PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following points are noted for the information of readers of this and subsequent volumes of the diary :—

(i) The Christian dates follow the New Style, which, though not adopted by the English until 1753, had been in use by the French for considerably more than a century anterior to the time that Ranga Pillai wrote.

(ii) Blanks, and incomplete sentences, as well as passages which owing to the perishing of the manuscript have become undecipherable, are denoted by dots. A footnote explains the exact circumstances of each case.

(iii) Words etc. inserted by the Editor are indicated by square brackets.

(iv) The transliteration of Indian names is in accordance with the system adopted in the publications of the Madras Government, an exception being however made in the case of well-known places, which are rendered in the ordinary form.

(v) The circumflex has been used in preference to the acute accent, to indicate long vowels.

(vi) *Madras, Fort St. David, Porto Novo, Sadras* and *St. Thomas' Mount* have, for convenience' sake,

been substituted for the native names by which they are referred to in the diary. For the reasons assigned in appendix I, the French word *Mascareigne* has been used for Ranga Piḷḷai's *Masukkarai.*

J. F. P.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

ÂNANDA Ranga Piḷḷai was born on the 30th March 1709 at Perambûr, a suburb of Madras, in which city his father, Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai, carried on business as a merchant. Somewhere in the early part of 1716, Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai emigrated to Pondichery, taking his family with him. This he did at the suggestion of his brother-in-law Nainiya Piḷḷai, then *courtier*, or chief native agent at that place, for the French. The invitation was sent at the request of M. Hébert, who was at the time Governor there. Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai was accompanied by some other wealthy and influential merchants of Madras, their object being to establish and promote commerce in their new home. Under the management of the two relatives the trade of Pondichery increased rapidly, but a severe check was ere long given to this, owing to M. Hébert having preferred certain charges against Nainiya Piḷḷai, who was cast into prison, and died there—it is said—of ill-treatment. His son Guruva Piḷḷai, and his brother-in-law, fearing the resentment of the Governor, fled to Madras. The former, having travelled by way of England to France, laid his grievances before the Duke of Orleans, who was then Regent, with the result that, in February 1719, M. Hébert was sent home under restraint. In the meantime, Guruva Piḷḷai

was made much of in France, embraced Christianity, was appointed Chevalier of St. Michael, *courtier*, and head of the Indian subjects of the French at Pondichery, for which he soon after took his departure. Prior to his arrival, M. de la Prévostière, the successor of M. Hébert, had induced Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai to return. He then brought with him five other wealthy and capable merchants, and their families; and from that time forward the affairs of the Company grew and prospered. About the close of 1724, Guruva Piḷḷai died without issue, and Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai followed him in June 1726. M. Lenoir came in September of that year, for the second time, to Pondichery—upon this occasion as Governor. He had previously entertained a strong regard for Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai, and on hearing of his death, employed Ranga Piḷḷai, whom he considered a very promising young man, to continue the work on which his father had been engaged. This he did to such good purpose that M. Lenoir decided to appoint him native head of the French factory at Porto Novo, where large quantities of blue cloths were, thanks to his exertions, manufactured, both for the Company, and for private traders. With a view to still further extend the commerce of the French, Ranga Piḷḷai established at his own cost, at Lâlâpêṭṭai and Arcot, large trading posts which were soon carrying on a brisk business in the exchange of European goods for the merchandise of the country. M. Dumas, who succeeded M. Lenoir

