HISTORY OF KERALA

K. P. PADMANABHA MENON

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HISTORY OF KERALA

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Mr. M. ACHYUTA MENON, B. A , B. L.

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HISTORY OF KERALA

A HISTORY OF KERALA,

WRITTEN IN THE FORM OF

NOTES ON VISSCHER'S LETTERS FROM MALABAR,

BY

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FOREWORD

BY THE EDITOR.

It was on the 24th of October 1924 that the printing of the first volume of this great work was started. It has demanded my unremitting toil all these twelve years; and it is with no small gratification that I contemplate the completion of this arduous undertaking.

My connection with this work commenced long before this period. While I was studying in Madras, I had to frequent libraries there to furnish extracts and to verify references for this. After I settled down here to practise at the bar, I have had to read several parts of this with the author, and to get, at his instance, a Note or two revised by my revered master, the late Mr. D. M. Cruickshank, and a few others by Mr. Glyn Barlow, when they were Principals of the local Maharaja's College. To our dismay, both of them expressed their inability to proceed further than what they did, as the subject was not familiar to them and the task not easy.

As desired by the author, in his last will and testament, I have tried, according to my lights, to revise the manuscripts as carefully as was possible for me to do it. The absence of a decent reference library in the vicinity had been to me a very serious impediment. But I have done what I could, by going to the extent of incurring personal expenditure on the purchase of books for the purpose.

Another difficulty had been the reading of the proofs, not once, but, as a rule, twice, and sometimes even three times. Only those who have experienced the trouble, and the perennial capacity of the compositors to create fresh errors can realise the mental and the physical exhaustion caused by such work. But for

the uniform kindness of my friends, Mr. C.P. Narayana Menon, the quondam Superintendent of the Government Press and Mr. N. M. Parameswara Ayyar, the present incumbent, and of his assistants, Mr.S. Sundara Ayyar and Mr. N. Kochunni Menon, Examiners, and Mr. P. Raman Menon, a Composing Foreman, I would have had to give up the task in despair. I am indebted to them to a degree which cannot be adequately expressed in words. If the scrutiny of *savants* will yet detect mistakes, I shall leave these to their correction and their indulgence.

Mrs. Padmanabha Menon, the wife of the author, once told me of a talk she had with her husband. An year before his death, she chanced to ask him as to why he was not seeing this his life-work through the press. He then let her know the prohibitive rates quoted by many printing firms in India and in England and of certain other obstacles in his way, and it seems he closed his reply with the remark that, so long as I was alive, he had no fear about that matter. His direction in the will and these works have cheered me not a little in my labour of love; and his wife, till her death, lightened my task in every practical way.

By the Grace of God, it is my privilege to have brought the publication of this work to its completion, a work that is sure to mark a new chapter in the study of the History of Kerala. If delay there was, it was none of my making.

I write this from a seat in my garden facing the new Cochin Harbour. There is a mild breeze about and the music of murmuring wavelets; and in the sky, over the prevailing background of a light violet colour, one can note the varying tints of a sun that is setting. They give a glow to the lights and shadows athwart the land-locked lagoon and the feathery palms. As the evening shadows gather, birds are hastily flying to their nests. A stillness fills the bowl of the sky. A solitary Brahmini Kite is loitering in the firmament, either to

take in air or to spot its prey, or, who knows, perhaps, to enjoy the prospect. "All is peace in the home; she sits by me, in the silence of blissful comradeship, who has shared with me the toil of life, and the joy of it," and who, above all, by her love and care and cheering words, has made it possible for me to do my life's work.

In the remote past, Kerala played a glorious part in the spread of culture and commerce. That these volumes will indicate. May her mission in the times to come be grander and even more glorious is the prayer of this writer who can claim, without any breach of modesty, to have dedicated these literary labours to his country in a spirit of loving service. For,—that is my creed—after all, love and service form the flower and fruit of all true religions.

Kumārālayam,
Ernakulam;
16th February 1937.

T. K. KRISHNA MENON.

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The Transliteration Table followed in the printing of this work.

The Press has accented letters only for 12 point capitals and lower case letters; and, even among these, the sets are not complete.

In spite of great care, a few mistakes have crept in to mar the uniformity attempted to be maintained in spelling the names of places and of persons. For this, the Editor craves the pardon of the reader.

This Press owns no letters of the Nagara alphabet, and so Malayalam characters have to be used.

അ	a	ഖ	kha	പ	pa
ആ	ā	ഗ	ga	ഫ	pha
ഇ	i	ഘ	gha	ബ	ba
ഈ	ī	ങ	nga	ഭ	bha
ഉ	u	ച	cha	മ	ma
ഊ	ū	ഛ	chha	യ	ya
ഋ	ṛ	ജ	ja	ര	ra
ൠ	ṙ	ഝ	jha	ല	la
ഌ	ḷ	ഞ	ña	വ	va
ൡ	ḹ	ട	ṭa	ശ	ṡa
എ	e	ഠ	ṭha	ഷ	ṣha
ഏ	ē	ഡ	ḍa	സ	sa
ഐ	ai	ഢ	ḍha	ഹ	ha
ഒ	o	ണ	ṇa	ള	ḷa
ഓ	ō	ത	ṭa	ക്ഷ	kṣha
ഔ	au	ഥ	ṭha	റ	ṙa
അം	aṃ	ദ	ḍa	ഴ	ḹa
അഃ	aḥ	ധ	ḍha	ററ	ṭṭa
ക	ka	ന	ṅa	ൻറ	ṅta

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Visscher's
LETTERS FROM MALABAR.

LETTER XXIII.

Malabar temples—Religious service—Revenues attached to the temples—Mode of consecration.

I shall now give you a description of the temples[1] in Malabar and their form of structure.

They are termed pagodas[2], or houses of the gods, who are supposed to inhabit them and to receive in them the devotions of the pious. They are mostly built of stone; the grandest glitter with copper roofs. All the architectural talents of the heathen have been devoted to the erection of these edifices: their dwellings on the other hand are wretched; generally mere low mean huts; but the temples far surpass in grandeur any of the royal palaces. I have seen a highly ornamented pagoda in Cranganur, in which the gateway of the exterior gallery is surmounted with an arch of such skilful workmanship that even in Europe it would be admired as a work of art.[3]. We sometimes find arches and facings of marble, a material not found in Malabar.[4] A wall furnished with a good front gateway encloses a quadrangle; within this enclosure in an empty uncovered space, free to every one, even the Christians and the unclean castes. This reminds me of the court of the gentiles, in Solomon's temple. The pagoda itself stands in the centre of this enclosure; the exterior of the building consists of a covered gallery open on the inside, though from without it appears to be all one. This gallery, which traverses all four sides of the edifice may be likened to the second court of the temple, frequented by the priests and Israelites. Within this again stands the house itself, surmounted by a pointed roof, and in the centre of this sanctuary there is a square stone elevation like an altar, its four corners furnished with four columns, on which stands the

1. Note 1, pp. 1 to 37.
2. Note 2, pp. 37 to 40.
3. Note 3, pp. 40 to 41.
4. Note 4, p. 41.

idol.[1] This image is made of various materials[2]. I have seen silver specimens: they are sometimes gilt, but copper is the most common material. I have a few of these in my possession, which were taken at the pillage of the rich pagoda of Pounetour Nambocri[3] they give one a good idea of the hideousness of the gods before whom these people prostrate themselves. Some are likenesses of men with elephant's trunks, others have four, six, or more arms, and others two or more heads[4]. The temples are all dedicated to special deities, as was the case with those of the Greeks and Romans, and the patron idol in each pagoda presides over the others; his form surpassing theirs both in size and splendour. I have seen a copper cow[5] at the pagoda at Cranganur, almost as large as life. As the gods are supposed to delight in illuminations, several lamps both iron and copper, fastened into the walls of the second court on both sides, are lighted up on feast days.

There are cavities along the walls of the inside gallery, something like baking ovens, in which rajahs, princes, or private individuals may deposit their treasures for security. The keys of these treasure chambers are always kept by the proprietors, who may obtain access to them when they please with the assistance of the Brahmins who have the care of the temple. No Christian, Jew, or Moor, may penetrate into this sanctuary, though the gates are suffered to stand open, and we may approach as far as the threshold,[6] but not near enough to obtain a sight of the interior ; this I have found by experience ; for if we attempted to intrude too far, we should be pushed back, as the temple would be polluted, and must then undergo fresh consecration and various ceremonies in order to render it fit again for the offices of religion. This would be the case even if we were merely to enter the tanks or wells in which the Brahmins, bound by their law, bathe daily they would be contaminated and require fresh consecration[7] to purify them. For their folly is such that they imagine that purity consists not in the cleanliness of the soul but of that of the body. Not alone men of other religions are prohibited from entering their temples, but the same rule is extended even to the low and despised castes among themselves, a practice which runs counter to the notions of all other nations, For as the mere touch of these miserable creatures would defile Brahmin

1. Note 5, page 41.
2. Note 6, ib.
3. Note 7, p. 45.
4. Note 8, ib.
5. Note 9, p. 48.
6. Note 10, ib.
7. Note 11, p. 49.

or a member of the higher castes, so would their presence the temple of the gods, of whose favour and notice they are unworthy. The daily services[1] of the temple consist of prayers and devotions offered three times a day, morning, noon and night. The devotees perambulate the outer court thrice, making their *Sombaie* or reverence (a gesture performed by bending forward and striking the forehead with clasped hands), each time they come opposite the door of the pagoda. The Brahmins observe a similar routine in the innermost gallery of the sanctuary, muttering prayers all the time. Then the first priest steps up to the altar and sprinkles holy water and flowers on the image, which act forms the daily sacrifice, for no blood must be shed in or near the temple. Estates are invariably attached to the pagodas from which they derive considerable revenues and their wealth is increased by the offerings and alms of the faithful.[2] I saw at Porcad two stone-images, man and woman, which have stood for ages by the side of the river, so near, that in the rainy season they are flooded. Bags hang from their necks[3] to receive the offerings of passengers on the river, who throw into them a portion of their fruits, rice, nely, etc., as an almsgiving to the adjacent pagoada. Rich pagodas are burdened with a number of Brahmins, perhaps 200 or 300 who must be fed: for so these Malabar priests cunningly contrive to be supported gratis.[4] Besides this, at many of the rajah's courts are places called *marroe*,[5] where food is dispensedto any Brahmin who demands it. There is one good thing about these pagodas, that they furnish provision for many wayfarers of their own religion, who resort to them; rice is never refused. They serve in this respect like hospitals or charitable establishments,[6] where a man, however poor and destitute he may be, can always find shelter.

I had almost forgotten to state, that when in the daily service the priests come to the performance of the Sombaie, or reverence, the first priest holds up the image while the others bend their knees to it.[7]

On certain national feasts a solemn procession takes place. The idol, finely ornamented and placed in a palanqin or set up on an elephant and covered with a canopy, is paraded about

1. Note 12, pp. 49 to 63.
2. Note 13, pp. 63 to 104.
3. Note 14, p. 105—106.
4. Note 15, pp. 106—107.
5. Note 16, pp. 107—110.
6. Note 17, pp .110—111.
7. Note 18, p. 119.

accompanied with music, and every body must perform the Sombaie before it. Thus still exists the procession of the tabernacle of Moloch, which, among the Egyptians, Syrians and other gentiles, used to cause the children of Israel to sin. The low castes who may not enter the temple, are permitted to attend at a distance on some of these occasions, and to deposit their donations of fanams before the temple for though not admitted, they are compelled to contribute to its support, as if it were a privilege so to do.[1] They possess temples of their own constructed of dried palm leaves, and if they could afford to build them of stone they must yet cover them with palm leaves: they have no Brahmins for their priests, but members of their own caste minister the offices of religion.[2]

Near some pagodas, as those of Valdurti and Mowton,[3] outside the enclosure stands a stone, at which the Nayars, who are permitted to partake of the flesh of all animals except cows, offer sacrifices of blood: here also they offer up vows to their deities[4] to obtain the boon of fertility for their estates, promising in return to sacrifice so many cocks. When the day for the sacrifice arrives thousands assemble, and the Nayars officiate at the solemnity in place of the Brahmins, who may not touch the bodies of dead animals. The chief called *Belka Paru*[5] first advances, cuts off the head of a cock which he throws on the ground letting the blood run on the stone, and then he takes the body home to his house, and devours it with his family. The others in succession follow his example, each sacrificing and eating his own cock. In the consecration of a new pagoda[6] the building is first sprinkled with water and the leaves of the Ixora, and then smeared with cowdung; this done ten or twelve cows, as sacred beasts, are tied up inside the building and fed with grass, then with waters taken from four sources, the Ganges, the sea, the river near which the pagoda stands, and the opposite side of the same river, they sanctify the idol, the presiding genius of the temple; they next take a number of dishes (they must not be fewer than 49—but generally there are as many as 101 of them) made of gold, silver, copper or stone, filled with raw rice and covered with party coloured cloths, over which are strewed flowers and figures representing the 27 stars under the influence of which the days of the month are placed. These figures are made of gold or silver,

1. Note 19, p. 111.
2. Note 20, pp. 111—2.
3. Note 21, p. 112.
4. Note 22, pp. 112—3.
5. Note 23, pp. 113—115.
6. Note 24, pp. 115—122.

on each of which the name of the star is inscribed. These dishes remain in the pagoda for a period of 21 or 41 days according to pleasure, during which time the Brahmins assemble to the same number that there are dishes, offer up prayers to the tri-une god head, Brama, Vishnu and Siva, when this is over, a fire lighted in the quadrangle must be brought before the altar, on which the image is then set up, and fastened with mortar mixed up of various adhesive substances, pearl-dust, sugar, honey, cake, etc., and the Brahmins must be regaled for eleven or twelve days.

If the temple were to be polluted[1] by the presence of a Christian or a member of the low castes, 21 dishes of water with flowers must be introduced to purify it, the idol must be washed again with the four waters, a feast lasting for three days must be given to the Namboories, and the temple swept thrice a day and smeared with cow dung.

LETTER XXIV.

Superstitions of the Natives—How they consecrate their houses—Their charms against the evil eye—Auguris on building their houses—The respect for the Kalu tree, and the state of departed souls—Exorcisms—Lucky and unlucky Omens.

In this letter I propose to satisfy your curiosity respecting the superstitious practices and opinions which prevail among the benighted heathen, in the midst of whom I am at present sojourning.

A member of the higher castes will never inhabit his newly built house, until it has been solemnly purified and consecrated[2] by the priests; because it is supposed to have been defiled by the builders, who belong to an unclean caste. Among the grandees the ceremony of consecration takes place in the following manner. An idol is carried thrice round the house, to the sound of trumpets and deposited before the eastern door. The priests then enter the house, and having laid some cowdung mixed with ashes on a *pisang** leaf they mutter some prayers over it, after which a Namboori sprinkles the house, first with water from a copper basin in which are placed the small red flowers of the Ixora shrub called by the Portuguese *Foule Paran*, and then with the cowdung; the idol is then brought inside the house, and the Namboories proceed to eat some cakes. These ceremonies duly performed, a great feast is held outside the house, the food consisting of rice, butter

1. Notes 25 and 26, pp. 122 to 141.
2. Note 1, p. 142.

* The *pisang* is the Areca *catechu*, or Betel-nut palm (Trans) See Brandes' Dict. of Science.

pisang, milk and curry; the guests, who have been first thoroughly smeared with oil (like the ancient heathens, who used to anoint their guests as a mark of honor), sitting cross-legged around the building. While on the subject of their houses, I must mention their superstition about the east door; when they go out for the first time in the morning it must always be through this entrance which is considered lucky, because from it they first behold the morning sun, before which they bend with reverence.

They are in the habit of setting up a *Molik* or figure in their fields, young plantations, and houses, and particularly in their roads; not for the purpose of scaring the birds, as is done in Europe, but to act as a charm against the evil eye.[1] This Molik may be the image either of an idol, a man, or an ape, or sometimes it is merely some kind of painted vessel. If the eye of a person possessed of a malign aspect fall on this object, it is robbed of all power of working mischief either to plants or to anything else. This superstition prevails not only among the heathen; for there are some Christians who are for ever talking of the *Toeca Olhos*. I was told by the Dutch Official at Paponetti, that there was a Mocqua chief living there, whose countenance was supposed by the natives, to be endowed with this pernicious influence; so that he was entreated never to enter fields when the plants were in bloom, lest he should injure them; which request he observed. They imagine that this evil eye works no harm to the lands and plants of the possessor, but rather increases their fertility.

In commencing the building of a house[2] the first prop must be put up on the east side: the carpenters open three or four cocoanuts, spilling the juice as little as possible, and put some tips of betel leaves into them, and, from the way these float in the liquid, they foretel whether the house will be lucky or unlucky, whether it will stand for a long or short period, and whether another will ever be erected on its side. I have been told that the heathens say that the destruction of fort Paponetti by our arms was foretold by the builders from these auguries. They receive for the performance of this rite one or two Cochin fanams, three measures of rice, and a garment worth three fanams.

There is an odd shaped tree called a *Kalu*, the stem of which seems to be formed by several twisted branches growing into each other. It is generally very large, and its spreading branches shoot out roots, many of which fix themselves in the ground, thus furnishing fresh nourishment to enable the branches to extend

1. Note 2, pp. 142—147.
2. Note 3, pp. 147—183.

further. This tree is esteemed sacred,[1] and is hung about with lamps which are lighted up in the evening. They have a legend[2], that the chief of the minor gods, Cheraman by name, was despatched by the supreme deity to introduce certain improvements on the earth. Fatigued by his long journey through a dreary wilderness without food or drink, he stretched himself beneath the shadow of the banian tree to seek repose and refreshment, and his object was so marvellously effected that he arose with his strength as completely renovated as if he had partaken of a hearty meal. In memory of this event, this tree is dedicated to the pagodas in the neighbourhood of which one is always to be found, they are also planted there for the refreshment of departed souls. for the majority and the most intelligent of these heathens believe[3] that in the beginning, the deity created a certain number of souls, which inhabit sometimes human and sometimes brute bodies; but that on quitting human bodies the souls repose for a century under the refreshing shade of the banian, after which they transmigrate into other bodies either of men or of beasts according to their conduct during their past life[4]. It is considered a piece of great good fortune to transmigrate into the body of a white cow whilst to pass into that of a buffalo is just the reverse as that animal undergoes great illtreatment at the hands of the Malabars, being the object of their utmost contempt and aversion. The people believe that during the intermediate period of hundred years, the souls of the departed visit their descendants.[5] They therefore prepare, either within or without their houses little apartments or huts, which are fresh smeared every morning, and furnished with a small bench, about a foot in length and a breadth from the ground, on which toddy is placed; which, in the evening, as the departed spirits have not touched it, they themselves drink, and it is considered a hallowed beverage. They always put aside a little rice at their meals, or strew some grains on the ground for these ghosts: and if they have more in the dish than they can eat, they throw out the remainder to the crows, and this also is put to the account of the spirits. They perform a ceremony like this on the feast of the souls,[6] in the month of July.

They carry their ideas of witchcraft[7] to an unequalled pitch; to this influence the most dire diseases are imputed in many

1. Note 4, pp. 184—194.
2. Note 5, p. 194.
3. Note 6, pp. 194—197.
4. Note 7, pp. 197—201.
5. Note 8, pp. 201—203.
6. Note 9, pp. 203—204.
7. Note 10, pp. 204—246.

places, and it is supposed to have power both to cause and cure them, so that apothecaries and doctors would find it difficult to obtain a livelihood here: they are less foolish in the neighbourhood of Cochin. It is said (by the majority, that is) that there exist 36,000 demons, of whom a few are good; and the worst among them are *Tjatte Pannikerri*, *Tiangadi* and *Cooli Mootootoe Pannikerri*. They ascribe to these spirits the power of occupying the bodies of men whose souls have departed: they have no power over Christians, even those who are so merely in name not in heart. Every individual has his own special demon whom he serves, and who in return assists him in the execution of his projects. They suppose that if a man has no other way of venting his wrath on his adversary he can send his own demon to do it for him. To effect this purpose he must make an image of the demon, and perform certain ceremonies before it, upon which it sets forth, and assails the victim with all kinds of diseases, madness, convulsions, etc. In order to discover whether these disorders proceed from natural causes or from malign influence, the friends of the patient repair to a *Canniane* or soothsayer, who determines the question by the result obtained from counting up some cowries, and can also indicate the person from whom the evil spirit was sent; the latter immediately confesses his guilt, or if he refuses, is brought before the rajah and compelled to do so, while the sufferer on his part must promise to make restitution of any thing to which the other party had a lawful claim. The exorcism proceeds as follows. A man of the washerman caste is introduced who has a drum shaped like an hour glass; he describes a magic circle on the ground within which he makes various characters, in red and white, and then flowers in pieces of betel leaves, rice, turmeric, Iscora flowers, arecanuts, tobacco, palm leaves, and date shells, etc.. A woman taken from the household of the party who has employed the aid of the demon, is made to sit down facing the circle, clothed in a white garment, her hair floating loose, her arms folded, and carrying on her bosom a cashewnut leaf. The washerman now beats his drum, singing at the same time a magic song: on which the unclean spirit quits the patient and enters the body of the woman, who immediately sets up a tremendous howling, and begins to jump about like a mad woman; then the demon speaking through her voice announces the rewards he expects and the rights to be performed in return for the alacrity with which he has executed the mission of his employer. These being promised, the spirit leaves the woman, who falls down as if dead and lies in this posture for an hour; at the expiration of which the washerman takes away all that he put in the circle and

eats it with his household: he receives four fanams in payment for his services; a like sum is also paid to the Canniane.

The official at Paponetti told me that he had witnessed very strange effects from those exorcisms at which he had himself sometimes been called in to keep order. On one occasion, a woman was brought in to him, very ill, to all appearance dead. Her friends complained, that an evil spirit had been sent to her by a Nair woman, whom they produced, and that the patient had lain seven days without food, like a corpse. The accused was asked whether the tale were true; she replied in the affirmative adducing as the motive, that a little piece of gold, worth about two risc dollars, which she had inherited and wore as an ornament on her neck, had been stolen from her. The officer commanded her to recall the spirit; this she performed with the usual rites, and the sufferer who lay inanimate, opened her eyes in his presence, asked for cheese and betel, and in short was restored to perfect health and walked home.

These people are also addicted to the observance of lucky and unlucky days. Monday and Thursday come under the latter category, and Sunday under the former. The last day of the month is unlucky. It is a bad omen to meet a cat or a snake, on first going out in the morning, and they will turn back to escape passing it: this they will do also if a crow flies past on the left hand; on the right hand it is considered lucky. It is a good sign to sneeze with the face turned towards the house from which they have come out, but with the face turned in the direction in which they are going it is unlucky. Leo is the most propitious sign of the zodiac, and it is a piece of good fortune to be born and business is best executed under its influence. Thus you see dear friend, how superstition rules this land[1].

LETTER XXV.

Discrepancy between the Chronologies of Holy Scripture, and those of the Gentile Nations. An account of the feast days of the Malabars.

The science of chronology has ever proved one of the most difficult subjects which have engaged the attention of the learned, who have not a little increased its perplexity by attempting to reconcile the system of Holy Scripture with those of the gentiles; this seems to me a hopeless endeavour, for all the traditions of eastern nations, are extravagantly fabulous and inconsistent with each other. This is very conspicuous among the nations of the East Indies, where the chronological systems of China, Pegu, and

1. Note 11, pp. 247—257.

Malabar, are totally distinct. How therefore can we rely upon them? The system of Holy Scriptures on the other hand, is both genuine and simple, narrating a regular succession of events, and seasons. St. Augustine remarks with justice in his work *De Civitate Dei*: "We need not doubt that those things related by profane writers which are contrary to the statements of Holy Scripture are false, for reason teaches us that what God through his Holy Spirit speaking to us in the Holy Scriptures relates, is more worthy of credit than the words of men, because he can foretell ong before the things which are to happen"[1]

If we apply this passage to the chronological theory in vogue among the Malabars we shall see confirmation of its truth. They affirm that many thousand centuries have elapsed from the creation of the world to the present time, and they make use in their reckoning of time, of certain periods which they call *Diva Varussam* supposed to be divinely appointed; each of these periods or cycles consists of 365 years, 3 months, 2 days, and 30 hours, and several of these *Diva Varussam* make up a great cycle or age consisting of some thousands of years.

The first age from the creation of the world is called *Crida Ugam*, and this lasted for the space of 4,800: *Diva Varussam* amounting to a period of 1,753,210 years, 6 months, 24 days and 16 hours.

The second age *Treda-Ugam*, contained 3,600 D. V., or 1,314,908 years, 10 months, 8 days, 14 hours.

The third age *Duavara Ugam*, contained 2,400 D. V., or 872,600 years, 4 months, 12 days, 9 hours.

The fourth age *Cali Ugam*, will consist of 12,200 D. V., or 438,032 years, 8 months, 6 days and 56 hours; of this age only 4,827 years have elapsed up to the present time[2].

While on this subject we must observe, that the year begins in October (which they call *Talla Massam*) and that each day is divided into 60 hours[3].

The above-mentioned system of chronology is only preserved and adhered to in their temples; in their daily intercourse they make use of certain epochs and eras which are mentioned in their legal documents and letters.

In the low-lands of Malabar, especially in the kingdom of Cochin, there are two of these eras. The first is the year *Coilam* or *Coulam*, which takes its name from the northern Coilam, the

1. Note 1, pp. 258—260
2. Note 2, pp. 260—265
3. Note 3, p. 265.

place whence, after his partition of the kingdom, Cheramperumal started, either for the Ganges, or, according to the Moors, for Mecca. The current year, 1723, they date the year of Coilam 899.[1]

The second era the year *Pooda Vaipum*; which they call the new style, was first established when the island of Vypeen was recovered from the sea and inhabited by men. This was 383 years ago.[2]

In the high lands of Malabar, and in other heathen nations, there is another system of cycles of 60 years. This was ordained by the prophet Paroese Raman. Each of the 60 years has a peculiar name, so that it may be always known how many years of the cycle have run. When the number is complete they begin again from the beginning.[3]

They divide the year into 12 months; the first day of each month corresponds with the thirteenth or fourteenth of ours.[4]

Magaram or	January	has 30 days.
Cumbam	February	,, 30 ,,
Meenam	March	,, 30 ,,
Madum	April	,, 31 ,,
Eddavum	May	,, 31 ,,
Methunum	June	,, 32 ,,
Carccadagam	July	,, 31 ,,
Chingam	August	,, 31 ,,
Cunnee	September	,, 31 ,,
Toolam	October	,, 29 ,,
Vrechecum	November	,, 30 ,,
Dhanoo	December	,, 29 ,,

There are certain annual festivities universally observed.

1st. On the first day of the month Madum, they celebrate the feast Biloe or the New year;[5] not that the year commences then, but at the season of the departure of the Emperor Cheramperumal in September, from which era they date. In the morning of this day, they put some gold into a copper basin, and scatter Ixora flowers about; besides distributing money or food and illuminating, after which they bathe. This feast is solemnised in honour of Vishnu.

1. Note 4, pp. 265—275.
2. Note 5, p. 275.
3. Note 6, p. 275.
4. Note 7, pp. 276—281.
5. Note 8, pp. 281—286.

2nd. They hold another feast called *Pattamoedasjam* [1] on the 10th of the same month, when they say that the sun has attained its meridian, and the days and nights are of equal length, they are accustomed on this day to offer vows in the pagodas, to illuminate with lamps, they carry the idols about in procession, and fire cannons or guns, which latter is a religious ceremony used on high occasions. These solemnities, which last for forty days and terminate in the Pattamoedasjam, are dedicated to the sun.

3rd. On the new moon of the month of July, they keep the feast *Baauw* [2] with fasting and prayers on account of the arrival of the souls of their departed ancestors, who they believe visit their houses on that day. They prepare and set food outside for them, which food becomes the property of the crows: and the dwellers by the sea-shore bathe for the purification of the said souls.

4th. In August comes the feast *Onam*, [3] or the birth-day of Sida, the wife of *Sri Rama* or Vishnu. This is observed by some people for four days, by others for seven. They raise a hillock in front of their dwellings, smeared with cow-dung and strewed with flowers, on which they set up the image of Vishnu, clothed in a new garment, and provided with an open cocoanut for food. Those castes who are allowed to partake of fish must abstain from it on this day, and the upper people distribute garments to their servants.

5th. Sixteen days after *Onam* comes the feast of *Magam* in honour of *Paramesiri*, or *Parwadi*, the wife of Parameswari or Vishnu in another form. For, as you must know they teach, that Vishnu underwent thirteen transmigrations. [4] The ceremonies observed on this occasion resemble those of the preceding feast.

6th. This same feast of *Magam*, [5] or *Onam* is held also in September or even in October, in memory of the goddess *Patrakalli* also called *Pagodi*. The ceremonies coincide with those of the feast of Onam, except that cakes are to be baked with sugar and laid before the Goddess.

7th. The feast *Tirawedira*, [6] is celebrated in December. This is an occasion of mourning and lamentation among the women

1. Note 9, p. 286.
2. Note 10, p. 286.
3. Note 11, pp. 286—306.
4. Note 12, pp. 306—323.
5. Note 13, pp. 323—324.
6. Note 14, pp. 324—330.

who now complain to the gods that they have not been equally endowed intellectually with man. They must not sleep all the night, nor partake of cooked rice.

8th. In January they observe the feast *Parmy*, [1] the birth-day of Pagodi Sri Couroumba, when they kill several cocks and offer them before the Pagodas. The Brahmins are excluded the temples for three days on this occasion.

9th. This feast to Parmy is also held in February, and at Paldurti [2] in Cochin in March, when a party of Nairs bound by an oath, cause themselves to be suspended by an iron passed through the skin of their backs to a swing (*wip*) and remain thus hanging for some time and fencing with sword and shield: [3] a frightful spectacle! On this occasion they exhibit various images, marching them about in procession as the Papists do on Shrove Tuesday, and thus it is a great time for merry making. It is the only festival to which all castes, even the lowest, are admitted, and it lasts two days.

It is dedicated to the sister of Pagodi or the goddess Sri Couroumba, called Assagia. [4]

10th. In this month also is celebrated the feast of *Oel Pouram* [5] or consecration, in memory of the visit of the sea god to the Pagoda *Arad polda*, a stone yet remains standing by a little stream at the corner of the Pagoda in memory of this event. Nearly 25,000 pilgrims repair here on this day.

11th. In March is held the feast *Oelsagam*, when the idols are carried about in a palanquin or on an elephant, accompanied by armed men who make all kinds of rejoicing with trumpets, games, and dances. The last day of *Oelsagam* [6] is the feast *Proe Ona* on which occasion they bathe. This feast is celebrated in memory of Siva and Vishnu.

12th. Eight days after, the feast *Asfami* takes place, on this day (which is also an annual fair) the souls in torment have recourse to Seeva, and the festival is celebrated with great solemnity in the temple of Curour.

I hope I have not wearied you with this subject, for though not a pleasant one, it is needful in order to form an accurate idea of the part of the world in which I now reside.

1. Note 15, pp. 330—343.
2. Note 16, pp. 343—344.
3. Note 17, pp. 344—347.
4. Note 18, p. 347.
5. Note 19, pp. 347—350.
6. Note 20, pp. 350—394.

LETTER XXVI.

Account of the Pepper, Turmeric, Cardamom, and Areca of Malabar.

You who live amid the bustle of trade, and daily load your magazines with costly wares collected from all quarters of the world, will doubtless be interested in reading about the commerce of Malabar, and the commodities it affords, which it shall be the purpose of this letter to describe.

Pepper, the cheapest but by no means the least useful of spices, is the chief production of Malabar and is collected in such abundance and good quality that this country may justly be styled the Mother of Pepper[1]. It grows well in the low lands, but with far more luxuriance in the elevated tracts and along the hills and mountains. It is not planted in open fields, but in the close neighbourhood of trees, around which the branches climb, as the plant requires support. The leaves are large, and the pepper-corns spring from them, clustering in rows close to the stems. Their colour is green. These plants, which climb to a great height, last generally for eighteen or twenty years, when other grafts or shoots are substituted for them. When the pepper is dried, it acquires a black colour, occasioned doubtless by its natural heat ; as is the case with cloves, which when first plucked are white, but when they have been laid out to dry, black spots appear and spread by degrees, till the whole clove assumes a dark hue. The unripe pepper-corns which get sometimes mixed with the ripe ones, dry away into powder, or shrivel up, owing to the heat of the latter. For this reason the East India Company never take new pepper by weight, but let it lie bye for some months in warehouses till the unripe corns have had time to decay ; and the bad are then winnowed from the good in presence of the merchants.

Many persons erroneously suppose that the white and black pepper are different plants. This is not the case. I have been told here that there are two methods of manufacturing the former from the latter, either by corroding the upper coating of the corn with lime, or by laying it aside for ten or twelve years, when the outer coat will dry off, and the upper-corn appear white [2].

The pepper of Malabar is that most prized: yet it is not equally good in all parts of the country. The pepper produced in South Malabar and Quilon is smaller than that of the North. No difference however is discernible in the fruit when exported, as it

1. Note 1, pp. 395—403.
2. Note 2, pp. 403—407.

is all mixed together. It is the principal article of trade of the East India Company in Malabar; it is calculated that they purchase on the average 2,000,000 lbs. annually collecting it in the factories of Cochin, and Chetwa in the North and of Porcad, Kulli-Quilon, Quilon and Pesa in the South. The sovereigns of these places and those likewise of Tekkenkoor and Berkenkoor, who send their pepper to Porcad, have made an agreement with the East India Company not to supply this article to any other nation [1]. We cannot help saying that such a stipulation is hard both upon the subjects and the settlers; for it gives the East India Company the monopoly of Malabar products and the settlers have no choice of a market, but must perforce sell to the Company when they might obtain a much higher price from other countries. It is true they often find means of exporting their pepper by stealth, but as there are officers posted all round the sea coast, these smuggled goods are often seized and confiscated to the Company. The native princes sometimes participate in these smuggling transactions, though they never dare to confess it, being bound by contract to assist the Company. And indeed in their contracts with that body, they have looked well after their own interests, for they have secured the privilege of exporting on their own account 100 or more candies, which they sell to the merchants at a good price. The contracts are renewed every year, when the East India Company send two members from the Council to make an agreement about the price with the merchants in the presence of the Rajahs of Porcad, Kulli-Quilon and Quilon. When the price is settled, presents are offered to those princes. In Cochin and Chetwa, however, this does not take place, the price in those countries being always fixed. The pepper costs generally 11½ or 12 ducats per kandy of 500 lbs. but this sum does not all to go to the merchants, and they are obliged to pay a duty of half a ducat in some places, and more in the South, to the Rajah of the country.

The East India Company have never succeeded in persuading the Rajahs of Travancore and Colastri, and still less the Zamorin, to enter into a similar compact, because they are aware that it must be prejudicial to their interests. For being free to sell their pepper to anyone, they have the advantage of being able to demand a much higher price for it; and they also prevent its being properly sifted and cleansed, so that it is very inferior in quality. This pepper is chiefly bought by the English, and sent not only to Europe, but through private traders to Persia, Surat, Mocha, Coromandel, and Bengal, thereby causing detriment to the Company's traffic in those parts.

1. Note 3, pp. 407—408.

The French are engaged in this trade at Calicut, and the Danes at Eddawa, a place near Quilon: but having little money and less credit, it is but little they can accomplish. The new merchants of Ostend also are beginning to take part in it; but as they pay too high a price for their pepper (as well as for their linen goods), it is probable they make but little profit by it. The Zamorin has granted to the four chief princes of Malabar the exclusive right of exporting this article [1].

The second plant that flourishes here and is exported to Europe, is the turmeric, called by the natives Burri-Burri, or native saffron [2]. This root is found in South Malabar, but too poor for exportation by the Company: they purchase the better sort, which grows in the north, in the territories of the Zamorin and Colastri. The turmeric plant closely resembles ginger, both in its root and leaf, and is planted every year. When ripe, the root is cut up, steeped in water, and then spread on mats or cloths to dry in the sun. It is used in Europe, as a dye, and in India in the preparation of a dish they call curry, which has a yellow colour. Its price is 10 ducats per kandy, and the East India Company collect at Calicut and Cannanore generally 200 kandies in a season.

The third production of Malabar which is exported to Europe is the cardamom [3]; I am not aware that the true cardamom grows in any other part of the world. Two different species of this plant are found here one in Cochin or South Malabar, and the other, generally known by the name of Cannanore cardamom, in the Kingdom of Colastri. The first is the poorest of the two, and is not exported by the East India Company, but by the inhabitants, the English and others, who send it to Surat, Persia, Mocha, Coromandel, and Bengal, where the *Mussalmans* use it in their food, and particularly in a dish of rice called brinsje. This cardamom fetches, on the average, two or three shillings per lb. The Cannanore species is rounder in shape, and more pleasant to the taste. Its price rises annually, as it is much in request with the English, and at present amounts to 100 ducats per kandy. The Company's demand is fluctuating, but the average quantity sold amounts to 20,000 or 30,000 lbs.

The cardamom grows on long stalks which spring out of the earth, the pods hanging on them in long bunches, rather far apart. When the weather is dry, the cardamom is white, but if rain falls

1. Note 4, pp. 408—409.
2. Note 5, p. 409.
3. Note 6, pp. 410—412.

while it is ripening, the bark or rind becomes brown; it then easily bursts and the little kernels fall out and are picked up by the natives and sold, though at a much lower price, generally for a shilling and a half per lb. When the cardamom is gathered, the stalks are burnt in the field, the ashes being serviceable for manure. This cardamom is not sown, but the land produces it spontaneously, the roots spreading along and under the soil, like those of the reed. When the cultivators wish to make the roots sprout up, they take heavy rollers with which they press them into the soul. They generally suffer the ground to lie fallow for a year, and in the second year roll and manure it to make it produce fruit. I have enquired of the natives whether the seeds might not be sown, and new cardamom fields be made in this way; but they replied in the negative, saying that the seeds would indeed germinate, but the stem would not grow bigger and thicker than a needle, and would whither away of itself. From this it appears that this plant is indigenous to certain districts, and cannot be grown in any other. Supposing indeed the case were otherwise, it may be that the natives would not allow it: for it yields the much more profit than pepper does, especially at Cananore.

In conclusion, I will mention the areca [1], the trade in which is carried on throughout nearly the whole of the East Indies. You know of course enough of the appearance of this tree from books of travels, to be aware that its fruit springs out of its side, after having been for some time enclosed within a sort of rind, when the tree appears to be distended; till the fruit, having become hardy enough to brave the open air, bursts from its covering. You are also aware that throughout the East Indies this fruit is chewed, together with a leaf called *Betel* [2] (a plant which grows like the pepper tree, and has similar leaves), a little lime being also mixed with it. It cleanses the mouth by its acridity, and makes the saliva blood-red, but when it is much indulged in, it corrodes the enamel of the teeth, so that they become black, with those who chew it in great quantities. The Areca serves the hindoos for dyeing, for which purpose quantities of it are dried and exported to Coromandel and Surat. The East India Company have made great efforts to appropriate to themselves the areca trade on this coast, but have not succeeded. But they have monopolized the trade in Ceylon, in spite of the dissatisfaction of the king of Kandy, and I am told, again 100,000 rix dollars yearly by it. In this country the natives traffic with it, and its

1. Note 7, pp. 412—416.
2. Note 8, pp. 417—422.

price varies, the kandy being worth sometimes 3¼, sometimes 4 rix dollars. There are also different sorts of areca, the common sort, the scented sort, the white, and the red, among which consumers may purchase according to their taste.

May Heaven prosper commerce, the sinews of our State.

LETTER XXVII.

Description of the Cocoa Palm, the Malabar Cinnamon, and Coffee shrub—Sanctity of Cows and Snakes in the eyes of the Malabars—Great Snakes—Quantity of Crocodiles—Dangerous Kites—Fire Flies.

