

# Dutch Voyages to Malabar 1644-59

BY

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Thanks to the forceful leadership of Antonie van Diemen who assumed office as Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies in 1636, the foundations were laid of a profit-yielding trade in Malabar by reason of the contracts concluded with Malabar princes. And, as in all other places in the East Indies, the United East India Company of the Dutch had here (in Malabar) only to reap under his successor Cornelis van der Lijn what had been sown by Van Diemen.

Henceforward, there departed annually from Batavia a number of ships *via* Galle in Ceylon to Malabar during the favourable monsoon with a view to secure pepper by bartering the Company's wares for the same. A mighty mounting up in barter and profits was discerned, a mounting up which hardly ceased when the armistice with Portugal came to an end in 1652. Already, the *Arent* and the *Waterhout*, which had sailed out from the Netherlands while the negotiations about the armistice with Portugal were proceeding, brought to Batavia a consignment of 253 lasts of pepper purchased by Dirck Schoorl at Cannanore, Kayamkulam, Calicut, Purakkad and Quilon. Because of lack of goods to be bartered, there remained unbought as many as 159 lasts. Schoorl had held out before the small kings of Malabar the armistice concluded between the Dutch Republic and Portugal and offered to place them under the protection of the United East India Company, but this aroused little response. The princes appeared to make little of it so that the affair, for the time being, remained unheeded. The Zamorin paid a portion of his debt, but a very considerable balance remained unpaid.

Expectations of the Malabar trade were stretched so high at Batavia that two ships were not considered sufficient for the purpose. Besides the *Arent* and the *Noordster* which were appointed for that trade in 1645, a third ship, the fly-boat *Overschie*, was now commissioned to take the pepper. The cargoes represented a value of 74,431 and odd guilders. Schoorl and Van Serooskercken who were entrusted with the direction of the trade hoped to acquire

here a consignment of 500 lasts of pepper. The wares were the usual barter goods which in previous years had yielded profits on the Malabar Coast. These were, spices, cloves, mace and nutmegs, tin, lead, Japanese iron; refined sandalwood, vermilion; quicksilver and a small quantity of red coral while the cargoes were replenished from Surat by opium and cotton. These two last-named articles were the most marketable articles on the Malabar Coast and it was from these that the greatest profit was obtained. Presents and letters for the Malabar princes were to serve for the confirmation of the contracts concluded by Pieter Sybrandtsz Groes. With a courteous but somewhat threatening note mollified by some presents (one roll Chinese lac, spices and a sword), the Zamorin was once more dunned for the final and full settlement of his debt. If payment was not made, the Company would obtain their demand in another way and go and trade elsewhere which indeed they had already commenced to do. The Company's threats made very little impression on the ruler of Calicut. He declared that owing to the war he was unable to indemnify the Company. The old friend of the United East India Company on the Malabar Coast, the king of Kayamkulam, likewise received presents for the maintenance of his good inclination towards the Company.

From the king of Quilon, Schoorl had, during his previous voyage, received an offer of free trade and a place to build a fort. This prince was also given presents. Yet, at the outset, the Dutch did not hear that pepper cargoes were acquired in this land. The influence of the Portuguese prevailed here. They possessed a well-built fort which was strong enough to hinder the Dutch, but owing to their great lack of capital the Portuguese purchases were very little.

Against the king of Purakkad, the Company had grave complaints. Cargoes and presents were sent to this land for the confirmation of the treaty of 1643, but the presents were not conveyed in ships nor the Dutch merchants received in audience. It could not be otherwise as there were again the intrigues of the Portuguese who with their usual lies had made the Dutch odious to the king. The latter was expostulated with as to the great benefits he could realise from the armistice between the Portuguese and the Dutch if he declared himself an ally of the United East India Company. Van Serooskercken who traded at Cannanore had, if he were to retain the favour of Mamaly Craa, Chief of the Moplabs, to grant him credit notwithstanding the bad experiences which the Dutch had in this matter with the Zamorin.

In June 1646 both the fly-boat the *Noordster* and the *Overschie* and the Yacht *Arent* arrived at Batavia with a cargo of 410 lasts of pepper purchased for 181,161 and odd guilders. A clear gain of 73,696 and odd guilders was made, the pepper with all expenses having cost only upwards of  $3\frac{1}{2}$  stuivers per pound. In comparison with the previous years when the profits at the highest amounted only to 23,092 guilders during a voyage, this was a handsome result.

Dirck Schoorl therefore gave to his superiors so bright a picture of the possibilities of the Malabar Coast that the latter expected, for the following year, cargo of at least 800 lasts. The Governor-General and Councillors hoped in the long run to acquire the entire pepper trade of the Coast, to push away the Portuguese and to give no chance to the English to trade. More shipping was necessary for this than they had hitherto made available for the Malabar voyage. Besides the ship *Maastricht* and the Yachts *Ackersloot* and *Acchterkercke* with a cargo of the value of 120,165 and odd guilders (30,000 reels in specie and the rest merchandise) the ship *Banda* was also despatched for the Malabar trade. This ship was to fetch at Malacca a cargo of tin, a commodity which had always found good purchasers on the Coast, and now that the tin-land, Malacca, was since the conquest of 1641 in the hands of the United East India Company, this commodity had not to be supplied from far. For the purpose of their pepper trade the Malabar voyagers henceforth decided that besides Ceylon Malacca also should furnish cargoes of tin. From Kayalpatnam where the Company had established themselves recently (end of 1645), the United East India Company hoped they could import tobacco to the Malabar Coast. Van Serooskercken was to buy at Kayalpatnam 1400 to 1500 bundles which the High Government hoped would fetch a profit of 35 to 40%.

The task of the Malabar navigators was divided so that Dirck Schoorl, the leader of the expedition, with the ship *Maastricht*, looked after the trade in Kayamkulam, Purakkad and surrounding places while Van Serooskercken, with the ship *Ackersloot*, carried on trade at Cannanore and the neighbourhood. As well against the Portuguese who in spite of the armistice were yet very little to be trusted as against the Malabar pirates had Schoorl and Van Serooskercken to be on the guard. It was desired to maintain as little intercourse with the Portuguese as possible and to refuse passage to them on Dutch ships.

This year it was firmly decided that they should carry into effect the threats against the Zamorin if the payment did not take place in the least and to lift from one of the Zamorin's ships the pepper which was due from him. The United East India Company was tired of having had to wait so long for pepper in exchange of the costly barter goods already delivered.

The pepper yield did not in any way satisfy their high strung expectations. Both at Cannanore where Serooskercken obtained 83 lasts pepper and had to take for the rest of his barter goods cash which he was to exchange for pepper at Kayamkulam and at the latter place also the pepper harvest turned out to be very bad.

Eventually in June 1647 the ships *Maastricht*, *Ackersloot* and *Banda* brought to Batavia only 340 (or 384) lasts instead of 800 lasts. This year the profit was only 34,171 and odd guilders which was considerably smaller than that of 1646. As the new pepper crop on the Malabar Coast was good and the cargoes which the Dutch had brought with them remained long unsold, the merchants Schoorl and Van Serooskercken left behind, under proper protection, an undermerchant, Jacob Cranenburg, on the Coast. He was to buy at Kayamkulam in good time pepper for the remaining cargoes i.e., for 81,807 and odd guilders so that, when they returned, a good ship load would be ready for serving as return cargo to the Netherlands. This was thus the first time that the Dutch obtained on the coast a permanent establishment.