in 1735, seems to have had a favourable opinion of Ranga Piḷḷai, and to have placed confidence in him. The success which had hitherto accompanied the commercial operations of the French was, however, destined to receive a severe blow; as, in 1740, an irruption of the Mahrattas took place, and put a stop for some appreciable time to all manufacture and trade. Porto Novo was raided and sacked, and the country, far and wide, became a prey to the invaders. Fighting, though not actually with the French, was still going on, when, in 1742, M. Dupleix arrived as Governor. As he was employed at Pondichery from 1720 to 1731, he had no doubt then known both Tiruvêngaḍa Piḷḷai and his son, and from the time that he assumed office, Ranga Piḷḷai rapidly rose to power. His influence with M. Dupleix—which he apparently exercised honestly and with judgment—was very marked, and he was evidently treated by that great man with full trust in his integrity and capacity. The post of *courtier*, commonly called *chief dubâsh*, which had been occupied by Guruva Piḷḷai, had, after his death, fallen into the hands of another family. This was probably the result of the desire of the priests, who at that time exercised much influence, that the position should be held by a Christian—a persuasion to which the surviving members of Guruva Piḷḷai's family did not belong. When M. Dupleix became Governor, one Kanakarâya Mudali held the appointment. This individual regarded Ranga Piḷḷai with much jealousy, as he

plainly saw that he was supplanting him in the good graces of his master. Death however removed him, in 1746, from the scene, and towards the end of 1747 Ranga Piḷḷai—having in the interval exercised to all intents and purposes the entire functions of the office—was appointed his successor. Whilst holding this position, he received from time to time honorific titles from the Subahdar of the Deccan; and he continued in office even after the downfall of his patron, M. Dupleix, which may be held to date from the close of the year of 1754, when M. Godeheu arrived as Commissioner. From that time, however, his power and influence with the governing body steadily declined, although he was still looked upon by his countrymen as their head. This and constant ill-health apparently caused him to become remiss in the performance of his duties, and he was finally removed from office, in 1756, by the then Governor M. de Leyrit. His diary makes no direct mention of this incident, although it refers to his successor as being the chief agent of the Governor in obtaining bribes, draws a vivid picture of the corruption and intrigue which followed the disappearance from Indian history of M. Dupleix, and is replete with expressions of disgust at the manner in which the administration of the French was carried on. He lingered on until the 12th (not the 11th, as stated by M. Vinson) of January 1761, and died four days before the surrender of Pondichery to Colonel Coote, which took place on the morning

of the 16th January of that year. He left no sons. Two were born to him, but both died during their childhood.

The account given here of Ranga Piḷḷai has mainly been derived from a copy of a petition in French, addressed to the Governor of Pondichery, which has been obtained from the family. In this the petitioner, after recounting the history of his uncle and his services, requested compensation for the losses which his relative had sustained in consequence of his devotion to the cause of the French. It bears no date, but from its contents there seems but little doubt that it was written not long after the death of Ranga Piḷḷai.

What induced him to keep a diary, there is nothing to show. It is very clear that it was never written with the slightest view to publication, or for perusal by others than, perhaps, the immediate members of his own family. It stands unique as a record of the inmost thoughts and reflections of an extremely able, level-headed Oriental, and of his criticisms—which at times are of the freest character—of his fellows, and masters. It is a strange mixture of things trivial and important; of family matters and affairs of state; of business transactions and social life of the day; interspersed with scraps of gossip, all evidently recorded as they came to the mind of the diarist; who might well be dubbed the "Indian Pepys." Homely as is its diction, there are in it descriptions of men and things which are

vividly life-like, and passages which are startling; some in their pathos, and others in their shrewdness. That, for some reason or other, he attached much importance to the keeping of a diary is shown by an entry in his journal in which he records having sent to his younger brother, on the occasion of his first mission, on behalf of the Government, to Madras, the materials for opening one, with strict injunctions to keep it regularly, and to note in it carefully everything that occurred. As a record, the diary, though perhaps in parts dull reading, is on the whole a deeply interesting, and probably valuable account of things historical, political, and social appertaining to the period embracing the rise, the zenith, and the beginning of the decline of the French power in India. Ranga Pillai evidently did not record, day by day, the events which he considered worthy of mention. Sometimes, consecutive entries are to be found; then breaks of more or less length occur; then the events of a single day appear; and then entries are made under one date of the occurrences of several days—probably from notes. The diary is not written throughout in his own hand. The first volume of the original, which covers a period of about nine years from 1736—the year in which he started the chronicle—very largely is, but the other volumes, where originals are forthcoming, have, on examination, been found to be in several hands, with here and there the writing of Ranga Pillai himself. It seems pretty clear that as time went on, and his

duties increased, he found himself unable to do the scriptory work which it involved, and employed an amanuensis. There is no change of style or diction until the last few pages are reached. In these the record has evidently been made by some one else, as what was hitherto a diary becomes a narrative which terminates abruptly on the day on which Ranga Pillai died.

