

CHAP.  
XX.

1746.  
He departs.

News from  
Fort St.  
David and  
Cuddalore.

Flight of  
people  
to Porto  
Novo, and  
alarm  
caused by  
reverse of  
English.

Return of  
Dutch  
traders and  
artisans to  
Porto  
Novo.

he consented to do so. I then presented him with four jewels, and bade him farewell. He took leave of me, stating that he would proceed on his journey by way of Villiyanallūr. His children and all the other members of his family remain here. He has gone alone, and said that he would write from Tanjore, as to when they might follow him.

*Friday, 15th July 1746, or 3rd Ādi of Akshaya.*—

The news of to-day from Fort St. David is this: As the English men-of-war which attacked those of the French off Negapatam, and were routed, have not yet been sighted, the merchants and inhabitants of Fort St. David and Cuddalore are sending their articles of value and their furniture, together with their women and children, to Porto Novo, and the men alone remain there. Ōrkāṇḍi Rangappa Nāyakkan, the dubāsh of Mr. Hinde, Governor of Fort St. David, was the first to despatch his wife, children, and his property, to Porto Novo; others then followed his example. The alarm which the reverse has excited in the breasts of the people of those places—natives as well as Europeans—is beyond description. Of the Dutch traders and artisans at Porto Novo who betook themselves to Fort St. David and Cuddalore during the late Mahratta inroad, the major portion remained there. But all of them have now, with their belongings, promptly returned to Porto Novo. Cuddalore and Fort St. David are deserted, but Porto Novo is as flourishing, and brisk with trade, as it used to be.

The citizens of Madras are without exception overwhelmed with consternation, the wealthy there, and those who carry on mercantile transactions with Arcot and the neighbouring country are transferring their goods to that town, and the rest of the population is also in a state of unrest. It is said that trustworthy information has been received to this effect. It is reported that Sambu Dās, the son of Sankarapārik, went to Arcot four or five days ago, and that his children are preparing to follow him. Reliable intelligence has also been received that the Governor, Mr. Morse, who is a man wholly destitute of courage and fortitude, is much broken in spirit, that vigorous arrangements are being made for the defence of the fort, and that the ships are being brought nearer the shore and are being supplied with arms and ammunition. The people there are said to be utterly cast down, as their ruler is wanting in presence of mind. The French will, ere long, be further reinforced by ships which have already anchored at Point de Galle, and their expected arrival is now known both to the French, and to the English, through a Dutch sloop which met them, and has brought news that they have reached Negapatam. These tidings, whilst they have enhanced the enthusiasm of the French, have broken the spirit of the English. Twenty chests of silver belonging to Mr. Barnet, and a thousand and odd packages, the property of the Company, which were at Fort St. David, have been transferred to Madras.

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1746.  
Consternation at  
Madras.

Governor  
there stated  
to have  
broken  
down.

News of  
reinforce-  
ment of  
ships for  
the French.

Property of  
Mr. Barnet  
and Com-  
pany trans-  
ferred to  
Madras.

CHAP.  
XX.

1746.

Merchants  
and English  
about Fort  
St. David  
bring their  
property  
into fort.

The merchants within and beyond the precincts of Fort St. David, are packing up their goods, and lodging them, for security, in the fort, whither—so our spies have ascertained—the English of the surrounding localities, such as Cuddalore, Vandipalayam, and Fort St. David, are likewise transferring their property.

*Saturday, 16th July 1746, or 4th Âdi of Akshaya.*—

The captain of one of the five sail which recently arrived, and whose name is not known to me, died this morning, after an illness. The colours of his ship were half-masted, and minute guns were fired until his remains were interred, when a salvo was discharged by the whole fleet together. The funeral took place at half-past 5 this evening.

In the course of conversation with me this morning at 9, the Governor said as follows: “M. de la Bourdonnais is a strange man, with an ungovernable temper. He is a babbler. His injustice at Mascareigne drove the inhabitants there to petition against him to the Minister in France. He was on the point of being executed; but thanks to his good luck, which seems to attend him still, he effected his escape by propitiating with lavish presents M. de Fulvy, the brother of the Comptroller-General, who was open to bribes. With a squadron of seven sail he set out on an expedition to Arabia, boasting that he would subjugate that country. But he failed in this project, and thereby caused serious loss to the Company. He

Governor  
comments  
to diarist  
on M. de la  
Bourdon-  
nais.

And makes  
very  
disparaging  
remarks.

Death of  
captain of  
one of  
recently  
arrived  
ships.

is a great impostor.” M. Dupléix said many other disparaging things of M. de la Bourdonnais. Not only did I throughout express myself in harmony with his views, but I dwelt at length, and in highly eulogistic terms, on the address with which he administered the affairs of this city at so critical a time as the present, and on the tact with which he expended from his own purse two lakhs of pagodas to relieve the townsmen from embarrassment, and maintain them in prosperity such as though they were in times when trade and commerce were at their best. I remarked that the ability and success of the administration of his predecessors could not bear comparison with those of his, and that it was problematical whether any of his successors would reach the standard of his qualifications; and I averred that there was no man in India who could conduct affairs of state with the consummate skill that he had displayed at the momentous period of the threatened attack by the English on Pondichery, when they captured all the French ships, and intercepted all the sloops and native craft bound thither. I asserted further that the Company could not in future secure the services of a like officer.

I talked to him for a long while; showering encomiums on him. M. Dupléix resuming the conversation, said:

“The universal opinion of the officers who accompanied M. de la Bourdonnais is that it was

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Diarist  
speaks  
very  
flatteringly  
to the  
Governor  
as regards  
his adminis-  
tration.

And refers  
to the  
skill  
displayed  
when the  
English  
threatened  
Pondichery.

M. Dupléix  
resumes the  
conversa-  
tion.