Till now the cargoes for Malabar had always contained a certain quantity of spices from the Moluccas. Of this the Company possessed the monopoly and they could themselves fix the price. They considered this of very great value and larded with cash. The navigators of Malabar were to view this costly commodity as capable of producing gain and were not to sell it cheaper than in Surat and Coromandel so that the market in those places be not damaged. If the Indian merchants did not desire to buy the spices at such a high price, they had to let the pepper remain stored up in the warehouses until the merchants finally realised that the Company was not timid about their clientele.

A number of complaints reached the High Government from their factories that the Company's sale of spices made those commodities unsaleable in their settlements. The inland merchants who bought the spices on the Malabar Coast conveyed this across the Sea to Wingurla, Surat, Mocha as also to Coromandel (this by taking a short cut overland) and offered both

these spices as also the Malabar pepper for lower prices than the Company asked for this. Even though the prices in Malabar were like those in other settlements, the Company's prices remained high as the Indians were not eager for such high profits as the United East India Company and were mostly but small hawkers whose expenses of transport were only slight. They were contented if they but obtained what was necessary for their maintenance. A considerable portion of those spices purchased by inland merchants found their way through the Arabian Sea to Mocha and there they not only spoiled the market but also caused the danger of their being transported to Europe. In 1649 the United East India Company decided to send no more spices to Malabar as they gave only a smaller profit than those conveyed to Mocha. The actual reasons were kept strictly concealed from the Indians and the suspension of the supply was to be attributed to the poor harvest. The following year they had to turn back from this policy as the Indians showed no inclination to buy the Company's other wares without spices to buy in exchange of pepper.

In particular the new Malabar trade gave offence to the Director of Surat who saw in this a competition caused to his factory. While the spices in sufficient measure were sold in his factory for reasonable profits, people began to sell this on the Malabar Coast at lower prices and by so doing sent him a smaller quantity apart further from the loss caused during these years to the voyage to Mocha undertaken from Surat.

But the head of Wingurla also saw a new competitor the more in Malabar where it was the rule of conduct of the Company to keep the trade of this factory (Wingurla) as small as possible and only make that factory serve as a watchpost for Goa and the actions of the Portuguese there. As has already been explained, the Company's original attempts to begin lucrative trade here were not crowned with success and the proposals of the later heads who insisted on the augmentation of the trade were let down by the High Council of Batavia. Neither Sterthemius nor Otto Houckgeest who presumably anticipated with their plans large profits for themselves had any success. Both recommended warmly the services of the great merchants of Wingurla, Narsanna and Krishna Annawy, a pair of brothers who dominated the trade in the Bijapur kingdom. These merchants, afraid that the Company would transfer their trade wholly to the Malabar Coast, offered to the United East India Company a contract to deliver annually, as happened on the Malabar Coast, pepper against

exchange goods. Large quantities could be purchased here and as Sterthemius proposed to his masters neither Surat nor Coromandel should suffer because of this while he looked forward to an enlargement of the trade of Wingurla and a diminution of the native competition in European goods. Sterthemius showed to the Governor-General and Council that by the expansion of the Wingurla trade the Dutch could best compete with the trade of the English which in 1647 and 1648 displayed a greater activity in spreading on the West Coast of India proper. Besides pepper, the Wingurla merchants promised to supply the Company with cowries through the inception of trade with the Maldivé islands. It was better that the United East India Company retailed exchange goods in Wingurla than that the natives bought these goods from the Netherlanders in other places and threw them on the market at prices lower than those of the Company.

As Sterthemius well understood that the suspension of the Malabar trade for the benefit of Wingurla was out of the question, he wished to make attractive to his superiors a plan for amalgamating into one both trade regions. With a contract with the merchants they were at least sure of a large shipment of pepper while much reliance could not be placed on the Malabar pepper. To what extent reliance could be placed on the trustworthiness of the Wingurla merchants, who were rather inclined already to break their promises for the purpose of giving pepper to those who offered most, was an open question which was surely not answered with absolute certainty by the Governor-General and Councillors.

As soon as these plans came to the ears of the Director of Surat, he, fearing that, through such an increase of the Wingurla trade, that of Surat would come to nought and that the Company's wares there would remain unsold, protested. The offers of the Wingurla merchants were rejected. But now the latter entered, into a contract with Mamaly Craa whereby they in return for opium and cotton purchased all the merchandise which the Moplah chieftain got from the Dutch at Cannanore. As the Wingurla merchants could exchange their opium and cotton in an advantageous manner, they could also sell the exchange goods originally imported by the Dutch to the Coast at a lower price than the Dutch could do at Wingurla and elsewhere. Their competition was at work likewise at Cannanore where the market was glutted by reason of their transport of opium and cotton and the Dutch remained waiting with their goods.

Sterthemius's successor, Otto Houckgeest, found with his superiors a no more favourable audience in the matter of expanding the trade according to his desire. His request for transfer was therefore all the more willingly granted by the High Government. It was indeed a pity that they replaced him by Jacob Bacheracht who came with no plans and proposals, but, without the previous knowledge of his masters, advanced a large sum to the Bijapur merchant princes, Krishna Annawy and Narsanna, for their trade and besides carried on an extensive private trade. Further, this Bacheracht in no way satisfied the requirements of a competent upper head. During the tenure of his leadership it came to very serious trouble with the native population so that Wingurla had to be evacuated and the Company's settlements had to be removed to the adjacent Salsette. It was Rijcklof van Goens who during the time of his visitation of the Dutch factories in India proper in 1653-54 put in order the affairs of Wingurla.

We now turn back to the Malabar navigators. Under the direction of Schoorl and Van Serooskercken the ship *Banda* and the Yachts *Ackersloot* and *Lillo* sailed from Batavia on the 15th September 1647 for getting into the hands of the Dutch the largest portion of the pepper of Malabar. A fourth ship was to appear on the Malabar Coast in February 1648 after proceeding on a voyage to Surat and Persia. Thus there was enough shipping and the High Government hoped to see brought to Batavia 850 lasts. Not less than 250 soldiers went with this squadron to be landed ashore in Ceylon for the fortresses of Galle and Negombo. The extent of the cargoes covered a value of 33,147 and odd guilders to which were added the usual merchandise. Opium and tobacco from Coromandel, Surat cotton, cotton yarns, golden reels and Moorish ducats, white cummin and cassomba (an orange red flower of the cardamom tincture used as a dye-stuff for cotton threads, as medicine and as substitute of saffron for colouring food). Just as in the previous year, the trade was divided between Cannanore and Kayamkulam. Besides, Cranenburg who had remained behind had gathered together 150 lasts of pepper which could be shipped immediately on arrival of ships. Cranenburg did not succeed in selling quickly the tobacco from Kayalpatnam which was left behind with the unsold wares. He was forbidden to sell these. Only secretly and for very small profits could he dispose of his stock. Of the ships sent through Batavia, the Yacht *Ackersloot* appeared so wrecked and rotten that it could not proceed on the voyage to the Coast and remained behind at Galle

for repair. It was not the Company's best ships that were used for the Malabar trade. A greater disaster was to follow.