The diary was begun on the 6th September 1736, and was written in bound volumes of the size of large account books. After Ranga Pillai's death, his nephew, Tiruvêngada Pillai, continued to maintain a record, which runs to the beginning of 1770, and is still in the possession of his relatives. It was not until more than a century after the date on which it was begun, that the existence of Ranga Pillai's diary became known. In 1846, M. Gallois Montbrun, the father of the gentleman who until recently was Mayor of Pondichery—to whose courteous help in making search and inquiry regarding the diary I desire here to express my indebtedness—unearthed the manuscript, which, up to then, had lain unheeded in the house of the representatives of the family. M. Montbrun, who took the deepest interest in old vernacular writings, then proceeded to make a copy of it. But he apparently started with selections only; for the volume from which the translation for the Government of Madras was originally made is full of breaks. This was not observed until the actual work of editing was commenced. The

omissions then noticed led to inquiry, and it was ascertained that M. Montbrun had subsequently supplied the blanks by a supplemental volume, which, however, was not forthcoming. Further search was made, and this resulted in the discovery of the undoubted originals of volumes I and II. The volume now being published is practically a fresh translation from these. M. Ariel made another copy, which is in the National Library at Paris, but whether this is defective or not, there are at present no means of ascertaining. M. Vinson, apparently under a misapprehension, has stated in his '*Français dans l'Inde*' that the copy made by the late M. Gallois Montbrun was presented by his son to the public library at Pondichery. It has been definitely ascertained that this is not the case. It was not until 1870 that an attempt to publish a translation of any portion of the diary was made, when M. Laude had a rendering into French prepared of the account given in it of the siege of Pondichery, in 1748, by Admiral Boscawen. The journal again dropped out of sight until 1889, when M. Julien Vinson, Professor of the Special School of Living Oriental Languages at Paris, published a translation of some portions of it, which he followed up in 1894 by a volume amplifying these, and bearing the title of '*Les Français dans l'Inde*.' This, however, does not go beyond 1748, and is composed of extracts referring only to a few special matters.

In 1892, the existence of the diary was brought to the notice of the Government of Madras by Lieutenant-General H. Macleod, R.A. the Consular Agent at Pondichery, and Professor G. W. Forrest the Director-General of Imperial Records, and it was suggested that the matter which it contained was of such interest and value that it was highly desirable that a copy of it should be obtained; and a translation made of this, and published. The Government, which was then presided over by Lord Wenlock, readily adopted the suggestion, and the transcription was commenced towards the close of 1892. Lieutenant-General Macleod, who took a deep interest in the matter, arranged for and superintended the work. The comparing of the copy was entrusted to his assistant. It was believed at head-quarters that the transcription was made from the original volumes, but subsequent inquiry has shown that this was not the case, and that the copy which M. Montbrun's father had made was that used. The translation from Tamil was finished towards the close of 1896, and it was then supposed that the diary was complete from September 1736 to January 1761, but subsequently the lacunæ previously referred to were found, and this led to my assistant being sent to Pondichery to, if possible, compare the portions of the translation in which these occurred with the original. It was then that it was discovered that the copy of the late M. Montbrun was imperfect; that such of the originals as were available

had not been used by the British copyists, owing to the difficulty of reading some portions of them; and that not only were some of the original volumes missing, and not traceable, but that portions of M. Montbrun's copy, of which no originals could be found, had disappeared since General Macleod's transcription was made. A prolonged search for what was lacking has been made, but without success; beyond the discovery by my assistant of the originals of volumes I and II, and by the French authorities of the original of the last volume of the diary.