When I reflect on the happy country life you lead, far remote from the turmoil in which most mortals are involved, your senses daily regaled with the sight of flowers and the scent of blossoming forests, pleasant tracts of clover field lying before you with dew drops like diamonds hanging on every blade and leaf, my heart is filled with sadness at the contrast afforded by the dreary meadows inhabited by noxious monsters, that surround me. But as there are novelties to be met with among the animals and vegetables here, which are unknown in the Netherlands, I hope you will not find it irksome if I give you some account of the most remarkable that occur to me.

The cocoa palm[1], which is the most useful of all trees to man, adorns the shores of Malabar with its lofty crown. It would be tedious to repeat all that has been said of its excellencies, for there is no part of it which is not serviceable for some purpose or other. It appears to thrive best under the influence of the cool sea breeze and near the salt waters of the sea; for, in more inland situations it is found to languish. It seems also as though it delighted in human society, being much fresher and more fruitful in the neighbourhood of houses than in retired places.

The Creator, whose wisdom is apparent in all His works, would seem to have bestowed especial thought on this tree. The long slender trunk, laden at the top with fruit, he has provided with a multitude of fibres which take root on all sides in the soil, thereby enabling the tree to withstand the blasts of the wind. The bark is enveloped in a kind of tissue, which some of the natives make into cloaks. The fruit yields water for the thirsty, food for the hungry, oil for culinary purposes and fuel for the lamp. If you wish to extract wine from it, you must make an incision in the top of the tree, and hang vessels round it; and from

1. Note 1, pp. 423—437.

the would there gradually drops a liquid which would otherwise circulated into the fruit. But now mark the wonderful change which this liquid undergoes. At first, it is sweet and rather nasty and as mild as our whey; but it soon becomes strong enough to cause intoxication. Vinegar, and sugar of a brown and clayey sort, may also be made from it. This liquid is a profitable article of commerce to the Company. At Batavia they distil from it a beverage as strong as brandy, which is mixed with brown sugar and called arrack, this is sent to all parts of India, and brings in a good revenue. The upper end of the trunk of the cocoa palm is soft, and when the bark is opened a sort of pith of a white hue is found inside, called *Palmyt*, soft and delicious to the taste, and not unlike the cauliflower: but, what is chiefly remarkable to a naturalist, in this part is found the germ of the fruit and its shoots, neatly enclosed in a tube or sheath.

I shall give you no description of the pineapple[1], jack fruit[2], mango[3], cashew nut[4], and other Malabar fruits. All books of travels abound in plates and descriptions of them. But it is right to remark that the cinnamon[5] is found here: not the fine, pleasant, species which grows in Ceylon, but a wild species, having a rough, thick bark, like that of the *China-China*, and a strong disagreeable flavour. The root of this tree is fit for yielding oil, and the oil which is procured from the rind is at first red, but gradually decomposes and settles down into a kind of camphor. The natives use this cinnamon in cookery, and as it is very cheap, costing less than a stiver per pound, there is no demand here for the better kind. The English contrive to sell this Malabar cinnamon in an underhand way in other places.

The coffee shrub is planted in gardens for pleasure, and yields plenty of fruit which attains a proper degree of ripeness[6]. But it has not the refined taste of the Mocha coffee. An entire new plantation of coffee shrubs has been laid out at Ceylon, with what success, time will shew. If it thrive, great advantage no doubt will accrue to the East India Company, who will not thus be compelled to purchase such quantities from Mocha, where the price is very high and continually rising on account of the concourse of European traders from all parts, while for the same reason the

1. Note 2, p. 437.
2. Note 3, pp. 437—444.
3. Note 4, pp. 444—445.
4. Note 5, pp. 445—447.
5. Note 6, pp. 447—449.
6. Note 8, pp. 450—451.

value of the European and Indian wares brought there, is greatly diminished.

This country of Malabar, though mountainous in the interior, contains but little mineral wealth, except iron, which is not expensive here, and is exported to Mocha after being beaten out in small bars. The natives make their firelocks of this metal, and their swords likewise, though they prefer cutlasses of European workmanship. The loadstone is very cheap here. You can get it for 1 shilling per lb. But whether it is found here, or, as some have told me, is brought from the Maldives, I cannot positively say.

And now to pass on to the subject of animal life. [1] You have heard perhaps that animals are esteemed holy among the Malabars,[2] a coincidence with, or possibly an imitation of, the superstition of the ancient Egyptians, among whom the slaughter of a cow was reckoned a heinous crime. A rajah, when he mounts the throne, must take an oath to protect cows, brahmins and women. They cannot comprehend how we, Europeans, can be so cruel as to kill an animal which yields milk and butter for man's sustenance. Therefore the places where cows are slaughtered are looked upon as unholy, and whenever they can prevent the act they do so. Among themselves any one who kills a cow is held guilty of murder, and though the murder of a man may be expiated by the payment of a sum of money, mercy is not easily extended to the crime of cow-killing. It is true that cows are daily brought into the town of Cochin which have been stolen by Christians belonging to the Company's jurisdiction, and we are obliged to wink at this practice, or punish the robbery, if discovered, by only a slight fine, or otherwise we should have to go without meat altogether.

It is not a little remarkable and must be ascribed to the wise decrees of Providence that although beef is prohibited to all natives and to Christians living under native rule, yet the number of cows does not greatly increase.

When a native is dying he takes hold of the tail of a cow which is brought alive to his bed-side: and some image that by doing this they are conducted to heaven.[3] Thus the cow's tail serves much the same purpose to them, as wax tapers to the members of the Romish church, and in place

1. Note 9, pp. 451—453.
2. Note 10, pp. 453—455.
3. Note 11, pp. 455—456.

of holy water, they take cow dung, and spread it on their benches, floors and stairs, believing that the evil spirit cannot make his way over it to do them harm. They use this substance also in their purifications.[1]

If a cow happens to die, the hide is stripped off by a certain caste or race, who are held in much the same low estimation with them, as flayers are among us. As the natives do not wear shoes, these skins are sold to the Company, a bundle or 20 pieces for 16 stivers; and they are sent to Ceylon where they are used for packing cinnamon.

There are great quantities of snakes here.[2] Not only do they infest woods and fields, but they get into towns and houses also. We lose our fear of them in a great measure, from habit, but there is no doubt that they are very poisonous, and will kill a person who accidently treads upon them. Otherwise, they rather try to escape from us. The natives esteem them as almost divine and hold their lives sacred.[3] The cobra capella is the most reverenced. Its head is flat, broad and arched, and on its back is a figure resembling a pair of spectacles. The natives perform their *Sombaien*, or obeisance, to these snakes, and keep a bit of their gardens partitioned off in honour of them, and for the chance of their arrival. They burn a lamp, and place a dish of rice in these enclosures once a year. To such an extent do they carry the superstition, that whenever they find a dead cobra capella, they consider themselves bound to burn its body with a small piece of sandalwood, a grain of gold, pearl dust, corals, etc., using the same ceremonies as at the burning of a person of one of the high castes. The European soldiers and sailors sometimes turn this custom to their own account: first they kill a snake and then sell it for a fanam or two to the superstitious Canarese, who buy it for the sake of giving it a good funeral. The cobra capellas are also used by the serpent charmers in their arts—they are taught to dance, being enclosed in separate baskets with which the charmers go about from house to house. In these dances they do not spring up on their tail, as travellers are wont to tell us, but merely twist themselves and raise the upper part of the body, which is no doubt their natural attitude when they sit upright, so that there is nothing marvellous in it. Moreover their poison has been carefully extracted, by making them bite some hard material, in consequence of which the vessels in the mouth containing the venom are broken. When a snake moves in this manner, one man blows

1. Note 12, pp. 456—457.
2. Note 13, pp. 457—474.
3. Note 14, pp. 474—498.

on an instrument whilst another holds the cover of the basket over the snake, which keeps striking at it with its mouth as though t would bite if it could. The charmers are sometimes cheated by these snakes, if they are incautious in their management, so that it has become a proverb among the Malabars, that "the Carnakken (men who ride on elephants) and snake-charmers seldom die their natural death". When the dance is over they close the cover of the flat basket over the snake's head, and it creeps in of its own accord. In the mountains and remote jungles of this country there is a species of snake of the shape and thickness of the stem of a tree, which can swallow men and beasts entire. I have been told an amusing story about one of these snakes. It is said that at Barcelore, a chego had climbed up a cocoanut tree to draw toddy or palm wine, and as he was coming down, both his legs were seized by a snake which had stretched itself up alongside the tree with its mouth wide open, and was sucking him in gradually as he descended. Now, the Indian, according to the custom of his country, had stuck his *Teifermes* (an instrument not unlike a pruning knife) into his girdle, with the curve turned outwards: and when he was more than half swallowed the knife began to rip up the body of the snake so as to make an opening, by which the lucky man most unexpectedly was able to escape.

Though the snakes in this country are so noxious to the natives, yet the natives' veneration for them is still maintained. No one dares to injure them or drive them away by violence, and so audacious do they become, that they will sometimes creep between people's legs when they are eating, and attack their bowls of rice, in which case retreat is necessary until the monsters have satiated themselves and taken their departure.

The crocodiles or caymans also abound here[1], and are venerated by the Malabars. They are not so large or dangerous as those of Java. Most of the tanks and ponds of Malabar contain these animals, and they are found likewise in marshy places. They abound in the rainy season, when the plains are filled with water. I have myself seen six or seven of them in the short space between the town and the Company's gardens, about half an hour's distance. They are not very mischievous on dry land, but in the water they are more dreaded, as they occasionally drag a person down.

The tiger and elephant are so well known that I need not describe them here. I should mention however that in the fine

1. Note 15, pp. 498—500.

season a certain species of kite[1] is found here which I have never met with elsewhere. It is of an ugly red colour, furnished with sharp claws with which it snatches pieces of meat from a window, or fish and other eatables from men's hands or basins as they go up the streets, and then flies away with its booty. Though so much given to thieving, kites do great good within the town, acting as scavengers for the natives, who are by no means so neat in their habits as the people of Holland and Friesland. During the war of 1716 and 1717, they followed the army, finding abundant food to satisfy their hunger.

A little insect called the fire-fly[2] is found in India; it is very small in size, and emits a bright sparkling light, which can be seen glittering at a distance in the evening. A species of bird resembling our sparrow, which builds very peculiar nests in the shape of a sheath, is endowed by nature with the power of attracting these insects, as if for the purpose of obtaining their light in its nest. The substance which emits the light is situated in the extremity of the insect's body which in day-light, or after death, is as white as wax, if the insect's mouth is pressed, so as to hinder its respiration, the light is dimmed, but it shines out again brighter than before as soon as the pressure is removed.

1. Note 16, p. 500.
2. Note 17, p. 500.

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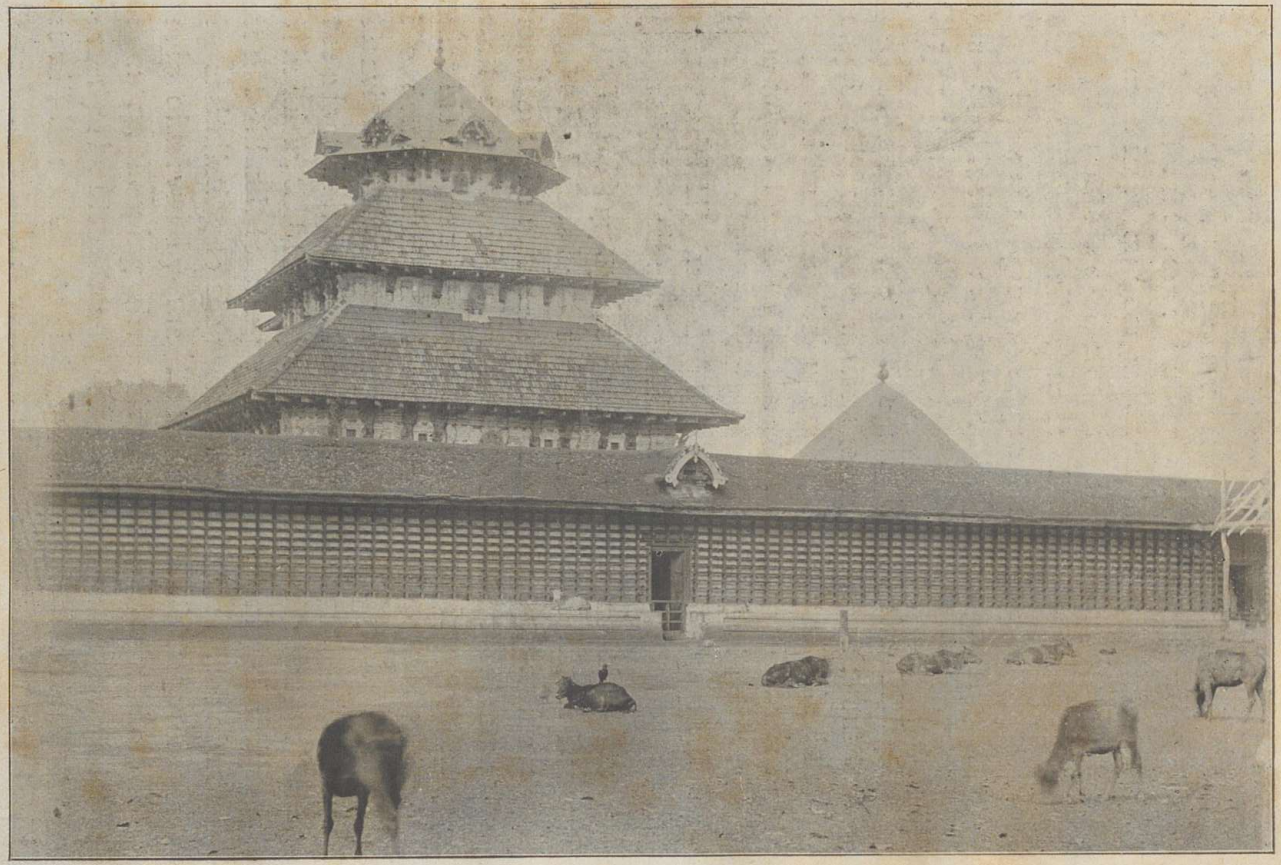

PERUMANAM TEMPLE.

NOTES ON

Visscher's LETTERS FROM MALABAR.

LETTER XXIII.

1. **Malabar Temples.** The subject of religion is so closely associated with that of temples, which are houses where religious worship is performed that it will not be out of place to say something here about the religion of the Malabar people.

Just as Malabar is a museum of races, where you can see side by side the highest and the lowest types of humanity, ranging from the Naṃpūṭiris to the Kāṭirs, you have also the most undiluted form of the highest, the most abstract form of religion of Southern India, Vēdāṇṭism, standing cheek by jowl with the most entirely primitive from of Animism. At one end there is the Naṃpūṭiri who has latterly been influenced by Vēḍāṇṭism, that wonderful religious idea of the existence of one spirit or Āṭman, the only reality, outside which the world and all besides is mere illusion, and which doctrine is wrapped up in the three words Ēkam ēva aḍviṭīyam, there is but one being without a second. At the other end we have the most primitive form of animism, spirit worship, fetish worship, tree and plant worship and animal worship practised by the aboriginal hill tribes inhabiting the high mountains of the Western Ghats. Cowed down and oppressed by the magnitude of their mountainous surroundings, the primitive tribes that inhabit these virgin forests see in everything that arrests their attention an evil spirit

which, unless propitiated, will be in their eyes, a source of eternal annoyance. Between the Aryan or Dravidian idea of an abstract unity without a second and the aboriginal idea of numberless spirits that inhabit these limitless space, there are various grades of belief, one a shade different from the other. The Nāyars, who form the most important community inhabiting Malabar, are observers of forms of worship which partake of the characteristics of all or most of the above. In fact, their ideas of religion are more Dravidian than Aryan, modified, indeed, and improved by close contact with Aryan forms of worship.

Taken as a whole, the religion of the Malayāḷīs may be said to come under the term 'Hindu'; but that term should then be understood to "include in its denotation the faith of the yōgi, entranced in meditation on the Brahman, no less than that of the purely ceremonial Hindu and of those classes of the population generally known as the Hill-tribes".

The Naṃpūṭiries' religion is certainly of the Vēḍas. His is by far the purest form of Vēḍic Brāhmanism to be met with in Southern India, or, for the matter of that, in India itself. Yet the fact remains that his religion has been influenced to a large extent by the demonolatory and ancestor worship of the early Dravidians whom he conquered and subdued. Such is the adaptability of Brāhmanism, we may almost say of Hinduism, that the Aryan settlers from the north found it not difficult to bring about a community of religion by assimilating to themselves many of the forms of worship observed by the Dravidian inhabitants of the country, keeping themselves in the meanwhile discreetly aloof from many of its most gross forms. Thus it will be no strange sight to see an orthodox Naṃpūṭiri worshipping his ancestors, also trees and plants such as the Peepul or *Asvattha* (*Ficus religiosa*) the *Bilva* (*Aegle marmelos*), the *Tulasi* (*Ocymum Sanctum*), the *Asoka* (*Jonesia Asoka*), and animals and birds such as

the cow, and the Brahmani Kite, and stones such as the *Salagramam* and the *lingam*. Serpent worship too takes a peculiar and important place in their cult. It will also be seen that the Hindu Pantheon has absorbed to itself and assigned a place to the various demons and deities venerated by the lower classes, so much so that it would be difficult at present to differentiate between the principals and their accessories. While the refined forms of worship of the Aryan gods have been prejudicially affected by association with the worship of the grosser deities of primitive peoples, it must be remarked that the religion of the latter has been considerably improved by its coming in touch with the more refined form of Aryan worship.

The religion of the common people is not however that of the Vēḍas. It is not a degraded form of Brahmanism either; but it is rather an elevated form of earlier Dravidian religion; a very different thing. As already observed, the demons and the rude divinities that once occupied and absorbed the care and attention of their early worshippers have now been relegated to the lower end, while the refined gods of the Aryan or Dravidian Pantheon have been accorded the places hitherto occupied by them. The refining policy set on foot from the earlier days of Aryan conquest worked itself by degrees, with the assistance and co-operation of the Brahmans themselves till at last even the theistic idea of ancient Brahmanism itself has begun to find a place in the complex belief of the lower orders of the Malayāli community. The process has been one of slow and silent evolution, and it is going on still. The animists and demon worshippers of the hills are being silently but steadily absorbed into the fold of modern Hinduism, and we see these aboriginal tribes as also the higher orders such as the Īḷavās eagerly advancing to take their place as devout worshippers of the Aryan Trinity.

The Hindu worships the Supreme Being under three forms, Brahma, Viṣhṇu, and Śiva respectively

the creative, the preservative, and the destructive forces. Rāma, Kṛshṇa, and other divinities are but later developments of Pauranic Hinduism. Even with regard to the Trinity or Ṭṛimūṛṭī, Professor Wilson observes: "neither is there (in the Vēḍas itself, speaking of the gods of the Vēḍas) the slightest hint of another important feature of later Hinduism, the Trimurti, or Tri-une combination of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, as typified by the mystical one, although, according to high authority on the religions of antiquity the Trimurti was the first element in the faith of the Hindus and the second was the *lingum*"[1]. The Mālayāḷis make no difference among the followers of Viṣhṇu, Śiva, Bhagavaṭi, or Rāma. They do not know one from the other except in name. Sectarian differences are altogether unknown in Malabar, at any rate, in the combative spirit in which they exist elsewhere in India. As pointed out by one Travancore Census Reporter: "The later developments of Hinduism have not acquired here those sharp distinctions which seem to have crystalised elsewhere into mutually exclusive sects, the adherents of each worshipping a particular deity to the exclusion of others. If any preferential adoration is shown by any person, it is generally because the deity that receives it is the presiding *Murti* in the village temple or is his *Ishta Devata* or *Kula Daivam* (family deity). Such special worship is not exclusive as against other deities"[2]. "Nowhere in Malabar will one see the differences obtaining amongst the Sri Vaishnavas of Conjeevaram who are divided into the Tenkalay and Vadakalay sects, each hating the other with the most acrid bitterness." The Malayāḷis, Naṃpūṭiris included, have never been known to differentiate between Śiva and Viṣhṇu as a point of religious dogma. They worship both alike as different manifestations of the same godhead. They accord no precedence to any single head

1. Wilson's *Rig Veda*, Vol. I, pp XXVI—XXVII.
2. Page 87.

of the Trinity. In their view, all the three are of equal position, their functions being sometimes interchangeable. Their faith may be well expressed in the words of the great Sanskrit poet Kālidāsa, the Shakespeare of India, as rendered ino English by Griffith:—

"In those three Persons the one God was shown—
Each first in place each last—not one above;
Of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva each may be
First, second, third, among the blessed Three."

Kumarasambhavam.

They take the philosophic view that "consciousness, perception and objectivity, the three aspects or categories of Being, or the seven aspects into which they may be divided, are not separate isolated natures and their graduals unfolding does not constitute three different and distinct processes; all three are but phases, aspects or facets of the One Being in the evolution and involution of which consists the life of the universe."

Brahma. Though first in the order of Trinity, Brahma has few temples dedicated to his worship, not only in Malabar but in all India. The temple of Brahma Puṣhkar, situated in the midst of the hills on the margin of a beautiful lake, seven miles from Ajmere, is perhaps, the most important shrine where he is worshipped. He has, however, a place assigned to him, quite a minor one, in some temples. In Travancore, some of the oldest temples, such as those at Ṭiruvallam and Valia Chālai near Trivandrum, are dedicated to him as well as to Viṣhṇu and Śiva. At Miṭṟānanḍapuram, within the Trivandrum Fort, there are, within a few yards of each other, separate shrines to Brahma, Viṣhṇu, and Śiva. So also at Chēṅṅamangalam in the Cochin State.

Vishnu. The worship of Viṣhṇu, as such, as also in the several forms of his various incarnations, is universal. He is perhaps the most popular of the Hindu

deities. While the grim Śiva is awe-inspiring, the mild and beneficent Viṣhṇu as Rāma and Kṛṣhṇa are rather inviting and loveable. His various incarnations are recorded in the Purāṇas and Iṭihāsas of which the Bhāgavaṭa, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārāṭa constitute the chief portion of the popular religious literature of the Malayāli Hindus. There are many important Viṣhṇu shrines in Malabar. The more important ones in Travancore are:— those of Śrī Paḍmanābha at Trivandrum, of Āḍī Kēśava Perumāl at Tiruvettur, of Janārḍana at Varklay and of Kṛṣhṇa at Neyyāṯṯunkaray and Ambalappuḷay; among those in Cochin and British Malabar are the shrines of Kṛṣhṇa at Trippūṇiṭṭuray, Chittūr and Guruvāyur.

Siva. He is considered the most powerful of the Triad. He is Mahāḍēva or Mahēśwara, the great God, Śambhu, the Auspicious, Īśwara or Viśwēśwara, the Supreme Lord; Ḍigambara, "he who is clothed with space;" Aṛḍhanārīśwara (God whose half is woman), symbolical of "duality and unity of the generative act and production of the universe from the union of the two eternal elements Prakriti, and Purusha, Maya and Brahmam." He is the destroyer as well as the regenerator of the universe, "perpetually re-integrating after disintegration." "He is the great typical ascetic and self-mortifier (yogi, Tapasvi), who has attained the highest perfection in meditation and austerity..... ..... It is in this character that he teaches men by his own example the power to be acquired by mortification of the body, suppression of the passions, and abstract contemplation, as leading to the loftiest spiritual knowledge and ultimately effecting union with himself in Kailasa".

The *lingum* or phallus, with its usual accompaniment, is now the universal and sole emblem of Śiva worship. There are in Malabar many temples dedicated to the worship of Śiva. The more important ones are: In Travancore, the shrine of Śṭāṇu Mūṛṭi at

Suchīndram near Nagerkoil, Perinṭirukōvalappan at Vaikam and Mahādēva at Ettumānūr. In Cochin, Chiḍambarēśwara at Tiruvanjikulam and Vaṭakunnaṭhan at Trichur, Kirāṭamūrṭṭi at Erṇākulam.

Other deities besides the *Trimoorti* are also worshipped, but only as tutelary deities. The chief among them are *Vighneswara*, *Subramaniya* and *Sasta*, all of whom are of the Saivite branch. Vighnēśwara, the God of wisdom and remover of all obstacles, is generally known in Malabar by the name Gaṇapaṭi and his image finds a place in every temple. His worship is very popular. He is the son of Śiva and Pārvaṭi and is said to have been conceived and born according to one version, while his parents were sporting in the forests as elephants. Hence his form partakes of the appearance of a human body with an elephant's head. As remover of obstacles, his blessings are invoked for success in the performance of all religious acts; and in fact, before beginning any undertaking. He is looked upon as an embodiment of sagacity, shrewdness, patience and self-reliance; all those qualities that lead to success in life. Hence his extreme popularity.

Subramaṇya is a brother of Gaṇapaṭi, and his worship too is very popular in the Malayalam and Tamil districts of Southern India. He is represented as a most benevolent deity protecting the helpless and avenging the wicked. He is the god of war and leader of the celestial hosts. Some of his well known temples are:—In Travancore, those at Haripād, Uḍayanāpuram and Munnam. In Cochin:—those at Elangunnappuḻa, Vyttila and Ṭṛikkumāramkoṭam.

The chief places of Subramaṇya's worship are, however, situated, outside Malabar, at Paḻani, in the Madura district, and at Ṭiruchanḍūr in the Tinnevelly district. The Malayāḻis, like other Hindus of the Eastern and Western Coast, make vows to the former shrine and fulfil them by carrying what is called a Kāvaṭi. It generally consists of a stick, decorated with

ornamental wood-work tapestry and peacock feathers horizontally placed with a canopy over it and pots attached to both ends. The votary carries this arrangement on his right shoulder, the pots at the ends containing milk or honey or rose-water or some other thing which he had vowed to present to the diety at Paḷani. The pilgrim dresses in reddish orange clothes, shoulders the kāvaṭi and goes accompanied by bells, tomtoms, etc. However opulent the votary may be, he has to go as a beggar in all humbleness and humiliation to deposit his tribute before the God at Paḷani.

Śāsṭa or Ayyappan is another son of Śiva, this time not conceived in the womb of his spouse Pārvaṭi but in the womb of Viṣhṇu in the disguise of a female. His worship is exceedingly popular all over South India. The Kēraḷōṭpaṭṭi states that, in order to stand guard and protect his country of Kēraḷa, Paraśu Rāma built a chain of temples along the Ghauts, dedicated to Śāsṭa, and another along the sea coast to Ḍuṙga. However this may be, there is the fact that the most important Śāsṭa temples are located near the summits of the mountains in the east, while the chief Ḍuṙga shrines, there are 108 of them, lie along the western sea board. Of the Śāsṭa temples, the most important is the one situated on the summit of the Sabarimala in the Chenganūr Taluk, Travancore. Numberless pilgrims flock to this shrine from far and near after qualifying themselves for the worship by a previous disciplinary course of forty-one days (frugal diet and sexual abstinence). Batches after batches of these pilgrims with loads on their heads may be seen all along the line of communication, calling out in unison the name of the God to protect them. The temple is situated on a steep hill and approach under ordinary circumstances is difficult. But religious enthusiasm, may be religious frenzy, sets at naught all physical difficulties and pilgrims to the number of several thousands annually undertake this journey to the

secluded shrine of Ayyappan in the thickness of the forest. The auspicious date of worship is the first of Makaram.

Coming to Vaishnavite deities, there are many of them who receive worship in Malabar, such as Kṛshṇa, Rāma, Narasimha, Lakṣhmaṇa and Bharaṭa.

There are indeed temples where an amalgamated form of Śiva and Viṣhṇu is worshipped as Śankaranārayaṇa; and the adoration of Śāsṭa, the issue of the couple, is another example of nonsectarian worship.

There are also female deities worshipped. But all of them partake of the character of the worship of their spouses. Such as Saraswaṭi, the wife of Brahma, Lekṣhmi, the wife of Viṣhṇu, and Pārvaṭi, the wife of Śiva. The grosser forms of female divinities worshipped are those of Bhaḍra Kāli, Chāmuṇḍa, etc. Of the temples where such deities are worshipped, those at Maṇṇadi, Mandakād, Koduṇgallūr and Kottyoor may be specially mentioned. Their worship involves bloody sacrifices and the Naṃpūṭiris always keep away, though they are never slow to extol the merits of such worship.

At Mūkkōla is a shrine where the deity worshipped takes the form both of a male and a female.

There are a number of minor tutelary deities worshipped by various classes of people, more or less advanced in the idea of religion. Almost every house in Malabar has or had but till recently, a place set apart for the worship of such tutelary deities to whom sacrifices are offered occasionally, so that, alongside with the more refined worship of Vedic and Pauranic deities, one is apt to find the grosser forms of worship offered to these family divinities. And no one need be surprised at this. For as observed by Dr. Fraser in his Golden Bough. "As in Europe, beneath a superficial layer of Christianity, a belief in magic and witchcraft, in ghosts, goblins, has always survived, and even

flourished.....So it has been, and so it is in the East. Brahmanism, Bhuddism, Islam, may come and go, but the belief in magic and demons remains unshaken through them all and, if we may judge of the future from the past, is likely to survive the rise and fall of other historical religions".

Demonolatory exists in Malabar to a large extent, hough it is confined mostly to the lower orders. Unconnected, though it be, with the higher forms of Hinduism, even the Brahmans are not free from the fear they entertain of the power of the devils to do mischief and cause injury to human beings. The Nampūṭiris themselves do not worship these devils or partake in the worship offered by their votaries. But they do not hesitate, as occasion arises, to cause devil worship to be performed by the lower classes. "The spirits of depraved men, of those who have met with a violent death by drowning, hanging or other means, are believed to become demons and wander about, inflicting injury in various ways upon mankind. It is supposed that these having been cut short of their legitimate existence in this world before the expiry of the full period allowed them, their spirits have to spend the unexpired portion of their lives before they meet with reward or punishment adequate to their deeds. At noon as well as at midnight the devils are supposed to lie in wait for seizing or 'possessing' those who walk in lonely places or under the tamarind trees or on the shores of tanks. Iron rings, iron staffs or leather shoes are considered to afford protection against their influence. At night the devil is believed to call loudly in order to allure people out of their homes into distant jungles, there to kill them. Hence calls at night are never responded to until the fourth repetition, for devils would not call more than thrice. At the period of puberty and after childbirth, women are peculiarly liable to the attacks of demons and these are the cause of convulsions and similar disorders. The sudden

illnesses of children and adults are also believed to arise in the same way. The devils which have such power to afflict mankind are appeased by sacrifices, and their influence averted by harms and incantations. The greater number of them are supposed to reside in trees, many are constant wanderers, while others are dwellers of houses. The trees and other places believed to be thus haunted are always approached with very great fear and none dare approach them during nights."[1]

The worship of animals, birds, reptiles, plants and other objects have also to be noticed. Of animals, the cow and the bull are the most sacred objects of worship. The cow is Kamāḍhēnu, the giver of all things. The bull (Nanḍi) is Śiva's vehicle. The elephant is the form in which the God Gaṇapaṭi was born. The monkeys formed the army of Rāma, and their chief Hanumān, has temples dedicated to him. Fishes and crocodiles are reared in tanks and reservoirs attached to temples, as they are held to be favourites of the gods to whom whose shrines are dedicated. Among birds, Garuda, the Brahmani kite, is most worshipped. It is the Vāhanam of Viṣhṇu. The peacock is a favourite of Brahma, Saraswaṭi, and Subramaṇya and receives due attention. Of reptiles the serpent and the common house lizard deserve mention.

Of stones worshipped, the Sāḷagrāmam and the Śiva Lingam deserve prominent mention. The use and value of Sāḷagrāmams is thus explained by a writer in an issue of the *Madras Mail* in March 1906:—"Salagrimams are fossible cephalopodes such as Anammonite or Blenorite, and are found chiefly in the bed of the Gandak river, a mountain torrent which, rising in the lofty mountains of Nepal, flows into the Ganges at Salagrami, a village from which they take their name, and which is not far from the sacred city of Benares In appearance they are small black shiny pebbles of various shapes, usually round or oval, with a peculiar

1. *The Travancore State Manual*, Vol. II, p. 55.

natural hole in them. They have certain marks and often are flecked and inlaid with gold. The name Salagram is of Sanskrit derivation, from *Sara chakra*, the weapon of Vishṇu, *grava*, a stone, the *chakra* or *chakram* being represented on the stone by queer spiral lines, probably believed to be engraved thereon at the request of Vishṇu by the creator. Brahma, who, in the form of a worm, bores the holes known as *Vadanas* and traces the spiral coil that gives the stone its name.....The mystic river Gandaki is within the jurisdiction of the Maharaja of Nepal and is jealously guarded on both banks, while the four special places where the sacred stones are mostly picked up are leased out under certain conditions, the most important being, that all true Salagrams found are to be submitted to the Maharaja. These are then tested, the selected ones retained and the others returned to the lessee. The first test of the Salagrams to prove if they are genuine is very simple, but later they are put through other ordeals to try their supernatural powers. Each stone, as it is discovered, is struck on all sides with a small hammer, or, in some cases, is merely knocked with the finger. This causes the soft powdery part produced by the boring of the worm, to fall in and disclose the *Vadana* or hole, which may, in those of the more valuable Salagrams, contain gold or a precious gem.....There are over eighteen known different kinds of true Salagrams, the initial value of which varies according to the shapes and markings of the stone. The price of any one Salagram may be so enhanced after the further tests have been applied that even a lakh of rupees will fail to purchase it, and should experience prove the stone a lucky one, nothing will, as a rule, induce the fortunate owner to part with it. The three shapes of Salagrams most highly prized are known as the *Vishnu Salagram*, the *Lekshmi Narasimha Salagram*, and the *Mutchya Murti Salagram*. The first has a chakram on it, the shape of a garland and bears marks known as the *Shenker gadar padma*, or

the weapons of Viṣhṇu, and is peculiar to that god. The second has two chakrams on the left of the *Vadana* and has dots or specks all over it. This stone, if properly worshipped, is believed to ensure to its owner prosperity and enternal life. The third, the *Mutchya Murthi*, is a long shaped flat stone with a *Vadana* that gives it a resemblance to the face of a fish. It bears two *chakrams*, one inside and one outside the *Vadana* and also has specks and dots on it in the shape of a shoe. There are four or five varieties of this species and it also, if duly worshipped, will infallibly enrich its possessor. One Salagram there is which has no *Vadana* and is known as the *Oogra chakra* Salagram. It is quite round with two chakrams, but it is not a particularly safe one to possess and is described as 'furious Salagram', for if not worshipped with sufficient ardour, it will recent the neglect and ruin the owner. There are many other kinds, but space will not admit of a detailed description of them. Again, possession of them without worship is believed by all Hindus to be most unlucky, and as none but Brahmans can perform the worship, none but Brahmans will retain the stones in their keeping. For an orthodox Brahman household, the ownership of three or more stones is an absolute necessity. These must be duly worshipped and washed in water, and the water drunk as *tirtha*, and sacrifice of boiled rice and other food must be daily performed. When this is done, speedy success in all business of life will fall to the lot of the inmates of the house, but otherwise ruin and disgrace await them".

Among plants and trees may be mentioned the Ṭulasi (*Ocimum Sanctum*), the Aṣvaṭha (*Fiscus religiosa*) and the Bilva (*Aegle Marmelos*).

Temples. Coming to the subject of temples or houses where the deities are worshipped, Professor Wilson says that temples find no mention in the Vedas. In his Introduction to the *Rig Veda*, Professor Wilson observes—"There is no mention of any temple, or any

reference to a public place of worship, and it is clear that the worship was purely domestic." The Vedic people did not raise temples because of the peculiar nature of their worship at that time which did not then require such edifices. The forms of worship prevailing in the Vedic age were widely different from that prevailing at present under popular practice. The worship which the Vedic hymns describe, "comprehends offerings, prayer and praise, the former are chiefly oblatious and libatious,—clarified butter poured on fire, and the expressed and fermented juice of the Soma plant, presented in ladles to the deities invoked in what manner does not exactly appear, although it seems to have been sometimes sprinkled on the fire, sometimes on the ground, or rather on the Kusa, or sacred grass, strewed on the floor and in all cases the residue was drunk by the assistants. The ceremony takes place in the dwelling of the worshipper, in a chamber appropriated to the purpose and probably to the maintenance of a perpetual fire although the frequent allusions to the occasional kindling of the sacred flame are rather at variance with this practice."[1] This form of worship needed no separate public place specially set apart for it. Further it is extremely doubtful if the Vedic Indians made use of images to represent their gods. The better opinion is that they did not. For Max Muller says, "The religion of the Veda knows of no idols. The worship of idols in India is a secondary formation, a later degradation of the more primitive worship of ideal gods"[2]. Dr. Bollenson, however, thinks that the vedic hymns contain clear references to the images of gods. Dr. Muir while noticing the specific texts quoted by Dr. Bollenson leaves the question open.[3] Dr. Bollenson argues from the vedic gods being called *divo naras*, "men of the sky"

1. Wilson's *Rig Veda*, Vol. I, xxiii, xxiv.
2. *Chips from a German Workshop*. Vol 1, p. 38.
3. Muir's Texts, Vol 5, p. 453.

or *nirpisas*, "having the form of men," that the Indians did not merely in imagination assign human forms to their gods, but also represented them in a sensible manner. Upon this Pandit Prannath Saraswati pertinently remarks, "I confess my inability to follow the latter part of the argument. By parity of reasoning, when the Book of Genesis speaks "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness ..... So God created man in his *own* image, in the image of God created he him" .... we ought to assume that in the time of Moses, the Jews worshipped their God by making human images". The learned Pandit refers to Psalm XI verse 4, Psalm XVII verse 8 and *Psalm* XVIII verses 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, and argues that from these we shall have to conclude that the Jews in David's time worshipped their national God, as a visible image with hands and feet and wings, riding on a cherub and holding arrows in his hands.[1]

In later literature, such as the *Adbhuta Brahmana* of the *Sama veda*, the *Adbhutadhyaya* or the chapter on Omens and Portents in the *Kausika Sutra*, etc., images of gods are mentioned. When we come to the Pauranic period, the practice of worshipping images of gods had become crystalised.

R. C. Dutt points out that temple worship and temple building were not a part of the Hindu religion before the Bhuddhistic revolution, and that Hindu temple architecture commences only with the 6th century A. D.[2]

1. *Tagore Law Lectures Hindu Law of Endowments* p. 37.
2. Ancient India, Vol 3, p. 344—5.

According to the vedic Hindu religion, there was no worship of gods in temples. The Buddhists started viharas where they worshipped Buddha. Viharas were not mere places of worship. They were educational institutions where knowledge of all kinds, material and spiritu al, were imparted to people and cases effected of all diseases gratis.

When Buddhism was extirpated from Kerala, Viharas were converted into temples. (*Bhadanta Nagarjuna's Rasa Vaiseshika Sutras* edited by Dr. K. S. Menon, M. A., L. T., Ph. D., in the Travancore Government Press.)

The Dravidians in the south had evidently temples where the deities they adored were housed and worshipped in the early centuries of the Christian Era. The Periples of Arian as well as Ptolemy the geographer mention the worship of Durga at Komar, the great promontory, satisfactorily identified with Cape Comorin. "It has derived its name," says Bishop Caldwell, "from the Sans: Kumari, a virgin, one of the names of the goddess Durga, the presiding divinity of the place, but the shape which this word has taken is specially in Komar, distinctively Tamilian."

The Malabar style of temple architecture differs radically from that of other parts of India. Indeed it has little or no affinity with the Dravidian style obtaining on the East Coast. If at all, it has some resemblance to the Jaina temples of Canara, constructed on an entirely new style from those of Northern and Southern India and having some resemblance to the Nepalese style. Most of them are constructed entirely of wood and such of the stone temples as exist, are close imitations of the wooden ones.