While in March 1648 already the *Banda* was back at Batavia with a pepper cargo of 439,298 pounds, there followed in June and July the *Maastricht*, the *Ackersloot*, the *Salm* and the *Lillo* which brought 416 lasts of pepper bought largely at 3 stuivers the pound. On the whole, a profit of 49,028 and odd guilders was made. Still there remained at Kayamkulam under the direction of Cranenberg 160 lasts which they could not receive on board because of the severe storms which already prevailed on the Coast. The ship *Maastricht* and the fly boat the *Salm* had traded in great peril and were preserved almost through a miracle. The Malabar voyagers received the express command not to remain in future on the Coast later than 1st May. The Zamorin had at last cleared his old debt. The crop there was good and all things promised a profitable trade for the next year. They hoped to get 600 lasts. During the bad monsoon (rainy season) Cranenburg must try to exchange goods worth 75,319 and odd guilders for pepper and in particular to take the wind out of the sails of the English.

In 1647 the English at Surat sent the ship the *Falcon* under George Oxenden *via* Mocha along the Malabar Coast for the purchase of pepper at Purakkad, Quilon and Calicut and cinnamon at Cochin. At Calicut, the merchants refused to trade. With the strong Dutch Competition, there was very little to get. Besides, the new Portuguese Viceroy, Philip Mascarenhas, on his voyage from Ceylon to Goa, had renewed all pepper contracts in Malabar and forbidden the sale of cinnamon. As the result of their taking possession of the principal cinnamon lands on Ceylon, the Dutch had become the owners of such large quantities of cinnamon that they had not only enough for their return cargo but also provided all Indian lands with what they needed. For the English no more advantages could be secured here.

Nevertheless in 1648 also the English *Blessing* sailed again under Oxenden to Malabar with a cargo consisting for the most part of coral. Connections with the Princes who had made proposals of trade during the previous voyage of the *Falcon* were to be negotiated. But the English felt so little secure in the Malabar land that they dared not leave their ship and caused the negotiations to take place through their broker.

Also, the *Blessing* obtained a poor result and many years elapsed before they perceived anything of the interference of the



English in Malabar. Attempts to carry on trade in Wingurla where the English desired to found an establishment at Carrapatnam 10 miles north of Wingurla made little progress. To drive the English, the Governor-General and Council deviated from their policy in respect of Wingurla and permitted the purchase of a small quantity of pepper for very high prices.

The Courten's Association did not on the whole do anything worth speaking about. Courten himself escaped from his creditors to the mainland and there died. Not the least help was to be expected from England. The agents formed a small isolated group in a foreign hostile land without any pecuniary resources. At the outset they endeavoured to keep their heads above water by appearing as freighters for the natives. In 1648 their position was so bad that they came to supplicate help in the Dutch lodge at Wingurla. They had not any more the least credit among the Indian merchants. If the Dutch did not help them and did not at least give them a loan of money for their daily expenses they would, to the great shame and disparagement of the Christian nations, it was represented, have to fall with great misery into the hands of the heathens. The Old English Company refused all help. The Dutch Company also dismissed this request of Courten's Association, much less were they inclined to give them their passage to Europe in Dutch ships. The United East India Company had no desire to incur loss and ingratitude nor did they entertain any nobler sentiments to their once highly troublesome competitors than their own countrymen. In 1649 the last of the Courten's Association to remain on the Malabar Coast was removed to Masulipatam.

The Malabar voyagers who on their return voyage to Batavia had touched at Kayalpatnam had suffered much. They were expelled with such a haste and violence that the Dutch had to leave behind everything and all were in danger of being murdered. Scarcely could they save the *Lillo* which had just arrived. But the fact that beside the obloquy it also involved the Company in great financial loss made it necessary for this to be avenged. Otherwise, there was a chance that the United East India Company would altogether lose its influence on the Madura Coast as also on the Malabar Coast, at Karikal and other places and such events would occur there. Therefore the High Government charged Maetsuycker, Governor of Ceylon, to undertake a punitive expedition against the prince of Madura. 150 soldiers were sent from Batavia with the ship *Nassau*. They were to be reinforced by 250

white soldiers and 100 lascars from the garrison of Galle and Negombo. Other ships and also the vessels destined for Malabar were also to be used for this purpose. Through the punitive expedition, the Nayk was to be compelled to conclude a treaty and make reparations. The forces reached Kayalpatnam on the 9th February. But the Dutch noted that the foremost ringleaders of this knavery had fled to the interior with all their movables. At the hands of the natives who remained behind, the Dutch received a friendly and respectful reception everywhere on the Coast. Unasked they brought all possible refreshments to the ships. On these simple people the Company could hardly vent their revenge. The Dutch hoped that they could return to Kayalpatnam and that they would not be made hateful to the inhabitants. The old and very renowned temple at Trichendur was besieged by the Dutch. In this pagoda they found an image of the war god Subrahmanya. The occupation of the temple made a deep impression on the Hindu population. A multitude of people neither ate nor drank on that sad day. Afterwards the Dutch marched along the entire Madura Coast. Everywhere they were received with great honour and friendship, also at Tuticorin. But the Dutch no more wished to turn back without accomplishing their object. And therefore they decided at least to have some satisfaction — a certain sum of money as ransom from the people and the towns i.e. the Hindus and the Parravas, the native Christians with whom the United East India Company was to have so much trouble and bother. The Muhammodans remained exempted from this penalty because at all times they had shown themselves friendly disposed towards the Dutch trade and had rendered all possible help to the Company's servants in their expeditions along the Coast. From the Hindus the Dutch asked 100,000 Reals, and the inhabitants of Tuticorin were to give 40,000 Reals. If they did not pay, all their temples and houses were to be burnt. This happened to the Hindu portion of the town of Tuticorin when the natives refused to pay. From the temple of Trichendur certain images were taken as Security. Among them was that of the god Subrahmanya.

Sometime later, when all was again forgiven and forgotten, the Dutch who wanted to make a business transaction of everything and were eager to get the ransom which had yet to be paid offered to sell this image to the "blind men" on the Madura Coast for a good sum of money, but this did not take effect, the first zeal of the Hindus for the good having grown faint. This bargain with the image of an idol was considered as something awful by the

authorities of the Company in the Netherlands who judged this to be unChristian.

The clergy in the Catholic section of Tuticorin had accepted the terms of the United East India Company but could not raise among themselves the required sum before the stipulated date as the head of the Parravas, the Patangatins, had fled, an example followed by the most prosperous of these peoples. The Portuguese clergy proposed to the Dutch, as the Pantangatins did not return, to open their houses, pay-offices and chests and to take from them what would serve for abatement of their debts. The Rector of the College of the Jesuits even gave to the Netherlanders a sum of money deposited with him belonging to another which the Pantagatins on their return must make good to its owner. But other than this money almost nothing of value was found in the town and the Dutch soldiers and Ceylonese lascars betook themselves to plundering, a course of action which the above said inhabitants considered as caused by none else than those who without reason had become fugitives and abandoned their houses—verily a weak defence of this hard action. The Portuguese whose properties were no more spared showed themselves very indignant. They lodged a protest through their envoy at the Hague with the States—General—a protest which according to the Dutch was entirely lacking in justification as Tuticorin was governed by the Nayk and the plundered churches and cloisters belonged to the St. Thomas Christians apart from the fact that the Dutch attributed all their disasters to Portuguese instigation.

Everywhere in the neighbourhood as also on the Malabar Coast, the chastisement given to the people of Madura had made a deep impression. Every one gaped with mouth wide open not knowing where to draw breath. Meanwhile Jacob Cranenburg awaited with impatience the ships which were to relieve him of the pepper which was stored in a far from fire-free warehouse thatched with *olas* (palm-leaves). The *Maastricht*, it is true, took no part in the punitive expedition but was sent first to Surat and Persia. Cranenburg sent an assistant to Cochin for the purpose of obtaining help from Dutch ships passing by. This had to be done in the utmost secrecy so that no suspicion might be aroused in Portuguese minds. Between Cochin and Purakkad a war had broken out as a consequence of which unrest prevailed throughout the Malayalam country and Cranenburg felt little safety any more at Kayamkulam. With the capture of Purakkad which was besieged by the king of Cochin, Cranenburg feared that the United East India

Company would therewith lose all the contracted pepper as the king of Cochin would reduce the whole place to ashes.

