, before the battle of the Adyar, the effectiveness of artillery against Indian cavalry. But he probably lacked the courtier's art, and certainly lacked the advantage of family relationship with the Governor. Accordingly he was passed over, and presently resigned rather than serve under his junior d'Auteuil. This nepotism must be included among the causes which ruined Dupleix. D'Auteuil was useless as a soldier and treacherous as a negotiator. His employment in positions of trust was a great mistake. Indeed the statesman is often enough in the same

position as the card-player. Neither can afford to neglect opportunities ; he who does so will most bitterly repent it, whether at the bridge-table or at the Council-board.

As if to point this truth, at the very moment when Dupleix was ignoring his own trump-card, the English Governor, Thomas Saunders, despatched Clive against Arcot. The secret of the project seems to have been well kept. Clive and his detachment sailed from St. David's on August 22 O.S. ; but news that we were sending men against Arcot did not reach Dupleix for a week. The blame of this must not lie upon Ranga Pillai. Dupleix had already ceased to employ him to gather political news, which duty was left to the care of Madame Dupleix. The siege itself made little impression upon people in Pondichery. They did not know that they were watching the turn of the tide. Dupleix alone regarded it as serious, and that because it threatened to derange the precariously balanced condition of the French finances. He was so angry at this horrid thought that the Chief Dubâsh feared to appear before him. But otherwise the English enterprise was regarded as an insignificant raid which must come to a sudden end as soon as Chandâ Sâhib had possession of Trichinopoly. Ranga Pillai therefore records no details of the event which

seems of so great importance in English eyes. Nor does he dwell upon the great victory which Clive achieved soon after at Cauverypauk. Indeed, apart from the cursory accounts of the subsequent captures of Covelong and Chingleput, one gathers little from Ranga Pillai about Clive's activities and importance in these critical years, except by an accidental remark that, when Dupleix seized the company of Swiss troops passing by Pondichery at sea, he hoped that he was going to capture the great Englishman.

Meanwhile operations dragged on against Trichinopoly. Law proved a more enterprising soldier than d'Auteuil, but equally unskillful. The progress of events is occasionally mentioned; but we are told nothing of importance and little of interest. The most curious incident recorded by the diarist is certainly that amusing case of diamond cut diamond, mentioned in the Diary of December 31, 1751, when one of Muhammad 'Alî's commanders tried to entrap Hasan-ud-dîn by a pretended desire to desert and join Chandâ Sâhib, while Hasan-ud-dîn displayed equal good faith. Hasan-ud-dîn was of course a special mark for Muhammad 'Alî's vengeance because he was believed to have been the man who slew Anwar-ud-dîn at the battle of Ambûr. Later on we find him kept a close prisoner after he

had fallen into the hands of the English, and on April 28, 1753, is entered a long and interesting account of his escape from Fort St. David.

But if we learn little from the Diary about the siege of Trichinopoly, we learn a great deal about the coming of the news of Chandâ Sâhib's tragic fate. Pondichery was full of strange rumours. Law was said to have deserted to the English. On June 13, 1752, a refugee came in disguised in Moorish turban and gown, with news of d'Auteuil's defeat. After hearing his news, Dupleix conducted him to his wife's apartments, looking so troubled that Ranga Pillai retired to his own office rather than encounter him. Two days later came the tidings that Chandâ Sâhib had been made prisoner, none the less bitter because Fort St. David welcomed the event with a salute. And on June 17 arrived the defeated d'Auteuil bearing news that Chandâ Sâhib was not only captured but executed. Dupleix was overwhelmed. He would not go to mass; he could not even eat his dinner. It was indeed the downfall of all his plans. Not that he was quite unprepared to do without Chandâ Sâhib; had he not already obtained for himself a sanad from Salabat Jang appointing him Subahdar of the Carnatic? And had he not decided that if Chandâ Sâhib

objected to this transfer of power, that recalcitrant prince should be shipped off to Mecca to repent of his misdeeds? But such a removal of Chandâ Sâhib was a very different matter from having him defeated and slain by an enemy, and by an enemy whom he had a hundred times represented to the Company and the ministers as powerless and on the point of overthrow. While Ranga Pillai reflected that the injustice of his French masters had thus brought about the downfall of their ally, Dupleix perceived that events had belied his promises and that this misfortune was but the precursor of worse.

All the year was unfortunate for Dupleix' schemes. Scarcely a month earlier, news had come that the treasury of Salabat Jang was exhausted. Only a week beforehand he had scolded the merchants because they were applying for money with which to carry on the investment instead of providing it (contrary to age-old custom) out of their own funds. He was at his wit's end for money when this political catastrophe befell.