The following statement gives what is believed to be correct information as to what is missing:—

Originals of the diary now extant—

From 6th September 1736, to 30th November 1745.
„ 31st December 1745, to 30th October 1746.
„ 28th April 1750, to 29th October 1750.
„ 24th April 1752, to 5th April 1753.
„ 4th September 1754, to 29th March 1755.
„ 1st April 1757, to 21st September 1758.
„ 12th April 1759, to 8th April 1760.
„ 9th April 1760, to 12th January 1761.

Copies in the possession of M. Gallois Montbrun for which no originals can be found—

From 30th October 1746, to 27th March 1747
„ 28th March 1747, to 27th November 1747.
„ 28th November 1747, to 7th April 1748.
„ 15th April 1748, to 1st September 1748.
„ 2nd September 1748, to 24th November 1748.
„ 26th June 1749, to 16th December 1749.
„ 17th December 1749, to 26th April 1750.

From 29th March 1755, to 8th April 1756.
„ 10th April 1756, to 31st March 1757.

Portions of the diary for which neither originals nor copies are forthcoming—

From 25th November 1748, to 25th June 1749.
„ 30th October 1750, to 15th April 1751.
„ 9th December 1753, to 3rd September 1754.
„ 22nd September 1758, to 22nd January 1759.

The diary—in the translation now made—is continuous (as kept by Ranga Pillai) from the 6th September 1736, to the 24th November 1748; after which there is a hiatus of 7 months. It then runs on, without failure, from 26th June 1749, to 29th October 1750, when another break of $5\frac{1}{2}$ months occurs; it is again perfect from 16th April 1751, to 8th December 1753, when there is a gap of 9 months. The last lacuna, of 4 months, occurs between 22nd September 1758, and 22nd January 1759. The total period for which the diary is wanting is 2 years, 1 month, and 15 days. There is no doubt, from inquiries made, that the breaks mentioned represent lost volumes. It is a matter for much regret that so much should be missing. It is possible that something may be found in the copy made by M. Ariel, which is reported to have been one from the original; but from what M. Vinson says this seems rather doubtful.

It is not, I conceive, my business to enter upon any dissertation regarding the period to which the diary relates, or to comment, further than I have, on this interesting chronicle. I regard it as my

concern only to attempt to place before the public a fairly readable, and reasonably correct translation, and to explain, by brief foot-notes, such points as might otherwise prove unintelligible to those unfamiliar with Indian words and expressions.

In preparing the diary for publication it has been considered expedient to break the translation up into volumes of convenient length, and to divide these into chapters. As no general index will be drawn up until the publication of the whole is complete, tables of contents have been prefixed to each chapter, and the items appearing in these have been repeated and amplified in the margin of each page. It is hoped that by these means the readers of the diary will have but little difficulty in tracing everything of any moment mentioned in it. The tables of contents are longer and more full than is usual, but it has been thought better, in a work of the peculiar nature of the present, to err rather in this direction, than in that of brevity. A nominal index will be found at the end of each volume.

Particular attention has been paid to the subject of dates; as regards which Ranga Pillai was, no doubt, occasionally—either through ignorance or carelessness—inaccurate. Where corrections have been found necessary, they have been put in the form of foot-notes.

The period covered by the volume now being published extends from the 6th September 1736—when it opens with the quaint preamble of which as

strictly literal a translation as is possible is presented to the reader—to 22nd April 1746. M. Dumas, the successor of M. Lenoir, had, on the former date, almost completed his first year of office, and Ranga Pillai, though barely twenty-seven years of age, was head of the family; his father having died some ten years before. How he first came to be employed as a servant of the Company has been already stated in the account given of him, but it was not until M. Dupleix assumed the reins of government that he had anything to do with matters affecting the administration of Pondichery. He then became, amongst the natives—if not the Europeans also—the right hand man of his illustrious master, and was in constant personal communication with him. In rendering the diary care has been taken to give as close a translation as converting Tamil into readable English will allow, of the many interesting, and often curious conversations between the Governor and Ranga Pillai, which are recorded in it.

J. F. P.