Regarding this style, Mr. Ferguson in his *History of Indian and Eastern Architecture* makes the following suggestive remarks:—

"When we decend the ghauts into Canara, or the Tulava country, we come on a totally different state of matters. Jainism is the religion of the country, and all, or nearly all the temples belong to this sect, but their architecture is neither the Dravidian style of the

About temples, Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai, B. A. B. L., M. L. C., late a Judge of the Travancore High Court, has the following remarks in the Devaswam Separation Committee Report, in the Travancore Government Gazette of 12th July 1921.

The Vedas do not tell us of any idol or idol worship. We begin to get sight of images in the later phases of the vedic period— Then we have the rise of Jainism and Buddhism in India, the former being the older of the two .. .. The growth of, not the rise itself, of temples and public religious worship is due in no small measure to the influence of Buddhism.

South nor that of Northern India, and indeed is not known to exist anywhere else in India proper, but recurs with all its peculiarities in Nepal". "They are so much plainer than Hindu temples usually are. The pillars look like logs of wood with the angles partially chamfered off, so as to make them octagons, and the sloping roofs of the verandahs are so evidently wooden that the style itself cannot be far removed from a wooden original. In many places, indeed below the ghauts the temples are still wholly constructed in wood without any admixture of stone, and almost all the features of the Moodbidri temples may be found in wood at the present day. The blinds between the pillars, which are there executed in stone, are found in wood in every city in India, and, with very little variation, are used by Europeans in Calcutta to a greater extent, perhaps, than they were ever used by the natives.

"The feature, however, which presents the greatest resemblance to the northern styles is the reverse slope of the eaves above the verandah. I am not aware of its existence anywhere else south of Nepal, and it is so peculiar that it is much more likely to have been copied than reinvented." [1]

Quoting the above extracts from Ferguson, Mr. Logan remarks that "This style of architecture marks out better than anything else the limits of the ancient kingdom of Chera (or Kerala), for the style prevails all through the West Coast country from the limits of Canara to Cape Comorin. In Malabar proper, the style is reserved almost, if not altogether, exclusively for religious edifices. In Travancore it is often to be seen in lay buildings."

The Mahomedans of Malabar also seem to have imitated this style of architecture for their mosques, and Mr. Logan accounts for this by the tradition that some at least of the original nine mosques were built on the sites of temples, and that the temple endowments

1. 1st Ed. p. 270.

in land were made over with the temples, for the maintenance of the mosques. Before Mahomedanism had become quite established in the country as to have its own places of worship, it is not difficult to suppose that the temples themselves thus transferred were at first used for the new worship, and this may have set the fashion which has come down to the present day. So faithfully is the Hindu temple copied, that the Hindu *trisul* (or trident) is not unfrequently still placed over the open gable front of the mosque.

Mr. Logan is of opinion that this system of temple architecture was introduced into Canara and Malabar by the Jains. He thinks that Asoka was a Jain by religion and that the great Emperor's Missionaries spread over the Malabar Coast about the third century B. C. and has left behind them this style of temple building.

The indigenous style of temple architecture in Malabar, as pointed out by Mr. Nagam Aiya, lacks both the costliness and grandeur of the Dravidian structures, but are neat and simple with ample provision for admitting plenty of light and fresh air, and in these respects are undoubtedly superior to the costly edifices of the Dravidian style. "Their style of architecture", observes the author of a *Memoir of the Travancore Survey*, "is sufficiently complicated, but never remarkable for design, elegance or magnificence of dimensions; it consists of a series of low buildings encompassed by a strong wall, * * * the centre is frequently occupied by a temple or temples occasionally of a circular form and covered with a conical top, the whole often being roofed with copper though covered with minute complexity" [1].

Nothing can be more beautifully picturesque than the situation of the Malabar temples. They are all located in the best possible sites available, either on the top of a hill, on the verge of a large lake, or by the side

1. Vol. I, p. 20.

of a running stream embosomed in the exuberant foliage of majestic trees. They are surrounded with groves and tanks for the refreshment and devotion of worshippers.

An ordinary Malabar temple consists of the following:—

(1) The *Srikovil* containing the *Garbha Griha* (*sanctus sanctorum*), the holy of holies, into which no one except the Śāṇṭikkāran, the priest who ministers to the image, is permitted to enter.[1] It is generally

1. Except the persons performing the *puja*, the services to the image, no other person of whatever caste is allowed into the inner shrine or *garbhagriha*. Other Brahmins and Kshetriyas are permitted to approach up to the steps, and to get up on the mantapam for devotional purposes. Vysias and Sudras can go as far as the *sopana*.

Thus, even among the Savarnas themselves, there are marked distinctions. There are times and circumstances in which even Savarnas are excluded from temples. Then there are special usages in certain temples excluding classes ordinarily entitled to admission, such as Kshetriyas, and Savarna ladies. Exclusion is thus not a result of any inferiority complex.

There is a separate class of Sastric works devoted to the subject of temples and temple-worship. They are known as *Agamas*. *Pancharatra*, *Pasupata*, *Vishnusamhita*, *Kamikagama*, *Vaikhanasagama*, *Isanugurudevapadhati*, *Tatvapradipika*, *Tantrasamuchaya* and *Tantraprayaschitta* are some of the very important authorities accepted in Kerala. Some of these are not original works, but *Nibandhas* treated as authoritative expositions of agamic doctrines and rules. *Tantrasamuchaya* is the *Nibhandha* most widely accepted in Kerala. This is the work of Chennassun Namputiri. The other two (which are also in consonance with the usage of Kerala are *Yogiarprayaschitha* of Nilakanta Yogiar and the *Prayaschitha vimarsini* of Mahishamangalam Namputiri. (Report of the Tr. Temple Entry Com. 1934). The words agama, tantra and yamala are at times used as synonyms. But they differ slightly. Agama is said to treat of 25 subjects, while the other two treat of 7 and 5 only, respectively.

The effectiveness of the *puja* is proportionate to the spiritual power of the *Pujari* or *Tantri*. He must be a Brahmin with the necessary knowledge of *Mantras* and *Tantras* and of unimpeachable character.

square in plan but sometimes circular also, surmounted by a conical roof covered with copper plates or tiled, with a Ṭāḷikakuṭam or Sṭūpam of gold, silver, or copper gilt, at the top. The image is placed in the middle of this inner shrine (Gaṙbha Gṝha). In some of the older temples, the Śrīkōvils are circular in form. The square ones have occasionally what looks as a double roofing, one slightly raised over the other.

Gaṙbha Gṛha is raised a few feet above the surrounding level, and its door is reached by a flight of steps called Sōpāna. Surrounding this structure is an open space called *ankana*.

(2) In the front of the Śṙīkōvil is the raised platform, the Maṇṭapam (*mukha mantapam*) which is always square in form, where Brahmans sit for prayer, facing the image and perform Namaskārams or prostrations. In Śiva temples a bull is placed in the Maṇṭapam in the middle of the front edge facing the image.

(3) Beyond it is the Nālampalam which consists of corridors or pillared halls all round the Sṙīkōvil and the Maṇṭapam. These are used for several purposes. The Nālampalam is divided into cells, rooms, and halls for storing articles of daily consumption in the temple, for cooking the Nivēḍyam or food served to the god, for Brahmans to sit for prayer in seclusion, etc.

വിപ്രഃ കുലീനഃ കൃതസംസ്ക്രിയൌഘഃ
സ്വാധീതവേദാഗമതത്വവേത്താ
വർണ്ണാശ്രമാചാരപരോധിദീക്ഷോ
ദക്ഷസ്തിപസ്വീ ഗുരുരാസ്തികോസ്തു.

The spiritual power (ചൈതന്യം) has also to be protected from dissipation by the action of adverse influences. The events that create such disturbing influences are called *Nimithas*, and they cause what is technically known as (*Asudhi*) defilement. The Agamas prescribe elaborate rules as to *Nimithas* and the rites, known as *prayaschittas* or purificatory ceremonies, which have to be performed to counteract their evil influences.

(4) The front part of the Nālampalam is divided into two raised portions with a passage in the middle leading from the *Belikkalppura* outside to the inner court containing the Maṇṭapam and Śrīkōvil. There are similar approaches behind and on one side. The raised portion on either side of the passage in the front is generally known as Vāṭilmāṭam.

(5) The passage in front leads outside to a portico called *Belikkalppura* in the centre of which stands the *Valia Belikkal* (the principal altar-stone where rice is offered.

(6) Next to the *Belikkalppura* facing the image is the *Dhwajam*, flagstaff, covered over with gold, silver, or copper sheets, on which a flag is hoisted during the *Uthsavam*, or temple festival. On the top of the *Dwajam* is placed the vāhanam or representation of the vehicle of the deity worshipped in the temple,—a bull for Śiva, Garuḍa or Kite for Viṣṇu and so on facing the deity.

(7) The Gōpurams are towers which mark the entrance to the temple grounds enclosed by high walls all round. The larger temples have these Gōpurams in the middle of the outermost walls on each side.

(8) In the larger temples, the Nālampalam will be surrounded by a similar square structure with a narrow passage between the two—the outside of which being provided with columns of lamps (iron or brass) which are lit upon important occasions. This is called Viḷakkumāṭam (house for lights). It consists of wooden or metal trellis-work, the outer surface of which has a great number of small oil lamps. The space between this frame-work for lights and the boundary wall with Gōpurams is called the bāhyankaṇa.

Provision is also made in temples for the residence of priests who are enjoined to keep within the temple precincts while employed as such.

(9) Just out of the staff or in a line with it, and therefore a few feet away from the Dīpaśāla is the

Pṟaḍakṣhiṇa vaḻi or path paved with stones or granite slabs for taking the image in procession round the temple building and for the worshippers to take their devotional rounds (Pṟaḍakṣhiṇam).

(10) Both in the ankaṇa inside the Nālampalam and outside it in the bāhiyankaṇa close to the Pṟaḍakṣhiṇavaḻi, at prescribed spots, are placed certain stones called *Belikkallu* on which boiled rice is thrown every day when the god is taken round in procession, as an offering to the Bhūṭās. The most important of these is the *Valia Beli Kallu* already mentioned, housed in the *Belikkalppura*. The daily offer of boiled rice to the Bhūṭās begins from and ends at this stone.

(11) Extending from the flag staff to the Gōpuram is a covered shed, known as Ānakkoṭṭil, for the elephants to take their stand in a line on occasions of temple processions.

(12) Gōpuram is the entrance gate. In large temples, there will be four gates connected by the boundary wall.

Construction. The Hindu Śāsṭṟās prescribe elaborate rules regarding the construction of temples.[1]

1. Vastu-vidya means the science of architecture and deals with the rules of construction of all kinds of architectural and sculptural objects. (P. K. Acharya's *Dictionary of Hindu Architecture* pp. 545—8.)

The meticulous attention to definite numerical relationships between the dimensions of the different parts of a building is characteristic of Kerala Vastu-vidya, as it is of Chaldea, Egypt, Persepolis, Creete and Greece.

The Three Main Styles of Temple Architecture recognised by the Silpa-sastras (*Bulletin of the Madras Government Museum*).

According to Silpa-sastras, including the Manasara and Suprebhedagama, the three main styles of temple architecture at the time when they were formulated were—(a) *Nagara*, in which the *vimana* was quadrangular, throughout. (b) *Vesara*, in which the *vimana* was crowned by a circular *sikhara* above the neck. (c) *Dravida*, in which the *vimana* was crowned by an octagonal or hexagonal sikhara above the neck.

The earliest samples of this are the seven pagodas at Mahabalipuram.

As the house of God, the temple comes under the operation of many rules relating to houses in general, to which are added some special ones. The general rules of universal application relate to:—

(1) The selection of time to begin construction; certain months of the year, days of the week, asterisms and conjunctions being held auspicious, while certain others are supposed to be inauspicious; and

(2) The selection of the site with regard to the nature and qualities of the ground on which buildings are to be erected. For this purpose the soil [1] is classified into three sorts, viz., (1) Good, (2) Medium, (3) Bad.

"The best sort of ground should abound with milky trees full of fruits and flowers; its boundary should be of a quadrangular form, level and smooth, with a sloping declivity towards the east, producing a

(The tower over a shrine is usually surmounted by some form of *sikhara* or head, bearing a stupi or final, sometimes called a sikhara or flame but the tower itself is a vimana, whatever its shape, not a sikhara).

The age of the Manasara is probably about 500—700 A, D. The Suprabhedagama is somewhat later. Nearly a thousand years later still, in the latter part of the 16th century, a compendium of the Silpa-sastras was prepared under the title of Silparatna by Sri Kumara at the instance of king Deva Narayana of Ambalappuzha. In this he (according to Messrs. F. H. Grave, D, Sc. and T. N. Ramachandran, M. A., the authors of the above Bulletin, all these treatises belong to the south.) links nagara with the Satvika temperament, Dravida with the Rajasa and Vesara with the Tamasa temperaments.

1. The Brahmin soil is white, and smells like clarified butter and is astringent to taste. The Kshetriya soil is bloodred, and smells like blood and is bitter to taste. The Vaisya soil is yellow, and smells like alkaline earth, and is sour. The Sudra soil is black,and smells like faeces and tastes like wine. *Bhuvanapradipa* by Visvakarma (*Canons of Orissan Architecture* by Babu Nirmal Kumar Bose.)

hard sound, with a stream running from left to right, of an agreeable odour, fertile, of a uniform colour, containing a great quantity of soil, producing water when dug to the height of man's arm raised above his head, and situated in a climate of moderate temperature. The ground possessed of qualities directly opposite to those mentioned above is the worst, and that which has mixed nature is the middling."[1]

The ground to be avoided is described in a special manner as follows:—"That which has the form of a circle, a semi-circle, containing three, five or six angles, resembling a trident or a window, shaped like the hinder part of a fish, or the back of an elephant, or a turtle, or the face of a cow, and the like, situated opposite to any of the intermediate quarters—north-west, and the like—abounding with human skulls, stones, worms, ant-hills, bones, slimy earth, decayed woods, coals, dilapidated wells, subterraneous pits, fragments of tiles, limestones, ashes, husks of corn, and exposed to the wafted effluvia of curds, oil, honey, dead bodies, fishes, etc., such a spot should be avoided on every account".

It will be seen that the tests applied are those of (1) colour, (2) smell, (3) taste, (4) form, (5) touch, and (6) sound. Other tests are also prescribed which it would be tedious to detail. But a universal maxim of selection mentioned by Varaha Mihira is:—"And that (site) too is auspicious (to the builder) whose heart delights therein".—a test which the most enlightened of moderns or the most captious of critics cannot demur to.

Coming now to special rules relating to the building of temples. They are to be built on the common boundaries of villages, if they are public temples, probably as marking the boundary. They should not be built so as to encroach upon the boundaries of another pre-existing temple or building and the new erection

1. *Ramraz's Essay on the Architecture of the Hindus* pp. 15—17.

should be placed at a distance of double the height of prior structures.

Varaha Mihira gives the following description of the surroundings of temples:—

"The gods use to haunt those spots which by nature or artifice are furnished with water and pleasure-gardens.

"Lakes where groups of lotuses like umbrellas ward off the sun's darting beams, and the waters receive access of brightness by the rows of white water lilies pushed aside by the shoulders of swans; where swans, ducks, curlews, and paddy birds utter their resounding notes, and fishes repose in the shade of Niculas; on the brinks, places where rivers flow, having curlews for their tinkling zone, singing swans for their melodious voice, the water-sheet for their cover, and carps for their belt; regions where streams have blooming trees on the margin, comparable to ear ornaments, confluences not unlike to buttocks, sandy banks like to high swelling bosoms and merry laughter from swans; tracts of land in the neighbourhood of woods, rivers, rocks and cataracts, towns with pleasure-gardens, it is such grounds the gods at all times take delight in." [1]

As to the location of temples of particular deities, the following general directions are given in the 9th Chapter of the *Manasara Vassu*. "The temples of Vishnu, in whatever form that deity may be worshipped, should be erected within the village, facing towards the east, except in the incarnation of Nara-Simha (the man-lion) whose temple should be built without the wall, with its face turned from the village or town * * * If the emblem of *Siva* (*Linga*) is to be consecrated according to the *Sidhanta Agama*, it may be placed within the village, otherwise it should remain without. In the case of Vishnu, too, if the idol is to be consecrated according to the system of *Vyghanasa*, it may be admitted within, but if according to the doctrines of

1. J. R. A. S. Vol. 6, page 317.

Pancharatra it should be placed without the village. The shrines of Durga * * * * should be erected without the village".

After the site is determined upon, there follows the ceremony of *Bhumi-parigraha* or taking possession of the land. It consists in ploughing the land, the sowing of seeds, the grazing of the resulting crop by cows and the assembling of Brahmans. The next important step is the ascertaining of the cardinal points for which elaborate methods are prescribed. When the directions have been all marked out on the spot[1] with thread marks, the spot should be further sanctified by feasting Brahmans thereupon. The underground impurities, such as thorns, etc., have then to be removed. The ceremonies which follow the cleansing and purification of the ground are collectively styled Vāsṭhuyāga. This consists, according to the *Gobhila Grihya Sutra* in

1. Signs and indications at the time of the first measurement:

If a conch shell is heard, then the spot is sacred to the gods, men should not live there. If music is heard, then wealth will accrue as the land is favoured by Kubera.

Similarly, different effects are indicated in starting work in different months of the year, days of the week, different Nakshathras.

According to the Silpasastra, a naga lies encircling every building-site. It moves round in a clocklike direction once a year. The auspicious pillar should be posted only on certain points of the naga's body.

For posting the auspicious pillar (മംഗളസ്തംഭം), the hole for it must be cleansed by besmearing it with cowdung. Then gems, pieces of gold and silver, a piece of cloth, a mango twig and a cocoanut have to be put into it.

Carve upon the foundation-stone a lotus with 8 petals and show its pistil clearly. Dig a hole at the heart or stomach of the *Vastu-naga* and purify it. Worship the village deities, the artist, astrologer and priest. The 8 petals when placed in position must point to the 8 points of the compass. Place it and say "Being placed by the hand of a Brahmin, then remain permanently".

(*Bhavanaprasada of Visvakarma* Ed. by Bubu *Nirmal Kumar* Bose.)

establishing the sacrificial fire in the middle of the site and the performance of sacrificial rites. According to *Ashwalayana*, a square or oblong portion of the land has to be measured out and prepared for the sacrifice after which follow an elaborate ceremony.

After the ground is thus prepared and the materials for building are selected, for which also are special rules laid down, the ceremony of *Silanyasa* or laying the foundation stone is performed and then the work is proceeded with. The special architectural rules laid down for the construction of temples are:—

"Temples consist of the *garbhagriha* (the womb of the house), the *antarala* (the anti temple), and the ard' hamantapa (the front portico). The diameter of the whole length of the building, including the walls, is to be divided into four and a half or six parts, and the *garb'hagriha* to take up two, two and a half or three, the antarala, one and a half or two, and the *ard'ha-mantapa*, one or one and a half. Sometimes a portico is made round the *garb'hagriha* and, *antarala* together, the whole being closed by walls on all the sides but the front, in which are the doors for entrance, approached by the front portico, which is generally a peristyle and it serves, as the innermost court around which people perform their circumambulations; I say the innermost court, because there are other courts around the whole temple."

"Temples on a large scale have three or four successive porticos attached to them in the front, which are called *ard'hamantapa*, *Maha-mantapa*, *Stapana mantapa*, *urittya mantapa*, etc. *Ard'ha mantapas* are sometimes made broader than the *garb'hagriha*, in which case the width of the former is either one and a half or twice that of the latter. In the event of the three compartments being of the same breadth, the length of the whole should be two and a half the breadth.

'The breadth of the *garbhagriha* being divided into three, four, five, seven, nine, eleven, thirteen or fifteen parts, let two, three, four, five, six, seven, or eight be allowed to the interior space, and the remainder take up the thickness of the walls on all sides.

"The thickness of the wall being divided into twelve equal parts, let five or six be given to the door-frames or posts without, and seven or eight to the inside of the door. The door-frames or posts may be placed either in the middle or at the extremity of the point of the division before-mentioned.

"The height of the pillars of the *vimana* is to be divided into ten or eight equal parts, and nine, eight, or seven of them are given to that of the doorway, the breadth of which is to be half its height.

"In temples and houses of Brahmans and others, two-leafed doors may be used. The doors are turned either by means of a perpendicular cylinder, one end of which rests on the ground, or by hinges. The outside of the door frames are ornamented with foliages, etc., and on the architrave of the door, and on both sides of it, are carved the images of the gods and goddesses presiding over gates and doorways.

"Let a water-spout be made over the base on the back wall of the *garb'hagriha*, on the left side of the idol, either towards the east or the north, according as the temple may face towards the south or the east. The thickness of the spout should be either eight, ten, twelve, fourteen, or sixteen, *angulas*. Its length should be equal to the *ad'histhana*, which length being divided into three equal parts, one is given to the projection below (*lambana*). The breadth of the bottom of the spout is to be divided into five parts, and three to be given to the breadth of the sloping extremity below. The whole spout being divided into five parts, three to be given to the *cugmala* (an ornament made in the form of a bird), one to the

padma (lotus or *cima recta*), and one to the *Vajina* or fillet. On the surface of the spout a cavity is to be made for discharging the water, from one to five *angulas* broad. The breadth of the cavity at the end should be three-fifths of that at the bottom. The spout may be made to spring from the head of a lion, etc., and the whole so devised as to project like a plantain flower".[1]

We have already observed that temples are constructed in Malabar in a somewhat different style from those elsewhere. But in architectural principles as also in most details there seems to be no great difference. Our author has given in this letter a rough idea fair enough, of an ordinary Malabar temple. Early Portuguese travellers have also given us descriptions of temples they had met with, specially at Calicut.

The following extract from Mr. Nagam Aiya's Report on *the Census of Travancore* (1891) gives us a very good idea of the Architecture of a Malabar temple.

"A Hindu pagoda is a very scientifically built structure. It commences with the *Bimbam* or image of the god, which is lodged in a *Sreekoil* or inner shrine. This image is the unit of construction. The size of the image is fixed at so many *yavams*, a sanskrit term for one of the grains in India. The image size being settled, the next point for settlement is the size of the Sricoil or inner shrine, for the shrine should bear a certain definite proportion to the size of the *Bimbam* or image. These being determined upon, the dimensions of the other parts of the temple can be easily deduced. Every native architect knows, given a certain size for the image, what the sizes of the *Mantapam* or square-roofed platform in front of the God, of the inner yard paved with stones, of the quadrangle called *nalambalam*, of the *velikkappura*, of the flagstaff, of the outeryard, of the *sivali-mantapam* or

1. *Hindu Law of Endowments by Prannath Saraswathi; Chapter III, pp. 74 to 76.*

the covered porch for the God's procession, and of the several other buildings inside the premises should be. The measuring rod used in the building of the temple is also generally engraved in some paved stone or pillar inside the temple itself, a standard measurement to be referred to in all future ages when the temple is repaired or rebuilt." [1]

In the following table are given the measurements of the different parts of one of the chief temples in the country:—

THE PAGODA MEASUREMENTS.

No.	Name of the portion of the Temple.	Length		Breadth		Height		Circumference
		Feet	Inch	Feet	Inch	Feet	Inch	
1	Vattasricoil ..					7	8½	117 feet 6 inches
2	Mantapam ..	13	6½	13	6½	7	6	
		18	6½	18	6½	5	7½	
3	Valliambalam ..	43	6½	9	9½	..	..	
		57	1	23	7¾	..	..	
4	Do Maligay or upstair ..	43	6½	9	9½	7	6	
5	Nalambalam ..	437	6	8	6½	7	1	
6	Velikkappura ..	20	7½	9	4½	7	1	
7	Vilakkumadam ..	542	11	3	6½	..	..	
8	Hanuman's sricoil ..	6	½	6	½	7	8½	
9	Dhwajom or flagstaff ..					48	1½	
10	Anakottil ..					11	3	100 feet 10 inches
11	Approaches to do. or Mukappu ..					11	3	33 feet 9 inches
12	Oottupurah ..	186	8	20	..	9	4½	

1. Vol. I, pp. 338—339

The following is a description of the temple to which De Gama was taken on his first visit to Calicut. "The Kotwal brought him to see a temple of the Malabars, which was as large as a great monastery. It was built of freestone, and covered with tiles. Over the front door there hung seven bells; and before it stood a pillar as high as the mast of a ship (the flag-staff), made of wire (probably, covered with copper sheaths), with a weather-cock (the *vahana* or vehicle of the God or Goddess to whom the temple was dedicated) of the same at the top. Within it was full of images. This made De Gama and the rest take it for a Christian Church****. On the walls of this temple were many images painted, some with great teeth sticking above an inch out of their mouth; others with four arms and such frightful faces that the Portuguese began to doubt whether it was a Christian Church or not. Upon the top of the Chapel which stood in the middle of the temple, was a fort or freestone tower, with a little wire (copper plated) door, and stone stairs on the outside. In the wall of this tower was an image, on sight where of the Malabars called out Mary! Whereupon De Gama and the rest, taking it for an image of the Virgin, fell on their knees and prayed. Only one, Juan de Sala, who had some doubt of the matter, in making his genuflexions said; 'If this be the Devil, I worship God'; which made De Gama smile. They would not see the Statue distinctly, the Tower being dark within, nor were they permitted to go near enough to examine it".[1]

Faria-Y-Sousa gives a similar description of this temple, and adds that the image did really represent the Virgin Mary, "for it could be no other, those people many ages before having professed Christianity".[2]

Varthema referring to the Chapel in the Zamorin's Palace says, "His Chapel is two paces wide in

1. *Astley's Collection of Voyages.*
2. Vol. I, p. 46.

each of the four sides and three paces high, with a wooden door covered with devils carved in relief".[1] In Purchas we read the description of another temple, said to be "dedicated to an ape", probably the monkey-god Hanuman, the faithful servant of Rama, the hero of the Ramayana. "It hath," says he "a large Porch for cattle, to the use of sacrifice, in which are (saith Maffeus) seven hundred marble pillars, not inferior to those of Agrippa in the Roman Pantheon".[2]

Barbosa gives the following description of Malabar temples generally: "And these temples have their principal door to the west, and each temple has three doors, and in front of the principal gate, outside of it, is a stone of the height of a man, with three steps all round it, and in front of that stone inside the Church is a small Chapel, very dark, inside of which they keep their idol of gold, silver, or metal, and three lamps burning".[3]

Faria-Y-Sousa has given us a description of some of the temples of Cochin and Travancore of the seventeenth century. He says :—

"Before they build a Pagoda, they sow the ground with Kidney-beans; when they are green, they turn in a greyish Cow to feed on them, and where she Dungs, they believe is the place for the Pagod, placing on the very spot a pillar and on the top of it the idol, to whom it is dedicated. Then they build the walls, which are never of great extent, but rich, as being black marble well carved, covered with copper plaks, with globes of Gold, or Gilt. The inside is set thick with images with many Heads and Arms, and girt with serpents. Then they build a square wall about it, on each side of it is an entrance with a sumptuous Portal, with Histories of their Gods carved about them. They are covered in the same nature as the temples. Underneath are Heads of Elephants, Bear, Lion, Tigers and other wild beasts with terrible eyes and teeth. It is

1. Page 137.
2. Page 625.
3. Page 122.

thought these things are to terrify those that resort thither, and move them to give alms though their Poet Palcanar (Pākkanār—the Pariah) laughs at it. Those who go to visit the idol enter the enclosure, but not the temple. The inhabitants of Pande, subjects of Bisnagar, are singular in these works.

"The most famous Pagods are, that of Rettora [1] built by Cheram Perimal living at Cranganur who placed in it the statue of a man ten cubits in length, lying on a snake with five heads in the sea of Milk. The temple was covered with plates of Massy Gold, but because they were subject to be stole he put them into the treasure of the Pagod, and instead of them placed others of copper. The idol is still covered with pure bright gold that shines like fire; his crown is of an inestimable value and has many precious stones; in the Forehead three Rubies that exceed all price, on his Feet Buskins valued 200,000 Ducats.

"In the Treasure, besides the covering plates there laid up, there are nine boats of gold set with rich stones each big enough to contain three men; the same number of Kettles of the same matter, each deep enough to hide the Brahmene with the idol upon his head, many Pots, Peacocks, and Cocks of Gold and Silver and an infinite quantity of coin. These are useless vessels; those that are of use and the same Metal are kept more at hand. At the entrance of the Pagod hangs a Gold candlestick so big, no man can lift it from the ground, and with the continual smoak looks like Ebony. Several idols and candlesticks that stand before the principal idol are of the same metal. In fine, the treasure is unmeasurable, if we may believe a Brahman who turned Christian, and had many good qualities that show he merited credit.

1. Most probably Tiruvanandapura=Trevandrum. The description of the image exactly fits in with the one at Trevandrum. It is in the form of Anantasayana, i. e., Vishnu reclining on the thousand headed snake Ananta. The wealth of the temple as described also points to Trevandrum. In the History of Travancore we read that Cheraman Perumal repaired this temple.

"The Revenues of the Pagod are incredible, and very many live on them. The enclosure is of marble six yards high and above one in thickness; it is about half a league from the store, a beautiful way leading to it. At each of the wonderful Gates can enter at once four elephants with all their furniture. It is guarded by 1,000 Armed Men; The Coast is dangerous, which secures many great men who keep their Treasures there.

"The Pagod called Comori, from which that famous point of land takes its name, is also remarkable. Comori Pagod, signifies, the church of the Virgin. It is like the other in structure, but not in Riches, because they trust them not there, since our Fleets sail upon those Coasts. The Pagod is dedicated to a Virgin Daughter* * * *

"The Pagoda of Tiruvate is more ancient than that of Rettora, but poor, having been plundered by the Nayque of Madura. It is not much frequented". This is Tiruvettar, a celebrated South Travancore Temple. The temple accounts show that on the 12" of Tye (February—March) 745. M. E. (1570 A .D.) one Veerappan Suppa Naique assaulted Tiruvattur, plundered the temple of all its riches and desecrated it, so that it had to be purified afterwards before worship could be resumed. The ceremony of purification (Kalasam) began on 24" of that month. It was once more plundered by the Nadars on the 29" Pankuni 856 M. E. (May—June 1681) and desecrated and Kerala Varma of Trippappoo Swarupam being the Mootha Tiruvadi or Ruling chief of Cherwai had the purificatory ceremonies performed. Twelve years later the temple was once more threatened when the authorities removed all valuables except the silver ewelry that adorned the idol to a place of safety.

"That of Upper Cranganur has an idol [1] on whose head one of the Brahmenes gives several strokes of a hammer every day. For they think if this were not

(1) Kshetrapala.

done, he would by this time touch the stars with his head. In the frontispiece are several images in the Portuguese Habit, whence is concluded either that work was finished after their arrival, or such a habit was formerly used there"[1]. This certainly refers to Kṣhēṭṛapālan of the Bhagavaṭi temple at Cranganur. It is not with a hammer that the strokes are given. The priest, who is not a Brahman but an Aṭikaḷ, does it every day with a piece of sandalwood lest it may not grow higher and higher.

Conquest, conversion and commerce were the three main objects the Portuguese had in coming to India. As soon as the first was accomplished, they set about the achievement of the second. The destruction of temples and places of religious worship was considered a necessary step preliminary to the subversion of the religion of the Hindus and was soon decided upon. In 1540, all Hindu temples in the Island of Goa were destroyed under the direct orders of the King of Portugal.[2] Towards this the Portuguese were further prompted by their greed for lucre. Many of the temples were enormously rich and were reported to contain almost fabulous wealth. The richer the temple the greater the attraction. In the year 1544, says Mr. Whiteway, Governor Alfonso de Sousa resolved to plunder the temple at "Tebelicare"—(near Quilon) situated within the territory of the Raja of Kayamkulam with whom the Portuguese were then at peace. On the Coast between Cochin and Quilon, the Portuguese had been settled for over 40 years and they depended upon the good will of the people for the supply of the merchandise, which was the bait that drew them to the East. But this did not prevent De Sousa from committing the outrage. He had received information that the temple was full of gold, and he resolved upon leading at once a plundering expedition. An offer of £ 12,000 down failed to turn the Governor from his intention and before night-fall the temple was reached. Governor

1. Vol. 2, Part IV, Chap. IV.
2. Correa IV, p. 290.

and his immediate following went inside the temple and shut the door; those outside the building passed a miserable night enough, a prey to every imaginable horror—the fall of a shield nearly caused a stampede. Inside, the Governor and his friends spent the time in torturing the Brahmans of the temple and in digging up the floor. It was never known exactly what was found, a gold patten worth £ 50 was all that was ever shown, but as two barrels of matchlock powder were emptied and the barrels passed in, and, as afterwards, as they each required eight slaves in relays to carry them scandalous tongues were busy.[1] Faria observes that it was said that these barrels carried water; such as were not easy of belief affirmed it was pure gold and precious stones. The truth was never known. He adds "Some writings declare, there was only a pot of gold found, in which the idol was bathed, valued 4,000 crowns, which King John (of Portugal) ordered to be restored, much admiring this action of Martin Alfonso, as if it had been a greater crime to rob at Teblicare without his order, than at Tremele (Tiruvella) with it" [2]. During their retreat, the Portuguese were harassed by the country people and suffered heavily, 30 of their number being killed and 150 wounded and the Governor himself being at one time in great danger having had to dismount to save his life. But his greed egged him on and he went in at once for another adventure. As Faria tells us, "No strangers to terrific avarice, they went to another Pagod. Out of it was taken a chest, which was publicly opened, and some silver money that was in it distributed; but of so little value, that many believed thence proceeded the liberality".

Not long after, in 1549, the Portuguese committed another and a more dastardly sacrilege. Governor Jorge Cabral who was subservient to ecclesiastical influences got information that the pagoda at Pallurute

1. Whiteway, p. 284; Correa IV, pp. 325-326.
2 Vol II, pp. 83-84.

in the vicinity of the palace of the Raja of Cochin, the particular friend and ally of the Portuguese, and much venerated by him, contained a large amount of treasure. Cabral at once arranged to rob it. The Raja earnestly requested him to desist from such a sacrilegious act. He stayed his hands for the moment. But, as soon as the Raja left Cochin, he ordered his subordinate Francis de Silva to make the attempt at once with the result that the Portuguese lost 3 of their men in this mad endeavour. "This" says Fariya "was the cause that three ships set out for Portugal late and ill laden" [1]. From this time the Raja of Cochin was estranged from the Portuguese.

From a letter written by the King of Portugal to the Viceroy in India, of the year 1594, we see that the latter had urged on his sovereign "how necessary it was for the increase of the Christianity of those parts to destroy all the pagodas and mosques, which the Gentiles and the Moors possessed in the fortified places of this State". The King, however, warned the Viceroy to treat this matter carefully with some theologians and canonists of those parts, but not to act till he shall have reported to the king.[2] The secular authority in India playing into the hands of the ecclesiastical was prompted to do sacrilegious acts more by burning avarice and covetuousness than zeal for religion. The verdict of the historian Faria-y-Sousa already quoted in another connection is indeed remarkable.

2. **Pagodas.** The word according to Yule and Burnell is used in three different senses, of which the primary or the first only need be noticed here, viz., "An idol temple". As to the origin of the word, five derivations are suggested. Thus from the Chinese *Pao-ta'h* 'precious pile' and *Poh—Kuh—ta'h* ('white—bones—pile')[3]. It is added that anything

1. P. 141.

2. Arch Port Orient Fase, 3 p. 417.

3. There is a theory that the modern temples were originally the graves of some great person.

can be made out of Chinese mono-syllables in the way of etymology. Another derivation is from the Portuguese, *pagro*, 'a pagan'. This is adopted by so learned an etymologist as H. Wedgewood. The aforesaid learned editors of *Hobson Jobson* remark that it is possible that this word may have helped to facilitate the Portuguese adoption of *pagoda*; it is not possible that it should have given rise to the word. A third theory makes *pagoda* a transposition of *dagoba* a word though used in Ceylon is known in continental India, since the extinction of Buddhism, only in the most rare and exceptional way. A fourth suggestion connects it with

The primitive people dreaded the spirits of the dead. These had to be propitiated by the offering of gifts. Further, their malignant activity was circumscribed by a magic circle. This led to a new cult, one feature of which was the worship of graves and tombs. This, in course of time, gave rise to temples. Graves became shrines where the spirits of the dead might be worshipped. Gradually, link with the dead became dim and remote, as the village deities, who were supposed, in later times, to have the power to ward off the evil effects of spirits, began to grow in power. To avoid a double expenditure, the anniversary of the dead of the community began to be celebrated along with the annual festival of the village deities (*gramadevata*).

The temple which grew around the graves is the dolmen-temple. Another type is the hut-shaped one. The hut-shaped temple was superimposed upon the dolmen-shaped and the result is the Modern South Indian temple. The latter is the result of a long process of evolution.

Chutala-matan is a village god. The words literally means (god of the grave hut). (Chutala=Cremation ground. (Matam= Hut). The connection with the graves is not confined to the village deities, but also to gods like Siva of a higher plane. The god himself declares "the crematorium of all pleases my heart.. Hence the crematorium is the sacred abode to me; ..it seems to me to be the very heaven". (*Mahabharatha—Anusasana parvom Chapter* 141). Bhavabhuti describes a temple of Durga situated in a Smasana in his *Malathi-Madhava*. We have another description of a Kali temple in a Smasana in *Mani-mekhalai*. (*Origin of the South Indian Temple* by Mr. N. Venkitaramana Ayyar, M. A., Madras University Publication.)

the Sanskrit *Bhagavat*, 'holy, divine' or *Bhagavati*, applied to Durga and other goddesses. A fifth makes it a corruption of the Persian *but—kadah*, 'idol temple'; a derivation given by Ovington. The learned editors having noticed these suggested derivations, proceed to remark that there can be little doubt that the origin really lies between the last two. But they could not agree as to which of these is the correct one. Dr. Burnell is disposed to adopt the Persian origin, observing that *but—kadah* is a phrase which the Portuguese would constantly hear from the Mahomedans with whom they chiefly had to deal on their first arrival in India. He adds that this is the view confidently asserted by Reinand[1] and is the etymology given by Littre.

Col. Yule, however, traces the word to a Sanskrit original and argues, "Now is it not possible that the word in all its applications may have had its origin from *bhagavat*, or some current modification of that word? We see from Marco Polo that such a term was currently known to foreign visitors of South India in his day, a term almost identical in sound with *pagoda*, and bearing in his statement a religious application, though not to a temple. We thus have four separate applications of the word *pacauta*, or *pagoda*, picked up by foreigners on the shores of India from the 13th century downwards, viz., to a Hindu ejaculatory formula, to a place of Hindu worship, to a Hindu idol, to a Hindu coin with idols represented on it. Is it not possible that *all* are to be traced to *bhagavat*, 'sacred', or to *Bhagavat* and *Bhagavati*, used as names of divinities—of Buddha in Buddhist times or places, of Krishna and Durga in Brahminical times and places? The use of the word *Bhagavati* as the name of an object of worship in Malabar was very common[2]. The

1. *Memoires Sur C'Inde*, 90.

2. In Wilson's work on the Mackenzie Mss., we find in the list of local Ms. tracts belonging to Malabar, the repeated

term *Bhagavati* seems to have been very commonly attached to objects of worship in Malabar temples [1]. And it is very interesting to observe that, in a paper on "Coorg Superstitions," Mr. Kittel notices parenthetically that Bhadra Kali (i. e. Durga) is "also called Pagodi, *Pavoti*, a *tadbhava* of *Bhagavati*" [2]—an incidental remark that seems to bring us very near the possible origin of *pagode*. It is most probable that some form like *pagodi* or *pagode* was current in the mouths of foreign visitors before the arrival of the Portuguese; but, if the word was of Portuguese origin, there may easily have been some confusion in their ears between *Bhagavati* and *butkadah* which shaped the new word. It is no sufficient objection to say that *Bhagavati* is not a term applied by the natives to *a temple*, the question is rather what mis-understanding and mis-pronounciation by foreigners of a native term may probably have given rise to the term?