The arrival of the Europe shipping permitted him a short respite. He once more sent an army into the field, under the command this time of his nephew, de Kerjean, freshly come from gathering golden laurels in the Deccan. The English too made a blunder. For once in

a way Saunders was deserted by his usual sound good sense, and projected an attack upon Gingee. In vain did Lawrence go up by boat from Fort St. David to Madras in order to represent the unwisdom of this measure. The expedition proceeded under the command of an officer newly arrived from Europe, Major Kinneer. He was never able to make an attempt upon Gingee, in spite of the story told by Ranga Pillai of his repulse before that fortress; but he contrived to get himself well-beaten by Kerjean at Vikravândi, and Dupleix saw himself once more on the high-road to victory, while Madame declared that now at last God would bless them with the head of Muhammad 'Alî. The threatened prince was however destined to survive for another forty years.

That was in the month of August. Towards the close of the month Kerjean had orders to advance southward to check the raids of the Maratha horse who accompanied the army of Muhammad 'Alî. It appears that the distrust which Dupleix had felt about his nephew's capacity to defeat the English early in the month had given place to a considerable degree of confidence. On September 2, he tells Ranga Pillai that the rains alone have prevented the French troops from attacking the English. The author of the action which

followed must have been Dupleix himself. His caution only reawakened after the crushing defeat which Kerjean suffered at Bâhûr on September 5. We may at least be sure that they are wrong who conjecture Kerjean felt anxiety about being superseded by the arrival of any officer with the troops which were still expected; he was the Governor's nephew; what surer guarantee could he have asked?

The defeat of Bâhûr reduced the French to military inactivity for the next six months. But this only redoubled the political activity of Dupleix. First we have the efforts to seduce Muhammad 'Alî. By a strange piece of fortune the very day that brought the news of d'Auteuil's defeat and surrender at Ranjangudi, brought also letters from Salabat Jang agreeing to leave Muhammad 'Alî in peaceful possession of Trichinopoly. The position was too critical for a moment to be lost. That very day Dupleix wrote to Saunders offering a settlement on those terms. The English had already heard that Law was on the point of surrender. They therefore considered the offer as dictated by circumstances with which Salabat Jang had no manner of concern. Their scepticism was doubtless natural; but, unless Ranga Pillai was misinformed in a matter on which he is usually reliable enough, they were mistaken. But Dupleix pitched his

terms too high. He demanded the release of all prisoners before he would pursue the negotiations further. To his opponents this looked as if he were inviting them to give up for nothing the positive advantages gained at Trichinopoly. Accordingly nothing came of the opening. Before Bâhûr he contemptuously rejected Muhammad 'Alî's offer of jaghirs; after Bâhûr he similarly treated the latter's offer to act under him as Naib. Nothing but the release of the prisoners would satisfy him. In that the event proved him to be unwise. He was demanding what the English alone could concede, and, one must suppose, intentionally rejecting Muhammad 'Alî's overtures.

The reason doubtless was financial. Muhammad 'Alî had no resources with which to buy pardon for the troubles which his English friends had caused; nor could he be trusted to give the French that exclusive devotion which they required. Dupleix therefore remained bent on destroying him, if that could in any way be accomplished. And the Nawâb's folly afforded an opening by which Dupleix could still hope to split up the confederacy which had brought Chandâ Sâhib to his humble grave at Trichinopoly. That confederacy had included two groups, the Nawâb, the Râjâ of Tanjore and the English, who were the natural enemies of Chandâ Sâhib and

the French, and the Mysoreans and Morâri Râo, who were ready to join either side for what they could get out of them. On November 8, 1751, Chandâ Sâhib is reported to have come to an agreement with Mysore, which Dupleix disliked as it afforded no supplies of ready money; presently Muhammad 'Alî overbid his rival with an offer of Trichinopoly, and on December 13 the French knew that Mysore was going to join the other side. This also carried with it the assistance of Morâri Râo who with a considerable body of Maratha cavalry had taken temporary service with Nandi Râjâ, the Mysorean leader. As soon as Chandâ Sâhib was safely underground, Nandi Râjâ claimed the immediate execution of Muhammad 'Alî's promises; this was refused; and the news of the resulting quarrel was known in Pondichery on July 7, 1752. This was enough to set Dupleix and his wife to work at once, though the intrigue apparently was not known to the diarist until October. It was not immediately successful with Nandi Râjâ, who had already spent so much money before Trichinopoly that he was reluctant to contribute more, while Dupleix only cared for his alliance on condition of its providing funds for his continuing the war against Muhammad 'Alî. Accordingly the negotiation lingered on until February 1753 when Dupleix was able

to bring Mysore to terms by applying the threat of invasion by Salabat Jang and Bussy. When the matter was at last settled, Nandi Râjâ agreed to pay four lakhs of rupees down and three lakhs a year until Trichinopoly was captured. Of these affairs we find little or nothing in the diary. Probably little was going forward in 1752, when the diary is full, whereas when the negotiation must have been most active, in the first two months of 1753, the diary is very incomplete.