As a result of the punitive expedition to Kayalpatnam, the inland trade and voyage from Malabar to the bay of Madura was obstructed. The merchants who otherwise came to the Malabar Coast to buy the cotton which was the raw material of their cloths had fled inland for fear of the Dutch, and so Crancenburg could hardly find buyers for his stock of cotton.

The Chetty merchants of Kayamkulam who had much business at Manapara had requested the Dutch not to burn that place. Crancenburg supported this request as he was afraid that as reprisal the Dutch lodge at Kayamkulam would be burned.

The cargoes with which the Dutch navigators to Malabar eventually came to that Coast represented a value of 33,878 and odd guilders. With this should also be included the wares which the *Maastricht* brought from Surat.

The trade was carried on again entirely as in previous years, but in place of the expected 600 lasts only 412 lasts were brought to Batavia by the fly boat the *Eendracht* on the 22nd May and the *Maastricht* on the 10th June 1649. The gain obtained amounted to 43,500 and odd guilders (pepper against 3 stuivers a pound). The debt of the Zamorin was now fully paid.

The Governor-General and Council were not satisfied with the Junior Merchant Crancenburg whose books showed a shortage of a good 1000 guilders. He had to be examined as to whether he had not handled matters maliciously. After doing business, this servant of the Company came back to Batavia. His place was taken by Mattheus van den Broeck. Because the pepper crop there was very good and people counted on an abundant harvest, Van den Broeck remained behind on the Coast with a remainder of barter goods of the value of about 100,000 guilders (93,662 guilders) "under the good security" of three assistants and 6 soldiers. To speak now of a military occupation as MacLeod does (Vol. II, page 389) is somewhat premature, but in any case it shows the firm intention of the Company not to evacuate this field for their competitors. The United East India Company hoped to store still larger pepper stock than in the previous year. For the sailing of the return ships to the Netherlands, people at Batavia desired to obtain a fly boat full of cargo. There was no fear of the competition of the Portuguese who were entirely without means.

For the vigorous continuation of the pepper trade, the High Government sent to Malabar in the year 1649 the fly ship *Uitgeest* with a cargo worth 44,655 guilders. The *Maastricht* which was first to proceed to Siam and Surat to bring again along with it the necessary barter goods from the latter place was to follow while the *Snoek* was to collect from Ceylon the rest of the pepper. For the first time they found no spices in the cargoes sent from Batavia. While every year an accurate assessment of the value of goods loaded at Batavia was given, this was not the case with regard to the supply received on this occasion from Malacca, Surat, Wingurla Coromandel and Bengal. Of these goods, only the quantity was mentioned but without an expression of the value of the goods in money. Also in this turnover a rise is seen.

Of these products, opium and cotton were the most marketable in Malabar. To what great fluctuations of price these goods were mutually subject can be seen from the fact that in 1646 the Surat opium was 52% dearer than a year ago because of the scantier planting. A few years later this product again cost 35¾% less. But, as the Surat Opium appeared to be very bad, they attempted to supply this from other factories of the Company such as from the Madura Coast, Kayalpatnam, the Coast of Coromandel and Bengal. The cargoes for Malabar from Surat since 1647 were filled besides cotton and opium with cotton yarn, cummin, cassumba and Moorsh ducats of which especially the last had mostly to be bought at very high prices but were greatly wanted. To keep alive the trade of Wingurla, the upperhead there suggested to the High Government to send to Malabar Spanish, San Thome and Basselor pagodas which according to him were obtained cheaply at Wingurla instead of the Surat ducats. Since the Company became master of the Malayan peninsula, the tin from Malacca formed, in mounting measure, part of the cargoes destined for Malabar. Just as in the case of the spices, the United East India Company was well nigh the sole seller of this commodity and could keep up its price.

The Chinese sheet gold which they imported into Malabar in 1649 as an experiment might alone, against the highest price be exchanged for pepper. If there remained more of it than was necessary for the winter trade, then the remainder was to be sent to Coromandel so that it might not remain lying without interest in the Company's lodge at Kayamkulam.

The Company's servant at Wingurla made use of the scarcity of horses on the Malabar Coast to sell to the inhabitants of that

region a number of very old horses which because of their great age could nowhere be sold any more. These horses could also be used by the Dutch for being given as presents to the princes by whom as the Dutch thought, the horses would be esteemed very valuable and rare. The narrative does not tell us whether these hacks had the desired effect with the Malabarees.

Though naturally the pepper trade on the Malabar Coast was by far the most important aim of the Company, the land however supplied also other products, the buying up of which the United East India Company no more neglected. As has already been narrated above, the Malabar cardamoms which were principally used for being imported into Persia were very much in demand. As the Persians far preferred the Malabar cardamoms to those of Wingurla, the United East India Company, in the long run, suspended the purchase there. In Persia there was obtained on these cardamoms profits which varied from 42% (in 1647) to rather 135 $\frac{5}{8}$ % (in 1650). This cardamom was purchased by the Malabar navigators principally at Cannanore, a place where comparatively less pepper was delivered. The Company in their purchase of cardamom experienced severe competition from Indian merchants who exported this commodity to Mocha, Surat and Cambay and this brought about a strong rise of prices. It was the enormous profits acquired by the United East India Company in Persia that induced them to continue the purchase of cardamom at Cannanore.

The arecanut of Malabar, which in quality was the best in the Indies, was exported to Surat and gave there a profit of 50%.

Of the products of the Coccoanut palm, the United East India Company had the greatest interest for the ropes made of the fluff of the husk of cocoanuts, for example coir ropes which could be used on the Company's ships although only in calm seas as they got petrified quickly and broke with fierce storms for which last contingency they could better use ropes made in Holland. The Lords Seventeen to whom the importance of this coir was pointed out by the Governor of Ceylon, Maetsuycker, must, however, have learned from the Governor-General Van der Lijn that these ropes had been in use already for many years and Maetsuycker certainly introduced no novelty with this. The coir fluff was carried from the Maldives to the Malabar Coast; but the true product of those islands were, for all that, the cowries used in the east as currency. The United East India Company wished to secure a portion of the trade in this substance. Especially to

Cannanore these cowries were conveyed and here the Malabar navigator Van Serooskercken brought consignments.

Further there came from these islands amber that the United East India Company likewise purchased in small lots at Cannanore. Also, the Company carried on trade in copra, the product of the cocoanut palm. This was principally sold at Surat. One other product which the Malabar Coast produced, wax, was negotiated by native merchants but received little attention at the hands of the United East India Company because of the small profits. Different was the case with slaves who could be acquired there in large numbers and at small prices. The Malabar navigators were required to reconnoitre the potentialities of this and bring with them a certain number of these to Batavia. This was, however, a matter that had to be effected with the necessary prudence so that the United East India Company might not become the subject of talk with the inhabitants of the country. It appears, however, that in this commodity actual purchases did not take place. In any case, such purchases are not mentioned in the Company's documents.