3. **An arch.** *a work of art.*—Most probably the reference here is to the pagoda at Tiruvanjiculam, a mile to the south of that of Cranganur. The arch referred to stood, though in ruins, till some time ago, when probably, some subordinate officer of the Sirkar, ignorant of its historical and antiquarian importance, but alive to its dilapidated condition, pulled it down and substituted a more substantial structure in its

occurrence of *Bhagavati* in this way. Thus, in this section of the book, we have at p. XCVI (Vol. II) note of an account "of a temple of *Bhagavati*" at p. c iiii "Temple of Mannadi *Bhagavati* goddess....."; "Temple of Palliarakavu *Bhagavati*....." ; at p. civ.; "Temple of Mangombu *Bhagavati*....."; "Temple of Paddeparkave *Bhagavati*....."; "Temple of the goddess Pannayennar Kavu *Bhagavati*..."; "Temple of the goddess Patali *Bhagavati*..."; "Temple of *Bhagavati* ...," p. cvii; "Account of the goddess *Bhagavati*; etc.,..."; Account of the goddess Yalanga *Bhagavati*", "Account of the goddess Vallur *Bhagavati*.

1. See also Fra Paolino, p. 79 and p. 57.

2. *Ind Antiq*,, ii p. 170.

place. With it perished many an inscription chiselled on its walls and foundations which would have opened a long vista of now-forgotten history.

4. **Marble arches and facings.** If marble was ever used for temple building in Malabar, there is no trace of it left at present. Neither Malabar nor any country in its neighbourhood produces marble, and it is most unlikely that, in days when means of communication between long distances was very sparing and most difficult, that material was brought from Rajaputana, perhaps the only province in India where marble could be had. But our author is not the only writer who speaks of marble being used in Malabar temples. We have seen that Maffeus quoted in Purchas speaks of the temple 'dedicated to an ape at Calicut' as containing a porch "in which are 700 marble pillars, not inferior to those of Agrippa in the Roman Pantheon." Faria also speaks of 'black marble' being used in building temples in Malabar. It must however be noted that in Malabar there is a kind of black granite stone available capable of great polish and which resembles marble very much, and it is probable that our author is referring to arches and facings made of that material.

5. **Stone elevation.** In Malabar temples, the idol is placed within the sanctuary, just in the centre on a stone platform which is not supported, as our author says, on four columns. But it is so in Konkaṇi temples.

6. **Image of various materials.** Before noticing the various materials of which images are made, it would be useful to refer to the classification of Images according to the Hindu Sastras. The sacred writings of the Hindus notice two kinds of images—one self-revealed (*Swayambhu*) and the other artificially created and consecrated (Pṛaṭiṣhṭa). In the Padma Purāna, Śiva declares to Pārvaṭi: "Hear,

O goddess, I speak of that partial abode of Hari; it is celebrated of two kinds, the established and the self-revealed. The image of Hari prepared of stone, earth, wood, metal, or the like, and established according to the rites laid down in the Vedas, Smrities, and Tantras is called the established. Now hear me speak of the self-revealed. Where the self possessed Vishnu has placed himself on earth in stone or wood, for the benefit of mankind, that is styled the self revealed." [1] "Vishnu in the above passage," says Pandit Prananath Saraswati, is typical of all deities." Self-revealed images are of greater importance than established ones. The Hindu sages have always treated worship in which images are used as an inferior form—fit only for those who are unable to grasp the abstract conception of the Supreme Being. Mr. Saraswati refers to the following texts in this connection:—

"I am in the fire for those who sacrifice; in the heart of those who recite prayers; in images for those of small understanding; for those possessed of true knowledge I am everywhere."[2] (*Agni Purana*).

1. *Uttara Khanda*, *Adhyaya*, 73.

2. *The Hindu Ideal* by Sri Ramanada Saraswati Swami. Chapter 25.

By antecedent misdoings in innumerable lives before, the mind has accumulated a lot of impurity. To remove this accumulated dirt from the mind, the Sastra prescribes the observance of good deeds (Sat-karma). The object of Karma is such purification of the mind or Chitha-sudhi. Even after such purification, there may be no proper reflection of Atma on it; for, the mind has another dosha, called Vikshepadosha, which is its unsteady, restless and ever-changing character. In order to regulate in the first instance and then finally to conquer the restlessness of the mind, the practice in concentration is prescribed in the shape of upasana or devotional worship of some great Personal Ideal, preferably of the Almighty God of the universe in some one of the forms described in the Sastra. It is the process whereby the wandering mind, on whose varied activity the Thinker or Vyavaharika Jeevatma depends for his existence, is gradually brought to a centre of attraction, and thereupon its

"For the needs of the worshippers, forms are invented of the Supreme Being (*Brahmam*) who is *Chinmaya*, without a second, indivisible and incorporeal."

The Sastras give various classifications of images, The *Gautmiya Tantra* classifies them into two kinds, the *lepya* and the *lekhya*. The former ordinarily denotes moulded figures and may be made to include metallic figures cast in moulds. Similarly the latter usually signifies pictures, but may be made to include chiselled figures of wood and stone.

flickering tendencies are, one after another, removed by constant one-pointed contemplation on the nature of the One Limitless Self of whom the image, used for worship, is a manifestation under name and form or limitation.

Ch. 26. The Christians and others have adopted only mental forms, and they send their prayers up to the Divine Feet of the Lord in Heaven. They shut their eyes, form a mental picture of the Lord and contemplate on his glory. This, no doubt, is very good. The Aryan Hindu however is not satisfied with a mental image alone. He adopts also physical Images for worship.

Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. IV. On *Bhakti-Yoga* pp. 33—4.

Religion is realising and I will call you a worshipper of God, when you have become able to realise the Idea. It is this power of realisation that makes religion. So we have to realise religion, and this realisation of religion is a long process.

In order to attain to the state where we can realise, we must pass through the concrete, just as you see children learn through the concrete first and gradually come to the abstract. We are all of us babies here ; we may be old and have studied all the books in the universe, but we are all spiritual babies. We shall have to begin in the concrete through forms and words, prayers and ceremonies, and of these concrete forms there will be thousands ; one form need not be for everybody. Some require an image outside, others one inside the brain. All forms, though leading to the same goal, may not be for all of us. The chosing of one's own road is called in the language of Bhakti, Ishtam, the chosen way. So with words, the prayers, the *mantrams*.

The Elements of Hindu Iconography—by T. A. Gopinatha Rao, M. A., Vol. I, Art.1, Introduction:—

The *Matsya Purana* divides them into four classes, viz., (1) paintings, on canvas, walls or vessels; (2) moulded, of clay; (3) melted, of metals; (4) chiselled, of wood or stone. Another passage of the same work recommends the construction of images of gold, silver, copper, iron, brass, bell-metal, jewels, stone, auspicious wood and conch-shells: whilst in a third, the phallic emblem of Siva is recommended to be made of jewels, crystals, clay, or auspicious wood as the worshipper might desire.

A passage in the *Gautamiya Tantra* speaks of *Kasmira*, amongst others, as the material of which an image may be prepared. According to lexicographers, this means saffron, as well as the *Fiscus elastica*.

Minute regulations are prescribed by the Sastras regarding the shape, size, and figure of images. Very full descriptions are given not only of the shape and colour which the image of a particular deity should assume, but also of its surroundings, such as its arms, ornaments, dress, vehicles, attendants and the like. The proportions of size are also fully set forth there.[1]

p. 1. The use of an external object to cencentrate the mind in the act of meditation is as old as the practice of Yoga itself in India. Patanjali defines *Dharma* or fixity of attention "as the process of fixing the mind on some well defined object in space." This process he says is internal or external.

p. 17. Images are divided into chala (movable), achala (immovable), and chalachala. Achala vigrahas are of 3 kinds—sthanaka, asana, and dyana (standing, sitting and reclining).

p. 18, Yet another classification of images into chitra wher the whole is completely shown, chitrardha and chitrabhasa.

Still another into terrific (raudra or ugra and pacific (or Soumya),

p. 23. The worship of the different aspects of the deity as the yoga, bhoga, vira and abhicharika, intended to enable the devotee to obtain certain desired ends, such as peace, plenty victory, etc.

അജ്ഞാനാം ഭാവനാർത്ഥായ പ്രതിമാഃ പരികല്പിതാ?

Jabala-Upanishad

(*Quoted in Deva Prathishta Tattvam* p. 644).

1. Those desirous of pursuing the subject further will find the authorities collected in the *Hari Bhakti Vilasa* and its

7. **Pounetoor Namboori.** This ought to be Punnaṭṭūr *Nambidi* and not Nampūṭiri.

8. **More arms and heads.** The description given by the Portuguese of the images worshiped by the Malabar people does not differ much from that of our author. It is idle to expect of those who are absolutely unacquainted with the *rationale* of Hindu worship to form any other opinion than the one formed by our author: Here is what Camoens says in the Lusiad:—

"Before them now the sacred temple rose,
The portals wide the sculptur'd shrines disclose·
The chiefs advance, and, enter'd now, behold
The gods of wood, cold stone, and shining gold;
Various of figure, and of various face,
As the foul demon will'd the likeness base.

Taught to behold the rays of godhead shine
Fair imag'd in the human face divine,
With sacred horror thrilled, the Lusians view'd
The monster forms, Chimera-like, and rude.

Here, spreading horns a human visage bore,
To, frown'd stern Jove in the Lybias' fane of yore·

One body here two various faces reared;
So, ancient Janus O'his shrine appeared.
A hundred arms another brandish'd wide;
So Titan's son the race of heaven defied.

And here, a dog his snarling tusks display'd;
Anubis, thus in Memiphis' hollow'd shade
Grinn'd horrible. With vile prostrations low
Before these shrines the blinded Indians bow·"

(Mickle's Translation).

commentary. The 58th chapter of the *Brihat Samhita* is also a good compendium on the subject. (Prannath Saraswati p. 102).

The *Brihat Samhita* of Varahamihira says that the ornamentation and clothing and beautification of the images should be worked out in accordance with the usage in the country in which the images are made (used). ദേശാനുരൂപഭൂഷണവേഷാലങ്കാരമൂർത്തിഭിഃ കൎയ്യാ

Varthema has the following description of the image worshipped by the Zamorin. "In the middle of his chapel there is a devil made of metal, placed in a seat also made of metal. The said devil has a crown made like that of the papal Kingdom, with three crowns; and it also has four horns and four teeth, with a large mouth, nose and most terrible eyes. The hands are made like those of a flesh-hook, and the feet like those of a cock; so that he is a fearful object to behold. All the pictures around the said chapel are those of devils, and on each side of it there is a *Sathanas* seated in a seat, which seat is placed in a flame of fire wherein are a great number of souls of the length of half a finger and a finger of the hands. And the said Sathanas holds a soul in his mouth with the right hand, and with the other seizes a soul under the waist."[1]

A similar description of this image is given in Purchas.[2] It is significant that we learn from Astley that De Gama and his followers when taken to this temple were not "permitted to go near enough to examine it (the image) because they were told that none but Kafirs (unbelievers) could have that privilege." They could not have seen the image distinctly for the "Tower inside which it was placed was dark within. Our author also tells us that "no Christian, Jew, or Moor, may penetrate into the sanctuary," so that it is rather difficult for one of them to obtain a sight of the interior or to have an exact idea of the images within, except on information gathered from those who have actually seen and examined them. It is not that some of the images used for worship are hideous enough to look at, but that to condemn them wholesale as altogether gruesome and to hold them up to ridicule is as unreasonable as to assert that they are all of them aesthetically and

1. Pages 137—8.

2. Page 625.

artistically perfect. Of course we cannot expect a Christian, whether a missionary or a layman, a Romanist or a Lutheran, to understand the significance of the figures represented by Hindu images and the distinctive meanings attached to their forms by the Śāṣṭrās. To him they look unnatural and inartistic and they are therefore straightway condemned as hideous. But a devout Hindu finds in them representations of principles of nature worthy of his adoration.

The subject will be found discussed with great elaborateness in the fourth volume of the *Yoga Vasishta*. In chapter LXXXIV dealing with the definition of the term *Sakti*, Rāma asks his preceptor Vasiṣhṭa:—"Tell me, Sir, why the goddess *Kali* is said to be dancing about, and why is she armed with axe and other weapons, and arrayed with her wreaths and flowers?" In the course of the discussion that follows this question, the sage observes:—

"It is the will of Siva (or Jove) that creates all this world from its formless state, and it is this creative power which is the intelligence of God and the intelligence of living being. (Para 7).

"This power takes also the form of nature in her formation of the creation and is called the creation itself on account of her assuming on herself the representation of the phenomenal world. (Para 8).

"She is represented with a crest of submarine fire on her head, and to be dry and withered in her body; she is said to be a fury on account of her furiousness, and called lotus form from the blue, lotus-like complexion of her person". (Para 9).

The sage then goes on to enumerate her various designations explaining why she is so designated Coming to her designation of *Uma*, Vasiṣhṭa says:—

"Uma means moreover the digit of the moon, which enlightens the worlds from the forehead of Siva,

and the bodies of the God and Goddess are painted as black and blue, from their representing the two hemispheres of heaven. (Para 14.)

"The sky appears as dark and bright from the two complexions of these divinities, who are situated in the vacuous forms in the bosom of the great vacuum itself. (Para 15.)

"Though they are formless as empty airs yet they are conceived as the first born of the void; and are figuratively attributed with more or less hands and feet, and holding as many weapons in them. (Para 16.)

"Now know the reason of attributing the Goddess with many weapons and instruments, to be no more than of representing her as the patron of all arts and their employments." (Para 17.)

Again

"This Goddess is adorned with the sacrificial implements, as the morter, and pestle, the post and ladle etc; and is arrayed with the weapons of warfare also, as the spear, arrows, and the lance. (Para 31.)

"She is arrayed with the mace and many missile weapons also, and accompanied by horse and elephants and valiant gods with her. In short she fills the fourteen worlds, and occupies the earth with all its seas and islands". (Para 32.)

Similar explanation will be found elsewhere in the *Yoga Vasishta* with regard to the forms in which the other gods and goddesses of the Hindu Pantheon are represented.

9. **Copper cow.** This too stands for Tiruvanchikkulam where there is a well-known temple of Śiva. The copper cow (Bull?) which our author saw is not there now. But there is a stone representation of a bull in the *Mandapam*.

10. **Approach to threshold.** In Malabar, castes below high class Nāyars are not allowed to enter

the inner precincts of temples. Those castes whose approach would cause pollution are not allowed to come inside the outer walls of the pagoda while those Hindus whose touch alone causes pollution are permitted to do so.

Christians and Mahomedans also are not allowed to come within the outer walls. Our author is not correct when he says, in the previous paragraph, that, within the quadrangle enclosed by the walls to which entrance is afforded by a good front gateway, even the Christian and the unclean castes can enter. The Konkaṇi temples have an inner and an outer wall. Within the outer wall, all are allowed to go. Perhaps our author was misled by this. Where, there is, however, only one quadrangular enclosure to the temple, no Christian or other non-caste men are allowed to enter there. All of them have to stop at the gate.

11. **Consecration.** In case of such pollution, the temple has to be purified by performance of certain ceremonies before worship is resumed. The ceremonies are known collectively as *Punyaham*.

12. **Daily services.** We cannot of course expect our author to give us an accurate account of the daily services performed in a Hindu temple, more specially of a Malabar temple, where he labours under the disadvantage of being altogether unable to ascertain at first hand anything that takes place within its inner precincts.

In a duly constituted temple, there is attached to it a full complement of servants to whom are assigned specific duties. The ministering priest who officiates at the daily worship is called the Śāṇṭikāran of whom there may be more than one, the chief or *Mel Santi* and his assistant the *Keel Santi*. In some temples, the office is hereditary in certain families. In others, they hold office by appointment made by the proprietors, managers or trustees of the temple. During the

period of the tenure of their office, they have to live within the precincts of the temple and are remunerated by wages and certain perquisites. In certain temples, the Śāṇṭikāran is strictly prohibited from going outside prescribed limits. They are then known as *Purappada Santi*. The other servants who have to perform menial service are compendiously termed *Kazhakakkar*. These belong to the *Ampalavasi* section, divided into sub-sections with specified duties in the temple.

The duty of the *Kazhakakkar* is to sweep and clean the temple, gather flowers for the daily worship and generally to minister to the daily work of the temple. Their office also is sometimes hereditary when they are known as *Karaima Kazhakakkar*. They are paid either by wages and perquisites or by means of property grants to which are always added perquisites.

Besides the above, every temple has got its staff of servants and servant-maids, such as the light carriers, the musicians, *Marans*, whose business is to sing and sound the conchshell, the flute, the *Thakil* or drum and the *Pani* (another drum that gives a shrill note), the sweepers, the vessel-cleaners, the cooks, the water drawers the accountants, the guards, etc. There are also carpenters, washermen, smiths, and other workmen attached to the temple who all enjoy privileges and perquisites.

In the matter of worship, the *Tantri* or chief priest, who has a higher position than even the *Mel Santi* and whose office is always hereditary, is supreme. He presides at the *Pratishtha Kalasam* or *consecration*, at its occasional renewals, at the *Utsavam* or annual festival and at all important ceremonies. He decides all questions regarding worship and has to be referred to in matters of doubt and detail.

Coming to the daily routine of worship, the daily *Puja* commences with the *Palli Unarthal* or the waking up of the god by the *Maran* who sounds the conch-

shell three times, its loud shrill booming noise resounds through the temple and is heard throughout the neighbourhood. A chorus also is set up by the full complement of temple musicians playing on the pipe, the flute, the Takil, the drum, and other instruments. This takes place generally at 3 a. m. Meanwhile the *Santikaran* should rise from his bed and purify himself by a plunge bath. By the time he reaches the temple, the inner precincts have to be swept clean by the *Variyar*, the *Pisharoti* or the *Puthuval* and the *Keel Santhi*, after their bath, and the lamps lighted. After sweeping, comes the process of smearing (*upalepana*) with cow-dung). The next step is to remove the Nirmālyam or the remains of the previous day's offerings of flowers etc. This is done by the *Mel Santi* who opens the door of the sanctuary and performs the office. This is a very essential ceremony, for a text declares the non-removal of the *Nirmalya* to be as destructive of religious merit as the confinement of a thirsty animal and the menstruation of an unmarried daughter. It is considered highly meritorious to worship the image at this and the next succeeding ceremonies, and devotees flock to temples at this early hour to be present at the ceremony, after having had their plunge bath previously, and generally in their wet cloths. In worshipping, those who are Brahmans have the privilege of ringing the bells hung up in front of the fane. Both Brahmans and Sudras join their palms in front of their face and bow down muttering prayers.

Then follows the *Abhisheka* or washing the image. According to the *Mantra Tantra Prakasha*, after removing the remains of the previous day's offerings, the priest should present the deity with an offering of flowers; of *arghya*, or a respectful oblation of rice, flowers, etc., with water; of pāḍya, or water for washing the feet; as also other articles necessary for washing the mouth and so on. The first offering of rice is known as *usha nivedayam* and the first worship *usha puja*. But before this, some fried rice (*malar*) is offered.

Other *Pujas* follow in succession at intervals. When the shadow of a man in the morning sun measures 20 spaces, the *Ethirtha Puja* is performed followed by the *Ethirtha Siveli*, *i. e.*, taking the image, with music playing and drums beating round the temple three times on the head of the priest or on the back of an elephant. When the shadow measures 12 spaces, the *Panthirati Puja* is performed, and at midday the *uchha Puja*, which is followed by a similar taking of the image three rounds as in the morning. After this, the temple is closed for worship till 4-30 p. m., at which time it is again opened. At dusk, the Dīpārāḍhana or the worship with lights is performed. This consists in the lights of the temple being well trimmed, while a number of extra lamps are also lit up and the Mēl Śānṭi, after making oblations, waves the light before the image, music playing outside in the meanwhile; some camphor lit up is also waved in front of the image as a finishing rite. At this ceremony, worshippers gather in great numbers and make their bow with joined palms. The Aṭṭāla Pūja followed by the Aṭṭāla Śīvēli which take place at about 8 or 9 p. m. brings the round of daily worship to a close. The frequent ringing of a hand-bell is a distinctive feature at every Pūja. The image is regaled with oblations of rice, water, and flowers and is afterwards carried round the temple three times just as in the morning. After the image is housed for the night, the temple is closed.

To those who go to worship, the Sānṭikāran would give Prasāḍam and Ṭīrṭham, *i. e.*, sandal paste and flowers used in the worship of the image, and the holy water in which it was bathed. To the twice-born he pours the *Teertham* (holy water) into their palms which they piously drink, after which they are given the sandal paste and flowers, (Prasāḍam) the former of which is applied to the forehead, the chest and both shoulders while the latter is placed on the head in the hair. To the Nāyars these are given in plantain leaves and cups made of the leaves, or the Prasāḍam alone is



SRIVELI ROUND A TEMPLE.

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MADRAS.

thrown on the floor for the worshipper to pick up. They also make the same use of the Ṭīrṭham and Prasāḍam as the Brahmans.

It will be remembered that, at his first visit to Calicut, Vasco De Gama was taken by the Kotwal or the Zamorin's minister to a temple. Entering it they were met by four Brhamans naked from the girdle upwards, and from thence to the knees covered with calico. They wore pieces of calico also under their arm-pits, with certain thread which were hung over their left shoulder, and passed under their right arm just as the Romish Priests used to wear their Stoles formerly." This refers no doubt to the *Poonunool* or *yangjopavita* or the sacred thread, the distinguishing badge of the twice-born. "These men with a sponge dipped in a fountain, sprinkled their visitants (*i. e.*, with the Teertha or the holy water in which the image had been washed)—and then gave each of them some Sanders pulverised to strew upon their heads, as the Papist do ashes (i. e. the *Prasada* of sandal used in the worship of the image). The Portuguese did the one but not the other, because their clothes were on"[1].

At every *Puja* there is *Nivedyam*, i. e., rice offering. The rice is boiled and is offered in a lump by placing before the image, and the Śāṇṭikāran, muttering prayers, shows certain signs, according to forms prescribed in the Śāstras, calculated to convey the essence of the food to the image. There are other preparations of rice used for *Nivedyam*, viz., rice boiled in milk with sugar added and made into a porridge. Rice boiled with ghee, molasses, cocoanut-milk and likewise made into a porridge. These are known as Pāyasams. Then there is the *Tri-madhuram* or the preparation of the three sweet things, viz., honey, sugar, and plantain fruits with a little ghee added. The *Appam* or sugared

1. (Astley) See also Faria. vol. I, p. 46.

cakes prepared in ghee, and the fried rice called malar are also offered every day. Not a day passes without these offerings being made by those who worship in the temple. There are other offerings made and other ceremonies performed varying according to the gods and goddesses worshipped in the temple.

Every well-ordered temple has its annual festival or *utsavam* which is conducted on a large scale for 5 to 10 days. It is celebrated in memory of the installation of the presiding deity. On the first day, at an auspicious hour, a flag is hoisted on the flag staff in front of the temple, and from that day forwards till the concluding day of the festival, special services are performed with great elaboration of details. During the *Utsavam*, the *Tantri* presides and the most important of the special ceremonies he performs are the *Utsavabeli* and the *Sreebootabeli*. These consist in offering boiled rice to the gods and *Bhootams*. It is believed that any mistake however small in the performance of the rite of *Sreebhootabeli*, whether committed by the *Tantri* or the drummer (*Maran*) who beats the *Pani* in measure to the quick *Tantram passes* of the *Tantri*, will seriouly injure the *Tantri* and the *Maran*; the *Bhootams* for whose propitiation the sacrifice is offered being displeased or annoyed at their lapse. The image is taken in procession round the pagoda in the morning, evening and night on the back of an elephant richly caparisoned with gold facings and trappings of rich material. This elephant is attended on either side by a number of other elephants clad alike in rich facings etc. These as well as the one on which the image is placed carry rich silk umbrellas with gold and silver fringes, pairs of large round fans made of peacock feathers, and snow-white brush or whisk of yak-tail which are waved from time to time. In front walk the musicians and drummers playing their instruments. With regard to the drumming, the following description given by Mr. Fawcett is interesting. "The number

of instrumentalists increases as the festival goes on, and on the last day I counted over fifty, all Nāyars. The instruments were the ordinary tom-tom, a skin stretched tight over one side of a circular wooden band, about 1½ feet in diameter and 2 or 3 inches in width, and the common long drum much narrower at the ends than in the middle, something like an hour-glass cut short at both ends. They are beaten with drum sticks, curved not straight, thicker at the end held in the hand. The accuracy with which they were played on, never a wrong stroke, was truly amazing, although the rythm was being changed perpetually; and their crescendo and diminuendo, from a perfect pury of wildness to the gentlest pianissimo, was equally astonishing, especially when we consider the fact that there was no visible leader of this strange orchestra". [1]

The whole temple is illuminated. A large crowd of sightseers, men and women in gala attire attend and the whole scene presents a sight worth seeing. The procession takes three rounds after which the idol is removed to its usual place. As long as the festival lasts, Brahmans are fed with rich meals twice a day, rice conjee or gruel in the morning and rice in the evening with suitable accompaniments. Sights other than the procession are also arranged for, such as acrobatic performances, dramas, sword play, rope dancing, etc.

Utsavams "are made the occasion for the gathering not only of the worshippers who muster strong during the holy week, but also the young athlete with his rings and strings, the amateur dancer with his quaint head gear and uncouth dress, the country wit with his sharp tongue for the men and events of the day; the juggler with his cups and balls and his sleight of hand, the native piper with his golden flute, piping away to the tune and temper of the audience, the native drummer with dexterous hands and bended back and

1. P. 258.

strong in numbers drumming away with deafening chorus to the extreme delectation of the country folk, and last, not least, the thrifty merchant with his showy wares spread to their best advantage."

The *Arat* or final bath concludes the festival. But before this, the image goes through the village on the back of an elephant with music and the inevitable drum, and as it passes along the gates of houses the inmates receive it at the door with decorations etc., and present it with a para of paddy some rice and a cocoa-nut. The idol receives the same and proceeds on its mission till it goes round the whole village within which the temple is situated. On the day previous to the Ārāṭ comes the Palli Vēṭṭa or Palli Nāyāt, *i. e.*, the sacred hunt. This consists in the image being taken in solemn silence to a secluded spot where the representation of a hog is placed in an extemporised bush, and an arrrow is shot into it. The ceremony is symbolical of the early hunting expedition of the gods and men. As soon as the arrow is shot, a shout is raised by the crowd and the image is brought back with banners flying pop-guns, firing with music and drum beating, amidst the noisome rejoicings of the assembled multitude. Before proceeding to the final bath, the image takes repose not in the *Sanctum* itself but in a separate place for after hunt it is not holy so as to be placed in the inner shrine. The next day the festival terminates with the ārāt which consists in taking the idol to the temple tank or to a river close by or as at Trivandrum to the sea, in procession for bath. The idol being bathed, pūjas are performed and Nivēḍyams offered. It then returns to the temple after which the flag hoisted on the first day of the festival is hauled down. The whole period is observed as holiday by the people of the village who from the wealthy land-lord to the meanest artisan, stop their work and make it a point to spend all their time in the temple. Once the flag is hoisted on the temple flagstaff it is thought a sin

for any one to leave the village unless he could return before the festival is over; or engage himself in work of any sort. All are expected to devote their whole time to the festivities going on in the temple.

It will be interesting to note the description given by medieval travellers of the forms of daily worship held in Malabar temples especially at the Zamorin's temple at Calicut.

Varthema tells us that "every morning the Brahmans, i. e., the priests, go to wash the said idol all over with scented water, and then perfume it, and when it is performed they worship it; and sometime in the course of the week they offer sacrifices to it in this manner: They have a certain small table, made and ornamented like an altar three spans high from the ground, four spans wide and five long; which table is extremely well adorned with roses, flowers and other ornaments. Upon this table they have the blood of a cock and lighted coals in a vessel of silver, with many perfumes upon them. They also have a thurible, with which they scatter incense around the said altar. They have a little bell of silver which rings very frequently, and they have a silver knife with which they have killed the cock, and which they tinge with the blood, and sometimes place it on the fire, and sometimes they take it and make motions similar to those which one makes who is about to fence; and finally, all the blood is burnt, the waxen tapers being kept lighted during the whole time. The priest who is about to perform this sacrifice puts upon his arms, hands, and feet some bracelets of silver, which makes a very great noise like bells, and he wears on his neck an amulet (what it is I do not know); and when he has finished performing the sacrifice, he takes both his hands full of grain and retires from the said altar, walking backwards and always looking at the altar until he arrives at a certain tree. And when he has reached the tree, he throws the grain above his head as high as he can over the

tree, he then returns and removes everything from the altar". [1].

Again, speaking of the manner of offering food to the idol, Varthema says:—

"You must know that four of the principal Brahmans take the food which the king is to eat and carry it to the devil, and first they worship him in this manner: they raise their clasped hands over his head and draw their hands towards them, still clasped together and the thumb raised upwards, and then they present to him the food which is to be given to the King, and stand in this manner as long as a person would require to eat it; and then the said Brahmans carry the food to the King. You must know that this is done only for the purpose of paying honour to that idol, in order that it may appear that the King will not eat unless the food has been first presented to Deumo".

With regard to Varthema's description, it has to be remarked that, rough as it is, it applies only to temples where the goddess Bhagavaṭi in her grosser forms, such as Kāli or Chāmuṇḍi, is worshipped; for no temple where a Brahman officiates and where the presiding deity is one of the Hindu Trinity or its various incarnations will allow itself to be polluted by bloody sacrifices. Again the description is applicable more to the performances of the Velichapāḍ than to the Pūjas offered by the Brahman priests.

Barbosa's description of daily ceremonies at a temple is as follows:—

"And no one may enter there except the minister of that church, who goes in to set before the idol flowers and scented herbs, and they anoint it with sandal and rosewater, and take it out once in the morning, and another time in the evening with sound of trumpets and drums and horns. And he who takes it out first washes thoroughly and carries it on his head with the face looking backwards, and they walk wtih

1. Page 139.

it three times in procession round the church, and certain wives of the Brahmans carry lighted lamps in front, and each time that they reach the principal door, they set the idol on that stone and there worship it, and perform certain ceremonies; and having ended the three turns with music and rejoicing, they again place it in the chapel, and each day they do this twice, by day and at night. And round this church there is a stone wall, between which and the church they walk in the before mentioned procession, and they carry over the idol a very lofty canopy upon a very long bamboo for state as for kings. They place all the offerings upon the stone before the principal gate of the temple, and twice a day it is washed, and they set cooked rice upon it to feed the crows twice a day with great ceremony". [1].

Let us now hear what a modern Protestant Missionary has to say on the subject of daily worship in Hindu temples. The Rev. Richard Collins who was a resident in Kottayam in Travancore for a long time says in his work on *Missionary Enterprises in the East.*—

"I may take this opportunity of endeavouring to give some idea of the nature of the worship performed in a Hindu temple. The daily rites which I shall describe are those belonging to the temples of Siva, the principal object of worship in most temples on the Malabar Coast. In a large temple, like that of Tiruvilla, for instance, which covers several acres of ground, there are fanes to more gods and goddesses than one: there is probably one to Bhagavathi (also named Kali), the wife of Siva, another to Ganesa or Ganapathi, the son of Siva, another to Krishna, or even Vishnu. But the principal shrine, in nine cases out of ten in this part of India, is to Siva. The shrine, or temple proper, cosists of two rooms, in the inner of which the idol is placed. It is very commonly roofed with copper, and surmounted with a final of some handsome devic-

1. Page 122.

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cast in the same metal. No bloody offerings are, I believe, ever made in these temples, except in the case of a temple dedicated to Bhagavathi alone; and then no Brahman officiates, or takes any part in the proceedings The blood shed is commonly that of a cock. Nairs, Chogans, and the lower castes only, engage in this offering. Bringing their cocks in their hands, they cut off the head at an altar placed before the temple of Kali, and then take the bird home and feast on it. This is no doubt a remnant of aboriginal worship.

"The object of adoration which stands in the inner room in a temple of Siva is a plain conical stone, cut out of granite. It is the *lingam*, the same emblem as the phallus of ancient Europe. At daybreak, and before the sun rises, the first act of worship is performed. The Brahman who is the officiating priest for the time being commences the day by anointing the *lingam*. This is done by pouring over it ghee (clarified butter.) A portion of the bark of one of the *sapindacese*, which is commonly used among the natives instead of soap when they bathe, is then taken, and with it the greasy stone is well scrubbed. Water is then poured over it by means of a *Shankha*, the sacred conch of the Hindus, and the resulting water is most carefully kept; it is the *tirthum*, or sacred water of the temple. The priest then takes a portion of sandal wood (*santalam album*), and rubs it with water on a stone, till he obtains a certain amount of paste from the ground wood. This is placed on the top of the lingam, and remains there till the next morning. It is removed before the anointing, and is carefully kept. A garland of flowers is then placed round the idol, the *Michelia champaca* (one of the *Meagnoliacese*) being in much esteem for this purpose, when they can procure it, as also one of the *Ixoras*, and the *Poinceana pulcheriena*, often called 'The Peacock's Pride'. Offerings are also made of cocoanuts, palm sugar, ghee, and other things, among which the chief is a portion of the food prepared for the morning's meal in the temple, generally consisting of

parched rice and sugar. During all this time the priest repeats his *manthras*, portions of the Vedic hymns. After this, a small gold, silver or brass image of the god, according to the wealth of the establishment, is carried round the temple with music. A somewhat similar service, with the exception of the anointing, is performed at noon, and again at sunset. Sometimes a burnt offering is made, called *homam*, or *homabali*, when ghee, rice, and other things are thrown into a fire, kindled, not in the shrine itself, but in the open space. But this is not, I believe, a daily offering; the Hindu who wishes to perform his devotions in the temple generally does so during the morning. Having bathed, and marked his forehead, breast, and arms with the ashes of sandal-wood, which they call *Bhasmam*, he presents himself before Siva. If a Brahman, he stands on the upper step of the shrine; if a Nair, below. Here he probably repeats the *gayatri*, the most sacred verse of the Vedas, and makes his requests, whatever they may be—most likely for riches.

"But a Hindu will not tell you what his private devotions are. When I once asked a man, whom I had known sometime, what he said before the shrine, he immediately repeated some words in imitation of our prayer book, which he knew, '*Yende devame, yenoda rakshikename*'[1], 'My God, deliver me'. But the chief object of appearing in the temple is to receive a portion of the ground sandal wood of which I spoke above. On presenting himself before the fane, the worshipper is sprinkled by the priest with the *tirthum*, a portion of which he may also receive in the palm of his hand to drink. He then receives a small portion of the sandal-wood which had been placed on the idol the day before, and having moistened that with the *tirthum*, he makes a circular mark with it by the fore-finger of his right hand on his forehead, just above the nose, on his breast, and on his two arms near the shoulder. This is to signify that his intellect, his heart, and his strength are his gods, and also to show to the

1. Probably, the words are "*yenttay Daivamay yenna rakshi kkanamay*" which means 'O my God, please protect me.'

outer world that he is a good Hindu, and attentive to his religious duties.". [1].

It will be found on the whole that the Hindu form of worship conceives the deity as a living being. It is treated in the same way as the master of a house would be treated by his humble servants. The daily routine of life is gone through, the living image is regaled with the necessaries and luxuries of life in due succession, even to the changing of clothes, the offering of food and the retirement to rest.

We may fitly close our account of Malabar temples and the worship conducted in them by quoting Mr. Nagam Ayya's estimate of them. Speaking of the Hindu Pagodas of Travancore he observes.—

"There is nothing more impressive to the fervent admirer of nature than the spectacle of a Hindu Pagoda in Travancore viewed either in respect of its religious importance, its architectural beauties, its health and commodiousness or the feeling which it creates in the human mind of the imposing scene around, it is alike useful and instructive. Unlike the habitations of men, the habitations of the gods, are like Olympus of old on the tops of distant hills, among cool groves, in secluded valleys, and by the side of beneficent waters. The religious devotee, the Brahman Pandit, the student of the vedas, the numerous votaries for the favours of the God, alike find it pleasant and sufficing for their purposes. On its festive occasions which send a thrill into the neighbourhood and call forth those great social gatherings unknown otherwise in the country, it alike attracts the commerce, the youth and the fashion of the land. The procession of the God, the illumination of the temple, the devout attitude of the old, the clasped hands of the thousands, the happy faces of the children, the solemn stillness around, all fill the mind with serene emotion and relieve the monotony of life." In another connection the same

1. Page 191.

writer observes.—"As a result you find that a Hindu temple on this Coast is a centre of attraction to the old and the young, by its perfect system of worship, by the sweet fragrance and peace it breathes, the health and recreation it affords, its remarkable neatness, its marvellous punctuality and regularity in all its varied functions,the active beneficence which it dispenses and, above all, by the devotion, the reverence and the order which it silently inculcates on the thousands of votaries that visit it". [1].

13. **The offerings of the faithful.** Turning now to the secular side of the temples; when they have been constructed, the image of the presiding deity duly installed and the performance of daily worship resolved on, the ways and means for the same have to be found. The intensely pious and charitable instincts of the people prompt them to bestow rich endowments on these places of worship, for the maintenance of daily services, as also for ordinary and extraordinary festivals. The Hindu Sastras extol the merit of religious and charitable endowments and promise for the endower untold bliss in the other world and unlimited prosperity

1. The *Travancore State Manual* Vol. II, Page 77.

Most of the large temples in Malabar "stand for the administration of charity, the dissemination of education, the encouragement of Fine Arts and the employment of a great number of people. Some of the ancient temples exhibit the wonderful development reached in architecture, sculpture and iconology. The paintings on the walls and panelled ceilings are marvels of the art, and serve to impart instruction in the legendary lore of the Puranas. Temples are also centres of festive gatherings. During the time of these rejoicings, there will be procession, dancing and drumming, music and piping, Drama, *Koothu*, *Pattakam* and sports of various sorts. Objects of show and curiosity and articles of household use will be vended there. The songs that accompany the sports and dances, the dramatic literature and the hymology which are the outcome of the existence of these temples are of a high order. Many of these are rightly ranked as classics." *Progress of Cochin*, a blue-book edited by T. K. Krishna Menon; p. 274. Cochin Government Press.

in the future generation. The gift of land to Brahmans is declared meritorious but special rewards are promised for the gift of lands to the gods. Thus in the *Vishnu Dharmottara* it is said that the donor of land for the erection of temples attains the abode of the particular deity to whom the temple is dedicated. In the *Siva Dharma* it is declared that he who dedicates to *Siva* cultivated land, dwells in bliss in the *Rudraloka* for as many *Kalpas* as there are (*dandas*) poles of land found on measurement. In the *Varaha Purana*, the bestower of a skin of land to *Vishnu* is promised fortune and prosperity for seven births, and it is also mentioned there that he who dedicates a field or a house for the enjoyment of Vishnu is released from all his sins. The *Bhavishyat Purana* similarly treats of the benefits to be derived from dedicating lands to *Surya*.

The bait offered is too attractive for a devout Hindu to deny himself the advantage of making large dedications of property to temples if he has the means to do so, and thus securing perpetual bliss in the abode of the gods. At any rate the desire and the will to make such gifts will never be found wanting. The law interposes no difficulty. The Hindu proprietor is absolutely free to dedicate his property to the service of his deity. As observed by Mayne in his *Hindu Law*, "gifts for religious purposes are made by *Katyayana* an exception to the rule that gifts are void when made by a man afflicted with disease and the like". The text of *Katyayana* runs thus.—

"What a man has promised in health or in sickness, for a religious purpose, must be given; and if he die without giving it, his son shall doubtless be compelled to deliver it."