However Ranga Pillai tells us a good deal about the agreement with Morâri Râo. On October 20 we hear that he has been promised a lakh and a quarter a month. On November 26 we find the substance of a letter addressed to him, together with a statement that an agreement had been reached; and a month later we read of the formal conclusion of a treaty, to which both parties solemnly swore, setting their finger-marks to the document in saffron. By this Morâri Râo was promised a present of two lakhs, payable half at once and half in a month's time, with a regular subsidy of a lakh a month, and as honourable a reception when he came to Pondichery as had been formerly accorded to Muzaffar Jang.

The main difficulty was to make good the financial part of these proposals. Pâpayya Pillai, the heir of generations of beggars and

Receiver-General of the country revenues, was called upon to find the money immediately required. It appears that he was unable to do so and that (without the knowledge of Dupleix) he settled matters for the moment by giving his bond for a lakh and a half for the lakh that had been promised in cash.

The natural expedient which occurred to Dupleix to secure the performance of his new obligations was to create a new Nawâb. The person whom he thought most likely to pay highly for that honour was the man who had already slain two Nawâbs, Murtazâ 'Alî Khân of Vellore. Here again Ranga Pillai says nothing of the details, but he describes Murtazâ 'Alî's visit to Pondichery in March 1753. The new Nawâb arrived on the 7th and departed on the 26th. Dupleix thought but lightly of his creature, and spoke of him in terms even coarser than he usually allowed himself about his Indian allies, declaring that he looked as if he was the son of a vagrant French surgeon who had once lived at Vellore. At last Murtazâ 'Alî departed, full of promises of the money he would send as soon as he got back to Vellore, "being desirous," as Ranga Pillai observes, "to get away quietly without being troubled to remain."

But these expedients afforded only temporary reliefs. In July 1753, Ranga Pillai

reckoned that Pâpayya Pillai had furnished (probably in the previous twelve months) 4 or 5 lakhs from the country revenues, and that Nandi Râjâ, Murtazâ 'Alî, Mudâmiah of Chidambaram, etc., had supplied about 10 lakhs more. But all this had been spent and more besides. In the following August even Salabat Jang was demanding money, though of course in vain. The fact seems to have been that French control of the Deccan was more beneficial to individuals than to the State. Bussy was a great man but an expensive general. He might go home with a fortune, buy an estate and marquisate, and marry into a ducal family; Dupleix and his wife might receive presents and jaghirs and even devote part of their fortune to the wars of the Carnatic; but it does not appear that the Company's treasury ever reaped any benefit from the great adventure of the Deccan, which, apart from private gains, never even paid for itself. All through 1753 Dupleix was hard-pressed for money. He even became so irritable with his perpetual money difficulties that he entirely lost his temper when he received a bill for 3 lakhs from Nandi Râjâ payable six weeks after sight, and Madame had to assure the vakîl that she would explain things to him.

This scarcity of money naturally embarrassed his relations with Morâri Râo. That chieftain was no altruist to fight without pay. Even in April 1753 he had begun to complain of the arrears into which his subsidy was falling. In July he was preparing to withdraw. At this time he addressed a letter to Dupleix in which he pointed out with great clearness the military defects of his ally's policy: "You should undertake only one affair at a time," he says. "But you indiscreetly seek to finish all affairs at the same time. . . . How can you hope to succeed everywhere at once? First you tell me to march against Arcot, then against Trichinopoly, then against Devikôttai, and then against Chidambaram and Vriddhachalam. If you write thus where can I go and how can affairs prosper? My coming has cost you money, but I have lost good sardârs, my younger brothers, and many men, without succeeding at any point." Little service was henceforth to be obtained from this ill-satisfied and ill-directed auxiliary; and at the close of the year we read of the escape of his hostage from Pondichery. The alliance with Morâri Râo was at an end. It had been broken partly by Dupleix' failure to pay, partly by the offers made on behalf of the Nawâb.

Nor was the alliance with Nandi Râjâ much more fruitful of military results. The

Mysoreans and French lay before Trichinopoly all the year through without securing one substantial success. In three considerable actions they were well beaten by Lawrence while Dupleix was amused by false rumours of victory. At the close of the year Pâpayya Pillai brought him news that Mainville had succeeded in his attempted escalade; but the same day he had to return to his master and tell him it was all a mistake, receiving in return "the usual courtesy of kicks and blows."

