

rounded by Hyder Ally's army, no supplies could reach them by land; and though several ships were at Madras, laden with provisions for their relief, they were afraid to attempt the passage, as the French fleet lay at Pondicherry, which was directly in the course they must take. But Captain Wilson being applied to by the governor of Madras, he undertook the service with five ships under his command, and passed Pondicherry in the night, so near as to see the French flag flying from the mast-head, and escaped being captured by the following circumstance:

Suffrein, the French admiral, had sent his water-casks on shore to be filled, and they lay on the beach. Sir Eyre Coote had detached a corps of grenadiers and light infantry, who entered Pondicherry, and destroyed the casks; this induced Suffrein to run down to Point de Gall, to repair the loss, just at the moment when Captain Wilson was in the offing. As Suffrein's ships sailed so much better than his, they were off Cuddalore in the morning, and Captain Wilson arrived in the afternoon, thus escaping and bringing in the whole of the cargoes committed to his care, and so much wanted by the army. They had then been reduced to their last forty-five bags of paddy, and not a grain of rice to be procured. This supply rescued them from the impending famine, or the necessity of cutting their way through the enemy; and was the means of God's good providence for the preservation of the army and the Carnatic.

Returning in safety to Bengal, he was employed in carrying supplies, and in one of these voyages, when