There are a number of other texts by various Smṛti writers regarding the merits of a religious gift and the facilities afforded to effectuate the same. We are not therefore surprised to see that there are richly endowed temples all over India, and in Malabar

especially where the country has been ever under the rule of Hindu Sovereigns, and where the State religion is Hinduism and where Brahmanism is rampant, and where, according to Alexander Hamilton, "the Namboories are first in dignity both in the Church as well as in the State."

The temples together with the endowments attached to them are known in Malabar as *Devaswams*. The *Devaswam* is in law a corporation sole and acts through its officers, and is capable of suing and being sued.

There are said to be four classes of temples in Malabar, viz.—

(1) Ancient temples founded by Paraśu Rāma.

(2) Temples founded by the Rajas.

(3) Temples founded by village communities or individuals.

(4) Temples founded by devotees from alms received.[1]

1. *Devaswam Separation Committee Report* published in the Travancore Government Gazette of 12th July 1921.

It is the general belief that most of the temples in the State were founded and endowed by the people. The successive sovereigns held these institutions in high veneration and fostered and richly endowed them from time to time adding to their wealth. A new conquest or change of dynasty was also the occasion for the construction of a temple. Devaswams founded by the people were under the management of a body of persons called *Ooralers* or *Karakkars*. These managed them through their delegates called *Samudayams* or *Manushyams*, etc. The Rulers of the State exercised their sovereign or *melkoima* right over all these and their *Sanketham*s. In some instances, the State had to interfere with the management of these to correct abuses or to undertake direct management. Surrender, escheat or conquest also added to the number of Devaswams under Sirkar management.

Almost every temple of note had a synod of the priestly class or other bodies. With the vast accumulation of properties under these synods, these bodies began to exercise judicial and executive functions which made the sovereign power in the land a mere shadow and a name. The power of the synods turned out at times to be a menace to public security and good Government.

In the language of the people, the Manager of a temple of the first two classes is said to be subordinate to the temple, whilst in the last two classes, the temple is said to be subordinate to the Manager. Another distinction drawn is that, where a temple is built over a self-revealed image and is endowed with property, the Manager is called *Devantte uralen* (the uralan of the god); where the image is newly constructed and the temple built to house the same and is endowed with property, the god is said to belong to the managing proprietor, or *Uralentte Devan.*

The Kerala Mahatmyam gives a detailed description of the founding of various temples by Parasu Rama to each of which the sage is said to have endowed property and appointed Managers, priests, etc. To the other classes of temples mentioned above, the founders seem to have appointed the various officers necessary for their management and working.

The ancient constitution of Malabar Devaswams generally was thus described by Mr. Conolly, a former Collector of the District, in a report to the Madras Board of Revenue. "The Pagodas of Malabar generally are, and have always been independent of Government interference. They are either the property of some influential family, the ancestors of which either built and endowed them or, as is more commonly the case, are claimed and managed by a body of trustees (*uratans*) who derive their right from immemorial inheritance and who conduct the affairs of the temple under the patronage and superintendence of some Raja or other person of consideration."

Consequently, to reduce and destroy this power, Col Munro, as Diwan of the State, quietly assumed, on 3-2-987 M. E., the control and management of 348 Devaswams.

Report of the Travancore Temple Entry Committee (1934).

Travancore, Cochin and Malabar have the same social and religious systems. Their temples have the same architectural style, and he principlesand rules of worship in them are based on the same authorities. (p. 6).

The general superintendence of all endowments is vested in the sovereign and is termed *Melkoima*. In the Native States it is still so, and the Rajas do exercise supervision in the case of public endowments by appointing an officer to represent them known as *Koima or Melkoima*. The British Government does not however exercise the Melkoima right over the temples in the Malabar District. The Malabar Rajas, who have ceased to be sovereigns and who as ruling chiefs had before the British conquest exercised general supervision, are still allowed to do so by the British Courts when their rights are contested.

A writer in the *Calcutta Review* has given us a better and perhaps a more correct and rational account of the origin of these Devaswams and their endowments and of the nature of those heirarchical rights so peculiar to Malabar.

"According to all legends and all available evidence, the Malabar Coast was populated by Aryan emigrants from the Eastern side of the Ghauts. It is equally a fact that the priestly class not only predominated among the emigrants, but actually monopolised the whole of the land of their adoption to themselves the rest of the emigrant population being their 'drawers of water and hewers of wood'—their serfs, or at the most, their tenants-at-will. But to stereotype the configuration of a society for all time to come is as much an impossibility as to fix that of the clouds in the sky. Aggregations and segregations of power, influence, and wealth, must ever and anon go on under the guidance of the universal law of struggle for existence and survival of the best. Those priests are the wisest, and consequently the most powerful, who, without directly arrogating secular power to themselves can bring into the meshes of their moral influence, those in whose hands the universal law places such powers. The ecclesiastics of the Malabar Coast knew this as instinctively as the ecclesiastics of Rome. But they had the additional advantage of having something more

solid than benedictions and indulgences to confer upon their political stewards—viz., the sovereignty of the land which exclusively belonged to them. They were equally wise and far-sighted in another step they took. They foresaw that the halo of sanctity which encircled themselves might not be proof against the gradual degeneracy of religious feelings which time must produce, and the consequent encroachment upon their supremacy in the land. And they *constitutionalised* that sanctity, by demising large tracts of land and their revenues to certain temples built and consecrated by them. Men who would not hesitate to rob a priest may hesitate to commit sacrilege on an object of general religious worship. Of these temples the priest assumed the proprietory wardenship. Almost every temple of note had a synod of these priestly wardens. They invited the leading layman or chief to a membership of the synod, and entrusted to him the stewardship of the whole temple domain subject to their superior authority. Thus arose these rich temples. Thus arose the sovereignties of the Malabar Coast". [1]

The chief officers in a temple are termed *Uraima*, *Samudayam*, *Karaima*, *Santi*, and *Pattamali*. The following extract from judgment of Mr. K. R. Krishna Menon, an experienced and learned Sub-Judge of Malabar, himself a Malayalee, would give us some idea of the nature of some of the most important of these officers:

"The Melkoima is analogous to the right of Advowson under the Common Law of England. As the original founders of Devaswams were either the reigning Raja or his Lieutenants, the Melkoima right, as a general rule, is vested in the sovereign and it, on that account, resembles in a great measure an Advows or donation. The practice of presentation, institution and induction is, however, unknown to the Malabar Law. By the mere deed of donation of the Melkoima, the families of the persons, to whom it is made, become the

1. (pp. 286 — 287of the Volume for 1883).

urallers, and in them the free-hold of the entire Devaswam is absolutely vested. Like other public offices in Malabar, the office of the urallen from its origin has been hereditary and consequently the occasion for the exercise of the right of the Melkoima is very rare, as it asserts itself only on the extinction of the family in whom the uraima is vested. The Melkoima, however, does not entitle the holder thereof to the bodily possession of the temple and its property, but it is a right to give some other men a title to such bodily possession.

"Urallen answers to the Parson of the English Church. By virtue of his nomination to the uraima, he has the entire free-hold of the Devaswam and in this character is regarded as its proprietor. The urallers possess the right of appointing all the temple servants, and they form a sort of corporation and manage the Devaswam. To guard against dissensions and consequent mismanagement, they, as a rule, appoint a manager who is styled a 'Samudayam', through whom the Devawam business is transacted. He, as a general rule, is entitled to demise Devaswam lands and to sue and to be sued on behalf of the Devaswam, but he cannot do this against the express will of the majority of the urallers, nor can he assign such lands on any permanent right or to sell them. When the function of the manager is limited to the collection of rent and to the general superintendence of the ceremonies of the temple, he is called a Pattamali. In the absence of special authorization, a Pattamali has no right to demise Devaswam lands nor to sue or to be sued on its behalf. In this respect he differs from an ordinary Samudayam".

Mr. Krishna Menon is here speaking only of one class of Devaswams, i. e., the one founded by a Raja or a chief. Mr. Wigram in his *Malabar Law and Custom* explains these terms to mean as follows:—"The Uraima originally denoted the rights of the heads of the village community to regulate the affairs of the village temple

It was subsequently applied to those who founded temples and constituted themselves managers and to those who were appointed as managers of temples by the Rajas. The Uraima is invariably vested in families and is hereditary. It is exercised by the head of the family.

"The Samudayam was originally the committee of management who managed on behalf of the body of the Uralans. Sometimes the management was vested in a single Uralen who became Samudayi. The term subsequently came to be applied to any person appointed as an agent to the Uralans. Sometimss the office is hereditary.

"Any temple servant who possesses an hereditary right to perform any particular service in a temple is said to be a *Kavala*. The term Santi has been already explained.

"The *Pattamali* is the rent collector and is usually a mere paid servant of the Uralans but his office is sometimes hereditary.

"The Uralans have no right to alienate trust property but may create subordinate tenures in accordance with local usage. They have no authority to transfer their office and its duties together with the trust property to a stranger.

"In some important temples of Malabar, the management of the temple and its eudowments is vested in persons selected by the community to which the temple belongs in conjunction with the sovereign and the local chieftains and inducted into office with the performance of elaborate religious ceremonies which invest them with a degree of sanctity not recognised in others, and rights over the temple and its appertenances that are peculiar to them alone. The process by which they are inducted into office is called *Avarodham* (consecration). There are, it is said, eighteen and a half *Avarodhams* in Malabar, the

eighteen being those of Brahmans and the half being that of a Nayar· In the case of Brahmans, the *Avarodham* clothes them with the right of management and confers on them certain privileges. But in the case of the Nayar, it does something more. The *Avarodham* raises him in caste status. He becomes almost a Brahman, at any rate a half Brahman. All ties with the family of his birth are cut off and henceforward he stands, by himself not as a Nayar as he was by birth, but as one ennobled or raised from that class by virtue of ceremonies performed on him. The most prominent instance of the *Avarodham* of a Brahman was that of the *Yogiathiripad* of Trichur. A Nambutiri Brahman of the *Adhyan* class of acknowledged learning and purity of life used to be installed as *Yogiathiripad* in the Vadakkunnathan temple at Trichur in the Cochin State· His primary duty was to perform *Pushpanjali* worship in the temple. But to his office was attached the duty of managing the secular affairs of the Devaswam. The *Avarodham* of the *Yogiathiripad* was continued till the expulsion of Pataykkara Yogiar, whom the Zamorin is said to have forcibly inducted into office in 1763. When the Cochin Raja, setting at naught that ceremony, assumed the management of the Devaswam and its rich endowments he stopped the *Avarodham* of a successor. Since then, no *Yogiathiripad* has been appointed".

The Nayar *Avarodham* is in the Kootalmanikkam temple at Irinjalakkuda in the Cochin State. and the person installed is known as *Thachudayakaimal.* His position in the temple is unique, and is thus described by Dr. Day following Ward and Connor. "At Irinjalakkuda is a temple, the chief of which is a Sanyasi, who must be nominated from certain families. He enjoys considerable immunities, and when he goes out, is preceded by a lamp and sword and has the insignia of supreme authority. He acknowledges no superior and will reside in the presence of no Prince.

He watches over the temple, superintendents its ministerial and lay concerns, sees to its revenues, and overlooks its expenditure."[1]

There were long-standing disputes between the States of Cochin and Travancore regarding the right of nomination to the "Sacred Sthanam or office designated Thachudaya Kaimal," which were finally settled by the award of the Arbitrator appointed by the Madras Government to dispose of all such disputes between the two States. The late incumbent of the office was appointed after the decision of the arbitrator. It declared that "the Raja of Cochin has according to custom to send a *Titturam* (Royal writing) to the Raja of Travancore through a Yogakaran (member of the community) requesting the nomination of a Thachudaya Kaimal to the Pagoda of Irinjalacuday; that the Kaimal is the manager of the temples and its endowments, that, though the Agent and nominee of Travancore, he is subject to the Civil and Criminal Jurisdiction of Cochin; that Cochin has no right of interference whatever in the affairs, spiritual or temporal, of the Irinjalacuday Pagoda, save such as may pertain to the office of Yogakkar held by the Raja of Cochin jointly with the Namboories."

The manner in which the Raja of Travancore came to possess the right of nomination, as related by tradition and relied on before the Arbitrator, is interesting. It is thus set forth by the Travancore Durbar in a statement presented to the Arbitrator:—

"The Irinjalacuday Pagoda, considered the principal and most sacred in the whole of the Malabar and Travancore, belongs to the Namboori community called the *Yogam* consisting of 42 families (illoms), and was founded admittedly 4,289 years ago or at the commencement of the Kaliyugam (Era.)

"Some centuries back, the Namboori Brahmins, observing an extraordinary red refulgence on the person of the deity, (so runs the tradition) were very

1. Page 23.

desirous of ascertaining what it was the like of, and with this view set out in search of a ruby of uncommonly good colour and waters. At last they found such a precious stone in the possession of His Highness the Maha Raja of Travancore (then known as the Venattoo Raja) from whom they obtained a loan of it, promising to return the same within 41 days after having instituted the much desired comparison. When it was taken near the person of the deity by the Tantri (officiating priest) for purposes of comparison, the precious stone, obtained after so much labour and with such strong assurances of being punctually returned, was, it is said, absorbed by the deity which is ever since known by the name of Kudal Manikkam (absorber of ruby).

"The Namboory Brahmans returned and explained what had occurred, and in consideration of their having failed to return the gem, offered to confer on the Raja the right of nominating a person to the management of their sacred temple. Thus originated in ancient days the right of nomination exercised by Travancore through ages but now boldly contested by Cochin.

"Whatever might be the foundation and probability of this tradition, it is an undeniable fact, that the deity, at the temple of Irinjalakkuda is known at the present day by the name of 'Kudal Manikkam', and every successive nominee of His Highness the Maha Raja of Travancore to the office of Thachudaya Kaimal signs as 'Manikom Keralan'. Again, the compound word Thachudaya (the component parts of which, *viz.*, Thachoo—building and oodaya—ownership) means the owner of the building, in the present instance, the Pagoda".

The ceremonies and the method by which the nominee of Travancore is inducted into office and invested with the sacred character of Thachudaya Kaimal, are not only interesting in themselves, but also

disclose the early system by which a temple, dedicated for public worship, situated within the territorial sovereignty of one State, was allowed to be managed by a Nayar, nominated by the sovereign of a neighbouring State, who is inducted into office and raised in caste status by a community of priestly Brahmans, with the assistance of a number of chieftains, coming from different localities outside both States, whose interests in other respects, more specially political, are more or less antagonistic to one another.

The following account, extracted from the records of the Devaswam, contains an accurate description of what transpired at the installation of the present Thachudaya Kaimal's predecessor in office in the year 983 M. E. 1808 A. D.

"On the 30th Thulam 983 M. E., the *Yogam* having resolved on the consecration of a Thachudaya Kaimal, the ceremony known as *Tevar Seva* (the serving of God) was begun by the yogakkars on the 1st of Vrischigam. It was continued for 40 days, after which the representatives of the *Yogam* proceeded to Trippunittura (the seat of the Raja of Cochin), had an audience with the Raja, and informed His Highness that it was their desire that a Thachudaya Kaimal should be consecrated without further delay. His Highness answered that, if they desired it, His Highness had no objection. After this, two members of the *Yogam* proceeded to Aĺavāncheri to ascertain the convenience of the Ṭamprākal (the high priest of the Nampuṭiries) and informed him that the consecration of the Thachudaya Kaimal has been resolved upon. The Ṭamprākal said that he would come on being sent for after a date for the ceremony is settled. The *Yogam* then assembled in the Vāthal Mādam, a particular part of the temple, where they usually assemble in council for purposes of consultation, and prepared a writ (*Theet*) to the Maha Raja of Travancore requesting His Highness to send the horoscope of his nominee for consecration as

Thachudaya Kaimal. Then four members of the *Yogam*, accompanied by Kolom Moothatu, Chirayath Moothatu, Olloor Nayar and Thuruthikat Nayar—all officers attached to the temple—went to Tripoonitura, saw the Raja and obtained a *Theetooram* (Royal writing) and left for Trivandrum on the 17th of Makaram, reaching the place on the 23rd. The party was received with all hospitality and housed in the Tycad Madom and was informed that the interview with the Maha Raja will have to be postponed till after Bharaṇi and Kārtika which were inauspicious days. The deputation waited till the 26th, on which day after sunset, the members proceeded to the Chowkkaket of the Palace and were admitted to an audience with the Maha Raja. They informed His Highness that they had come to get the horoscope of His Highness' nominee for consecration as Thachudaya Kaimal, and had brought with them, according to usage, the Ṭīṭṭūram of the Raja of Cochin and the Ṭīṭṭ of the *Yogam*. The former was handed over to the Ṭēvāri (purohit or priest) while the latter was placed in the hands of His Highness himself. Then the members of the *Yogam* were asked to sit on a plank placed for them. The rest stood there. The Theet and Theettooram were read aloud, and His Highness answered, 'So let it be.' On the 27th, the deputation again waited on His Highness in the Chowkka Etakket, and the members of the *Yogam* sat on a plank facing to the East while the others stood by. The Maharaja sat facing westwards. The Elaya Raja (the heir-apparent) and the 3rd Raja were also present. Vatayattil Pilai stood down the Chowkkay. The Maharaja handed over to the deputation the horoscope of Panayara Illattu Puthenveettil Kumara Kuruppu. It was then Meenam Rasi (indicating the exact point of time). Olloor Nair Sanku took it. On taking leave of His Highness that day, after meals, rich presents were given to all. Similarly the Dalawa or Prime Minister also gave presents. Leaving Trivandrum the same day, the party reached Irinjalakuday on the

3rd Kumbham. Two members of the *Yogam* repaired to Trippunithura to acquaint the Raja of Cochin of what had transpired. After an audience with His Highness, the 10th of Meenam was selected as an auspicious day for consecration, and invitations were issued to all those whose presence at the ceremony was necessary. Theets and Theettoorams were sent through special messengers of the *Yogam* and the Raja to Tamprakal, Velattukara Nampidi and Wadakumkootil Nair. All responded to the invitation and came to Irinjalakkuday on the 9th of Meenam. On the morning of the 10th, the *Yogam* assembled in the Thekke Vathalmadam and sat facing eastwards. Lamps were lit. A para (measure) of paddy and rice were placed there with a bunch of plantain fruits as an offering to Ganapathi. The Raja sat on a piece of cloth spread facing westwards with his sword placed in his lap. Kolom Moothathu, Cherayath Moothathu, Olloor Nayar, Thuruthikkat Nayar, the four Kaimals of Nanthipulam, Wadakunkootil Nayar, and Muriyatathu Nampiyar stood in the Thekke Vāthilmadām. In the Vadakke Vāthilmādam stood the Uralers of the nine houses, Vellattukara Nampidi and Veloss Nampidi and Veloss Nampiar. The Chieftains can be allowed to come up to the Vathilmadam and stand there, only on purging themselves of any offences they had committed, by presenting an elephant to the temple as penalty for the same. Of the erring chiefs, Chankarakanda Kaimal was the first to be called on to make amends for the wrong he had committed. A dispute then arose between Tekineyedat Karumukk and Vadakenediath Karumukk Nambutiries as to which of them was entitled to enforce the penalty and the *Yogam* disposed of the dispute by calling on a third party Arithodath Nambutiri to exact the penalty. The office of Velose Nampiar having become vacant by the death of the last incumbent, his heir and successor was ordered to surrender the silk and sword, the insignia of office which had been given to his uncle. On these being

given up, Itteyetath Nampiar was chosen to fill the vacant place. On his entering the temple through the eastern gate after taking his bath in Kuttankulam (tank) and the Theertha Kolam (tank); Moothathu presented him with the silk and sword and called out his designation as Velose Nampiar. He stood in the Vadakke Vathal Madam. The Tamprakal, after this, ascended the Mandapam (raised platform in front of the *Sanctum*) and sat on a plank in the middle facing the image of the god. On the Mandapam were placed lighted lamps, a para of paddy, and rice, cocoanuts, molasses, ghee, plantain fruits, etc., as offerings to Ganapati. Money for *dakshina*—one fanam (4 as. 7 ps.) for Danam and 3 fanams for Muhoortam—were also placed there. Tamprakal made the presents and proceeded to perform the consecration ceremony. On the 10th of the month of Meenam being Uthrattathi asterism, Desami or 10th day of the 2nd half of the fortnight, Monday at Karkadakam Rasi, Panayara Puthenveettil Kumara Kurup was consecrated as Thachudaya Kaimal. At that time none was allowed to stand within the inner precincts of the temple. The Marar who was to blow the *Shank* (conch-shell) did so from the northern door (standing out of sight).

"After Tamprakal had finished Puja to Ganapaṭy, Kolom Moothatu placed on a plank on the Mandapam in a leaf 1001 fanams for Dakshina. He also took to Vellattukaray Nambidi and Vadakamkooletil Nayar, who were standing in the Vatal Madam, 101 fanams each and presented them with the same. Here ended the first part of the ceremony, which closed with a grand feast to the Brahmans and Ampalavasies.

"At an auspicious moment on the 11th Meenam, eight members of the *Yogam* accompanied by Kolom Muthatu, Chirayath Muthatu, Ollur Nayar Thuruthikattu Nayar, Perumpilli Nayar, Nanthikaray Panikar, Krishnapisharath Pisharody, Arakkaypisharath

Pisharody, Akathuttu Wariyar, and the Marars attached to the pagoda left for Trivandrum, to bring down the Thachudaya Kaimal. They reached the place on the 23rd. On being presented to the Maha Raja, they were told that the 25th has been selected as an auspicious day for the further ceremonies to be performed at Trivandrum. The deputation was located at Tycad Madham and entertained with magnificent hospitality. On proceeding to the Valia Etaket of the Palace on the morning of the 25th, the place was found to be richly decorated with silk hangings, etc. A bunch of plantain fruits had also been placed for Ganapati. There was also a lighted lamp and a para of paddy and rice. The members of the *Yogam* were seated on a plank facing westward, the other members of the deputation standing. The Maha Raja sat facing the east. Kolom Muthatu then placed before His Highness, on a plantain leaf, a new pot, filled with saffron powder, the mouth being covered with plantain leaf. Then a member of the *Yogam* announced to the Maha Raja that Panayara Illath Puthen Veettil Kumara Kurup has been consecrated as Thachudayan of Irinjalakkuda. Upon this, His Highness sent for the person consecrated and addressed him thus:—"You have been consecrated Thachudayan for Irinjalakkuda. Go you along with the *Yogam* and manage the temple as I had done." So saying, a piece of silk was presented to him which he received making obeisance. As soon as this was done, a screen was drawn between the Maha Raja and the Kaimal (for he cannot see the Maha Raja after this) and the Shank blown. Olloor Nayar and other temple servants made their obeisance to the Thachudaya Kaimal first. These were followed by the Dalava and other officers of State. The bunch of plantain fruits placed for Ganapati is the perquisite of Olloor Nayar.

"The Thachudaya Kaimal entered his palanquin from inside the Palace and went round the temple in procession with music playing and drums beating, with

lamps of peculiar make[1] carried before and after and proceeded thus to the Sreekanteswarath Madham. The Thachudaya Kaimal's daily functions began from this day. On the members of the *Yogam* taking leave of the Maha Raja that evening, presents were given to all. The party left Trivandrum the same day. On reaching Quilon, boats were supplied. It reached Paroor on the first Medam and was accommodated in the Mookambi Palace. Staying there till the 6th, a move was made to Trippayya, a couple of miles to the south of Irinjalakkuda. On the morning of the 7th, the Raja of Cochin attended by the chieftains and noblemen who had been invited by His Highness came to Trippayya, placed the Thachudaya Kaimal on the back of a magnificent elephant and took him to Irinjalakkuday in procession with popguns firing, music playing, drums beating and all other paraphernalia that generally accompany a procession of the kind. He was accommodated in a special shed put up for the occasion to the south of the Gopuram or Gate-Tower of the temple. The Kaimal sat there with a lighted lamp and a para of paddy and rice placed before him, attended by the chieftains and nobles and attendants above-mentioned who were dressed in a peculiar fashion with clothes supplied by the Devaswam. There he had to be shaved by Olloor Nayar (for which the Nayar receives certain perquisites he is entitled to), after which he bathed first in Kuttam Kulam (tank outside the walls of the pagoda) and again in the Theertham (the sacred pool within the walls). He then dressed himself in the peculiar orthodox style of the Nambootiries, and had consecrated water poured on his head (*Kalasom ati*) being seated on a plank placed on the floor decorated with figures formed with powders of different colours (*Patmam*), inside a closed shed of five *Koles* circumambit erected on the bank of the sacred pool to the west of the Mandapam. The water was consecrated by having elaborate Pujas performed and mantrams or incantations muttered on it according to rituals laid

1. Changalavatta lamps.

down in the Sastras. After being bathed in consecrated water, he proceeded to the inner precincts of the temple, attended by men, carrying lighted lamps of peculiar make in front and rear and accompanied by music. He entered it by the eastern door and sat on a carpet to the right of the image. Kolom Muthatu then placed before him an *Edangazhi*, a measure, and the keys of the temple. He took them up and, with the first, he measured out rice for offering at the mid-day service in the pagoda. Having done this, he ascended the flight of steps leading to the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, placed a piece of *Veeravalipattu* (a kind of rich silk) before the image, rang a bell hanging there and worshipped. The presiding priest gave him *Theertham* (holy water), and *Prasadam* (flowers and sandal paste used in worship). Receiving this on a plate, he went round the *Sanctum* and by the time he reached the *Valia Belikallu* (large stone altar) a palanquin had been placed in a shed, erected to the south of the altar, on four posts. Puja had been performed on the palanquin, which was then removed to the east of the stone-altar and so placed as to have one of its poles touch the altar. On the Thachudaya Kaimal getting into the palanquin, the Raja of Cochin touched the pole at the other end that rested on the ground (indicating that the palanquin is borne by the god at one pole and the Raja at the other. It was then lifted up by the bearers (*Pallichan* Nayars whose profession is to act as bearers to Nambutiries) and carried round the pagoda in procession with music, etc., attended by the Raja, chiefs, Nambutiries, and others to Kottilakal, the official residence in which the Kaimal is to take up his permanent abode. On Kaimal leaving the temple, Koloman Muthatu paid to the Raja 301 fanams in a bag. As he alighted from his palanquin at the gate of Kottilakal, he was received and welcomed by Turithikat Nayar, dressed in the peculiar fashion of the Nambutiries, carrying in his hands a plate filled with rice on which was placed a mirror and a small painted round box.

He entered the house and took his seat in the east wing of the building on a piece of black cloth spread over a white one. In front of him was a lighted lamp and paddy and rice. Sitting there he gave the chieftains each one and a quarter measure of rice and 32 fanams being their subsistence allowance. The chieftains made their obeisance and received their allowances on their shields. Then followed distribution of allowances to the temple servants. The whole ceremony was wound up by a grand and sumptuous feast to the Brahmans and Ampalavasies, also to other classes of people, together with money donations to the twice-born."

By this ceremony the Nayar individual who is consecrated as Thachudaya Kaimal is raised almost to Brahmanhood. He is not invested with the sacred thread. But all the same he is regarded as equivalent to a Brahman. He is henceforward clothed with all the peculiar privileges of a high class Brahman. He is to dress like the holy Namputiri priest, is allowed to bathe in the sacred pool attached to the temple, can go up the stairs of the sanctum and worship, may ring the bell hanging before the idol, is entitled to get *prasadam* in his own hands from the officiating priest and is always preceded by a *kuthu wilak*[1] or lighted lamp of peculiar make, as also by men carrying swords and shields. His approach is announced by the blowing of a *shank* or conch so that all may give way to his sacred presence. He adopts the designation of the deity and styles himself Manikan Keralan and the faithful recognise in him the representative of the deity. In the eyes of the ultra orthodox Malayali Hindu, steeped in modern Brahmanism, can any position in this world be more elevated or more sacred than that of the Kaimal—a Nayar promoted to Brahman-hood by means of ceremonies performed by the Brahmans themselves? Henceforward the Thachudaya Kaimal manages the Devaswom and its affairs, and acts independently of any one, though in these prosaic days of materialism

1. called changalavatta.

and agnosticism the judicial tribunals of the State refuse to uphold the theory of the Kaimal's assimilation with the deity and his claims to absolute independence, but admits to see in him only the manager of a religious endowment.[1]

With the above account of a Nayar *Avarodham* may be compared and contrasted the ceremonies attendant on a Brahman *Avarodham* that of the *Yogiathiripad* for *Pushpanjali* in the Vadakunathan temple at Trichur. The following account is gathered from the Grandhavari or Chronicles of the Trichur temple and it gives us an interesting description of an old-world ceremony that has now gone out of use altogether.

"When a vacancy occurs, the Raja of Cochin should proceed to Trichur and summon the Perimpadappil Mooppu (i. e., the senior in age of all the branches of the Cochin Royal Family) who should take his seat in the Vatalmadam of the temple. The 22 Nampikkoors (i. e., temple property-holders or Nambis) as well as the members of the Pathillam (10 houses of Brahmans) and Ponnazhiath Kaimal have also to be summoned. At this assembly, the Raja has to announce the proposed Avarodham. On the proposals being accepted, intimation has to be given first to the Azhuvancheri Tamprakkal and Vadakkiniyedathu Kārumukkil Namboodiripad. The invitation to the former should be issued in the names of the Patoor and Poraṇāttukara Gramams (villages or communities) and should bear the signatures of Mundakaseri Nambutiri and Kāvumkal Nambutiri followed by those of the members of the 18 Illams. The invitation to the other goes in the names of Mundakaseri, Venad, Vettanad and Kavumkal Nambutiries. The invitations have to be written on Olas, palmyra leaves, in the handwriting of the Pattola Menon, hereditary Secretary of the temple. They are handed over

1. After a protracted litigation, and, as a result of an arbitration, it is now settled that he acts independently of the two States but, in certain respects, under the Political Agent.

to Perimpadappil Mooppu who delivers them to the Raja who in turn despatches them through special messengers to the addressees together with Royal writs of his own and of the Perimpadappil Mooppu. Writs have also to be issued to the following Nambutiries and chiefs inviting them to be present at the occasion. Thekkiniyedathu Namboodiripad, Paykkad Namboodiripad, the Rajas of Kurumpanad, Walluvanad, Thekkenkoor and Wadakkenkoor, the Karanavarpad of Kakkad, the Punnathoor Chief and the four Karalers. When all have arrived, the party should assemble on the platform in front of the temple. Two well lighted brass lamps should be placed there, and in front of them a full measure of paddy and rice together with offerings to the God Ganapathi. The Azhuvancheri Tamprakkal should sit on an *Avanappalaka* (a piece of plank in the shape of a tortoise) to the south of the lamps facing northwards. Kirangat Nampooripad should sit on his left looking to the north on an Avanappalaka. The Raja should stand on a black blanket spread on a white sheet placed to the north of the lamps, sword in hand. On being bidden to sit by the Tamprakkal, he should sit facing southwards with the sword placed across in his lap. Towards the right side of the Raja, facing the south, Karamukkil Nambooripad should seat himself on a piece of plank. Paykkad Nambooripad should sit on a plank to the west of the lamp, looking to the east wearing his loin cloth in the *Tattu* form having another piece wound round it. The members of the *Pathillom* and the *Irupathirandu Illom* have to sit on small pieces of cloth behind the Paykkad and Kirangat Nambooripads, the former facing to the east, and the latter to the north. The Kurumbranad Raja as well as the Manakkulam and Ayanikkoor Chiefs should stand on the steps leading to the platform on the east with their sword points resting on the ground. The Pattola or Secretary should stand to the south of the steps with the Ola on which the programme of the ceremony is written in hand, and still further south

Panamukkathu Kaimal should attend with sword and shield. When the whole assembly has arranged itself in this manner, the Raja should call on the Pattola Menon to read the Ola. Then a sort of roll call is made somewhat in this form;— "Are the following persons, summoned to be present at the *Avarodham* of so and so (name given) on such and such a day (year—date—Rasi given) at Trichoor, present here?" The names of a number of Nambutiries, Swamyars, Rajas and others are then called out.

"After the roll call is over, offerings are made to Ganapathi, and Kirangat Nambooripad announces that the *Avarodham* ceremonies are to be commenced. Vazhiyil Marar and the other Marars present then blow their conchshells. The party after this goes in procession to the *Illom* or house of the Yogiar-elect to conduct him to the temple for induction into office. This party should consist of the Tevari or priest of the *Yogam* and Keezhoottil Wariyar carrying the Avanappalaka for the candidate to sit on; Vazhiyil Marar and other Marars, the Asans or headmen of both sides (perhaps of Tiruvampady and Parmelkavu villages) with their following, Kandir and Chathir Nambootiries; —Perutaya Nayar should take the clothes for the candidate; Pallichans (bearers) should take the Palkee in which the candidate is to be brought away. On the party reaching the house, the Avanappalaka is placed on the floor and the clothes are also deposited there. The candidate takes his seat on the Avanappalaka and the conchshell is blown. The Pattola Menon would announce to those present as well as to the ladies of the house that the candidate is being taken to be installed in the office of *Yogathiri* for offering flowers to the God (*Pushpanjali Avarodham*) and blows his conch-shell once. The candidate then goes to the tank to bathe, preceded by the Vadhyan Nambootiri, the Marans blowing their shells. After the ceremonial bath is over and the candidate is decked in the new clothes (*Utayata*) that had been brought for the purpose, he proceeds to the temple. Before he enters the temple

Sanketam limits, marked off by four bridges one on each side, the Raja should meet him in a Palkee at the bridge at Viyyoor and accompany him to the temple as his bodyguard (*Akampadi*). The four Karalers should also act as such. On nearing the temple at Rishabhat in the vicinity of the main fane, the Tamprakkal, Nambooripad, the Raja and Perimpadappa Mooppu meet together and see the candidate shaved by the Puduval after which he bathes and proceeds to the inner shrine to offer flowers (*Pushpanjali*). As he enters the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, he has to be accompanied by the Tamprakkal and Puliyannoor Namboori. When the installation is announced in public, the Tirumunpus of the two Madhams, *i. e.*, the two Swamyars of Trichur and Changaliote Namboori, the Vadhyan or preceptor of the Yogam, should be present at the Rishabhat temple. The following payments have to be made in connection with the ceremony.

"To the Azhuvancheri Tamprakkal at the rate of 50 fanams per day from the date of his arrival at Trichur to the date of the ceremony. For that day he should be paid double the amount or 100 fanams. This payment has to be made from within the *Sanctum*. To the Cochin Raja 160 fanams should be paid tied up in a piece of cloth after the Yogathiripad's return to Rishabhat temple. The Raja of Walluvanad gets a similar sum. Kakkad Karnavapad and the Rajas of Thekkenkoor and Vadakkenkoor get 120 fanams each. The Kirangat Namburipad gets 101 fanams. Karamukku Nambooripad, Ponnazhiat Kaimal and the Punnathoor chief get 64 fanams each. The Raja of Kurumparnad gets at the rate of 50 fanams per day from the date of his arrival at Trichur to the date of the ceremony. Kuttoor Nampidi, Vatakkum Nampidi, Thekkum Nampidi, Kazhala Nampidi, and Panamukkath Kaimal, get 32 fanams each. The Kurups on both sides get 4 fanams each. The Nayars 2 fanams each. The Chathir Nambutiris 4 fanams each, and the Marans 2 fanams each."

It is recorded, in the same temple chronicles that, while the Zamorin of Calicut was holding court at Trichur, having expelled the Cochin Raja from the place, at the invitation of the Nambutiries of the Trichur Grammam, he resolved upon installing Pathakkara Nambutiripad as Yogiathiri. The Cochin Raja protested against this and issued writs to the various chiefs, Brahmans, and others concerned prohibiting them from taking part in the ceremony. The Raja also intimated to the Yogyar-elect that he would be expelled from the office to which he is illegally and unjustly raised on Cochin regaining ascendancy over the temple. In spite of these vehement protests, the Zamorin had his nominee installed as Yogiatiri in the year 936 M. E. 1761 A. D. Most of the chiefs did not attend the installation. The new Yogiar did not enjoy his elevation long; for, on Cochin Raja driving out the Zamorin with the assistance of Travancore, the Raja called on the two Swamyars and the Yogam to cancel the appointment, and they unanimously declared that the installation having been made against their protests and by force, it was *ab initio* void and the psuedo Yogiar was led out of his residence on the night of the 9" of Makaram 938 through the northern gate-way and the doors shut against him. He was expelled from the country altogether.

Another peculiar institution of Malabar in connection with religious endowments require notice. Many of the more important Devaswams of Malabar had originally their own *Samketams* or independent jurisdictions—possessions beyond the control of the Sovereign or local chieftains who are simply protectors of those jurisdictions, the corporations themselves managing their concerns and in certain respects subjecting the sovereign as well as the local chieftains to their authority.

The *Samketam* is one of the many peculiar institutions of Malabar, which has, in the course of the many political revolutions the country has been subjected to,

altogether disappeared. The term itself has lost its original signification and is now used simply to mean a tract lying within certain defined limits. Originally, it meant the independent jurisdictions of Pagodas and Brahman communities, and were places of refuge altogether inviolable by any one by long established custom.

Many of the more important Devaswams or temple endowments had their own *Samketams* which were well defined and of large extent. Within these limits, the temple corporation used to exercise sovereign authority. We have seen that most of the temples and the lands attached to them were originally the creation of Brahman lords and communities, who under the early theocratic form of Government owned the proprietorship of all lands in Malabar. The Brahman lords identified themselves with these corporate estates which they had created and as time flowed on they associated with themselves, for political reasons, a secular leader to defend those possessions. That secular leader became part and parcel of the Devaswam corporation. The Brahman lords themselves never gave up their rights of ownership or management. They, along with the secular leader and other persons attached to the temple collectively termed a Yogam, managed the temple lands and ruled the tracts lying within the limits of the *Samketam*.

The very existence of such a constitution as that of the *Samketam* was much discussed recently in connection with certain disputes regarding the exercise of sovereign rights within the limits of the lands attached to the Elangunnappuzha and Annamanada temples between the States of Travancore and Cochin. These disputes along with others were referred for settlement to the arbitration of an officer appointed by the Madras Government. The two temples mentioned may be taken as typical instances of Devaswam corporations. According to both parties, the Elangunnappuzha

endowment was the creation of a local chief or Raja. Travancore contended that "the pagoda was built by the Raja of Parur, and the villages which formed part of his territories were ceded to the Devan (God) and constituted into a Samketam under his protection, on the 24th day of the Month of Makaram of the year 2767 Kaliyugam Era (B. C. 335)". According to Cochin, the Devaswam was founded and endowed by the Raja of Cochin, who is said to have purchased 5½ Desams or villages and presented it to the temple—date not known.

With regard to the Annamanada Devaswam, Cochin stated that it was founded and endowed by the Nambootiries and that the Samketam of the Devaswam comprised 12½ villages. According to Travancore, the lands attached to the temple were known as forming Adoor Gramam comprising many villages with a superficies of about 10 square miles and was styled Adoor Gramam Samketam. It is described as a remnant of Brahman sway over the Malabar country.

Travancore referred to a document containing answers to questions alleged to have been put to four Nambutiri Brahmans at the instance of Major Cadogan, British Resident in Travancore and Cochin, in A. D. 1829, and answered by two of them. These questions were: —

1. What is meant by a Samketam?

2. How many kinds of Samketams are there?

3. What sovereign powers can a Raja, whose territories surrounded a Samketam, exercise over the properties and ryots of the said Samketam?

