

'What is all this about?' he said; 'I don't understand it. Read through the letters and explain the matter to me.' I told him that matters had not gone so far as M. Friell thought, but that they were progressing; that the prisoners' fetters had been struck off after the arrival of the matchlock-people; but that this letter was mere fiction and should not be listened to. He said, 'Very well; go through the letters and let me know what should be said.' So I took the letters and came home to eat.

After dinner, while I was reading them, the Governor received a letter from M. de Bury, at the Alisapâkkam camp. It said: 'A European trooper riding to the west of the camp, has given the alarm and reports that he has seen the English forces with their colours advancing from the Southward. I have sent out a hundred European and some other horse and a hundred Mahé sepoys.' On this there was a general alarm. All the troops, and palankin-bearers were sent out to Ariyânkuppam under M. Duquesne. But soon another letter came, with the news that the trooper was in liquor and did not know what he was saying. Then all was quiet again.

I had sent word to Satyapûrnaswâmi that I would visit him at Arumpâtai Pillai's Choultry to-day; and I had made preparations to go. But meanwhile, in consequence of the Sêndamangalam letter and the alarm at Ariyânkuppam, I had to send Parasurâma Pillai instead.

*Wednesday, February 7.*<sup>1</sup>—This morning I went to M. Cornet at the Fort. I then showed the goods that had arrived from Madras—pieces of silk, red lead and Bengal goods—to Arunâchala Chetti, Tâni Chetti, Muttayya Chetti, Alagappa Chetti, and Virâ Chetti. I then took Virâ Chetti to the Second, and explained that he had supplied seventeen corge and some odd pieces of long cloth and thirty-five corge and some odd pieces of coarse cloth, which had to be paid for; and I asked that he might be paid for these goods which he had supplied and also for twenty corge of coarse cloth since ordered, saying that it might be met from the money due by the Company's merchants for the goods they have purchased. The Second at once sent for M. Cornet, and told him to write an order to the Company's merchants to pay Virâ Chetti 10,000 rupees. I got the order from M. Cornet and gave it to the Company's merchants.

Meanwhile the Governor had sent three peons, one after the other, to fetch me. So, taking leave of the Second and M. Cornet, I went to him. He said, 'Rangappa, have you heard anything about the complaints made by the St. Paul's priests?' When I asked what they were, he answered, 'They say they have a mortgage on the Reddis' lands at Olukarai; that they need the paddy cut there for the expenses of their church and have always received

<sup>1</sup> 28th Tai, Prabhava.

it; but that you say that it is needed by the Company, have had the crop cut by your own people and carried it off. Now they want an order for the delivery of the paddy to them. I asked them whether their bond entitled them to paddy or money; they told me, money only; so I told them they must be content with money. I then asked how they could be justified in saying that they had a mortgage on the Company's lands, and whether anyone had a right to mortgage them; and told them that, if they had lent their money in ignorance of this, they were likely to lose it, and with that I sent them off. But everybody borrows from these people. Even the man who was seized as an English spy at Kīrumāmpākkam owed them money, and they wanted to obtain his release. It seems that there is nobody, in town or out of it, who does not borrow from them.'

I answered, 'True, Sir; but gain is not their only motive. They think their debtors will be humble and obedient, doing everything they say; and so people will think them influential. They wish all who come here on business to look on them as the lords of Pondichery, to believe that they are wealthier than anybody else, and the best to borrow from, and that they can procure employment for their favourites. Besides this, they get their interest as well, and so profit all ways. That is why they act thus. They will listen to any story a man cares to tell them—as we know by experience.'

The Governor agreed with me, and said, 'In Europe everyone knows they are liars and cheats, the fathers of falsehood. Everyone knows it and never believes a word they say. But if it were known that they were money-lenders as well, they would get into trouble. They're a bad set of people. M. Lenoir put them down<sup>1</sup>; but M. Dumas was a less capable man, and in his time they raised their heads again.'

I thought within myself that they were never so powerful as now; but I said, 'Sir, M. Lenoir put them down, and you also are doing the same,' thus flattering him. He answered, 'But M. Dumas, though incapable and powerless, knew how to make money<sup>2</sup>.'—I said, 'You could make a hundred times as much as he did; and your glory in overthrowing the subahdar of the province, and driving him back to Arcot, and seizing Madras, has spread to Delhi. It will endure as though written upon stone. Kings and emperors praise your name, saying you have done what they scarcely could do. Nothing in the world is so precious as glory. It dies not, but riches perish.' And to this I added other compliments.

M. Friell was there, and the Governor said to him, 'Who is so wise as Rangappan?' and praised

<sup>1</sup> When Lenoir was Governor, he seems to have cherished a grudge against the Jesuits. See, for example, *Cultru*, p. 56, where it is said that he forbade mangoes to be carried out of the town because the Jesuits had a good garden and sent presents of mangoes to various Rājās.

<sup>2</sup> Dumas' fortune, it was said, was largely acquired by corrupt means. See *Cultru*, pp. 51-52.