Even in the Deccan events were more flattering than prosperous. Soon after the death of Chandâ Sâhib news came that Ghâzi-ud-dîn was coming from Delhi to dispute possession of the seven Subahs with Salabat Jang, and that he was to be supported by the whole force of the Marathas. While the event of this was still depending, Dupleix received the parwâna from the Emperor confirming Salabat Jang's grant of the Carnatic. Ranga Pillai's narrative throws no direct light on the contested authenticity of the document; he was not in the secret, if secret there were; but he tells us how Dupleix went out in state to receive it, with the naubat, the Fish-standard, and flags on elephants and horses; and how delighted the Governor was, even just after Bâhûr with his nephew lying

desperately wounded and his army destroyed, at receiving the parwâna written on paper such as was used in a formal address to one of equal rank. If the parwâna were genuine, lavish gifts must have gone to procure it ; and in any case, whether it really bore the signature of the Protector of the World and the Champion of the Faith, or whether it had been concocted by some *mutasaddi* at Hyderabad or Delhi, it may be doubted whether it was worth its cost.

That Dupleix should have so valued it, or affected so to value it, betrays the obsession which he shared with Bussy, and indeed even with his English contemporaries,—the curious respect felt for the name of the Moghul coupled as it was with a complete contempt for the actual powers of India. It seems odd that people, in most ways so clear-sighted, should have been deceived by the empty name of Delhi. The empire stood ready to fall into whatever hands were skilful and strong enough to seize it. Yet Dupleix and Bussy plumed themselves on the position they had secured in the Deccan because half a century earlier that position would have enabled them to give the law to the Carnatic. And when Ghâzi-ud-dîn was poisoned—by Salabat Jang's mother, as the usual story runs, by his kitchen-people, as the Southern shroffs told Ranga Pillai,—it still seemed worth while, in spite of

Salabat Jang's bankruptcy, to keep a French contingent at Hyderabad for the sake of the legal fictions which Dupleix was thus enabled to put forward, and which he hoped would seem more imposing at London than they did at Madras.

Meanwhile ill-success was plainly reflected in his temper. More than once Ranga Pillai feared to approach him ; and Pâpayya Pillai, his successful rival, must have often wondered amidst his tribulations whether his success had been worth while. Nor was it only Indians who found him unapproachable. He abuses ships' officers ; and vents his spite against Saunders in such inappropriate phrases as "thievish dog" and "fool." The combined effects of misfortunes and feminine persistency manifest themselves in another way. Madame was allowed to do very much what she pleased. She was permitted for instance to perform that startling deed which must have shaken the whole of Hindu Pondichery to its foundations,—the baptism, namely, of a Hindu upon his death-bed, in spite of the protests of his relations, and the refusal of every respectable Christian priest in Pondichery to have anything to do with it. Again in the Holy Week of 1753 Dupleix takes to unaccustomed observances, half-masting the flag and bestowing unusual sums in charity. "But of what

avail is all this?" asks the Tamil *courtier*. "God favours those only who turn from cruelty to do good."

With a quaint touch of irony, the wonderful new *Gouvernement* in the Fort, whence Dupleix was to have reigned all over Southern India, was just being finished when its builder learnt of Chandâ Sâhib's death and Law's surrender. We catch glimpses of the allegorical figures with which it was decorated and of the great hall plated with silver and hung with green-laced curtains. For its brief duration of nine years—it had taken nearly twice that time to build—it was the most splendid palace of the South, with its gilded chambers, and wide cool verandahs and snow-white pillars. In 1761 most of its ornaments were bought by the Nawâb Muhammad 'Alî, and probably used in his new palace of Chepauk. In neither case did they afford their owner much serenity of mind. It was as though a curse had clung to them.

All this the diarist watched with many premonitions of disaster. The gods had bestowed much on Pondichery; they were about to take back their gifts. The fortunate Governor who could not tear his shirt without finding reason to rejoice at the accident, had become the unconvinced hearer of flattering prophecies in which the *courtier* himself

had ceased to believe. His intercourse with the Governor had declined much also. In the period covered by the present volume he attended daily, but it was only to report the amount of grain that had been carried into the town or the number of bales of cloth that had been packed. He had dropped for the most part out of political affairs, probably from the time when Madame began to become more prominent. More than one intrigue is here mentioned in which he took no part and of which apparently he had no knowledge. In spite of all, however, he contrived to hear a good deal, for even Madame could not dispense with agents from whom he learnt the current events.