4. Does the civil and criminal jurisdiction in a Samketam vest in the Raja whose territories surround the Samketam?

5. Please state in detail what Koima, Aka Koima and Samudayam are, and their respective functions and powers.

The substance of their answers was to the effect that the term Samketam applies to a tract over which no sovereign has any right or jurisdiction; that there are two kinds of Samketams, viz., those self-existent, as remnants of Brahman supremacy of old, and those created under concessions made by sovereigns in favour of pagodas or Brahman communities from motives of religion; that the sovereign whose territories surround a Samketam has, as such, no authority of any kind over it, but all powers are vested in the Samketam authorities conjointly with the sovereign elected by them; that the civil and criminal jurisdictions over Samketams vest in the constituent members elected or in the sovereign protector of their choice; that the terms *Koima*, *Aka Koima*, *Samudayam* are applicable to the managing members who are generally sovereigns elected for the purpose. In short, then, a Samketam meant, according to them, an independent constitution governed by its own members and presided over by a sovereign elected by them.

Cochin stoutly denied the existence of any constitution as above set forth, and put forward its own version thus:— "Samketam is a tract of territory, belonging to a pagoda, the limits of which are defined. Within these limits no act calculated to pollute the pagoda, to which the tract belongs, can be committed. Such lands as are exclusively set apart for the performance of ceremonies, etc., at the pagoda, are said to be lands comprised in the Samketam, and the sovereign has as much sovereign supremacy over it as he has over other portions of his territories."

Mr. J.C. Hannyngton, the Arbitrator, rejected the Travancore document as "inadmissible under all rules of evidence", and expressed his opinion that "the existence of such an extraordinary corporation as is described as a Samgaitham or Samketham in paras 13 to 15 of the Travancore statement, must be admitted to be improbable, inasmuch as no trace of any such constitution exists at the present day." He continued

"That a sovereign who founded a pagoda and endowed it with lands should give to the managers the power of emancipating themselves at pleasure from his sovereign authority and adopting at will a different and probably a rival chief as sovereign is well nigh incredible." The learned Arbitrator was however forced to admit that "the condition of things in the days when this pagoda (that of Elengunnapuzha) was founded and endowed was very different to anything now existing. I am justified in stating that the sovereigns of the State in which this Devaswam existed, even though they themselves were the individual founders of the Devaswam, conceded the deity, through his managers, powers within the limits of the Devaswam which included every function of Government save and except Royalty. Within their Devaswam limits, the managers of the temples collected the revenues, and exercised all judicial powers. The sovereigns themselves yielded homage and paid substantial tribute to the Devaswams (they do so still). The various chiefs or swaroopams assisted in the management of the pagoda and in the celebration of its ceremonies. In course of time, these endowments were infringed upon and these privileges curtailed as the secular influence prevailed and the religious influence diminished."

Possibly the learned Arbitrator was correct in his decision regarding the constitution of the particular Devaswams with which he was dealing. But the reasons on which he based his conclusion seem to throw doubt on the possibility, or even the probability, of the existence at any time of any such institution as a Samketham, as "an independent constitution governed by its own members and presided over by a sovereign elected by them". We are in no way concerned with the merits of the dispute between the two States, but, in the interests of history, we think it necessary to scrutinise the general reasoning on which the non-existence of such a constitution at any period of Malabar history is

sought to be based. It is argued that such an "extraordinary corporation" could not have existed as it is improbable inasmuch as no trace of any such constitution exists at the present day." The argument is, to say the least, unsound and fallacious. Because we are not in a position now to detect traces of an ancient institution that had flourished in the remote past, does it follow that it could not have existed at all? If so, many an ancient institution now defunct, having passed into the limbo of oblivion, leaving behind but a bare name, will have to be declared as having never existed, and yet we have instances of institutions and usuages of hoary antiquity of which very little trace can now be found. Mr. Hannyngton himself observes: "I believe that the condition of things in the days when this pagoda was founded and endowed was very different to anything now existing". He added, "in course of time, these endowments were infringed upon and these privileges curtailed as the secular influence prevailed and the religious influence diminished," and this supplies a conclusive answer to his objection that "no trace of any such constitution exists at the present day." Not to travel beyond Malabar itself, we find at present no traces whatever of the following old institutions and customs: viz., *Kutippaka*, *Mamamkam*, *Chamgadam*, the custom of Nayars constituting themselves "Amoucos" or "Amocchi". Nor is there any trace at present of the custom mentioned by Barbosa of the kings of Quilacare publicly cutting their own throats clean at the end of their 12 years term. Such instances, as *Pangan Purapad*, *Pattini*, etc., may easily be multiplied specially with reference to the period of Brahman sway in Malabar.

The early Jewish and Syrian copper plates unmistakably show that, when those deeds were executed, there were guilds in existence exercising functions of Government not unlike those exercised by the constituent members of Samketams. The Jewish and Syrian guilds assembled in their respective corporate

head-quarters at Anjuvannam and Manigramam, "to protect the church people's (Palliyars) town." Referring to the Syrian and Jewish plates, Mr. Logan observes: "The light thrown by these deeds on the state of society as it existed in the 8th and 9th centuries A. D. exhibits a community in a very advanced state of organization. At the head of all was the *Kon* or King or Perumal—drawing from the land a share of the produce of the soil called the *Ko-pad's* share (vāram). Another share of the produce went to the *Pati* (overlord) intermediary between the *Kon* and the actual landholder. The *Pati*, it seems, was not any particular person, but a body corporate of the Jews in their municipal township of Anjuvannam and of the Christians in theirs of Manigramam, and (inferentially) of the Nayars in their corporation called the 'Six Hundred'. But each body corporate had an hereditary headman or chieftain. These bodies corporate seem to have constituted the political backbone of the country, and their particular functions in the State were those of protecting and of supervising...."[1] Where are these institutions or organizations at the present day? A hundred and odd years of British domination has wiped them off the face of Malabar so completely that the present day Malabar Christian, Jew and Nayar have no idea whatever of the position their forefathers occupied in the body politic. These deeds further indicate the existence of other corporate bodies in Malabar such as those of "the five kinds of artificers, the oil makers, Ezhavas, Chetties", etc. Where are these now?

To Mr. Hannyngton it seemed "well nigh incredible" that a sovereign founder of a pagoda and its endowments should "give to the managers the power of emancipating themselves at pleasure from his sovereign authority and adopting at will a different and probably a rival chief as sovereign." Mr. Hannyngton has evidently failed to correctly understand the origin and nature of these foundations. In the particular case

1. Vol. I, p. 271.

he was dealing with, he has assumed, or it may be that it was proved or admitted before him, that the temple in question was founded by the sovereign and the lands attached to the Devaswam were a gift from him. But if we keep in mind the origin of the Malabar temples and the hierarchical rights therein we have already given, it will be clear that the learned Arbitrator's argument is of very little use to support his conclusion. To say that the ancient temples of Malabar were endowed by the sovereigns would be to put the cart before the horse. Most if not all of them were Brahman foundations and the body of Brahmans, the *yogam*, the community to which these belonged, called in the sovereign or elected him only to protect the temple and its endowments and to preserve the rights and customs just as the Nambutiries called in or elected Perumals from outside Malabar to rule over them for a term of 12 years.

The fact that these sovereigns were generally *samantha* Kshetryas and were designated *Koviladhikarikal* (temple managers) is significant enough. "Namputiri Brahmans", observes Mr. Justice Kunhi Raman Nayar in his Memo on the Land Tenures of Travancore, "who held sway over the Devaswams or pagodas possessing immense wealth and landed property, invoked the assistance of Samantha Kshetryas, and these managed the Devaswams under the designation of Koviladhikarikals· The Devaswams exercised sovereign functions within the limits of their landed property as did wealthy classes of Brahmans generally within the limits of their Sankethams (tracts assigned to Brahmans). The life and liberty of the Devaswam tenants were at one time at the mercy of these Devaswam communities."[1]

The Copper plate inscription dated Puthuvaippu 103, i. e., 619 M. E., 1444 A. D., filed by Cochin and marked A by the Arbitrator affords ample support to this. For it concludes by saying "Perimpadappu (the Cochin Raja) has the authority (in the

1. Para 26, pp, 10, 11

Elengunnapuzha temple) to cause the different Swaroopams (Principalities) to pay the fines should they have committed any irregularities, to protect the Samketams and to preserve the rights and customs thereof". The Cochin Raja still styles himself Koviladhikarikal, in the documents he executes with regard to landed properties.

In the early days of Brahman supremacy, their political and spiritual influence over the constituent members of the corporations as well over the various sovereign rulers, whom they themselves had created or called in, was so great that it was almost impossible for any conflict such as contemplated by Mr. Hannyngton to arise. It is an open secret that the ecclesiastics of Malabar like those of Rome always kept the rulers of the land under their thumb. To a large extent they do so still. There is indeed considerable force in the Travancore Diwan Ramiengar's observation that "such corporations as Sankethams in olden days are by no means the myths he (the Arbitrator) imagines them to be. If there was such a thing as the Hanseatic League—a mere trade union—in existence till the fifteenth century exercising acts of sovereignty and judicial power which were incompatible with the supremacy of the rulers in whose States they were enforced; and if it is a fact that the Head of the Romish Church at one time so arrogated all civil power to himself as to set up Kings and to depose Kings, there is nothing incredible or extraordinary in the existence of such independent hierarchies as are implied by Samketams in a country at all times acknowledging the domination and influence of its Priesthood".

That such institutions did actually exist and that they exercised sovereign powers within the limits of their authority, even though there were sovereign protectors placed over them, we have abundant evidence to show. An *imperium* in *imperio* is not more extraordinary in medieval Malabar than in medieval

Europe. Have we not instances of Republics flourishing under the protecting aegis of Monarchies? The earliest mention we have by Portuguese writers of a *Samketam* is that of Elengunnapuzha itself. It is referred to as a "Sanctuary the Samorin dared not violate", to which the Cochin Raja retreated for safety after his defeat at the battle at the Edappilly ford, where three of his nephews, including the heir-apparent Narain, were killed (A. D. 1503).[1]

Again we read in the *Memorials* of Governor Gollenesse of the "free Desam" of Nedumpuram into which the Queen of Peritally retired when hard pressed by the King of Travancore. The Dutch Governor M. Adrian Van Moens in his *Memorials* speaks of 'Replim' or Edappilly as a "free town". He says:—

"The Company has little to do with the Chief (of Edappilly). However, it is expedient for us to know that his little State is a kind of asylum, like a free town, to which people, who are afraid of prosecution and punishment, retreat, and where they are safe, and more especially when they are able to reach a temple or pagoda there. This privilege is acknowledged and respected by all Malabar Kings. However, I never could find out on what right or grounds the privilege is based, unless it be that this State obtained this privilege as a matter of course on account of its ruler being a priestly and a very pious chief". But the only other priestly chief in Malabar, the Ambalapuzha or Chempakasseri Raja who, as Hough assures us on the authority of Gouvea, was no less pious never possessed the privilege within his territories. We have therefore to seek for the origin of the privilege possessed by the Edappilly Chief elsewhere in the early peculiar institutions of the country now forgotten.

Gouvea in his *Journada*, while describing the visitation of Archbishop Menezes to the Romo-Syrian

1. Whiteway, *The Rise of the Portuguese Power in India*, *Keralapazhama*, *p*. 39.

churches mentions Chenganore in Travancore as forming a *Samketam*. We take the following extract from Hough who writes on the authority of Gouvea: "After passing through these villages he (Menezes) visited the Church of Chenganore. This tour is said to have been more celebrated for the worship of idols than any other in Malabar. In fact, the country itself was the property of a pagoda or temple, whose Brahmans exercised sovereign power, and appointed governors and subordinate officers throughout the province".

"The Church at Chenganore stood out of the town, and so absolute was the power of the Brahmans there, that the Christians were not allowed to repair it without their consent. Gouvea says that it required a miracle to obtain for these poor people permission to tile their church ; for the Brahmans objected to it, lest the Christian temples should vie with their own"[1].

Ward and Conner in their *Memoirs* of the great Trigonometrical Survey (1816 to 1820) describing Travancore says, "The original likeness the ample space included within the modern limits of Travancore, is not to be traced in its present united form: at the commencement of the 18th century, it presented the same divided authority as the other parts of Mallialum, but the imperfect memory of its ancient state, can now enumerate only a few of the larger principalities. Kotium was held by a Kurtav, Keedangoor Koymah was the independent possession of a number of Sankaidoms (independent possession of pagodas) was ruled by Brahman authority, which extended through other tracts".

As to the nature and extent of the authority exercised by these corporations within the tracts ruled over by them it may be difficult to define them with precision at this distance of time when all traces of ancient institutions have been ruthlessly effaced. Still, such *Grandhavaries*, or contemporary chronicles of

1. *History of Christianity in India* Vol. 2, pp. 175—6.

temples, as have fortunately escaped the vandalism and iconoclastic tendencies of modern times, which have found expression in the organised and systematic destruction of old records in Government offices, etc., give us some faint conception of the powers exercised by Saṃkēṭams originally.

In the *Grandhavari* of the temple at Vykom, in Travancore, we read that it was the duty of the Naṃpūṭiries of the four *Cheries*, or divisions into which the *gramam* or village was divided, to report to the *Samudaya-Yogam*, i. e., the committee of management, any crimes or derelictions of duty committed by any one in their respective divisions, and it was the duty of the *Samudaya Yogam* to summon the offender at once to their presence, investigate the matter and inflict condign punishment on those convicted. Again, before hoisting the flag for the *Utsavam*, i. e., the annual temple festival, the committee of management had to see those convicted by them of murder within the Saṃkēṭam limits hanged. This was observed till the year 977 M. E. (1802 A. D.) when it was stopped.

A *Chatta-Variola*, or Rules for the regulation of business, in the Elangunnapula temple drawn up in 958 M. E., 1783 A. D., embodies a provision for the hanging of murderers by the temple authorities within the *Samketam*.

Even the sovereigns themselves were subjected to penalties for acts of tyranny committed by them within Samketam limits and on the officers and men of the Samketam. The constitutional rules of the Samketam were such that, if ever any of the chiefs or their followers committed an atrocity within Samketam limits, the Samketam was held to be dissolved, and till ample amends are made by the delinquent chief, or till they are exacted from him by the sovereign Protector, the working of the Samketam comes to a stand-still. The sovereign Protector himself is not exempted from these penalties if he is the erring individual. Thus, in the

Elengunnapuzha temple, we gather, from the copper-plate inscription already referred to, that "Should any of the Swaroopams (Principalities) of the Samketam be found guilty of any irregularities, the Nambutiripad (the chairman of the Yogam) fines the party and then gives permission to hoist the flag (for the Utsavam) sending the Tevary Nambutiri along with him," and it is the duty of the Cochin Raja to levy the fine as Protector of the rights of the Samketam. Again, another document, dated 10th Kumbham 191 Puthuvaippu Era, 697 M. E., 1522 A. D., embodying the observances of the Devaswam, marked D in the Arbitrators' records, says, "When all the *Yogakkars* (members of the *Samketam*) shall have fully assembled, they shall repair to the aforesaid place and ask the Nambutiripad whether he would give permission for the *Kodiyettu*, commencement of the *utsavam*, and the Nambutiripad shall, on his part, *enforce a penalty from any of the Swaroopams* (sovereigns) *who has been guilty of any fault* and then grant the sanction applied for". It further proceeds to say, "On the 18th Vrischigam 88 at half-past 9 p. m., the individual named Peroomparayan was put to death by Thekkenkoor (Raja). *On the occasion the Samketam was dissolved.* Twelve months after the said date, the *Koimastanam* (an important office in the temple) was surrendered. For the above and certain other faults of Thekkenkoor (Raja), in accordance with the decision of arbitrators composed of a representative of the Perimpadappu Swaroopam, Porkalamattath Vasudevan (Nambutiri), Perayil Narayanan Kumaran (Nayar) and other arbitrators then present, the Perimpadappu Swaroopam (Cochin Raja), who was the *Melkoima*, sovereign Protector, presented an elephant together with the *Thotti* and *Walaru* (hook and stick) and thus renewed the management of the Samketam." This is a euphemistic expression to mean that the Raja was mulct of an elephant as a penalty for not restoring the *Samketam* earlier.

Another document, a *Grandhavari* of Pallippurath Nambooripad, marked E by the Arbitrator, of the date 740 M. E., 1564—65 A. D., recording the encroachments and tyrannical acts committed by the Pintanivattattu Swaroopam (the Parur Raja), within the Nedungad Desam of the Elengunnapuzha *Samketam* on a particular day, after mentioning the atrocities, goes on to say,—"We (Pallippurath Nambooripad, a high functionary of the temple) withdrew from the place on the same day; on that day *the Desam fell* (the customary observances of the Desam were stopped)". Other atrocities followed. The Nedungad people retaliated by entering Parur territory pulling down houses. The differences continued for about 8 years, "when the Pallippurath Nambooripad", says the document, "went in person to Elengunnapuzha and having said what was proper, offered to do what was necessary. After this, the Perimpadappu Swaroopam (Cochin Raja) and Pintanivattattu Swaroopam (Parur Raja) arrived at Elengunnapuzha on the 7th Kumbham and summoned Moothedathu Namboori * * * Rayathil Para, Ponancottil Bhattathiri, and Pulikkamana Bhattathiri to act as *Thatassers* (arbitrators) in adjusting these points. In accordance with their decision, the Pintanivattattu Swaroopam paid compensation for losses inflicted and expenses of the *Pattiny* fast, as also fine for the wrongs committed. *For the acts of aggression committed by the Perimpadappu Swaroopam, the Pathies (on behalf of the Raja) presented* an elephant and placed its Thotti and Walar (hook and stick)". The document then proceeds to prescribe the manner in which the fines are to be levied. It says:—"When the latter ceremony takes place (i. e., the levy of the fine), Pazhedath Panikkar should stand in the Kanni Rasi. We (Nampooripad) should occupy a seat in the *Mandapam* (raised stone platform in front of the *Sanctum*), and *Thevari* (priest) and *yogakkar* (members of the Samketam) assembled should stand in the *Velikkappura* (portico of the temple). When the yogakkar ask us

whether we are satisfied with the fine, we should signify our assent and order it to be levied and then Munnath Moothathu should take charge of it."

On the 23rd of April 1814, the Uralers of the Elengunnapuzha temple and various aged men of the Desams attached to it having been called on to depose "to the rules and usages observed in the Elengunnapuzha Devaswam *Samketam* and Desams from ancient times", stated that Ochenthooruth, Manjanacaud, Moondengad, Vysrakal, Poocad and Nedungad Desams (villages) formed the *Samketam* or jurisdiction of the Elengunnapuzha Devaswam. Among the rules and usages mentioned by them is the following: "If a man commits a crime in any of the Desams, so that it becomes corrupt, the Paroor and Cochin Rajas should both jointly repair to the *Vathilmadam* (gate in the Pagoda) and cause the culprit to be punished *and the sovereign of the culprit should present the Pagoda with an* elephant".

In the Trichur temple *Grandhavari* for the year 945 M. E., 1770 A. D., we see that, before the *Kalasam* ceremony was performed in the pagoda, heavy penalties were exacted from the Ayanicoor chief for having shot thirty-two men of the Devaswam and committed other atrocities in the *Samketam*. He had to surrender 3,941 paras of seed-sowing paddy-land, Mangalath Matapad, one of his residences, as also 6 villages, in addition to it. The fine was levied at a public ceremony in the temple, in the presence of the Swamiyars, Vadhyan Nambootiri, the Brahmans of the Yogam, Kakkat Karanavapad and other local chieftains and the Cochin Raja. The Kakkat Karanavapad as the head of the Aynikkoor family had to confess the crime, pay the penalty and present an elephant. *The Cochin Raja too had to present an elephant for the delay in enforcing the penalty on the wrong-doer.* This was on the 14th of Medam 945 M. E. (1770 A. D.).

Similarly, the accounts preserved in the Archieves of the Trivandrum pagoda show several entries of heavy

payments exacted by the Yogam from various chiefs, as well as from the Rajas of Travancore, for acts of aggression committed by them in the Devaswam *Samketam*. So far as can be ascertained at present, these entries range from 500 M. E. (1325 A. D.) to 903 M. E. (1728 A. D.). The earliest entry says that a sum of 30,000 fanams (7½ fs.=1 Re.) had to be paid as fine, together with the surrender of valuable lands sowing 150 paras of paddy seed, to the temple by Kunninmel Sree Veera Kerala Vurman Tiruvadi (of Travancore) for killing the officers of the temple. The latest one says that Sree Veera Rama Vurma of Trippappoor Kezhapperoor (Travancore) being the Mootha (eldest) Pandaram of Cherawai was mulct in an elephant for his having on the 14th of Medam 896 committed various atrocities and killed Devaswam officers within the limits of Aykkanam, Veeranarayanasseri, Vikramanadichamangalam, Pulloorkuruchi, Rajaklamangalam, lands belonging to Sree Padmanabha Perumal (the presiding deity of the Trivandrum temple). Another entry of the 15th Dhanu 894 refers expressly to the *Samketam*. Payments had to be made in full by Sree Veera Aditya Vurma of Trippappoor Kezhapperoor (Travancore) being the Mootha Tiruvadi of Cheravi, for committing atrocities within Sree Padmanabha Swamy's *Samketam* and collecting revenue therefrom. Villages yielding an annual revenue of 12,000 fanams were surrendered for this. For committing incursions in the *Samketam* villages, two elephants had to be presented and, in place of men and slaves killed, others had to be given up.

A document produced by Cochin and marked K in the Arbitration records gives us a fair idea of the government of a *Samketam* and the rules and observances obtaining therein. They deal indeed with the Elengunnapuzha Devaswam but they are an index to the general system followed in other Devaswams, *Samketams* as well.

A perusal of the document[1] certainly leaves the impression that the administrative functions of the *Samketam* are complete in their own way and provide for no intervention of an outsider. Para 2 lays down that the *Uralers* conjointly with the *Aka Koimas* constitute the governing body. Para 4 states that the *Koima* or the representative of the sovereign, whose duty is to administer the villages was to be nominated by him on intimation being received of a vacancy, and the procedure to be followed at the ceremony of nomination. Paras 5, 13, 16 to 20 and 35, provide for punishment of offences, and paras 8, 24, to 26, 32, 33, 39 to 40 provide for the collection of different kinds of land revenue from all the villages, while paras 11, 12, 21 to 23 and 36 provide for a system of registration of all deeds relating to transactions of immovable property and the fees to be paid for the same. Paras 5, 16 and 17 show that the Koima assisted by the *Pathies* exercised the authority to pull down houses[2] and to inflict capital punishment over the inhabitants of the village. Para 39 lays down that the money and paddy paid to the Devaswam for the paddy lands and gardens owned by the States of Cochin and Travancore shall be continued to be paid in future without intervention. The amount, if any, in arrears, should also be paid *after due enquiry*. Para 40 says the *Karom* (*tax*) *payable to the Devaswam* on the paddy lands and gardens of the six Desams (villages) shall be paid regularly from 958 M. E. Para 9 authorises the *Koima* to levy a house-tax on the houses of certain classes of

1. A *Chattavariola*, dated 958 M.E., prepared, in consultation with the authorities connected with that *Devaswam* and in consonance with the provisions of an old *grandhavari*, by the two States. *Chattavariola* means a writ or deed of rules for the conduct of business, from *chattam* = rule or regulation, and *variola* = a writ or deed, so called, perhaps, as, until recently, the rules used to be recorded on *ola*, a palmyra leaf, prepared for writing.

2. Similar provisions are to be found in the Trichur temple *Grandhavari* also.

the inhabitants and para 10, the profession tax on outside Pulayars (agricultural slaves), while para 15 imposes a cess on oil mills. Paras 7 and 13 show that the *Yogam*, *i. e.*, the *Aka Koima* together with the *Uralers*, constituted the highest governing body, while paras 14, 31 and 34 state that they received a subsidy from the villages besides other dues. Paras 2, 7, 13, 14, 29, 31 and 34 make it clear that the *Aka Koima* presides at the meetings of the *Yogam*, bearing a prominent part in the ceremonies attendant on the appointment of a *Koima* to the villages, receiving a double share of the subsidy. He had at one time the privilege of demanding grants of money from the villages.

An attentive consideration of the provisions of this document places it beyond dispute that the *Samketam* in itself constituted a self-contained and independent community exercising sovereign powers, levying taxes and punishing crimes. In fact, we find all the elements that go to constitute a body politic which, though of primitive structure, was self-working and independent, *owning no Sovereign except the Yogam*[1]. Of course these *Samketam* jurisdictions have ceased to exist with the rise of the secular power and the diminution of religious influences just as the Cochin Raja has stopped the *Avarodham* or installation of the *Yogiatiripad* in the Trichur temple, he, as well as the other Rajas of Malabar have infringed upon the rights of the Devaswams within their limits and annexed them to their respective States. With the advent of British supremacy which was, not long after, followed by the administration of the Governments of the Native States of Cochin and Travancore by the British Resident, Colonel Munro, most of the rich and important Devaswams were annexed to the States, and it necessarily followed that their *Samketams* also ceased to exist as independent jurisdictions. According to the *State Manual*, there are nearly 10,000 temples in Travancore and 15,000 other places

1. See 18 *Cochin Law Reports* p. 376.

of worship in the shape of groves of serpents, etc. Many of these are private institutions having been endowed by pious Hindus hundreds of years ago. About 1549 were taken over under State management by Col. Munro. In Cochin there is no means of ascertaining the number of places of Hindu worship in the State, but, according to the Report on the administration of the State for A. D. 1907-8, there are about 172 temples managed by the Sirkar.

[*Tantras* (Skt. tan = to believe) are compositions assuming the form of a dialogue between Uma and Maheswara in which the goddess asks her consort for directions to perform ceremonies and for advice as to the prayers and incantations ith which they should be accompanied (*Ency. Dicty.*, Vol. IV, p. 91). Properly, a *Tantra* ought to treat of five subjects; (1) the creation; (2) and the destruction of the world; (3) the worship of the gods; (4) the attainment of all objects, especially of the six superhuman facilities; and (5) the four modes of union with the supreme spirit. (Monier Williams). *Tantras* form an invaluable treasure, embracing religion, theology, law, medicine, cosmology, rules regarding elementals, and all branches of transcendental philosophy. (Pandit B. K. Majiundas)

Revelation, according to Kalluka Bhatta, is two-fold: *Vedic* and *Tantric*. Tantras constitute the fifth Veda. They are said to number 64. Their authorship is sometimes ascribed to Dattatreya, but generally thought to have been revealed by Siva. Professor W. D. Whitney, of the Yale University, emphasising one aspect of the *Tantras*, writes of *Tantras* as religious treatises teaching magical formulas for the worship of the gods and the attainment of superhuman power. Max Muller rightly says that the symbols and sites of *Tantric* celebrations are invested by the priests with mystical and occult significance, unintelligible to the masses, and confided only to those who, after severe trials of faith and endurance, are found worthy of initiation into the divine secrets.

"The Tantric religious system is by all odds the most extensive in myth and dogma, the most finished and consistent in theology, the most elaborate and dogmatic in ceremony, and the richest and most poetical in symbolism of any cult in the world; it was probably the earliest in origin; has certainly been the most persistent in the continuity; and is claimed by its adherents to be, and thought by most scholars to be, the origin of all other systems." (R. A. Campbell in his *Phallic Worship*, Religion and Worship, Ch. I, p. 46.)

14. **Images with bags.** There still stands one of these at Karimadi, to the south of the bridge across the canal, but no bag hangs, at any rate at present, from its neck to receive offerings from passengers, though boatmen generally break a cocoanut there by way of offering. The companion image has disappeared. The figure is popularly known as *Karimadi Kuttan* "and is said to be of Jaina origin, while some put it down as a Buddhistic image." Both Buddhism and Jainism had at one time their votaries in Malabar. We have seen that one of the Kēraḷa Perumāḷs, Bāṇa, had turned Buddhist, that there were public disputations between the Brahmans and Buddhist Missionaries, and that Śankara, the greatest opponent of Buddhism, was born in Malabar. So early as the date of Asoka, Jainism also made its appearance in Malabar and has, as we have seen, left its influence in the temple architecture of the Malayalis.

We have still remains of Buddhistic and Jaina sculptures in Malabar. Those in Travancore are thus noticed in the *State Manual*:—

"The Buddhistic sculpture consists of bas-reliefs and detached statues. A few of these are to be found here and there in Travancore. There is an image of Buddha standing on the roadside between Māvēlikkara

In India alone, the followers of the *Tantra* may be reckoned by hundreds of thousands. The life of many an Indo-Aryan from birth to the burning-ground is that of eternal bondage to the ordinances of the *Tantra*. This was so in 400 A. D., and equally the same conditions prevail after a lapse of 1500 years. (Dr. Rajendral Lal Mitra, *Ancient and Medieval History*, Vol.I, p.404).

The method of the *Tantrik* is to test everything to its final analysis, and receive as truth nothing whose entity cannot be seen with absolute certainty. (Carl Grant Zollner). That is why Mr. F. G. Warwick says that "the Tantra will at least provoke its students to silent and open disputation, compel him to a balancing of reason, and develop an independent judgment. Such a discipline is eminently wholesome as it prepares one for the affairs of life". Ed.

and Kaṇdiyūr. In the Museum at Trivandrum are a few images distinctly Buddhistic in appearance.

"The Jaina sculptures are for the most part restricted to a representation of their twenty-four hierarchs or Thirtankaras with their symbols. These are very rare in Travancore. Some of them are to be hardly distinguished from Buddhistic images, so much so that a few which are considered Buddhistic are not infrequently styled Jaina images. The figure popularly known as Karimādi Kuttan in the canal near Karimādi is said to be of Jaina origin, while some put it down as a Buddhistic image. In the central compartment of the rock-cut hall in the Bhagavathi temple on the summit of Chitral near Kuzhittura is a figure which would appear to be a Jaina image, as it is said to be 'quite naked'. It is in sitting posture on an elevated stone plinth and has three umbrellas over its head. There is another in the southern compartment. On the rock-face on the north of the temple are thirty-two figures, repititions of the images in the pagoda. I take these also to be of Jaina origin".

The rock-cut cave temple at Kallil, about 8 miles to the east of Alwaye in Travancore, shows distinct traces of Buddhistic, may be of Jaina, origin.

15. **Feeding Brahmans.** There are few temples in Malabar at present which are '*burdened*' with the charge of feeding such a large number of Brahmans, and it is not likely that there were such at any time. Our author is perhaps mistaking the institution of *Oottupurahs* or feeding houses where wayfarers, specially Brahmans, were fed. These were generally attached to the temple buildings, but formed no part of those religious institutions themselves, except in a very limited sense. It was considered a great merit from a religious point of view to feed Brahmans, and the Rajas, chieftains, and the wealthy

generally never stinted in that direction. The Śāstrās prescribe a feast to the Brahmans as an inevitable concomitant to every religious ceremony and the merit is increased when money doles are also added.

16. **Marroe.** Malayalam *Madham.* Separate buildings for the purpose of feeding Brahmans are generally attached to the Palaces of the Rajas as well as to the residences of the chiefs and the wealthy, where food is dispensed to Brahmans who resort to them. Though these institutions, the *Oottupurahs* and *Madhams*, were originally designed to minister to the wants of travellers, more specially pilgrims without restriction to caste, in course of time they degenerated into choultries maintaining even an idle resident Brahman population. The States of Travancore and Cochin maintain *Oottupurahs* on the roadside where Brahmans, whether way-farers or not, are fed, and Gosais or pilgrims are given supplies. With the increase of facilities for travelling, these institutions became a source of great drain on the resources of the States. From an economic point of view, the *Oottupurahs* are wholly indefensible. They are at the same time demoralising to a great extent. They have become centres round which an idle resident Brahman population gather, setting a bad and unwholesome example to the industrious classes around. In Travancore, every *Oottupurah* supplies meals gratis to every Brahman, resident or non-resident, resorting to it. But not so in Cochin at present. There the recent Rulers have reduced the number of *Oottupurahs* in the State and has confined the feeding in them to *bona fide* travellers. Their number at present is only 14.

Some reforms have been recently made in Travancore also. There, exclusive of the *Ootupurah* at the capital known as the *Agrasala*, there were 41 of them. Thirty-five of these were *Vazhi-Oottus* or wayside feeding institutions and six were *Devaswam Oottus* or feeding institutions attached to temples. Ten of

them provided two meals a day, one in the morning and one in the evening; 21 gave one meal in the morning, 7 one in the evening and the remaining three supplied *Conjee* or rice-gruel in the morning and rice in the evening.

The Travancore Government had recently deputed an officer of superior status and qualifications, a Puisne Judge of the High Court, as special Commissioner "to investigate and report upon the numerous and complicated problems involved in the administration of State charities and Devaswams". As a result of the special Commissioner's Report, the Government introduced various reforms in their working. Eight of the *Oottupurahs* have been closed, while the cost of maintaining another one has been considerably cut short. As regards the number of meals to be given in the *Oottupurahs*, the Government order says, "In *Oottus* which now give two meals *per diem*, two meals may be continued for *bona fide* travellers. In regard to the resident poor, who now wholly depend on the *Oottus* and who are too old and too poor to shift for themselves, the question of the number of meals does not arise. An attempt should be made to prepare lists of these people and the *Padivus* (scale of expenditure) should be so fixed as to meet their wants as well as those of *bona fide* travellers, care however being taken that the lists are not recklessly added to".

It is also interesting to note the opinion of the special Commissioner, a highly educated Brahman gentleman, on the origin and scope of these institutions as set forth in the order of the Government on the Report. It says:—

"In the earlier chapters of the Report, Mr. Ramachandra Rao has dealt with the origin of charitable institutions in civilized countries, he has traced the causes which led to the difference of ideals in the dispensation of charity between European countries and

India, he has shown how the domination of the priestly classes has influenced the restriction of the scope of charities and he has explained why the gift of food is the most meritorious form of charity· Then he has proceeded to explain the considerations in support of the Oottupurahs of Travancore, how they were called into existence to suit society as it existed from time immemorial, and what a serious mistake it would be to totally abolish Oottupurahs and thus 'turn adrift a large body of men belonging to an intellectual race, who are generally persons without any means or professional occupation'. He has recorded his opinion that, in the case of endowed Oottupurahs at least, abolition should not be thought of· With a view to ascertain whether the Oottupurahs of Travancore have not been allowed to deflect from their original purpose, and whether it could have been the intention of the founders to feed gratuitously not only the travellers but also the resident population, Mr. Ramachandra Rao has examined the origin and history of these institutions, and has arrived at the conclusion that, in spite of the declarations of Diwans Krishna Rao, Seshia Sasthri and Ramaiengar that the Oottus were originally intended only for the benefit of Brahman *travellers*, there were reasons to believe, from the high *padivu* (scale of expenses) fixed, from the institution of *Anchu-sadyas* (five feasts) and of *Dharma-canjee* (charitable distribution of gruel) to the resident poor, and from uninterrupted practice, that the resident poor of the Brahman community were also intended to benefit by gratuitous feeding in Oottupurahs—at least in such of them as give more than one meal a day''. Here we have the gist of the defence of these almost universally condemned institutions by a highly educated and highly placed Brahman gentleman of no mean attainments.

The Agraśāla at Trivandrum, the capital of the Maharaja of Travancore, as we have seen, does not

come within the operation of the Order quoted. Mr. Nagam Aiya gives the following description of it; "This is a very large institution unique of its kind in the whole of India. The extensive corridors and galleries of Padmanabhaswamy Pagoda serve as the dining halls. The number fed daily is on an average 1500 at breakfast and an equal number at supper. The arrangement for supplies, custody and account of stores for cooking, serving, etc., are very perfect and self-acting as it were. * * * The establishment consists of 103 hands controlled by a Tahsildar of the second class, whose almost sole duty it is to look after and manage this institution."[1]

"The daily meal given in the Agrasala is a homely fare and is unchanged from day to day. It consists of cooked rice, prepared in huge copper vessels, and tamarind soup, a vegetable curry made either of the plantain or pumpkin, a little salt and a highly diluted butter-milk. A slightly better meal is served on five or six days in the month which are generally of religious importance in the bright or dark fortnights, or on the return of particular asterisms of departed sovereigns. On festive occasions the meal consists of crisp cakes, fruit, sugar, honey and sweet *kells*; the vegetable curries are richer and more numerous, the rice is finer and the butter-milk less diluted with water, sometimes it is curd itself."[2]

17. **Charitable establishments.** This is a mistake. The pagodas as such do not furnish provisions to any Brahman way-farer as a rule. There are however some pagodas in which provision is made by the charitably inclined for the feeding of a specified number of Brahmans. Such endowments are called *Namaskarams*. It is indeed highly desirable that these pagodas should really serve the purpose of charitable establishments by devoting at least a part of their

1. *State Manual*, Vol. 3, p. 526.
2. Ibid, p. 527.

income towards affording shelter to the needy and the destitute. At present, they do not serve "like hospitals, or charitable establishments, where a man, however poor or destitute he may be, can always find shelter".

18. **Bending Knees.** The practice of bending the knees to the image held up by the priest is quite unknown to the Malabar form of worship, and it is difficult to understand where our author got his information from. The devotees join the palms of their hands above their heads or in front of their face or chest and bow to the image.

19. **Compulsion to contribute.** The Hindu Religion does not *compel* any one, nor do temples *compel* any one to contribute anything towards their maintenance. On the other hand, every Christian, specially Roman Catholic, and every Mahomedan, attached to a Church or Mosque, has to contribute something to those institutions.

20. **Temples of some castes.** Among these classes, *the Izhavers* and *Valans* have a few temples of their own, where their caste men officiate as priests The Brahmans will, of course, have nothing to do with these temples. We have a good description of *Izhava* temples given by the Reverend Mr. S. Mateer. "The Ilavar temples are generally low, thatched buildings, with front porch, a good deal of wooden railing and carving about them, an enclosure wall and a grove of a few trees, such as *Ficus religiosa Plumieria* and *Bassia*. At the Ilavar temple near Chakkai, in the outskirts of Trivandrum, the goddess Bhadrakali is represented as a female seated on an image, having two wings, gilt and covered with serpents. A temple at Mangalattu-konam, about ten miles south of Trivandrum, at which I witnessed the celebration of the annual festival on the day following Meena Bharani, in March or April, may be taken as a fair example of the whole. In connection with this temple may be seen a peculiar wooden

pillar and small shrine at the top, somewhat like a pigeon house. This is called a *tani-maram*, and is a kind of altar, or residence, for the demon Madan, resembling the temporary shrines on sticks or platforms erected by the Pulayars. On it are carvings of many-headed serpents, etc., and a projecting lamp for oil.

"For the festival, the ground around the temple was cleared of weeds, the outhouses and sheds decorated with flowers, and on the *tani-maram* were placed two bunches of plantains—at its foot a number of devil-dancing sticks. Close by were five or six framework shrines, constructed of soft palm leaves and pith of plantain tree, and ornamented with flowers. These were supposed to be the residence of some minor powers, and in them were placed, towards night, offerings of flowers, rice, plantains, cocoanuts, and blood.

"The Ilavars who assemble for the festival weer the marks of Siva, a dot and horizontal lines on the forehead, and three horizontal lines of yellow turmeric on the chest. They begin to gather at the temple from noon, and return home at night. Over five hundred persons attend on this occasion—formerly many more came. The festival lasts for five days. Some of the neighbouring Sudras and Shanars also attend and some Pulayars, who pay one chukram for two shots of fire-work guns in fulfilment of their vows. Offerings here are generally made in return for relief from sickness or trouble of some kind. The *Pujari*, or priest, is an Ilavan, who receives donations of money, rice. etc."[1]

21. **Valdurti.** Palluruthy, a couple of miles south of Mattancheri in Cochin.

