

## MAY 1747.

*Monday, May 1.*<sup>1</sup>—The news from Fort St. David is that when Mr. Stratton went away to Bengal, he left his dubâsh Guruvappan to the care of Madame Dupleix. She sent him as a confidential servant to Madame Morse at Fort St. David, with orders to send her all the news and along with Madame Morse to poison the Europeans there. He obeyed his orders and with Madame Morse's help poisoned the Company's servants and ships' captains, who fell sick and giddy. Then he wrote to Pondichery saying that Mr. Hinde was dead, that the present Governor,<sup>2</sup> the ships' captains and the rest were all sick and that if we wished to seize the fort, this was too good an opportunity to be missed. This letter was given to a Pariah fellow, who was living with a Pariah woman at Fort St. David. This woman knew what was going on, and when the man, having drunk much arrack, beat her, she went and revealed it to the peons. They seized the man at once and carried the letter to their Commander. He ordered Guruvappan and the Pariah to be ironed hand and foot and kept in prison. Madame Morse also has been confined and is not allowed to speak with any Europeans<sup>3</sup>. This business has thus been

<sup>1</sup> 22nd Chittirai, Prabhava.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Floyer; he arrived in India in 1730, aged 18.

<sup>3</sup> The story seems a good example of bazaar gossip.

planned, performed and betrayed by women. That is why it has failed and injured their good name. Had it been carried out by men, they would have taken care to keep it secret. We shall see what happens later.

*Wednesday, May 3.*<sup>1</sup>—According to the Honourable Governor's orders, to-day we sent a Brâhman and four peons to Tanjore to keep us informed of the news there. I also wrote to Rangô Pandit of Tanjore desiring him to collect what is owed me by Krimâsi Pandit and Raghunâtha Pandit, and, as we agreed some time ago, to send me the agreement about our opening a bazaar together, and to get a cowle and present from the Râjâ. The man who took this letter had been ordered to send me all the news.

The news from Conjeeveram is that Muhammad 'Alî Khân, Nawâb Anwar-ud-dîn Khân, Sampâti Râo and others are on their way to Trichinopoly.

*Thursday, May 4.*<sup>2</sup>—At six o'clock this evening I was sent for to the Governor's after he had come back from a drive. 'Jemadar Shaikh Hasan tells me,' he said, 'that the English have asked the Nawâb for 500 horse and 2,000 foot, and that he has promised to send them.' I replied that I did not know how the English could have asked the Nawâb for help or how he could have consented to give any; and the Governor told me to send and ask the Jemadar. I sent for him and he said he had been told by a Jemadar at Arcot to whom the

<sup>1</sup> 24th Chittirai, Prabhava.

<sup>2</sup> 25th Chittirai, Prabhava.

English had written asking for 500 horse and 2,000 foot, and who had promised to send them. I then went in again to the Governor. 'Jemadar Shaikh Hasan,' I said, 'does not, as you thought, say that the English asked the Nawâb for help. They wrote to a Jemadar at Arcot who is said to have told Shaikh Hasan.'—'Then write to the Nawâb and find out all about it,' he replied. 'But what grounds have we for writing?' I asked; 'probably it is not true. They may say that the Jemadar was approached by the English and that he made promises, but most likely it is a story put about by soldiers, discontented because they are dismissed or unpaid, to frighten the Nawâb into thinking that they will take service elsewhere. That is all—it won't be true.'—'But how can we find out?' the Governor asked. I told him we could write to our vakîl Subbayyan at Arcot. He agreed and said I need not write to the Nawâb till we had heard from the vakîl. So we wrote to him to-day.

*Friday, May 5.*<sup>1</sup>—There is strange news to-night. Two Frenchmen and two Coffrees had got ready a large catamaran on the beach at Vîrâmpattanam,<sup>2</sup> with augers, a barrel of gunpowder and some match. They meant to approach the English ships off Fort St. David in the night, make holes in them, and blow them up with the gunpowder. They did get near the ships, but God designed otherwise, for the match went out. So they had to return.

<sup>1</sup> 26th Chittirai, Prabhava.    <sup>2</sup> 3 miles south of Pondichery.

*Tuesday, May 9.*<sup>1</sup>—To-day the Governor received the presents sent from Wandiwash by Safdar 'Ali Khân's wife—a plume, a pendant and four other jewels. These were in return for those sent to her when her son was put to school. The messengers left the present outside the fort-gates and came and told me of their arrival. I went at once to the Governor, but, as he was asleep, I had to wait till ten, and then I told him the news. Monsieur Paradis, Monsieur Duquesne, Râjô Pandit and I went at half-past ten with horns, trumpets, drums, dancing girls, in short, with all magnificence, to meet them. Seven guns were fired when the present, in a palankin, reached the fort-gate, and fifteen were fired when it was presented to the Governor. We returned the plume and pendant to the messengers and they paid 1,500 rupees for them.<sup>2</sup>

News comes from Fort St. David of a rumour there that the English, without waiting for their reinforcements, have decided to collect their ships, and cannonade the town for five or six nights together. I told the Governor this this morning. 'Do you think they will do so?' he asked. 'They may,' I said; and he agreed that it might be true. About three he went to the Fort, where he ordered the roof of the powder godowns to be covered with planks and beams, and the pots and chattis<sup>3</sup> in the

<sup>1</sup> 30th Chittirai, Prabhava.

<sup>2</sup> Thus combining the dignity of a public, with the utility of a private, present—a custom by no means uncommon.

<sup>3</sup> For water in case of fire.