Coffee, it is true, was exported in small quantities by the Company to Surat; but it was a product which did not grow on the Coast, but was imported here and there especially at Cannanore by the native merchants. In comparison with other products, this yielded no great profits to the United East India Company. Also sandalwood was one of the imported wares which the United East India Company re-exported. The land produced plenteously other kinds of timber which was utilized by the Company for their ship-building and which the Dutch sent from the Coast to Ceylon.

The High Government decided that, as the Malabar navigators had a too small quantity of pepper in their ships, they should fill them at Galle with cinnamon so that no portion of the Company's costly shipping space might remain unused. Further, the Malabar navigators prompted Ceylon, where the Company did not have at their disposal sufficient cultivated land, to buy rice at Mangalore and Barsalore on the coast of Kanara a little to the north of Malabar when the supply of rice from Coromandel and Java broke down. The rice here was, however, very dear. It was cheaper to get the same in Bengal, and so they got it from that land. The Naick of Canara, in whose land they brought this rice showed himself inclined to deliver pepper also. Till now he had a contract with the Portuguese about the delivery of pepper. Offers were made to the Company in 1656 about the occupation of the

fort Onor; besides the Dutch would enjoy a trade monopoly to the exclusion of others. The Company's upper head at Wingurla, Leendert Jansz, had an audience with the Naick and concluded a treaty with the prince.

As the Portuguese were partly dependent on this prince for the supply of provisions, the United East India Company could here thwart their hereditary enemy and this matter was recommended to the attention of Van Goens during his visit to the West Coast of India proper in 1657.

X While he was staying behind on the Malabar Coast, Van den Broeck managed to exchange almost all his wares for pepper and when Schoorl arrived on the 7th January 1650, Van den Broeck informed the latter that 340 lasts of pepper were purchased. In the ware house at Kayamkulam he found 150 lasts. With the merchants they had a credit of 50 lasts and at Quilon, where also business was now transacted, 100 lasts were in stock. There was so much pepper that the available tonnage proved too little and it became necessary for them to fill with pepper the gaps in the cargoes from Surat. A portion of the pepper was this time destined for Taiwan (Formosa) and China. In these lands there was a large pepper market which was hitherto supplied exclusively by pepper from the Archipelago.

X The Ragiadoor of Kayamkulam put many impediments in the way of the Dutch loading pepper in their ships. Probably this rajiadoor was prompted by Portuguese instigation, but it was also true that in this manner he compelled the Dutch to give him presents. He victimised the natives who loaded pepper for the Dutch with severe penalties. The merchants no more hastened to deliver the contracted pepper. Complaints to the rajiadoor hardly helped. No more had Van den Broeck much success with the merchants who had made him appear before a deputation out of their midst, that is, before "that council of rogues." They replied to Van den Broeck that the king must first have a present and that the pepper should be brought to the Dutch ships only in vessels belonging to him. There remained nothing else for them to do than to pay a visit to the king and have an audience with him. The king was staying in his old palace at Eriby in the midst of forests. This was reached by Schoorl and Van Serooskercken in the night after much trouble and travail. It was a palace for which the Dutch had no other word than a pig pen. The audience and the presents—some Moorish ducats, two guilt mirrors, red lac and sandalwood, altogether costing 126 guilders, "a present too little for such a great



king," as the Dutch flattered him, but sent to him "with a good heart"—so far succeeded that the king promised his help to the Dutch. ✓

The kings of Quilon and Travancore were also visited by the Dutch navigators to Malabar, now Schoorl and Van den Broeck as Van Serooskercken had departed for Cannanore with the *Snoek*. Isaac van Twist the younger also formed part of the embassy. ✕

The signatty (ruler of Quilon) also received a present which did not differ much in value from that given to the ruler of Kayamkulam. He received only one gilt mirror but besides that he was given one small gold-painted nest box and not only red but also green lac. This prince also promised to be helpful to the Dutch. ✓

The king of Travancore who had come to Quilon to fight against the king of Cochin wished likewise to enter into a treaty with the Dutch, but, as Schoorl sceptically observes, only under that pretext to obtain a present. The king was staying in a pagoda and the Dutch proceeded there after first making a gift to the ragiador of this prince so that the pillais whose desire for gifts was insatiable might not be in their way. Also, the king of Travancore accepted respectfully the Dutch presents which were not smaller in value than those given to his subordinates, the king of Kayamkulam and the signatty. He made great promises to the Dutch that his lands would remain open to the Company. After they had already departed, the Travancore monarch caused a request to be made secretly to the Dutch that he might be given the image of god Subrahmanya which the Dutch had plundered from the Trichendur temple. The Malabar navigators who knew that their superiors had a more advantageous plan with regard to the image of the Hindu god courteously declined the king's proposal. But the king does not seem to have taken this ill for some days later a request from this king that they should conclude a contract with him reached the Dutch. They could then remain in his land during the bad monsoon as they had done in Kayamkulam. In Quilon the Dutch were permitted to pitch, for carrying on trade, a tent close to a Hindu temple on a sacred yard where no blood could be shed. ✓

The king of Cochin did not await the attack of the king of Travancore but himself advanced to the combat. He surrounded the king of Travancore and besieged him in a temple. In Quilon this war caused great consternation. All Nairs and merchants came in arms to relieve the besieged. But because of this the

Dutch did not make much progress. Besides the Portuguese intrigued here very much. The king who admits that there were many rogues among his merchants who had been bought up by the Portuguese promised to punish the guilty ones. But the Dutch also were not trusted by the Signatty. He suspected them of eluding his toll by getting their pepper loaded outside his harbour town of Quilon. Such proposals the Dutch had indeed received from a Kayamkulam merchant but were not acted on, so that disaster might be averted.

Requests from Purakkad to carry on trade there reached the Dutch. Against a merchant of this land who for three years owed pepper to the United East India Company, the Dutch resolved to act firmly and to take the owed quantity of pepper from a country vessel of his loaded with pepper.

While the Dutch were at Kayamkulam they received a request from a man who claimed to be king of the Maldives to take him to Europe in the Company's ships. The claimant to the crown had some months ago made an effort to take possession of the Maldives. But such a hot reception was prepared for him by the inhabitants that he hastily crossed over to Tuticorin. In fact he went so far that compared to him the Dutch were reckoned saints. Schoorl declined the request on the pretext that the transport of foreign nations in the Company's ships was strictly forbidden.

With the Portuguese, the Dutch carried on as little intercourse as possible because they were afraid that the farmer would avenge the outrage at Tuticorin. At Quilon certain prominent Portuguese came to the Dutch "tent" and complained that from their slaves some negroes and negresses had run away and hidden themselves on the Dutch ship for proceeding in it to Batavia. The Dutch immediately suggested that they should convince themselves of the untruth of this imputation so that after their departure no calumny might be cast on them, but the Portuguese did not enter the ship. The Portuguese, indeed, showed the Dutch a letter received from Goa wherein there was talk of an alliance between Portugal and diverse other lands including the Dutch Republic. The Dutch believed nothing of this, rather the contrary. Shortly afterwards, the Portuguese armada sailed past Quilon. Schoorl and his companions suspected that the Portuguese were on the way to Tuticorin so that they might, by putting up a fortress, protect that region against an invasion by the Dutch.

After the departure of the Dutch ships, Van den Broeck was again left on the Malabar Coast with barter goods to the value of 99,137 and odd guilders. For the security of the Company's possessions, there were added two assistants, 4 brave soldiers and a carpenter between whom he had to maintain good discipline. Schoorl reckoned that during the bad monsoon Van den Broeck could collect about 200 lasts of pepper. The negotiations which had been begun with the Signatty had to be continued and a start made with the building of a lodge whereunto the king had promised his support. Already, during the previous season, Van den Broeck had attempted to enter into trade relations at Cochin. However, the Company's goods were not considered sufficient for carrying on the trade here fruitfully. They should keep in their thoughts the opening of the door for profitable returns in Cochin also inspite of the impecunious Portuguese.