Mouton. Chertala, still further south, and 12 miles north of Alleppey.

22. **Vows to Deities.** Vows are often made to obtain boons from the gods. They take the form of festivals, *kavadies*, lustrations or illuminations and

1. *Native Life in Travancore*, pp. 92—93.

decorations, offerings of rice in various preparations, penances, hook-swinging, self-mortifications, etc. Mr. Fawcett speaking on this subject observes: "The subject of vows can be touched on but incidently here. A vow is made by one desiring offspring, to have his hand or leg cured, to have an ulcer cured, to fulfil any desire whatever, and he decides in solemn affirmation to himself (it is not necessary to go to a temple for the purpose of vowing) to give a silver image of a child, a silver leg and so on, in the event of his having fulfilment of his desire. The offering is never an adjunct of the prayer, it is always something done for benefit received. The thing to be noted is that a vow is always fulfilled as well as the vower can possibly fulfil it: it is never forgotten or overlooked.

"When the devil is ill the devil a saint would be;
When the devil is well the devil a saint is he"!

is a couplet inapplicable to the Nayar, or, indeed, to any people in Southern India, where vows of objects to be given or animals to be sacrificed, are treated always with the utmost sacredness even by people who, perhaps, in no relation of life, behave for an hour with common honesty." [1]

23. "**Belka Paru**". Mal. *Velichha Padu*: A velichhappād is a person attached to Bhagavati temples who acts on certain occasions as if he was inspired with the spirit of the presiding goddess and pretends to possess divine powers. The following accounts of a velichhappād and his doings by Mr. Fawcett gives one a fair idea of the institution in Malabar.

"Plate XII shows a man standing with a sword of the shape known as Nandakam. He is an individual called a velichhapad, and, as he stood to be photographed by me, his forehead and face streamed with blood from a self-inflicted wound on the head. The velichhapad is a familiar character in Malabar. His profession illustrates the very mixed character of the Hinduism of the

1. P. 267.

Nayar, partaking as it does of much of the lower cult,—animism, and deification of ancestors, worship of snakes and kites, ceremonies connected therewith sacrifice, magic, witchcraft and sorcery — together with the purest form of Vedic Brahmanism known in Southern India, of which there is the highest expression in the temples attached to the wealthy Nambootiri Illoms, to which the Nayar goes daily to pray, to purify his mind after having purified his body by bathing. There is very little to be seen of prayer in Southern India outside Malabar. The great mass of the people (I exclude the Brahmans, a very minute percentage of the whole) never dream of going to a temple daily to pray, in fact prayer for its own sake scarcely exists. People go in crowds to a temple on the occasion of a festival to make obeisance to the god, and in a vague way to pray, or they will go to fulfil a vow ; but going merely to pray by way of self-purification of spirit is certainly rare, for this denotes a phase of religion to which the great mass of the people of Southern India has not reached.

"Far away in, as it may be said, rural Malabar, I witnessed the ceremony in which the velichhapad exhibited his quality. It was in the courtyard of a Nayar house to which thronged all the neighbours (Nayars), men and pretty women, boys and girls. The ceremony lasts about an hour. The Nayar said it was the custom in his family to have it done once a year, but could give no account of how the custom had originated most probably in a vow ; some ancestor having vowed that if such or such benefit be received, he will for ever after have an annual performance of this ceremony in his house. It involved some expenditure, as the velichhapad had to be paid, and the neighbours had to be fed. Somewhere about the middle of the little courtyard, always as clean as a dinner table, the velichhapad placed a lamp (of the Malabar pattern) having a lighted wick, a kalasam, which he had prepared, some flowers, camphor, saffron and other paraphernalia. Bhagavati

was the deity invoked, and the business involved offering flowers, and waving a lighted wick around the kalasam. The velichhapad's movements became quicker, and suddenly seizing the sword he ran round the court-yard (against the sun, as the sailors say) shouting wildly. He is under the influence of the deity who has been induced into him, and he gives oracular utterance to the deity's commands. What he said I know not and no one else seem to know or care in the least, much interested though they were in the performance. As he ran, every now and then he cut his forehead with the strange misshappen sword, pressing it against the skin and sawing (vertically) up and down. The blood streamed all over his face. Presently he became wilder and wilder, and whizzed round the lamp bending forward towards the kalasam. Evidently some deity, some spirit, was present here, and spoke through the mouth of the velichhapad. This, I think, undoubtedly represents the belief of all who were present. When he had done whizzing round the kalasam, he soon became a normal being and stood before my camera. The fee for this self-inflicted laceration is one rupee and some odds and ends of rice, etc., I saw the velichhapad about three days afterwards going to perform elsewhere. The wound on his forehead had healed! The careful observer can always identify a velichhapad by the triangular like patch over the forehead where the hair will not grow, and where the skin is somewhat indurated. The velichhapads seem to get used to cutting their foreheads as the eels to skinning".[1]

24. **Consecration.** The temple having been constructed and the image to inhabit it prepared according to rule, it has to be formally installed in its future abode. Having selected an auspicious day for the installation an elaborate series of ceremonies have to be gone through preliminary to the installation.

The preliminary purification of the image is

1, Page 173. See also Day, p. 321.

termed *adhivasa*, and a separate structure styled the *Adhivasa mandapa* has to be erected. Varaha Mihira prescribes its *location* to the north or east of the temple in which the deity is finally to repose; the *Mandapa* or shed is to be provided with four archways covered with sprouts from auspicious trees and adorned with wreaths and streams of various colours. The *Mandapa* is to be covered in all directions with green boughs, and ornamented with flower-wreaths, streams, looking-glasses, bells, *chowries*, etc., and an awning spread under the roof. Sand from the Ganges river is to be strewn and the *panchagavya* sprinkled on the outside.

A *Vedi* or altar is to be erected in the middle of the *Mandapa* and four *Kundas* (pits) excavated in the direction of the four cardinal points of the compass from the *Vedi*.

North of the *Adhivasa Mandapa* is to be erected *Snana Mandapa* or hall of ablution, square in shape and provided with four doors, as also with means for the egress of water.

A third *Mandapa* has to be erected for the storage of the numerous articles required for the performance of these ceremonies.

The image up to this time has remained in the hands of the artist, who generally belongs to a low scale in the Hindu gradation of castes and so it has to be purified on delivery by him.

According to the latest development of the ritual, the *Hayasirsha pancharatra* the image has to be brought in procession with dance and music after a preliminary ceremonial ablution with twenty jars of water, either in the artist's place, before starting the procession, or at its close outside the precincts of the hall of ablution. The following invocation is addressed to the image at the end of this preliminary ablution, prior to its entry into the hall of ablution:—

"O Queens of the gods, wrought by *Viswakarma*; hail to thee! Salutations to thee, the preserver of thy

own-created countless worlds! In thee we worship the god Narayana, who is free from disease! Mayes thou, being cured of all the faults of the artist, ever remain in perfect (or prosperous) condition."

The artist is rewarded with suitable presents when the image is removed from his custody.

Varaha Mihira thus describes concisely the first step in the ceremonies inside the *Snana Mandapa*. "After smearing with cowdung a plot of ground within the shed, and strewing it with sand and then with sacrificial grass lay the head of the image on a throne and the feet on pillow".

Then follows the *Sankalpa* or solemn vow to perform a religious rite. This solemn resolution is a necessary preliminary to the performance of every religious ceremony. The formula for the *Sankalpa* on the occasion of *pratishta* or installation of an image is thus given in the *Pratishta-Mayukha*. "On this day (here follow full chronological details) (so and so), being desirous of obtaining (as the case might be) longevity, prosperity, all progeny, eternal bliss or the love of God, for causing the presence of the divine emanation in this image or *lingam* shall perform the *pratishta* of the image or *lingam* of such and such divinity."

After performing the *Sankalpa*, the worshipper should, according to the *Grihya Parisishta*, request the incanters, sacrificial priest and the Acharya (superior priest), to begin their respective functions. The door-incanters or *Dvara Japakas* denote priests who mutter prayers at the door of the structure where the image may be placed for the time. In the *Hayasirsha Parisishta*, provision is made for the appointment of five *Japakas*, four for the doors, evidently of the *Mandapa* and one for the *Garbha*, or inner chapel, where the image is to be finally installed.

A *Murti-dhara* or image bearer, 32, 16, or 8 *Murtipas* or image-keepers and four *Dwarapalas* or gate-keepers are also appointed.

Between the *Sankalpa* and the appointment of the priests, etc., the following ceremonies intervene, viz., (1) the worship of Gaṇapaṭi, (2) *Punyaha Vachana*, (3) the worship of the *Matrikas*, and (4) the *Vridhi Sradha*.

The worship of the *Nava graha* or the nine planets is also recommended by the *Matsya Purana* as a necessary preliminary to the fruitfulness of all *Kaniya* works.

The Āchārya or superior priest so appointed is directed in the *Grihya Sutra Parisishta* to proceed to the *Yagabhumi* (the place for the sacrifice), the *Prasada* (temple) and the *Snanashala* (ablution-hall), and sprinkle the same with water from the tips of *Kusha* grass pronouncing the text *Apohistha*, etc., and also to strew white mustard seed about. This is followed by the ablution ceremonies of the image.

The image must first be washed with cow-dung, cow-dung-ashes, and earth from an ant-hill, in order to remove the impurity created by the touch of the artist. The text of Varaha Mihira on the subject is more elaborate. It directs that:—

"Let the image, with the head to the east, be bathed with an infusion of wavy-leafed fig, pipal, glomerous fig, siris and banyan, mixed with all sorts of auspiciously named plants, with sacrificial and other grass, with clay dug up by elephants, and bulls from mountains, ant-hills, confluences, river banks and lotus-grown lakes joined to water from holy bathing places and the five products of cows, the whole combined with scents and water containing gold and jewels. Let the bathing be performed amid the sound of various musical instruments, solemn shouts, and the recital of holy texts.

"Eminent Brahmans have to mutter prayers to Indra in the East; prayers to Agni in the south-east, for doing which they ought to be honourably rewarded.

"Let the special priest make an offering also to fire, with prayers addressed to the god whose idol is being consecrated."

After this the *Bhavishya Purana* prescribes that "The *Prana Prathishta* and the *homa* should be performed according to rules, and the priest's fee duly paid for the completion of the ceremony."

According to the *Tantras*, the *Prana Prathishta* or vivification consists in pronouncing certain mystic syllables followed by an invocation, asking for the vivification of particular organs of the image with the vital energies of the divinity whom the image represents, and the continuance of such energies for all time. According to the *Vasishta Samhita*, the incantation is to be performed by the worshipper touching the heart of the image, the heart being supposed to be the essential seat of life. The *Kalika Purana*, however, requires the cheeks of the image to be touched before touching the heart. It is this process of vivification that infuses the spirit of the deity into the image and it is by this process that in law the image from its previous status as an inanimate object, a simple piece of wood, clay, stone or metal, acquires the status of a judicial personage capable of holding property.

It is the spirit within and not the gross material of which the image is made that is worshipped by the Hindu. The idol is but the symbol. "Throughout the history of the world," says Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on *Bhakti* or devotion, "we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through thought-forms, or symbols, and all the eternal manifestations of religions—bells, music, rituals, books, and images—all

come under that head. Anything that appeals to the senses, anything that helps man to form a concrete image of the abstract, is taken hold of, and worshipped". The Swami points out that "the great attempts of the Mahomedans and of the Protestants (among the Christians) have been directed to this one end, of doing away with all rituals, and yet we find that even with them, rituals creep in. They cannot be kept out; after long struggle, the masses simply change one symbol for another. With the Mahomedan it is the temple at Kaba. With the Protestant it is the Church or the Book. The image of the Cross with the Protestants takes the place of the image of the Saint with the Catholics. It is vain to preach against the use of symbols, and why should we preach against them? There is no reason under the sun why man should not use these symbols. They have them in order to represent the thing signified behind them. The universe is a symbol in and through which we are trying to grasp the thing signified, which is beyond and behind. This is the lower human constitution, and we are bound to have it so."

After pointing out that we are always struggling to get to the thing signified, to get beyond the material, to the spiritual, that the spirit is the goal and not matter, the Swami says, "Forms, images, bells, candles, books, churches, temples, and all holy symbols are very good, very helpful to the growing plant of spirituality, but thus far and no further."

Again "so long as you cannot conceive of abstract *as* abstract, of the ideal *as* ideal, you will have to grapple through these forms, these material images, either inside or outside the brain, it matters not. You are all born idolators, and idolatory is good, because it is in the constitution of the human nature. Who can go beyond it? Only the perfect man, the God-man. The rest are all idolators. So long as you see the universe before you, with its forms and shapes you are all idolators. Do you get shapes in the brain? You

get just a little sensation somewhere in the brain. Why do you imagine this universe with all these colours and forms and shapes, this immense symbolical universe? This is a gigantic idol you are worshipping. He who says he is the body, is a born idolator. You are all spirits, spirits that have no form or shape, spirits that are infinite, and not matter. Therefore, anyone who thinks of himself as the body, as material, who cannot grasp the abstract, cannot think of himself as he is except in and through matter, is an idolator. And yet how these people begin to fight with each other, each, calling the other an idolator; that is to say, each says his idol is all right and the other's is all wrong."[1]

This then is the justification for idol worship among the Hindus and it is in ignorance of its *reason d etre* that other religionists who are themselves idolators, more or less, have pointed the finger of scorn on them.

The following directions of Varaha Mihira as to the manner of setting up the image is interesting.

"When the image has been bathed, clad in a new garment, smartly adorned and honoured with flowers and perfumes, let the person, whose function it is to set it up, put it on a nicely-spread bed.

"After the sleeping image had been consecrated with wakes, dancing, and song, they have to proceed to its setting up at a period indicated by the astrologers.

"Let the image worshipped with flowers and unguents, amid the sounds of horns and musical instruments, be led with all precaution, round the shrine, in such a manner that the latter is always kept in the right side.

"Thereupon, make copious oblations to treat Brahmans and fashionable people; and, after a piece of

1. Pp. 426 to 428.

gold has been deposited in the cavity of a seat, let the image be placed upon the base.

"By particularly honouring the setter up, astrologer, Brahmans, fashionable people, and carpenter, one shall inherit good things in this world, and heaven in the next".

The books of ritual refer to another ceremony which too is important. They direct that, before removing the image into the temple, the building itself should be formally given to the god for whom it was intended. It is termed the *Utsarga*. The *Utsarga* in the case under consideration is the relinquishment of the donor's right, and the gift is completed by the acceptance corporeally made by the donee—the image —which is made to take bodily possession of the premises. The gift as in the case of other gifts has to be made by the donor taking in his hands water, sesamum, the sacred *Kusa* grass and the like. The *Sankalpa* or formula of resolve, makes the deity himself the recipient of the gift and the corporeal acceptance completes the gift.

After the installation of the image in the temple, the rituals prescribe the performance of the *Arati*, or lustration ceremony, and a feast to the Brahmans whose number according to the *Matsya Purana* range from one thousand to twenty thousand according to the means of the worshipper. The ceremony, concludes, with gifts to the poor, a general festival of dancing and music.[1]

25. **Pollution of temples.** A temple polluted by the happening of certain events specified in the Sastras has to be purified before worship is resumed. As to what events would cause pollution and what purificatory ceremonies are prescribed we would do well to quote here the learned observations of

1. *Hindu Law of Endowments* by Mr. P. N. Saraswathi is one of the works consulted here.

Mr. Justice M. K. Ramachandra Row, B.A., B. L., the Travancore Special Commissioner, from his elaborate *Report on Purificatory Ceremonies* :—

"The supreme being is described as light. Light in Sanskrit is symbolical of wisdom and power. We are not endowed with the power to bear the light of God. Even Arjuna could not bear the sight of such effulgence. Krishna invested him with the necessary power of vision and what he saw with such power of vision was so magnificent and transcended his conception so much that he shivered from a sense of deep awe. All that we can now perceive is his reflected light. Light is the effect of vibrations, and Manthras also produce vibrations. Vibrations in Akas or ether are affected by counter vibrations set up by external objects or natural events or Manthras. These latter set of vibrations may either completely destroy the power of the image to reflect the Divine light or enfeeble its power to do so in varying degrees. These unfavourable circumstances are known as *Nimithoms* requiring purificatory or expiatory rites. There are other *Nimithoms* which call for expiatory rites on the ground that they forebode evil to the worshipper, or the proprietor, or the country and the ruler. All these *Nimithoms* are known as pollutions or *Asuddhy*. The *Thanthra Sara* compares these idols with *Vithanagni* and declares that, if expiatory rites are not immediately performed, the Devathas feel provoked, that they should not be touched before such rites are performed and that, if their performance be delayed, the Devathas cease to reside in those images.

"The *Nimithoms* which call for expiatory rites are either those that destroy the capacity of the image for reflecting the Divine presence or those which forebode evil. The *Thanthra Sara* says that, even in cases where total obscurity is not the immediate result of the *Nimithom*, delay in performance of the prescribed rites of expiation will cause the Devatha to cease to reside in the image and will give full scope for the play of the

mischievous spirits which have their abode in the image, causing thereby the spread of disease and disaster in the country.

"2. What are the events which are attended with such fearful results, if neglected? The *Thanthra Sara* enumerates the following:—

If the idol drops down or shakes or is mutilated, or if it should perspire, laugh, or cry, or if it be wrenched or carried away by a thief, or if there should be a mutilation of the weapons, ornaments or of subsidiary images, or damage to the pedestal or the Sreekovil by fire or force, or if mushrooms, ant-hills, worms or insects and the like should appear in these parts, or if a dog, thief, Pashandy or Vrathya, or Devala should enter, or if the Archana or Pooja should be performed by one who does not know the appropriate Manthras or who is devoted to some other Devatha, or who is uninitiated, or if wicked Manthras or those appropriate to different Devathas are chanted, or if the images should be time-wore or bent, or if Poojas were offered with stale, faded or proscribed materials, or if Poojas were omitted in the absence of *Nimithoms*, or if from neglect the regular periods of Poojas be transgressed, or if strife, death or birth should occur, or if blood, sputum or tears should drop, these and others are portents threatening manifold disasters. * * *

"2. B. The *Thanthra Sara* by Ananda Thirtha disposes of the whole in one brief sloka:—In the event of entry by dogs, thieves, Chandalas, Pathithas, women in their periods, etc., or of pollution by corpses and the like, and also if there should occur default in Pooja, expiation is ordained in the manner laid down for *Snapanam*, i.e., *Kalasabhishekom* * * *

"2. F. The *Thanthra Prayaschithom*, a Malabar Granthom, declares as follows:—"The dropping of or daubing with *human* blood or flesh and the like is alone objectionable and that only when the event occurs in the *Madhyahara* or *Anther Mandalom* or the five

Prasadoms. The Vivarana includes also blood and the like of beasts (Pasus). But only the blood, flesh and seminal fluid of Pasus (beasts) are objectionable and nought else. Tears, ear-wax, excrement, perspiration and sputum of all animals are objectionable. The gravity of the contact with these substances varies in proportion to their quantity and with reference to the regions affected or the caste of the person from whom the exudations arose. The entrance into the *Haras Anther Mandalam* and the *Prasadas* of Pathithas, i.e., of persons guilty of the five great sins of murdering a Brahmin, drinking intoxicating liquor, stealing gold, and knowing carnally the preceptor's wife, or of persons affected with pollution (funeral or birth) of Pashandas or barbers, of husbandmen who sow seeds, of Mlecchas, or washermen, weavers and others who are outside the pale of caste, of women recently delivered or in their periods, of a mechanic, or of a Chandala, is objectionable in an ascending order of magnitude. The entrance of owls, bears, hawks, dogs, donkeys, crows, camels, rat-snakes, hogs, dark-blue pigeons, Chathaka (a bird said to subsist on rain drops), Thittari (Francoline partridge), Chakora (a bird said to feed on moon beams), Balaka (crane) and the bird Kapinjala into the *Garbhagrahom*, in small or large numbers, is objectionable. If these creatures abound largely in the country, their entrance calls for ordinary rites, but in the case of their being rare, such entry calls for treatment as in the case of *Albhoothas* or portents. The generation of insects and worms in the Prasada or the Hara, the growth of mushrooms, ant-hills, and honeycombs, the striking of *Gopuram* and *Vimana* by lightning, the fall of *Oolkas* or meteors and earthquakes, are portents in a duly ascending order of gravity".[1]

Besides the above, several other texts are also cited and it is pointed out that none of them attempts an elaborate and exhaustive enumeration of all the

1. Pages 19—22.

events which call for the performance of propitiatory or expiatory rites. Further, in many cases, the usage of the temple in the past would be the guide to follow: for, according to Manu, custom is transcendental law and it is allowed to supercede the express texts. The description of the general character of the events that cause pollution makes it clear that contacts, which are considered to be objectionable to caste persons are equally objectionable in the case of temples and their images. It is mentioned as a general proposition that the mischief of any *Nimithom* (event) increases in magnitude in proportion to the proximity of the place of happening to the idol and that there are certain events which call for only sanitary remedies unless they happen in some of the interior portions of the Pagoda.

Coming to remedial measures to be observed for removing the impurity and avoiding its mischievous consequences, the learned Special Commissioner says:—

"In the case of Nimithoms of the two classes of the major head, viz., those affecting the idol and those affecting the local divisions, the practice of the Thantharies has introduced a ceremonial which is preliminary to the elaborate rites performed leisurely according to convenience. That ceremony is called *Pasuddana Punyahom*. The Sastras forbid the offering of Poojas to images before the mischief caused by a Nimithom is wiped away. The ceremony of *Pasuddana Punyahom* which is a very simple one costing a few fanams is performed immediately after the happening of a Nimithom. Its efficiency is not adequate to remove the mischief caused by the Nimithom. It is just sufficient to meet the ordinance that no Poojas should be performed before *Nishkrithy* or *Prayaschithom* is performed. It is only in formal compliance with the letter of the law that this right is performed. It might occur to inquire why the effect of this rite should be treated as merely formal. The reason is that the effect

of Nimithoms generally can be washed away only by *Snapanom* or *Kalasabhishekom*.

3. The other purificatory rites observed are:—

(a) Daily *Punyahom* during the progress of *maramath works*;

(b) *Sthanasuddhy* or *Khananady*;

(c) *Prasada Suddhy* and *Bimba Suddhy* as preliminary to and closing with *Panchakom*;

(d) *Navakom* or *Ottakalasom*;

(e) *Suddha Jala Kalasom* preceded by *Panchakom*;

(f) *Dranya Kalasom* without *Homams*; and

(g) *Dravya Kalasom* with *Homams* beginning with *Prokthom* and closing with *Thathvam*.

4. I shall next proceed to notice these several rites briefly. The rite of daily *Punyahom* is carried out to wash away the pollution caused by the entrance of proscribed people like carpenters, etc. The cost is very small, it being generally only 3 chakrams. The ceremony called Khananady consists of certain formalities in imitation of scraping, digging and washing, etc., with the object of purifying the locality defiled by contact with offensive substances. Of course the first thing is to remove the substance, and these various Manthric rites are performed in analogy to sanitary practices for disinfection. The word Khananady shows that the ceremony is a combination of several rites. They are (1) Khananom (digging), (2) Haranom (removal of the soil), (3) Dahanom (burning with fire), (4) Pooranom (filling with new soil), (5) Gonivasanom (the stalling of cows and feeding of them), (6) Viprocchishtom (feeding Brahmins on the affected ground) and (7) Gavyom (sprinkling with the five-fold products of the cow). The materials required for these rites consist of Kusa and earth from river-beds, fields,

ant-hills, cowpens, Agnikoondas and lake beds and the five products of the cow. These rites commence with the purification of the Acharya who is required as a first step to put on new cloths. He then purifies the materials by the Manthric processes of Soshanom, Dahanom, Plavanom, etc., and worships Ganesha. The affected part should be dug up to a certain depth which varies with the nature of the pollution. The pit is next burnt with Kusa grass and the ashes removed and Gavyom sprinkled. Brahmans are next propitiated by washing their feet and feeding and presenting them with Dakshina, and the pit is sprinkled with the water with which the Brahmans' feet were washed. The pit is then filled up with the earth previously collected and the ground is rammed down. The cows are caused to walk over the ground and are fed with grass. Then the place is cleaned and in a shed built over or near it, Brahmans are fed and afterwards a Padmam of 8 petals is drawn and Poojas are performed to it and the whole ceremony is brought to a close by imagining that the Deva worshipped in the Padmom has filled the whole of the area affected. If the pollution should affect a stone-pavement, etc., the process of burning and filling up are carried out figuratively. If the pollution affects the Prasadom, the feeding of Brahmans is carried out elsewhere and the table-refuse is scattered over the affected portion.

5. The next item is *Prasada Suddhy*. Prasadom chiefly means the Garbhagrahom. It also signifies as stated elsewhere the Agra Mantapom, the kitchen, the dancing hall and the Dhwaja Mantapom or Bali Mantapom. The whole of the temple is regarded as the gross body of the Devatha which is installed therein. It is therefore a principle of Thanthra Sasthra that any Nimithom which externally affects any portion of these Prasadas and the Ankanom is also communicated to the Devatha worshipped in the temple. It is thus obvious that *Prasada Suddhy* and *Bimba Suddhy* rites have

to be carried out even when the infection occurs outside the main Prāsādom.

"6. The *Prasada Suddhy* rites consist of various ceremonies, the first of which is the propitiation of Gaṇēsh. The next step is to arrange the materials required, namely, a cord made of cotton and Kusa, the products of the cow, perfumed water and brushes, and to purify these by incantations. The Guru should next conceive the spirit in him as identical with the Devaṭa worshipped in the pagoda, and by gazing on the Prasadom and sprinkling water on the same, he should expel all evil spirits. The other processes are (1) entwining the building with the consecrated cord of Kusa and cotton, (2) sprinkling the five-fold products of the cow and a preparation of perfumed water on the building, (3) scattering mustards, rice, grains, flowers, etc., (4) cleaning with brushes made of certain specified materials and making Poojas to the Prasadom which is to be fancied as representing the Devatha itself. The next step is called *Raksha Kalasa* Pooja. This Pooja is offered to a *Kalasom* which represents the prowess or weapons of the Devatha. This is performed before Pooja to the Prasadom. Afterwards a *homam* called *Raksha Homam* is performed with some twigs, ghee and cooked rice each being offered 108 times. The ashes, etc., of this sacrifice are sprinkled over all the regions of the Prasadom after making some *japoms*. This Hōmam is believed to have the effect of completely keeping out all evil spirits from entering into the pagoda. This Hōmam is followed by another called *Vasthu Homam* which is ushered in by the offering of *samiths* or twigs and the consecration of 2 *Kalasams*, one dedicated to the Devatha concerned and the other to the Goddess Santhy. Finally the principal Hōmam which consists of about 250 oblations of ghee and about 108 oblations of each of the following materials, viz., twigs of semi and boiled rice balls and Doorva dipped in *Panchagavyom*, is performed. *Vasthu Homam* is

followed by *Vasthu Bali* which consists of drawing a diagram of 81 squares representing *Vasthu Purusha* as lying on his back and investing each square with a certain Devatha by *Avahanam* and making Poojas to all those *Devathas* and offering rice oblations to them. After this a *Punyahom* is performed by sprinkling consecrated water on the *Prasadom*, etc. We have now closed the rite known as *Prasada Suddhy*.

"7. The next step is *Bimba Suddhy*. The processes of this purification in their order are :—(1) *Kshalanam* (washing), (2) *Plavanom* (flooding), (3) *Snanom* (bathing), (4) *Marjanom* (sprinkling), (5) *Dhara* (streaming), (6) *Abhishekom* with *Panchagavyom* and *Ashta Gandhom* or *Avagahom* or immersion in *Panchagavyom*, and (7) *Sekom* or *Abhishekom* with five pots of consecrated water. The first four steps combined are known as *Chathu Suddhy*. They require four pots of water. Each pot contains different materials in addition. One pot contains Kusa, earth and barks of the four milky trees. Another pot should contain Akshathom or a few grains of paddy and rice together, with flowers. The third pot should contain Akshathom, Ashta Gandhom, flowers, gold, fruits and Kusa and the fourth should also contain similar substances. These pots should be decorated and, after invoking certain Devathas to occupy them, Poojas including *Nivedyom* should be performed. Afterwards the Poojas to the image in the temple up to bath are performed, and the image is bathed with the contents of these pots, each pot being only applied after repeating the Pooja to the image commencing from *Peeta Pooja* and closing with the rites up to *Abhishekom*. In the case of serious mischief, the process of *Marjana* or sprinkling is carried out with some elaborations which consist of the introduction of two additional pots containing respectively Gavyom and grains and their consecration and Pooja. The contents of these two pots are then sprinkled and scattered over the idol and the infected parts.

"8. The first four rites alone are ordinarily performed for *Chathu Suddhy*. But when the *Nimithom* is very serious an additional ceremony called *Maha-Chathu Suddhy* is also performed. This consists of the consecration of four pots filled with water and other substances. The idol is treated separately three times with the contents of each of these pots and finally bathed with the water contained in them. The application of the contents of the first three pots containing Kusa brushes, earth and milky twigs is preceded and followed by the usual Pooja to the Deity in the pagoda. The fourth pot which contains paddy, grain flower, gold, fruit, etc., is applied finally after bringing up the usual Poojas to the Deity in the temple up to bath, and is closed by the usual *Nivedyom*.

"9. After *Chathu Suddhy* comes *Dhara* which consists in causing a stream of liquid which may be pure water or perfumed water or milk or ghee to flow on the head of the idol for the space of three hours. This process may close on the first day or be continued for three successive days, the interval occupied each day being only three hours. During the interval *Japoms* and vedic recitations are ordained. In the case of minor *Nimithoms*, *Dhara* is performed on one day only. It is repeated for two additional days in the case of serious mischief.

"10. The penultimate rite in *Bimba Suddhy* is known as *Avagahom* or immersion in *Panchagavyam*. This is done in four ways. The usual way is to prepare *Panchagavyom* in a pot, to make Poojas to it and pour the contents over the idol. This operation is not technically called *Avagahom*, but it is ordinarily substituted for it. The regular *Avagahom* may take place in three ways. Each of the five products of the cow may be filled in a tub and the idol immersed in each tub separately. In this case the idol is immersed in one substance every day. It is finally immersed in the mixture of the five products. This process which

requires 6 days to complete is carried out only in cases when the *Nimithom* is very serious. Ordinarily, the immersion is into the *Panchagavyam* mixture alone, and then the ceremony can be gone through in a few hours. The third method consists in performing the above *Avagahom* and following it up with immersions in the four following liquids, viz., Ashtagandhom, water infusion of barks, pure water and water of sacred *Theerthas*. This third process which is resorted to in cases of poilution of the idol by actual contact with dogs, etc., requires two days for its performance. In the case of a *Avagahom*, *Japoms* and vedic recitation during the immersion are also enjoined.

"11. The last rite of *Bimba Suddhy* consists of *Abhishekom* with five pots filled with consecrated water. There are of course Poojas to the pots separately and jointly. Each of these pots represents one of the five principles peculiar to each Devatha.

"12. In the case of serious *Nimithoms*, *Panchakom* is preceded by a rite called *Samadhi Suddhy* This consists of a process of *Bhootha Samharom*, etc., in the idol similar to those mentioned as items 1 to 16 in the *Deha Suddhy* rites. After purifying the idol in this manner, the Divine Principle in the idol which at the preliminary stage was transferred into the body of the worshipper is re-transferred to the idol. After these processes, Pooja is performed to the idol and it is bathed with the contents of the five pots mentioned above.

"13. In *Nimithoms* of considerable gravity, a rite called *Mahapanchakom* is also performed in addition to the above. This also requires five pots of consecrated water mixed with *Ashtagandhom* and they should contain pieces of gold and silver as also precious stones. The pots are as usual to be duly purified by the rites of *Soshanom*, etc. They should be invested with the

principle of Sakthy and Pooja should be rendered to them jointly. They are afterwards invested with the principles known as *Thrikala* which represent the spiritual force of the sun, the moon and the fire. These *Ghatas* are again invested with the principle of *Koombha Devathas* and the Acharya after filling them with cosmic waters by a mental process proceeds to do so with actual water kept in reserve after the poojas. The Acharya next invokes by appropriate *manthras* the Deity of the temple to shed His Grace into the *kumbhoms*. Then after some further process the pots are conceived as transformed into *Moola manthra*. These pots are next worshipped(separately and afterwards the principles of all these pots are made to unite) and another *Avahanom* takes place with *Lipi Thathva*, *Manthra* and *Anga Nyasom* and then a full Pooja is performed to the Divinity in the pots. Finally the contents of the pots are poured over the image in the temple.

"14. The books refer to another rite of sprinkling called *Samprokshanam* which is prescribed in succession to *Panchakom* under grave situations. The rite is very simple in the case of all Devathas. The ceremonial consists in filling four pots with pure water, perfumed water, *Gavyom* and *Rajiakshathom*. They are duly consecrated and worshipped with a simple Pooja and the contents are afterwards sprayed on the temple buildings and idols. In the case of Vishnu, Siva and Subramania an additional rite of a very elaborate character including *homams*, *Japoms* and Vedic recitations involving the employment of a few persons in addition to the Thanthry according to the nature of the *Nimithoms* and the means available is also performed. It is called *Maha Kumbha Prokshanam*.

"15. We may next take up *Kalasoms*. They are of two classes. The first class is known as *Suddha Jala Kalasom*. The second class which is costly is known

as *Dravya Kalasom*. In the case of *Suddha Jala Kalasoms* there are three sorts according to the number of *Kalasom* or pots that are called into use; which may be 1, 9 or 25. The *Suddha Jala Kalasom* with 25 pots is usually performed after *Bimba Suddhy*. In special cases *Navakom* or *Suddhy* with 9 pots is carried out after *Bimba Suddhy*. The *Suddhy* with a single *Kalasom* is performed only in the case of subordinate Devathas in a pagoda. These *Kalasoms* may suffice to counteract the effect of any kind of pollution if the means available are extremely meagre.

16. The next class of *Kalasoms* is what is known as *Dravya Kalasom*. It may be performed with 17 or 25 *Drayas* according to the Devatha to be treated. Each *Dravyom* fills a special pot. The central pot is called *Maha Brahma Kalasom* and the other pots are called *Khanda Brahma Kalasoms*. The maximum number of pots may go up to 1000 in the cases of Vishnu and Siva. In the case of Subramania and Sankara Narayana the maximum number of pots is 500 and 347 respectively. The pots referred to by the names of *Maha Brahma* and *Khanda Brahma* are filled with various substances. The other pots are filled with water only. Some of the substances required for these pots are valuable. They are the products of the cow, precious stones, models made in precious metals of the weapons, vehicles, etc., of the particular Devathas, also golden and silver tortoises and fishes, *Pachakarpooram*, Kumkumapoo and others including metals. Generally it is considered expensive and troublesome to perform the *Dravya Kalasom* with 17 pots for Vishnu or 25 pots for Siva. In the case of 25 pots for Siva, one of the substances required is the flower called *Sougandhikom*. The common belief is that this flower which belongs to a class of aquatic vegetation is met with only in a certain locality near Pattamby in Malabar. The flower may be plucked for use only by a man who has observed due vigils. In a certain statement of

purificatory ceremonies prescribed by Koovakara Pōṭṭi, he appears to have gone in for this method of Kalasom and charged 300 fanams for a couple of flowers, though, according to some including Thazhamon Pōtti, Sasthra allows the substitution of Karaveera or Arali for this costly flower. In the case of Vishnu, *Kalasom* with 17 pots of Dravyas is on account of its costliness rarely restored to.

"17. In *Dravya Kalasoms*, the processes of *Avahanom* are many and varied. The consecration and Pooja of the chief pot or *Maha Brahma Kalasom* involves rites the performance of which would take not less than seven hours. The consecration and Pooja of the *Khanda Brahma Kalasom* requires much less time. Generally the Thanthry performs the rites connected with *Maha Brahma Kalasom* and he engages assistants to officiate in respect of the minor *Brahma Kalasoms*, eight of which would ordinarily occupy the time of one individual. There are as already mentioned numerous fresh water pots called *Panikalasoms* arranged round the *Brahma Kalasoms* and their number may be taken up to above 900. These *Kalasoms* are grouped in certain order and numbers around the *Brahma Kalasom* and the celebration of the Pooja rendered to them is so simple that the assistant of the Thanthry engaged to consecrate the *Khanda Brahma Kalasom* is also able to simultaneously get through the work of offering Poojas to the *Suddha Jala Kalasoms*.

"18. The Dravya pots represent the Brahma and the Thathvas. According to one method the number of Thathvas is 25 and according to another method it dwindles into 17. The 17 Thathvas are Jiva, Manas, the five senses of perception, the five objects of perception and the five elements. The category of 25 Thathvas includes Purusha, Prakrithi, Buddhi, Manas, Ahankara, the five Thanmathras, the five organs of action, the five organs of perception and the five

elements. After adoring all these pots with a flower, the worshipper has to repeat the adoration in the inverse order. The offering of flowers has the effect of investing the subsidiary pots each with a separate *Thathvam* of the Devatha who is invoked into the chief pot or *Maha Brahma Kalasom*, and by an appropriate mental process the worshipper has to realise the identity of the Devatha in each of the *Khanda Brahma Kalasoms* with that in the *Maha Brahma Kalasom* which again should be conceived and realised as infinite and perfect. Many *Avahanoms* and *Nyasoms* representing the Sastric principles of cosmic evolution are performed and Poojas are offered. The effect of these processes is believed to be to increase the store of Divine energy in the worshipper which is finally transferred to the pots and by the contact of their contents to the idol.

"19. In the case of these Kalasoms it is usual to perform the rite of seed sprouting. It is generally observed only where the number of pots consecrated exceeds 49, in which case it is usual to perform various hōmams also. In the case of *Dravya Kalasom* accompanied with this rite, the whole course will take not less than five days to go through. But without this rite the ceremony can be closed on the noon of the fourth day or even in three days. The rite of seed sprouting cannot be dispensed with in the case of *Dravya Kalasoms* with *Homoms*. I have referred to this rite though it is only a subsidiary rite as it is an expensive element.

"20. This Kalasom ceremony may be carried up to a period of 12 days. The number of days would increase in proportion to the development of the various rites referred to under the heads of *Bimba Suddhy*, and no Kalasom ceremony is generally performed without going through the preliminary process of *Prasada* and *Bimba Suddhies*. The

performance of expiatory *Homams* may also tend to protract the course of the ceremony"[1] .

Only certain classes of Hindus are allowed to enter Malabar temples. Of these, only a few are permitted to officiate as priests there. Among those who are thus connected with temples in Kerala, the number of those who know anything about the nature of the architecture[2] of the structures and of the images

1. Pp. 33-37.

[Apart from the housing of idols, and without any reference to the efficacy of prayers, it has to be remembered that most of the large Kerala temples stand for the administration of charity, the dissemination of education, the encouragement of fine arts and the employment of a great number of people. Some of the ancient temples here exhibit the wonderful development Kerala has reached in architecture, and sculpture and iconology. The paintings on the walls and panelled ceilings are marvels of art. Temples are also centres of festive gatherings. During the time of these festivals, there will be processions, dancing and drumming, music and piping, drama, Kuthu, Patakam, and sports of various sorts. The songs that accompany the sports and dances, the dramatic literature and the hymnology which are the outcome of the existence of these temples are of a high order. Many of these are rightly ranked as classics. They bespeak of the excellent culture that prevailed in Kerala from ancient days. P. 274 of the *Progress of Cochin*, Government Press.]

2. Kerala religious architecture, till a few decades back, was based essentially on wood, and the aim has been to reproduce exactly what existed thousands of years ago. A study of ancient Kerala structures, even though few of them can be dated back beyond the 12th century A. D., would give sure indications of what were typical wooden structures at the time of the advent of Buddha, or even earlier. Fergusson, deplored that "One single example of a Hindu temple dating before the Christian era may show the transition of Indian architecture from wood to stone". In my opinion the ancient temples of Kerala can show this transition.

