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## PREFATORY NOTE.

THE translation of the following section of Ânanda Ranga Pillai's Diary has been rendered the more difficult because there exists in India no text with which the Madras transcript of this portion can be collated. The original and the Montbrun transcript both seem to have been lost.

I have to acknowledge with great gratitude the courtesy with which His Excellency M. Martineau, Governor of the French Settlements in India, permitted me to examine the archives at Pondichery, together with the kindness of the French Minister of the Colonies in permitting me to procure copies of documents lodged at the *Ministère des Colonies* at Paris. My sincere thanks are due to Mr. W. Foster, C.I.E., for affording me information on numerous points of detail; to Mr. S. C. Hill for being so kind as to read the proof-sheets and make several suggestions of which I have taken advantage; to the Hon'ble Diwan Bahadur L. D. Swamikannu Pillai for translating and annotating the horoscope printed as an appendix to the present volume; and also to Dr. F. de Haan, the Archivist at Batavia, for information regarding Sadras. I must further acknowledge the great assistance afforded me by Rao Sahib K. Ranga Achariyar, the Superintendent of the Madras Record Office, and by M.R.Ry. S. Kuppuswami Ayyar, in preparing the text of the translation.

JUN 10 1922

As regards printed authorities, my principal obligations are to Colonel Love's *Vestiges of Old Madras*, to M. Cultru's *Dupleix*, to the Marquis de Nazelle's *La Défense de Pondichery*, and to the volumes of records issued by the *Société de l'histoire de l'Inde française*. Other obligations are acknowledged in the footnotes.

N.B.—My references to the records at Pondichery are indicated by the letters 'P.R.' and the numbering is given as in M. Martineau's recent Catalogue.

H.D.

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## INTRODUCTION TO VOL. IV.

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THE period covered by the present volume of Ananda Ranga Pillai's Diary—March 15, 1747 to March 31, 1748—includes no event of outstanding importance but affords much detail of considerable interest, such as would naturally come to the knowledge of a man discharging the varied duties of Chief Dubash. As the principal factotum of the Governor, he was expected not only to assist in the negotiation of the Company's investment and the provision of the Governor's private trade, but also to procure intelligence, to advise concerning political relations with the country powers, to see that the Governor's correspondence with them was properly interpreted, to arrange for the offering of suitable presents to the Governor on the proper occasions, to conduct intrigues in which the Governor wished to avoid personal intervention, to watch, report, and advise on the state of public feeling among the Indian inhabitants. As such he was necessarily acquainted with much confidential information which, with an exception or two, he promptly set down in his diary.

Of commercial matters in the present volume we hear little. Commerce, both public and private, in the European settlements at this period was chiefly maritime. Their internal trade was necessarily

insignificant, because they were but small centres of population. The principal branches of local trade consisted of the importation of goods, not for sale in Pondichery, but for export to the islands of the Malay Archipelago, to Manilla, to China, to the French islands, to the Persian Gulf, and to the Red Sea; while the Company's trade consisted almost entirely of traffic to and from Europe. Both public and private commerce thus presupposed open seas; but from March 1747, when Griffin arrived with the British squadron and saved Fort St. David from threatened capture, the seas were practically closed to French trade until the end of the war. From time to time news came which made Dupleix hope to be able to renew the languishing commerce of the settlement; but the English squadrons were too tenacious and too pervasive for these hopes to be realized.

Meanwhile the struggle on the Coromandel Coast had come to a dead-lock. The French had, as in 1744, a great military superiority, further increased by the men La Bourdonnais had brought and been compelled to leave behind on the Coast. But a considerable number of men had to be set apart to garrison the captured city of Madras, and English ships once more held the seas, hindered the importation of food-grains from the fertile northern coasts, and formed a perpetual menace to both Madras and Pondichery should they find either stripped of its garrison. Thus the French could only attack Fort

St. David during the short, uncertain periods of the squadron's absence; and the English could not attack Pondichery with the least prospect of success until they had received reinforcements.

This situation is very clearly illustrated by the abortive attempt made on Fort St. David under Dupleix' personal direction in January 1748. Why Dupleix assumed command of it, we are not told; but the reason is probably to be found in the touchy dignity of the officers, who, alike in the French and English camps, both now and throughout the whole struggle, were continually making difficulties by the insubordinate attitude which they adopted towards the civil government. It is likely that in the present case they were unwilling to march under the command of the man whom Dupleix wished to place at their head. The expedition seems to have been well-planned and well-organized; but it came to an ignominious end owing to the length of time spent on its preparation. Had Dupleix been able to march a fortnight earlier than he actually did, it is exceedingly doubtful whether the English would have been able to offer an effective resistance. The garrison was indeed under the command of Captain Gibson, an experienced officer of marines, lent for that purpose by the English commodore; but later experience suggests that the Company's forces had not yet acquired that resolute and disciplined valour which they were to display in the later phases of the struggle under the command of Stringer Lawrence.