Van den Broeck had to take very great care that the natives did not deceive him as they tried to adulterate the pepper with all low practices; a very much used means for this was the mixing of the good pepper with unripe pepper of a second picking.

For the pepper season of 1650-51 the ships *Snoek* and *Uitgeest* were sent out from Batavia.\*

This ship was to be joined by the ship *Maastricht* coming from Surat. The whole of the capital for exchange, consisting of the barter goods left behind under Van den Broeck and the supply from Malacca, Surat and Bengal, amounted this year to the sum of 265,333 guilders. The Dutch wished that the Malabar trade continued and expanded, as had happened at Quilon in the previous year, especially as now the Portuguese influence was removed. It was also Cochin that they were already wishing to include in their sphere of interest. The negotiations began by Van den Broeck met with the approval of the Governor-General and Council. They showed themselves very much pleased with the actions of this servant of the Company. Van den Broeck enjoyed a fine and rapid career in the service of the Company. Having come with the ship *Zeelandia* as Under-merchant in 1648, he was already promoted to the rank of Mer-

\* There are no data kept of the quantity of pepper that was brought to Batavia in 1650 nor of the gains made. The only source for this, the original general letter dated 10th December 1650, is only fragmentarily kept and the portion dealing with Malabar has been lost. In the original general letter of 20th January 1651, even much less data occur.

chant in 1650 and to that of Senior Merchant in 1653. From 1658 to 1663 he was Director of the trade in Bengal and Councillor Extraordinary of India. After that he was sitting as Ordinary Councillor of India till he returned home on 18th November, 1669, as Admiral of a return fleet.

In view of the endless trouble the Zamorin had caused to the Company in the matter of clearing his debt, it was the intention of the Company, as far as possible, to give no credit on the Coast. But the steady and well-known merchants could not altogether go without the benefit of receiving advance payment for the supply of pepper though everything had to be done here cautiously.

Schoorl again had the command of this voyage, although there were serious complaints about his careless financial management. A not inconsiderable deficit occurred in his books. Or, had he made himself guilty of engaging himself in private trade? It was now expressly laid down firmly in the instructions for the Malabar navigators that in every case such sort of trade was to be absolutely repressed.

In 1650-51, during the bad monsoon, Van den Broeck collected 230 lasts of pepper at Kayamkulam and Quilon. As in the previous year, the embarkation took place with great trouble and worry. This was again due to Portuguese intrigues. One of their expedients was that, when the Dutch had fixed the price of pepper, it was raised by the Portuguese. At Quilon, since the departure of the ships, a ware-house was built in 1650 with the consent of the king. Van den Broeck and his assistant Gerrit van Voorburg who, out of the behaviour of the Portuguese, supposed that a fresh state of war had occurred between Portugal and the Republic, felt themselves very unsafe and feared a surprise attack on and setting fire of their lodge by the Portuguese of Quilon which lay only five (Dutch) miles distant from Kayamkulam. And how easily could the Portuguese with a small present persuade the Malabar princes to do one or other affront to the Dutch! Van den Broeck believed nothing of the talks of the covenant concluded with the Republic. Also, during the armistice, the relations with the Portuguese were very tense. The Portuguese Commander of the fort of Quilon did not forego the opportunity of taking in arrest one of the Company's vessels which had been loaded with goods by Van der Meyden on the way to the Malabar Coast. This again provoked reprisals by the Dutch.

Again and again native ships with passes granted by the Dutch were made booty by the Portuguese. Sometimes, the Portuguese denied this and laid the fault at the doors of the Malabar pirates. Yet it was as clear as the mid-day sun that they had done it. At another time, in a very insulting manner, the Dutch passes were not only not accepted by the Portuguese, but torn into pieces and flung overboard before the eyes of the natives after uttering many abusive words. The Viceroy himself appears to have been implicated in it. Great damage was done through this to the prestige and authority of the Dutch. They decided not to grant any more passes to Indian ships in the future.

In 1647 there was a rumour among the Indian people that Schoorl, the Company's representative at Kayamkulam, would be poisoned by the Portuguese. This, luckily, was a gratuitous supposition, yet it shows the relations between the rivals.

A constantly recurring passage in the annual instructions to the Malabar navigators warned them earnestly not to trust the Malabar pirates but not less the Portuguese.

It was the Portuguese who had to fight with an ever greater want of money, a thorn in the eyes that promoted in such a strong measure the Malabar pepper trade of the Dutch. In 1647 the Viceroy at Goa complained seriously to the Governor of Ceylon that the Dutch went on buying pepper in places where they till then had not traded. They supplanted the Portuguese out of the trade by making them hated by the natives and princes. The Viceroy deemed all these injuries to be little according to the spirit of the concluded armistice treaty.

Actually it was not because the Dutch were turning away from the armistice that the war broke again with the Portuguese. Owing to the weakness of the Portuguese who were so poor that they had nothing to boast of except their tongues, the Dutch could easily obtain advantages and perhaps they could for all times be freed of the Portuguese.

In connection with the chance of war with Portugal, the High Government decided in 1651 to have a strong and defensive stone dwelling built at Kayamkulam for the protection of the Company's servants and property and to place a garrison of 16 to 20 soldiers drafted from the garrison at Galle. This house was to be built in a compound bought at the time by Cranenburg and situated about two miles inland but very favourably on the river where vessels of 20 and more lasts could come before the door for bringing in

wares and taking out pepper. Besides the soldiers 3 or 4 small cannon must terrify possible attackers. The furnishing of the lodge was however to take place only with the complete approval of the lords of the land. When these, presumably on the investigation of the Portuguese, raised objections to this and made even the piece of ground, the Company's property, not available, the Company gave up the building of what could have been their first fortress on the Coast.

Out of fear of the plans of the Portuguese, the Malabar navigators decided to leave behind no garrison on the Coast this year, and the Company's people as well as possessions were to be brought on the *Snoek* to Batavia. As outstanding debts to the East India Company there remained with the merchants at Cannanore and Kayamkulam a Capital of 38,728 guilders for which these merchants promised to deliver pepper the following year. But this abandonment of the Dutch settlement appeared to the High Government as some what premature. The Portuguese who feared a Dutch attack on Kayamkulam and Cochin kept a squadron of 18 frigates stationed along the Coast so as to have sufficient immediate help at the place.

It was not less than 565 lasts of pepper that the Malabar navigator could take on their coming to the Coast in 1651 a quantity not reached in any of the previous years. But a great calamity made them lose a good deal of the profits. On the way back to Batavia the *Maastricht* sank with its full cargo. The crew were saved, but of the cargo they saved only a small consignment of gold which was not sold in Malabar. All other goods, a pepper stock of 201 lasts (worth 3,938 guilders) opium, sandalwood, camphor, tin etc., altogether worth 97,549 and odd guilders. became a prey of the waves—a calamity which was mainly due to unusually bad ships which must have been used for want of better ones so that the trade might not be idle. Very many ships had been wrecked on the last occasion or laid aside as useless because of age. In spite of this shipwreck, a gain of 68,430 and odd guilders was still obtained. This reverse destroyed the interest in the Malabar pepper trade and they already hesitated to send ships again the coming season to the Coast. But to leave the field wholly free for the Portuguese who had just got ships from Portugal while two new karaks were ready to sail to Europe involved a great peril and so they decided in 1651 on a yet fresh expansion. In November of that year, the fly-boat the *Os* sailed from the harbour of Batavia to the Malabar Coast.