The question, however, was not to be brought to the test in January 1748. The French expedition was so long delayed that it was but on the march when the English squadron hove in sight and for the second time saved Fort St. David to the English.

Meanwhile, although Pondichery was not seriously exposed to immediate attack, the future, as it must have appeared to Dupleix, grew steadily more and more dubious. The French shipping, so long expected, failed to appear; rumours spread of the English expedition under Boscawen; so Dupleix became ever increasingly preoccupied with the question of defence. Hence his close personal attention to the progress of the fortifications, and his anxiety, manifested on numerous occasions, to provision the town with adequate stocks of grain.

Relations with the country powers were naturally modified somewhat by the situation of Pondichery. Although Dupleix had concluded a peace with Anwar-ud-din, the old Nawab of Arcot, shortly before the opening of the present volume, that did not signify that the Nawab was disposed to assist the French in uprooting the English from the Coast. According to the terms agreed upon, the Moorish flag was to fly over Madras for eight days as an acknowledgment of the Nawab's suzerainty and in apology for the French having attacked the place against his express orders; and further considerable presents were to be made as the price of peace. Dupleix' war with the Moors did not then conclude

in a very triumphant manner, since from the Moorish point of view he apologized for his past conduct and purchased the Nawab's forgiveness. The latter's attitude was shown plainly enough by the presents brought back by the French envoys; Ranga Pillai tells us that they were old and valueless, showing the estimate Arcot set at that moment upon the French. Again, the Nawab was still indisposed to allow hostilities on land; and each of Dupleix' attacks on Fort St. David appears to have irritated Arcot against him. That irritation was not very deep or serious, no doubt; but it might on any suitable occasion develop into an inconvenient hostility. Dupleix was keenly aware of this, and ascribed it to the Moors' habitual duplicity, just as the English ascribed Anwar-ud-din's peace with the French to the same cause. In fact both the English and the French Governors knew that they could not rely upon the Nawab's assistance to overthrow the other.

Each nation therefore sought to win over to its side Nasir Jang, Anwar-ud-din's superior, who had been invested by his father, Nizam-ul-mulk, with considerable authority over the countries south of the Kistna. On the one side an English Dubash, Mutyalu, was despatched in August 1747 and succeeded in procuring orders to the Moghul officials of the Carnatic for the protection and assistance of the English, but at such a cost that on his return Governor Floyer refused for some days to see him.

The French, at first sight, had a considerable advantage over us at the Deccan Court, for they had, as it were, a permanent representative in a Moghul official named Imam Sahib. He had been faujdar of Alambarai when Dost Ali Khan was Nawab of the Carnatic; but when Dost Ali was killed by the Marathas in 1741 and Safdar Ali, his son, became Nawab, Imam Sahib fled hurriedly to the northward, being on ill terms with the new ruler at Arcot. He contrived to conciliate the Nizam, became for a time faujdar of Masulipatam, and then was given a place about Nasir Jang's person. In the old days he had been very friendly with the French; and Dumas, Dupleix' predecessor as Governor of Pondichery, had had the address to procure a considerable loan from him. After his establishment at the Court of the Deccan, his relations with the French continued; and it was in his name that the French demanded the restitution of a rich Manilla ship, *le Maure*, which the English captured in 1744.

But however friendly Imam Sahib had been with the French, he had cultivated good relations with the English as well. As faujdar of Masulipatam he had encouraged their traffic there by new and advantageous regulations; and possessed a house at Madras which seems to have contained a considerable quantity of goods. When Madras was taken by the French, these goods were seized on the plea that they really belonged to the English. Moreover,

the French loan was still unpaid; and the failure of the French Company's remittances placed payment altogether out of Dupleix' power. These two subjects of difference must have moderated Imam Sahib's enthusiasm for French interests; at all events he did not or could not prevent the favourable reception of the English envoy, Mutyalu, nor did he display great activity in pressing the negotiation on which Dupleix had set his heart, the exchange of Madras for the districts of Villiyannallūr and Valudāvūr which bordered on the French territory at Pondichery. The reader will find in the following pages numerous passages relating to these matters.

Of minor importance, but very illustrative of conditions in India at this time, is the episode of Mainville's imprisonment in Mysore. He and some other officers were ordered to Mahé overland to recruit sepoys; they were seized on their entrance into the Mysore territories; tried to escape by forcible means; and remained prisoners till the French procured their release by presents.