The shortage of ships made the voyage begin only very late in the year. The leader of the trade was no more Dirck Schoorl whose books last year were again not in order and whom they reduced in rank on the complaint of the Chief of Surat that he was a rather careless gentleman. In his place, the control of affairs was entrusted to Van Serooskercken who had already so long been next in seniority to Schoorl. Next in rank to Van Serooskercken was Mattheus Van den Broeck. Although till now Kayamkulam was the headquarters of the trade on the Malabar Coast, Van Serooskercken, because of his long experience of the trade at Cannanore, remained there and Van den Broeck stayed at Kayamkulam.

As they did not know whether the war with Portugal was already begun, there went with this party 16 or 20 soldiers who after the completion of the trade were to return to Ceylon. The value of the cargoes together with the outstanding debts amounted to 112,285 and odd guilders. With this came again tin from Malacca, the Moorish ducats and cotton from Surat. These Surat goods represented a value of 38,141 and odd guilders. The ship conveyed opium to Malabar from Bengal to the great loss of the trade as there was a great demand there (Bengal) for this product and it would have yielded good profits. ✓

Because of the utter lack of tonnage, the ship destined for Malabar also took with them goods for Galle in Ceylon. The Company wanted to keep up good understanding with the princes. The connections with Quilon had to be strengthened. Here the monarch showed himself a devoted friend of the Dutch. On the other hand, his minister, the "independent lord, the Pillai," caused many and unbearable burdens and trouble to the merchant, Van den Broeck, before he finally gave his consent to the delivery of the contracted pepper. The Dutch suspected, probably rightly, this Malabaree nobleman to have been bought up by the Portuguese to be in their way as much as possible. But here appeared Van den Broeck's ability in a praiseworthy manner; he knew to overcome all hindrances and obstacles with great long-suffering and patience. The Dutch, knowing the Malabaree nobleman's eagerness for gain, hoped to bring this Pillai to their side by presents. In spite of the failure of the attempts of the previous year to build a stone fortification at Kayamkulam, the Governor-General and Councillors did not give up the plan and compelled the Malabar navigators to bring the nobles of the land to other thoughts. Van Serooskercken must, as the United Dutch East

India Company always alleged, but pretend to the Malabar monarchs that they did not yet care very much for the pepper trade.

As pepper always turned out to be dearer for the United India Company at Cannanore than at Kayamkulam, the High Government thought that no more trade should be done at the former place in this, but the whole trade should be shifted to Kayamkulam where, besides, much more pepper was available. Therefore, Van Serooskercken was advised not to give any more credit at Cannanore, but to collect as much of their debts as was possible. That the Company was eager to get rid of their unsaleable wares has already been seen in the matter of the old Malabar horses which were made to serve as presents for the Malabar princes. This time Van Serooskercken was given a specimen of a consignment of very old worm-eaten long pepper which was an impediment to the warehouses at Batavia and which was to be disposed of on the Malabar Coast at a loss.

In Malabar the Dutch were received by the princes and inhabitants more friendly and obligingly than in the previous year. Owing to the long delay of the ships, people had not expected them any more and they believed the talk of the Portuguese that the Dutch would not appear on the scene. Now there was great joy over the coming of the Dutch. Even the Pillai who in the previous year had been so hard and bitter to the Dutch now behaved as the Company's best friend. How good the relation was is clear from the fact that the merchants even desired to deliver pepper on credit so that they might first obtain the Company's barter goods. They learned to know each other better and as Van den Broeck, in his communication to Batavia, writes, "as they go on to meet with patience their (of the Portuguese) lies and artifices," they would show themselves more friendly to the Dutch than to the Portuguese. Now from the side of the King and his Ragiadoor there even reached an offer regarding the building of a stone lodge notwithstanding the difficulties they had to face against it the previous year. The orders which the Dutch had given for building materials appear to have been executed and they had to begin immediately with the building. The leading Hindu merchants with whom the Company had already contracted for pepper offered to make themselves responsible for the building of the same during the bad season.

There was a large quantity of pepper at Kayamkulam as the Portuguese had bought very little of that spice there and at



**Purakkad.** This was clear from the somewhat accommodating attitude of the native merchants. Van den Broeck tried to collect the debts due to the Company. This did not make rapid progress. The princes of the land were greeted with the usual presents. The Dutch contracted with the merchants for a stock of pepper to be speedily delivered as the ships had to be loaded before the sea became stormy in April.

At Quilon Van den Broeck, however, encountered an unexpected competition. For six years the Portuguese had not traded here. But the Queen of Signatty (Quilon), fearing that the Dutch would not appear on the Coast and the pepper would remain unsold, had the Governors of Goa reminded of the contracts for the buying up of pepper which the Portuguese had long ago concluded with the princes of Quilon and to which no effect had been given for several years past.

As at Kayamkulam so at Cannanore also, people were glad to see the Dutch come back. Here also the Portuguese had spread false rumours. According to them, the Dutch had become so weak through the reverses which the Portuguese had inflicted on them in Brazil and besides so harassed by the inundation and discord in their own land that they would certainly not appear on the Malabar Coast.

The head of the Mappillas, Mamaly Craa, requested the support of the United East India Company in the form of 2 yachts against the king of the Maldives who, according to Mamaly Craa owed him tribute but wished to withhold the same and had thrown up a fort and mightily defied the people of Cannanore. Mamaly Craa promised to deliver annually a large supply of cowries to the Company if they helped him. The Governor-General and Council rightly saw herein a promising outlook; it could be a means of obtaining better knowledge of those islands. If the Dutch could grant to Mamaly the desired help, then they could stipulate more favourable conditions than he was now willing to afford them. However, the shortage of ships induced the High Government to refuse, for the present, Mamaly's proposals although they were to feed him with hopes. Meanwhile they were to investigate whether the claims of Mamaly Craa on the king of the Maldives were well founded and in which way the venture could best be carried out.

On the 8th July 1652, the ship *Leeuwarden*, which after leaving Surat, had touched the Malabar Coast, arrived at Batavia

from Malabar with 256 lasts of pepper and on the 6th July the fly-boat the Os with 143 lasts — altogether 399 lasts to the value of 135,812 and odd guilders purchased at the moderate price of 2½ stuivers (pence) *per* pound.

Only a profit of 26,514 guilders was obtained. With the fly-boat the Os Van den Broeck came to Batavia in accordance with the instructions he had received while Van Serooskercken with his family remained behind at Galle on special request to be used for the Malabar trade in the future. None of the Company's servants nor their possessions remained behind on the Coast.

The war which had broken out with Portugal, the disappointment which the Malabar trade caused to the United East India Company during the most recent years, the lack of ships for the Company to fight in and especially an abundant supply of pepper as a result of larger planting in the Archipelago where the warehouses remained too small for containing the stocks, had put an end to the desire of the Directors in the Netherlands and the High Government at Batavia for the continuance of the Malabar pepper trade and they decided for the present to suspend the voyages. The pepper prices were not only higher in Malabar than in the Archipelago, but from the first they had to face the great expenses of the crew, the wear and tear of ships, and the wages of the servants employed in the Malabar voyages.