In all these and similar matters Ranga Pillai played a considerable, though of course a subordinate, part as the Governor's adviser and confidential agent. In other directions, however, he found a formidable rival in Madame Dupleix, who took a considerable share in obtaining intelligence about the English and in settling the Madras question. It is clear that the French did not place unlimited confidence in their Indian agents, particularly in matters

which related to their European enemies. We have conclusive evidence, apart from Ranga Pillai's own statements, that he was suspected (though altogether without reason) of furnishing intelligence to the English.<sup>1</sup> This unjust suspicion, coupled with the consequent invasion of the sphere of his duties, awoke in him bitter dislike of Madame Dupleix. He relates with satisfaction every tale he hears to her disadvantage; he takes counsel with French Company's servants, jealous, like himself, of the interference of a woman in politics; and gives us so lurid a picture of Madame's iniquities that we can only accept it with considerable reservations. His judgment is evidently biassed by his personal feelings and interests. But while that is so, we cannot dismiss Ranga Pillai's allegations against Madame Dupleix as wholly fictitious until we have more conclusive evidence against them than the somewhat vague and undocumented eulogies which have been lavished upon her. Here, as elsewhere, we must distinguish between what Ranga Pillai relates on his own authority and the stories which he hears and repeats. As regards what he has seen and heard, he seems to be a very reliable witness. I am not aware of any instance in which he himself is guilty of anything like bad faith. His weakness lies in his treatment of the reports which he hears from others, for he sometimes records the merest

<sup>1</sup> See p. 207 *infra*.

bazaar rumour with as grave an air as if it was serious evidence, and not infrequently he does not trouble to distinguish between the two, especially when, as in the case of Madame Dupleix, he wishes to believe the worst.

It is noteworthy, however, that in regard to Dupleix himself Ranga Pillai records little but on his own testimony. We learn what were the Governor's orders and how they were carried into execution. The diary thus records a number of incidents which, though in themselves by no means astonishing, come as a disconcerting surprise to those whose conception of Dupleix is based on Colonel Malleison and the writers who have unfortunately accepted him as authoritative. On the other hand, these incidents fill in the detail of the admirable outline we find in the volume which M. Cultru has devoted to Dupleix. For instance, in the present instalment of the Diary, there is the story of Dupleix' intrigue about the Madras cotton. It was alleged that cotton which had been put up for sale at outcry at Madras, was afterwards sold collusively at a lower price than was offered at the public sale. This was denied by Dulaurens and his colleagues at Madras; and thereon Dupleix employed Ranga Pillai to induce the Company's merchants at Pondichery to buy the cotton at a price considerably higher than that at which Dulaurens had sold it; and Dupleix went so far as to offer to bear any loss that might arise to the merchants out of the transaction. The

purpose was evident—to blacken the character of Dulaurens. Now it is quite possible that Dupleix sincerely believed Dulaurens to be guilty, and that he had not sufficient evidence to bring the matter to proof. But that will scarcely condone this manufacture of evidence. The incident in fact illustrates the weakest side of Dupleix' remarkable character. Few have possessed a mind so fertile of expedients, so tenacious of purpose, so clear-sighted, so courageous. But along with these great qualities, there went a violence of temper which often disturbed his judgment, and a subtlety of mind which often passed into disingenuousness. In judging others Dupleix was constantly disposed to believe the worst, to express his belief in untempered language, and to act on it in a way which allowed his good-faith to be called in question. Dupleix' comments and conduct in the Dulaurens case furnish one example; many others might be added. Thus in 1750 he wrote a report on the character of the French Company's servants (*Ministère des Colonies*, C<sup>2</sup> 15). Save for those immediately connected with him, he speaks in one uniform tone of condemnation. One is a fool; another has no morals; a third is untrustworthy and corrupt; a fourth went bankrupt in France before coming out; and all this expressed with an acerbity of language which leaves a painful impression of Dupleix' suspicious and passionate character. Nor can we regard Dupleix as truthful. Where a lie will serve immediate interests, he prefers it to the

truth. When Mainville, etc., are prisoners in Mysore, he authorizes Ranga Pillai to say they were poor Frenchmen seeking employment at Mahé, just as he seeks to ruin Dulaurens by concocting evidence. This doubtless permitted him to fight Oriental Courts with their own weapons, but after all deceit is a weapon which the wise statesman avoids, which he never uses except for great objects or in desperate circumstances, and which even then seldom leaves him with an unquestionable balance of advantage; when it becomes an every-day expedient to overcome trivial difficulties or gratify personal malevolence, the balance of advantage turns decidedly against it, as happened indeed in Dupleix' own case.

MADRAS RECORD OFFICE,  
January 6, 1916.

H. DODWELL.