The chief aim of the United East India Company with regard to the Malabar pepper trade was not so much the acquisition of large quantities of pepper as to elude another party of it and in the first place it was naturally the Portuguese whom they first wanted to elude. Now that war had broken out, this could happen fruitfully only if the Dutch equipped a fleet for the occupation of Goa which the United East India Company was not immediately in a position to effect owing to their lack of shipping.

The High Government charged the Governor of Ceylon to send to Malabar in the year 1653 only one yacht with the merchant Serooskercken to collect the debts and to greet the princes for the maintenance of friendship and alliance. Serooskercken was besides to try to collect those arrears of the time of Schoorl's activity for which they could not produce a single proof. The High Government rightly feared that forgiving this might create trouble. These debts had to be placed to the charge of these imprudent servants of the Company.

With two yachts Serooskercken set out for Goa; on the way some ships destined for Surat and beyond acted as convoy up to beyond Goa. During the outward journey he took at Cannanore a consignment of cardamoms, but as it was taken without being examined and weighed, it appeared to be so bad that it had to be left behind at Wingurla. For this imprudent action, his superiors were very much offended with Van Serooskercken. He also appears to have been a man of inferior character and to have possessed a certain sort of carelessness but on the whole he obtained at this time the approbation of his then superiors. In 1653, as there was a fear of his activities in Malabar coming to an end, the Governor-General and Council proposed him as provisional Upper Head of Negombo. At this time they did not hear anything of the later complaints and criticism with which Van Goens overwhelmed him.

At first Van Serooskercken who, now that the Netherlands were again at war with Portugal, was commanded to seize ships appears to have had success. Between Wingurla and Cannanore he managed to capture a Yacht whose crew with a single exception knew to escape to the land. The exception was a fakir who was so upset by the interrogation of the Dutch that he sprang overboard and perished. The ship appeared to have cargo worth very little and was brought by Van Serooskercken to Cannanore. While it was lying at anchor here to take a cargo of rice and besides to settle current affairs, there appeared suddenly in sight a Portuguese armada of 22 ships coming from Goa. As Van Serooskercken suspected that this was a reinforcing squadron destined for Colombo, he set about pursuing it so as to prevent its coming into that harbour. But the squadron escaped by rowing quickly and reached Colombo. In this way everything still remained wrong on the Coast. Because of his suddenly breaking camp, Van Serooskercken could no more look after a business which he had been commanded by the High Government to transact. The business was this. A year ago the ship the *Wapen* from Batavia had strayed from other ships in the vicinity of Goa. Attacked by Malabar pirates, it caught fire and sank without being rescued. Almost the whole crew was drowned with the exception of five of their number who were rescued. Two of these were sold by the pirates to the Portuguese as slaves. They were carried away to Goa. The other three were held by the pirates in miserable captivity. The Dutch hoped that the mediation of Mamaly Craa would be productive of some good to these prisoners. In the spring Van Serooskercken had already made a beginning with the negotiations, but the pirate

chief would liberate his prey only in return for a very high ransom as he had suffered very great loss in the fight with the Dutch ship. This pirate maintained 'that, if only the captain of the ship had given a signal that he was a Dutchman, he would have been let alone and he himself need not have incurred such great loss.' The sudden departure of Van Serooskercken who, moreover, dared not, on his own authority, grant such a high ransom, let this matter pending and the poor Dutchmen in their captivity.

For the settlement of this and other questions, it was thus very necessary that in spring a yacht was sent again from Ceylon and Van Serooskercken sailed again with the Yacht *Sluis* to Cannanore. Yet they had not sufficient ships to blockade Goa and as the large supply of pepper was brought to Batavia from the Archipelago, the high College at Batavia had no inclination to renew the voyage to Malabar from Batavia.

Van Serooskercken knew to collect the pending debts at Cannanore. Of the Dutchmen imprisoned with the pirates, we hear nothing further and must thus suppose that the ransom was found to be too high and the Dutch left their fellow countrymen in the hands of the Malabarees. Now, for the present, they had no need of pepper and there was no reason to visit Cannanore any more unless it was because of cardamoms which always yielded such large profits in Persia. Again, as only very little of value was left behind at Kayamkulam, Serooskercken did not touch this place at this time. In 1654 the High Government left it for the present to the judgment of the Governor and Council of Ceylon as to whether they should continue or suspend the Malabar trade.

But as already in the following year the men at Batavia were, by reason of a good reinforcement received from the fatherland, in a position to equip a strong fleet for the capture of Colombo under the Director-General, Gerard Hulft, they decided, in spite of their having a sufficient stock of pepper, on the resumption of the Malabar pepper trade with the view of hitting the Portuguese economically. A small cargo of barter goods to the value of 46,565 and odd guilders was sent for the purpose to Ceylon to be exchanged by Van Serooskercken for pepper. At the same time, the usual purchase of cardamoms for Persia was to be effected at Cannanore.

And though Van Serooskercken acquired but little profits, they continued the trade in the following years. This, however, took place more out of the initiative of the Governor of Ceylon than of Batavia. Even the old plan of building a stone dwelling at Kayamkulam was carried out though not without protests and

hindrances from the natives. Throughout the whole year Van Serooskercken stayed on the Coast and collected the pepper. As Batavia and the Netherlands were flooded with pepper Van der Meyden desired to use this Malabar pepper exclusively for Persia and the Mocha trade. However, the Governor of Ceylon no more cherished very high expectations of the Malabar trade. He estimated the yield of the whole Coast to be less than 600 or 700 lasts and was sceptical about the possibility of keeping away foreign merchants from the Coast. This required more rights than the Company could at that moment assert. Moreover, the desire of the Indian merchants for gain was far too great for them to exclude others for the benefit of the Dutch.

The Governor-General and Council who were not highly fond of the performances of Van der Meyden on the Malabar Coast showed themselves to be little pleased over the expenses caused by the building of a lodge. Only for the faint continuance of the trade by the sending, at the most, of a Yacht from Ceylon were they prepared. Foreign competitions must be hindered. It was hoped that they of their own accord would be eliminated to a large extent by the blockade of Goa. Friendship with the magnates of Malabar must be preserved. But it was certain that greater benefits could not, for the present, be obtained on the Coast. Looking over the relations of the Dutch with the Malabar Coast during the entire period during which the United East India Company had so far maintained connections with that Coast, they felt that the profits were still very little compared with the much more important pepper trade of the Archipelago from which much greater profits were obtained. The complaints of the Governor-General and Council over the dear pepper of Malabar were very frequent. Compared with the pepper trade in the Archipelago, the Malabar pepper trade was only a side show. Reviewing the turnover and gains of the period dealt with, we find there were ups and downs, but, on the whole, however, a steadily mounting line. The negotiations of the pepper contracts during the Governor-Generalship of Van Diemen laid the foundation of the flourishing period under the Governor-General Van der Lijn. There ensued a sudden falling back, mainly owing to political causes, namely the war with Portugal with which they were again threatened and which specially broke out again.

But the Malabar Coast acquired one other meaning for the Company. No longer was the word to be applied to merchants and traders. The capture of Colombo in 1656 opened with respect to

Malabar far-reaching perspectives. The military conquest of the Coast came within the realm of possibilities.

It was not cunningness in trade but political, war-like and diplomatic talent that the new situation required. The Malabar Coast which till now was viewed only as a region of very subordinate importance in the economic organisation of the United East India Company claims full attention for a series of years. It was a person like Rijcklof Van Goens, one of the founders of the Company's power in the so-called Western Quarters, who here performed his most renowned deeds. With his expedition to Quilon begins the story of the political activities of the Dutch in Malabar.