Yet Kerala temples have received scant publicity till now, because they are generally taboo to the foreigner. Fergusson, Havell or Acharya have made only casual references to Kerala.

It is therefore interesting that the *Manasara* perhaps the earliest extant treatise on Indian architecture, gives great prominence

housed in them is very limited. It is therefore no wonder that there is considerable misunderstanding about the use of temples and images among Hindus and those who stand outside the pale of Hinduism. Apart from this aspect, symbolism is a difficult subject. It is a meaningless superstition to those who cannot understand it, and there is the argument of the proud but low mind that what it cannot understand can have no sense in it. That is why it is stated that 'veda fears the man of little knowledge since injury may be received from

to Kerala architecture. The ten best types of buildings in India are assigned to Panchala, Dravida, Madhya Kanta, Kalinga Varata Kerala, Vamsa, Magadha, Jana and Spu (Gujerat). (Cf. *Manasara* XXX). Arranged in the order of size and importance, Kerala comes third, while Dravida is specifically mentioned as the smallest type and comes last. In the "Wood Age" this is quite possible since the supply of wood was as is now much more plentiful on the West coast than on the East coast of South India. "Kerala Kantaka", a particular type of "Twelve storeyed" building, one prevailing in the ancient country of Kerala, is discussed at length in the above chapter of the work. "The twelfth storey should possess a big central hall, two side-halls, bay-windows, corridors, eight rooms, a central portico and no less than sixteen windows."

Professor K. R. Pisharoti, Mr. A. Govinda Warrier and others hold that some of the Pallava structures at Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram were designed by Kerala architects. The strange similarity that exists between the plans and decorations of the Vaikuntanatha Perumal temple at Kanchi and the Karthyayani temple, Lalur, or between the Chandika shrine in Trichur and the Draupati's Rath, or between the Thinnamel Appan's temple, Peruvanam, Cochin State, and the Dharmaraja's Rath, Mamallapuram, lend support to this view. A detailed discussion is beyond the scope of this note.

Circular and square structures.—The two simplest and perhaps earliest architectural forms conceived by man, were the "sphere and the cube". It may be suggested in general that the artistic urge in man has been towards the plastic circle; the rationalising trend towards the linear square. Havell has shown how a happy blending of these opposing principles were effected in the characteristic Indian dome, which, springing from a square base, merges into polygons, eight and sixteen-sided, and so into the circle. The Vedic Yajna-salas had circular

him.' It is of him that Bhartruhari speaks as 'the inexpert of little knowledge' whom it is impossible for even Brahma to instruct. But to the discerning minds let me say "Hold to your dear native land and to its precious possessions; for there lies the strong roots of your strength." When old and even modern civilisations have tottered and fallen, how is it that India

thatched roofs, models of which, according to Professor Jouveau-Dubreuil, are to be seen in the "Vedic eaves" at Meenapuram, Bagula Motta, Kakkad and other hilly tracts of Kerala.

Early Buddhist architecture was also essentially circular. The various forms of domed and barrel-vaulted-roofs, gabled windows and roof-ends are developed from woodon prototypes; and the striking resemblance of the barrel-vaulted, gable-ended eaves at Bedsa, or Karli to the "Valavara" of the Malabar boat—a vaulting awning made of bent bamboo splits attached to two parallel rows of short stumps fixed to the edges of the boat—or to the Toda hut, is quite obvious. (Greater India Society Journal Vol.2, Pt. 1, pp. 41-2.)

Professor Gangoli in his *Indian Architecture* has shown that the *stupa*—one of the three typical Buddhist structures, the other two being the *chaitya* and *Vihara*—evolves from a simple hemispherical mould to a square cell terminating in a corbelled domical roof. The typical "Garbha-Griha" of Kerala, examples of which may be seen at Oorakam, Triprayar, Ernakulam, in the Cochin State, and other places in Kerala conforms to this shape but they are marked from the sight of the casual observer by the concentric Vimana or Srikoil towering above them.

The second characteristic Buddhist structure is the "Chaitya". The word (from chita, a funeral pile) denotes anything connected with a funeral pile, but it generally used to indicate a place of worship. The ⊂ shaped chaitya halls, intended for congregational worship, consists of a nave and side-aisles terminating in an apse or semi-dome with the *stupa* at the apsidal end. In later Hindu models, a tower of *sikhara* is built to mark the position of the *stupa* outside, which becomes the base of a circular *Vimana* or *Srikovil*, while the nave contracts to a square "Mandapa" in front thus: O □. Many specimens of the apsidal temples are to be seen in Kerala (cf. Sasta's shrine, Trichur) and it is significant that most of them are dedicated to Sasta. Circular Srikovils with square *mandapams* in front are very common in Cochin State and North Travancore, where the later Dravidian influence was least felt.

alone with its oldest culture stands steadfast to-day? It is, among other reasons, because of its temples, its religion and its spirituality. The ancient seers took so much care to expound not only the ethical and metaphysical sides of religion but also its symbolical aspect. They paid special attention to the construction of temples, to the installation, consecration and

The "Sankara-Narayana" Srikovil at Matilakam, Trichur, is characteristic of this type. The basement consists of two concentric circular walls, the inner one being extended upwards to form what appears like a second storey. The basement is of granite plainly-chiselled, the walls of laterite, while the projection of the inner wall above the eaves is of wood. The pilasters, *torants*, *madhya-nasikas*, *panjaras*, *kutas* and *Khana-dwaras* follow the instructions laid down in *Tantra-Samuchayam*, the oldest Kerala treatise on architecture. The inter-spaces are covered with mural paintings, perhaps the oldest surviving in Kerala. The Cymer Reversa shape of the roof and eaves, so beautifully worked out in wood, must have formed the model for the deep overhanging cornices of Tamilian temples. This is a structural necessity in countries like Kerala, Nepal or Southern China, where there is a very heavy rainfall in one season and glaring sunshine in other seasons. The roofs have therefore to be steep to carry off the water and projecting well out to keep off the sun and are therefore curved out into almost horizontal eaves.

The Srikovils at Ernakulam, Irinjalakkuda (Cochin), or the temples round Tiruvalla (Travancore) have wooden walls most elaborately and exquisitively carved.

Fergusson believed that the square *Vimana* evolved out of the circular one. The point is very debatable. Anyway, we know that the *Manasara* and other Indian treatises on Architecture (supposed to have been compiled about the 7th century A. D.) give unmistakable prominence to square and polygonal plans. All the later temples in South India are linear descendants of structures like the 'Shore Temple' at Mamallapuram or the early Pallava structures at Kanchi, where the central shrine towers above the rest. The plans and decorative devices of the Pallava structures reveal a close similarity to the square *Vimanas* in Kerala (cf. The Srikovils at Lalur, Guruvayoor or Tiruvanchikulam); but the Kerala structures are evidently copies of its old wooden prototypes and possess parts constructed of wood. The *Vyalis* (lions) to take but one instance, are characteristic of both architecture. Rampant '*Vyalis*' attached to pilasters, appear on

purification of images and to the daily poojas. Kerala leads, so to say, in this respect. There the famous temples, which are architectural beauties, are the abodes of godliness and cleanliness. There are several classical treatises on Kerala architecture and on the Agama Sastras. But into these entrancing subjects, it is not possible to enter here.

the *vimana* of the Vaikunta-natha-Perumal temple at Kanchi, while the outer enclosures contain clumsy squatting specimens of supporting pillars. In Kerala architectures, rampant *vyalies* (often 6 to 8 feet long) springing from the crowns of couchant elephants (both being made of wood) are used as wide-sprung supports for the overhanging eaves, a much more appropriate method than using them as pillar-supports. I am of opinion that the *vyali* figure was originally used as struts, and when the need for them vanished during the transition into stone, the *vyali*, so dear to the Pallava, was used by him to adorn and support the pillars. These and various other points give support to the view that the semi-lithic structures of Kerala are truer copies of the ancient Dravidian wood architecture than the Pallava structures.

Viharas—The third typical form of Buddhist architecture is the *vihara*, intended as a sort of dormitory and college for the student-monks. It must have originally consisted of a court or hall surrounded with rooms. A stone relief at Bharhut contains a characteristic *vihara* with barrel shaped roof, '*chaitya*' windows, and a row of *kalasas*, on top. It is possible that Bhima's Rath at Mamallapuram and the few ancient *gopurams* still existing in Kerala are representations of one type of *vihara*. The western *gopuram*, Trippunittura, is an extremely important structure. Without entering into details, I may add that its plan and arrangement reveal a thoroughly utilitarian purpose (unlike the *gopurams* in Tamil land). It is also significant that while its plinth is of granite and walls of laterite, the porch is built entirely of wood.

There are various other features of Kerala architecture that would repay careful investigation. The wooden pillars inside the *gopurams* and *mandapams* with their characteristic rampant *vyalies* are perhaps the oldest of their type in South India. (V. K. R. Menon, M. A., M. Sc., from his University Extension Lecture on Kerala Architecture.)

LETTER XXIV.

1. **New house: consecration.** The ceremony is called Pālu-kāchhal, or the boiling of cow's milk, as this forms one of the important items in the consecration and house-warming ceremony.

2. **The evil eye.** The potency of the evil eye to work mischief is a well recognised belief in Malabar, and, to avert its baneful influence, many kinds of charms are used. At every step, from one end of the country to the other, evidence of this attracts the eye of the observer. When a new building is being put up, one will see near it in a conspicuous position a hideous figure made of wood or straw set up to avert the evil eye. A kitchen garden with a fine growth of vegetables lies by the roadside. To avert the evil eye of the passer-by, which may injure the growth, a bogey of some sort is set up, generally a pot covered with cabalistic signs made in chunnam and charcoal, or more often a branch of the prickly cactus The evil eye is supposed to affect human beings as well as cattle also, and there are both preventives and curatives prescribed against it. Amongst preventives are certain jewels, tigers' claws set in silver, *Yentrams* or cabalistic figures drawn on metal plates, or cadjan leaves, on which *Mantrams* are inscribed. They are worn round the neck or the arms or the waist, rolled up into small tubes. These are not peculiar to Malayali Hindus alone. The Mahomedans also suspend charms on their persons as also from the ceiling of their houses. The Jews too place figures on their houses. The Native Christian does not hesitate to resort to charms against the evil eye, however vehemently he may protest openly that it is against his religion. Why should he not do so when his more enlightened co-religionists in civilised Europe

are not slow to believe in the maleficent effects of the evil eye and to use charms to avert it?

"The fantasy of the evil eye is prevalent in many parts of Europe at this date. It is rife in certain Highland and Irish districts. The Italians are undoubted believers in the potency of the evil eye to do mischief and have designed means to ward it off."[1]

"Superstitious people would on no account even mention the name of one who is unfortunate enough to be suspected to possess the so-called evil eye".[1]

The following extract taken from the tenth volume of the *Theosophist* attempts to give a rational explanation for the belief in the potency of the evil eye.

"Recent research into mesmeric laws and phenomena has thrown much light upon the nature of that maleficent magnetic glance of the human eye, whose direful effects have been known in all countries since the remotest antiquity. If the Hindu mother suspends around the child's neck an amulet to protect it from the evil eye, and similarly the Indian cultivator guards his thriving field or orchard or his new house, by setting up some uncouth image or painting, a *Svastika* or some other sign of power, to arrest the first envious glance, so also do the simple folk of other countries adopt the like expedients.

"The human eye is in fact a reservoir of tremendous psychic power, and the world's literature teems with expressions to indicate the potency of its light, its lightning, and its blandishments. Some of the most romantic stories extant are based upon the fact of ocular fascination. The benevolent healer cures the sick by his kindly glances, and animals and lunatics are alike subjugated by the spell of the fixed gaze. The possessor of evil eye is often unconscious of his gruesome gift and is disposed to ascribe to mere coincidence the tragedies of which he seems to others the perhaps unwitting and horrified cause."

1. *The London Magazine* for October 1903, pp. 134—135.

The cures prescribed are many and curious. In the case of cattle afflicted with the evil eye, shells strung together on a black coloured cord are tied round the neck or the horns of the animal. It is fed with grass, fruits, etc., on which *Mantrams* have been uttered, or is bathed in charmed water. What is known as *Karin-kannituka* (casting the black eye) is very much feared. It is thought that, if those so endowed cast their eye on anything or make remarks comparing one thing with another and note the excellence of the one over the other, the good one will at once be destroyed. This is ascribed to the *karinak* or evil tongue. The pernicious eye and tongue would even injure human beings. Those who fall under the influence of the evil eye and tongue are said to become ill, and unless some speedy remedy is resorted to soon, they pine away and die. Under the same category of belief comes the absolute faith in the power of spells.

Unless the effects of the evil eye are very serious, easy remedies are adopted. There are those who pretend to be adepts well versed in the art of removing such injuries as are caused by the evil eye or even by ordinary spells. These mutter *mantrams* over the afflicted and sometimes these *mantrams* are whispered over water or oil which is rubbed on the body of the patient. A most popular method adopted is to get one of these adepts to mutter his *mantrams* over some salt and pepper which are afterwards put into the fire. If the injury is caused by the evil eye, the adept declares that, in the process of muttering his *mantrams*, he yawns, his mouth waters and tears flow out of his eyes. This is said to afford a sure test as to whether it is a real case of the effect of the evil eye or not.

The methods adopted in serious cases are very elaborate. The Malayan or one of the Hill tribes is often the *mantram* man who undertakes to cure the effects of the evil eye. The account that one of

them, an adept in the art, Chatu by name, gave to Mr. Fawcett is curious. "In effect, he said: certain persons have the evil eye by nature, *Pottakannu*,[1] blind eye, it is called. A person having the evil eye may, while *thinking evil*, infect man, woman or child by simply looking at them. Those who have the evil-eye are generally woman; men rarely. The cause is in the eye itself. No evil spirit is in any way connected with it. A woman may affect her own child. A person having the evil eye, looking at a beautiful or healthy child, will affect it without intending to do so. The injury done through the eye is often unintentional. The power of the eye to do mischief is altogether beyond the volition of its possessor; but it is excessively virulent when mischief is really intended: Colour of the eye matters nothing. Nor is possession of the evil eye confined to any caste. He knew a Nambutiri who had it. The effect of it on a child is that it becomes lean, feverish, loses its well favoured appearance, and cries in its sleep. Men and women suffer from headaches and pains in the limbs. Animals are disposed to lassitude and eat little. Cows will not give milk.

"The Malayan drives away all these unpleasant ailments by invoking an evil spirit *Vudikandan* by name: male having no wife. By means of magic, he forces *Vudikandan* to do what he requires of him. But how? The process he would not tell. It is secret. That is all; but the drumming! No one outside the Malayan caste may be initiated into the fearsome mysteries. The spirit *Vudikandan* is used for no other rite. The Malayan also drives out evil spirits.

"Chatu presented me with a *Mantram*, a magic verse, written with a style on a cadjan leaf, the common stationery of Malabar, and told me that whenever any part of my person becomes affected by the evil eye, I should whisper the *Mantram* over a piece of string and tie the string round my leg or other limb or part of the body which suffers, and cure will take place instantaneously.

1. *Pottakannu* means also bad eye. *Karinkannu* black eye is another popular term. *Ed.*

"He works by day; never by night. A whole day is occupied in driving away injury through the evil eye in a bad case. He need not be starving; in fact eats a good deal before he begins. The generous Chatu presented me also with a couple of *Mantrams* such as could cure an easy case of harm through the evil eye, and explained their use.

(*1*) "*Om Namo Bhagavathom, Sri Parameswaranum Sri Parvathiyum Palliveta Nayatinnai Ezhunellumpol, Sri Parvatikku kanneru-dosham undai. Sri Parameswaran Sri Parvatiute kanneru dosham Tirtata pole Tirnupoka· Svami en guruvinana*".

("*I prostrate myself to Bhagavathi. When Sri Parameswaran and Sri Parvati went hunting, Sri Parvati was under the influence of the evil eye; Sri Parameswaran then put away this influence. I swear by my guru.*)

(2) "*Om Peputi Vorrupoti Yerrika. Swaha yen Guruvinana*". (*Mantrams* 1 and 2 are in Malayalam. While No. 1 invokes Puranic deities, No. 2 invokes the aid of the adept's *guru* or preceptor who, Mr. Fawcett explains, is 'the deity', an entirely abstract idea without reference to any incarnated forms, such as Parvati or Parameswara, as in No. 1.)

"The meaning of this" i.e., No. 2, says Mr. Fawcett, "is not clear." "Om-I. "Yerrika"-burnt "Swaha" (used as a verb)-devour "Guruvinana -by the Guru or teacher. But in *Mantrams* the word Guru invariably means the deity."[1]

"*Mantram* (1) is whispered on sixteen grains of rice: on each grain separately, not on all together. As

1. As a rule, *mantrams* are never given out off-hand by one who has learnt them from a teacher to another; never to a person of a caste different from that of the person who knows them. So that, I do not think what are given above are real *mantrams*. Not to displease a high European Police Officer, the man may have given some scraps that may form trappings of certain *mantrams*.
Ed.

the *Mantram* is whispered on each grain, the grain is placed in oil. When the sixteen grains have been placed thus in the oil, it is stirred while the *Mantram* (2) is repeated sixteen times. The magician then hands this oil in silence to the person who has been injured by the evil eye. The person receives it also in silence and rubs it over his head. No word is spoken until he has finished." [1]

3. **Building house.** In para 1 of the last letter, our author, speaking of temples, has remarked, "All the architectural talents of the heathen have been devoted to the erection of these edifices: their dwellings on the other hand are wretched." In the present para, he gives us an account of the manner in which the building of a house is commenced. But he nowhere gives one an idea of the habitations of the Malabar people.[2]

1. (P. 308-9).

2. *Domestic Architecture of Kerala.*—A proper study of the Art and Architecture of ancient India is not possible without a sympathetic understanding of the intensely religious atmosphere that produced them. Like the ancient tribes of Israel, the Indian "Silpies" or "Master-builders", believed in a personal and jealous God presiding over their destinies. The "Silpa Sastras" therefore abound in frequent references to this imminent deity, while even the simplest of architectural laws are expressed in so abstruse and religious a language that they appear, on rational grounds, to be as inexplicable as the religious sections of Puranic India.

Astrology naturally played a large part—perhaps an unnecessary part—in Indian architecture. The house, for instance, is compared to the bride-groom and the building-site to the bride, about to be united together in holy wedlock; the perimeter of the stucture playing the same part as the horoscopes of human beings. But when we realise that horology was considered to have many scientific attributes by men like Francis Bacon and Johanuss Kepler, we are led to sympathise with the Indian builder. To take just one example, the dimensions of houses constructed on orthodox lines are based on the "Shadvarga formulae" by means of which, the Yoni, Aya, Vyaya, Thithi, Nakshatra and age of a house are calculated from its perimeter. The first one has a purely scientific basis and deals with orientation (Cf. *R. V. R. I. Bulletin* No. 3), while the others, as the author expressly states, are based on astrology.

P. T. O.

The Malayalees do not live in streets as the people on the East Coast do. Their habitations are situated in enclosed gardens, distant from each other, and this peculiarity has been remarked from early days. Ibn Batuta, writing early in the fourteenth century, observes, "And in all this space of two months' journey there is not a span free from cultivation. For everybody has here a garden and his house is placed in the middle of it, and round the whole of this is a fence of wood, up to

(*contd.*)

"നക്ഷത്രാദി ശുഭത്വം ജ്യോതിശ്ശാസ്ത്രാദിഭിസ്സുവിജ്ഞേയം"

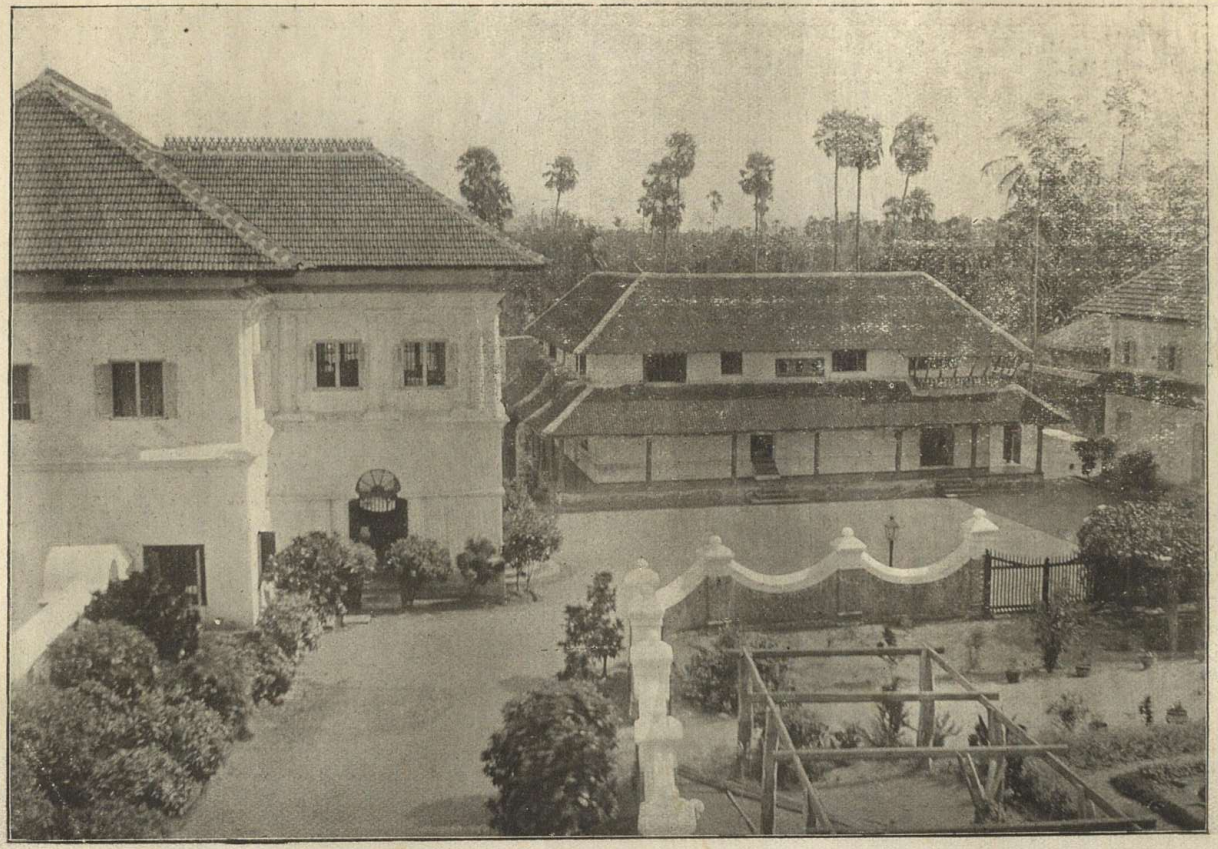
(*Manushyalaya Mahachandrika* CH. III. S. 31); yet statements like "യോനിഃ പ്രാണാ" or "യോനി പ്രധാനം ഭവനം" show that the author was conscious of the outstanding importance of the first formula. This tendency to deliberately mix up wheat with chaff, truth with fiction, is unfortunately characteristic of the genius of ancient India.

The domestic architecture of Kerala never attained the dazzling brilliance of the palaces and pavilions of Ayodhya or Lanka or the lithic grandeur of Mogul and Vijayanagara structures. But then, luxury and ostentatious display go hand in hand with despotism and monarchy, while Kerala has all along been democratic in spirit. Archeologically, however, Kerala houses are important, because there is every likelihood of their plan, structure, and decorative devices being very similar to the secular architecture of the third millenium B. C.

Treatises on Architecture.

It is understood that there existed no less than 12,00,000 granthas, or stanzas, each containing 32 letters in *Anushtup* rhyme on Indian architecture, part of which at least, was devoted to house construction. Professor Acharya mentions that there exists even now fragments of 300 treatises, mostly in manuscript. There is unmistakable evidence that the more important among these, *Maya-Mata*, *Manasara*, *Silpi-ratna*, *Kasyapeya*, etc., were available in Kerala a hundred years back. It is therefore regrettable that the orthodox domestic architecture of Kerala is now based on one single treatise called *Manushyalaya-Mahachandrika* which, in spite of its long title, contains only 235 verses, of which at least half are not strictly relevant to architecture proper. The book is however interesting in that it happens to be one of the few treatises devoted exclusively to domestic architecture.

P. T. O.



A TYPICAL ARISTOCRATIC NAYAR HOUSE.

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MADRAS.

which the ground of each inhabitant comes." [1] Barbosa says, that "these Nayars live outside the towns, separate from the people, on their estates which are fenced in". The Italian traveller, Della Vella, in the 17th century, describes, Calicut "to consist of plots beset with abundance of high trees, and amongst the boughs whereof, a great many of wild monkies; and within these close groves, stand the houses, for the most part at a distance

(1) Pages 166—167.

(*contd.*)

Only one type of house is dealt with, namely the *Nalukettu* or *Chaturasra Sala* from which we are led to conclude that a hundred years back all the larger buildings in Kerala were *Nalukettus*. The *Nalukettu* consists essentically of a rectangular structure comprising a central courtyard; the structure being divided into four main rooms and four corner rooms, the courtyard being connected to the outside by four corridors arranged in *Swastiki* fashion. The *Chandrika* lays down nine different plans, but they vary only in minor details. Kerala temples also conform to this plan, the *Sri-Kovil* or *Vimana* occupying the position of the *Thulasi-Tara* at the centre of the courtyard. We knew that the temples and relic shrines of Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Judea, Maya (Mexico) and China, reveal that their planning and lay-out are very similar to that of Kerala temples. It is curious that this close similarity is even more evident in domestic architecture.

Almost all ancient Asiatic structures were raised on high bases, the superstructure being of wood, while the windows and doors opening out were small, solid and well protected, as a precaution against nocturnal raids. The interior depended on light and ventilation on the central courtyard whose dimensions and decorations depended on the wealth of the owner.

The *Persian* palaces generally consist of a number of pavilions and detached halls grouped round a central courtyard. The Persian caravansaries, states Fergusson, "have the usual form of a square court-yard surrounded by a range of arcades generally two storeys in height". The *Egyptians* lived in storeyed mansions situated in gardens laid out in a quaint formal style with pavilions, ponds and all other accompaniments of gardens in the East. The Wuswus ruin at Wurka (cf. Loftus *Chaldea and Babylonea*) reveals an Assyrian palace 246 ft. by 173 ft.; and like almost every building in the Euphrates valley in those ancient times, the centre was occupied by a court. The palaces

from the common ways or streets" [1]. In the 18th century, Forbes observes, "the houses of the Nayars, and better sort of Malabars, are neat and clean; generally situated in a garden, with a few cocoanut and jack trees, betel plants, indegenous roots and vegetables; and a small grove of areca, or a shady tamarind, and a wall within the enclosure, furnish a Malabar habitation".[2]

(1) Page 181.

(2) P. 252.

(*contd.*)

at Nimroud, Koyunjik and Khorsabad, and the numerous ancient mansions in China, conform to this plan.

The houses of Pompeii had the principal apartments on the ground floor facing inwards. They were lighted from courtyards and had few openings outside; for, "with a people who had not glass with which to glaze their windows, it was impossible to enjoy privacy or security without at the same time excluding light and air, otherwise than by lighting their rooms from the interior". The smaller houses with their miniature courtyards look so like a small Malayalee *Nalukettu* that it has even been alleged that Kerala borrowed its secular architecture from Rome. It may be the other way.

Evolution of Nalukettus. The Palace at Mattancheri (circa 1560) is built according to orthodox architectural canons where the exterior stone staircase, deep-seated windows and arched soffits alone reveal Portuguese and Dutch influence. It is a two storeyed building built round a central courtyard which is about 100 ft. by 50 ft. and contains a shrine dedicated to the family deity of the Cochin Royal Family.

The next stage in the evolution of the *Nalukettu* is seen in Saktan Tampuran's palace at Trichur, where the western wing constitute the palace proper, while the '*Tulasi Tara*' carries a few idols. The spacious rooms, wide staircase, massive pillars and magnificent porch, all reveal Dutch influence. Thereafter many buildings were erected where the western or southern wing is built as a two or three-storeyed mansions while the other wings hang on to it as a sort of unnecessary appendage. In certain recently reconstructed, aristocratic residences, all the wings are two storeys in height, but exigencies of modern requirements have reduced the courtyard to 12 ft. by 8 ft. though the building site covers an area of about 85 ft. by 55 ft.

In conclusion, a brief reference may be made to the various superstitions connected with domestic architecture. A large

The Malayalees still live in separate garden houses nestling amidst the feathery palms whose leafy foliage afford shelter from the scorching rays of a tropical sun. Their gardens are still fenced round so well as to elicit from Sir Grant Duff, a late Governor of Madras, the remark that it looked as if the great Vauban was in Malabar fortifying these Malayalee habitations from external attacks though not of human beings.

Early in the 15th century, the Chinese traveller Ma Huan found the houses in Cochin "built of the wood of the cocoanut tree and thatched with its leaves which render them perfectly water-tight".[1] At the advent of the Portuguese, according to Astley, "the houses (of Calicut) were made of hurdles; the King's Palace and the Temples, which were the only buildings of lime and stone; for none else, by their laws, were permitted to be raised with those materials".[2] Describing the town of Calicut, Varthema observes:—"The houses

(1) J. R. A. S. 1869, page 342.

(2) Page 29.

(*contd.*)
majority of these seem to serve no useful purpose, but there are others of definite practical utility.

Thus, speaking about compound sites, *Chandrika* emphasises that they should slope from the south or west towards the north or east. All this is most quaintly worded and wrapped up in superstitious sanctums; yet they agree with those of Vitruvius, the architect of Augustus Caesar, that, "A city on the sea-side, exposed to the south or west will be insalubrious." Similarly, the taboo against house construction in the *Vayu* and *Agni Konus* (South-east and North-west quadrants) is an effective check on the growth of slums; since, if a large plot is split up into a number of building sites, at least half the area, cannot be built upon, with the result that overcrowding is impossible. Numerous other injunctions tend to show that the ancient Aryan was as anxious to maintain the purity of the race as the modern Hitlerite and adopted equally ruthless methods for suppressing the individuality of the non-Aryans. (*V. K. R. Menon, M. A., M. Sc.* From his University Extension Lecture.) (The Editor is indebted to his friend for his two valuable notes.)

are very poor. The walls are about as high as a man on horse-back, and the greater part are covered with leaves and without an upper room. The reason is this, that, when they dig down four or five spans, water is found, and therefore they cannot build large houses. However, the house of a merchant is worth fifteen to twenty ducats. Those of the common people are worth half a ducat each or one or two ducats at the most". A century, later Della Vella visiting Calicut says of the houses he found there. "They appear but little, few of their outsides being seen, besides the low walls made of black stone surrounding these plots (i. e., the gardens wherein the houses are situated) and dividing them from the streets, which are much better than those of the Bazaar, but without any ornament of widows; so that he that walks through the city, may think that he is rather in the midst of uninhabited gardens, than of an inhabited city. Nevertheless, it is well peopled, and hath many inhabitants, whose being content with narrow buildings is the cause that it appears small".[1] Before Della Vella, Linchoten had remarked that "in their houses they are not verie curious" and Ralph Fitch, that "all the inhabitants here have very little houses covered with the leaves of the cocoanut trees". According to Nieuhoff, "they had most excellent carvings in wood with all sorts of images in their houses". Among the marshes he observed many ruins of old houses which appeared to have been built many years ago.

Bishop Medlycott observes in his *St. Thomas and India* that it was extremely unlikely that stone houses existed in Southern India when the Portuguese came, though there may have been stone-built temples, even in Malabar. Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese on the Malabar Coast, the houses of the superior classes were built of teak-wood, and used to last upwards of 400 years when kept well tarred on the outside. In

(1) Page 181.

support of his statement the Bishop quotes Jarric,[1] and gives part of a letter by James Fenicio, a Jesuit Missionary in the Zamorin's territory. "This letter" says the Bishop "is our earliest authority; as quoted above, it has no date, but evidently belongs to the period between 1600 and 1067. The Missionary had obtained permission to erect four Churches in the Zamorin's territory: 'I devoted all the remaining available time to the erection of these Churches, and to the Christian inhabitants of this village (Pālūr). I used to give them instructions as I chanced to meet them. As the Church of Pālūr dedicated to Saint Cyriac (Syr. Quriaqus), which was the oldest (*primus*) among all the Churches in Malabar, renowned for favours and graces obtained, and for this reason much frequented, I devoted myself more especially to it. The stone Church which I began two years ago (enclosing, apparently, within it the primitive building) had risen to the height of the windows. At this stage no one would dare to pull down the old wooden building, fearing to be struck down by sudden death, it stood surrounded by the walls of the new erection, but after I had prayed and removed their timidity, the old structure was pulled down, and the new building stood out in such fine proportions that the Hindus, the Mahomedans, and the Jews flocked to see it'. This is one of the seven churches traditionally assigned to the time when Saint Thomas preached in Malabar. The wooden structure must undoubtedly have been very old, and constructed no doubt of teak, which formerly grew all over the country, even in comparatively recent times: At that early age the supply must have been very plentiful.

Coming to more modern days, Fra Bartolomeo in the latter part of the 18th century supplies us with a fair account of the habitations of the Malayalis, both rich and poor, prince and peasant. "The houses of

(1) *Indicarum Rerum, tom.* III, lib II, Chapter V, Pages 50—51.

the nobility", says he, "and opulent persons consist of two storeys. Before the lowest there is generally a small hall, supported by thin pillars of teak-wood, which is of a yellow colour, and exceedingly hard. This hall is called *varanda*, and supplies the place of a parlour. The upper storey is called *maliga*, and in this the Indians are accustomed to sleep, to study or to perform any business in which they do not wish to be interrupted. A building, which consists of seven storeys, is called *elammaliga* (more correctly ēlu ñila mālika) that is a tower; and is considered as a habitation which none but a king or reigning prince dare inhabit. The huts of the poor people are constructed of the branches of the cocoanut tree interwoven through each other and are covered with its leaves, or with rushes or straw. The entrance into these huts is low and the interior part of them is dark". [1]

Of the materials with which the houses of the rich are built, he makes the following observations: "The greater part of the houses in Malabar are built of teak-wood, which is much harder and heavier than oak, and which withstands corruption for a very great length of time. I have seen several houses more than 400 years old, which during that period had suffered little or no decay. The palm-leaves with which they are covered, and the above wood, have the property of attracting the moisture, and of suffering it again to escape, as soon as a breath of air begins to stir, or the sun to shine. Hence it happens, that these houses are much healthier than those of stone and lime; which, if not allowed to dry properly, evaporate, for a long time after they are built, a great many calcareous and highly pernicious particles". [2]

We have in Logan's Malabar a fine description of a Malayali house built in the orthodox style. "The Hindu Malayali is not a lover of towns and villages. His austere habits of caste purity and impurity made him in former days flee from places where pollution in

1. Page 155.
2. Page 157.

the shape of men and women of low caste met him at every corner, and even now the feeling is strong upon him and he loves not to dwell in cities.

"On the margin of a fertile valley or ravine, upon bright green fields of rice in front of his door, he likes to select the site of his dwelling. The stream coming down the valley or ravine is skilfully turned aside to right and left high up in its course where the first of the rice-fields is terraced out of the steep hill-side. This device serves several purposes, for first of all the divided stream is carried along the sides of the valley at a higher level than the middle of it and thus irrigation is easy; then, again, the channels serve as catch-drains for the streamlets coming down at intervals along the hill sides; and, finally the water serves many domestic purposes as it flows close past the outer gateway of the house.

"This outer gateway is the first thing that catches one's eye as the dwelling is approached: it is quaintly placed, quaintly constructed, and quaintly neat and tidy in all its surroundings. It is essential that a stair or a ladder should lead up to it from the bank of the green level paddy flat, reminding one in its construction of the days when security of life and limb and property depended on one's ability to laugh a siege to scorn; when a Nair's house was his castle; and when here, at the gateway, were posted the retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies. Seats for them to rest on to right and left, both outside and in, a quaintly and solidly carved door and lintel; a room above approached by a ladder from inside, with a window or openings whence deadly shots are even now-a-days sometimes discharged on lawless intruders and, finally, a thatched roof, complete the characteristic of the gate-house. The Malayali is scrupulously particular about the tidiness and cleanliness of his house and its surroundings and nowhere perhaps is this more conspicuous than at the gateway of his dwelling.

"But a gate-house without flanking defences would be of little use, and the attention is next drawn to the massive bank of earth which hems in the spacious orchard in which the dwelling is placed. A neat interlaced and most serviceable fence of dry prickly bamboo thorns now generally tops the massive bank of earth and takes the place of the dense mass of living bamboo thorns which in former times used to be relied on for keeping out enemies. The house was evidently never meant to stand a long siege in former times, and the defences were intended merely to ward off a sudden raid and give time for the occupant's friends and retainers to rally round him as was their wont.

"On entering at the gateway the most prominent feature is the expanse of cool shade thrown by the umbrageous trees that surround the dwelling. The cocoanut, the jack with its dark glossy leaves and massive shade, the slender arecanut and the broad-leafed plantain, all contribute to this effect. The earth around is cooled, and an agreeable freshness is preceptible even in the hottest and most scorching days in April and May.

"A broad smooth path of hard baked clay, with raised banks a few inches high on either side, leads to a square, flat, open yard, where at mid-day the sun shines dazzlingly and scorchingly down on the stores of paddy and other grains laid out to dry. The floor of this yard is well rammed and made smooth by cow-dung mixed with charcoal dust, often renewed in the hot weather, and the same bank of smooth clay hems in this yard on the open side.

"The neatness, tidiness, and cleanliness of the approaches are not belied on closer acquaintance with the dwelling itself, and speak volumes for the housewifely qualities of the ladies who inhabit the main dwelling ranged round three sides, or sometimes all four sides, of the open yard just described.

"The main-building must face the rising sun—the east—and yet rather inconsistently it is called the *padinjattapura* or western dwelling. The reason of this is explained that the building opposite to the rising sun and the *padinjattamuri*—the central chamber, the honoured guest chamber in the house, the sanctuary of the ancestors of its occupants—must be placed so as to admit of entrance through its doorway of the sun's earliest rays. Another way of looking at it is that it is called the "western dwelling", because there cannot be any portion of the house to the west of it again. It in fact hems in as it were the dwelling on the western side. On either side of it, forming two sides of the square, are the *vatakkini* and *tekkini* the northern and southern rooms—the former used for cooking and the latter for ordinary purposes of the household. These three are the main rooms of the dwelling, but the fourth side of the square is sometimes occupied by another room called the *kilakkini* or eastern room, and behind one or more of the chambers is sometimes placed another called the *chaypu* or lean—to, forming an enclosed verandah room.

"In selecting the exact spot for his dwelling, a Malayali is guided by a very simple rule. The garden in which it is to be placed must be intersected into as far as possible equal portions by lines running due north and south and due east and west. Four divisions are thus formed and the exact spot where the *padinjattapura* is to be placed is in the north-east division, and in the inner corner or south-west angle of that division. The reason for the selection of this spot is explained to be that a Malayali tries to be as far as possible away from the polluting caste people who may approach the house as far as the fence, but may not enter the garden.

"However high a man's position may be, and however numerous may be his dependents, his house must, if he attends to the customs of his ancestors, be a succession of dwellings made in the above style; but upper

storeys are often added, verandahs generally find a place both upstairs and down, and are made both open and enclosed. Long, cool, comfortable quarters are to be found in these enclosed verandahs, which, by an arrangement common on the west Coast, are screened from outside observation by a pent-house roof with a massive carved wooden reverse slope to the eaves filled in with horizontal bars.

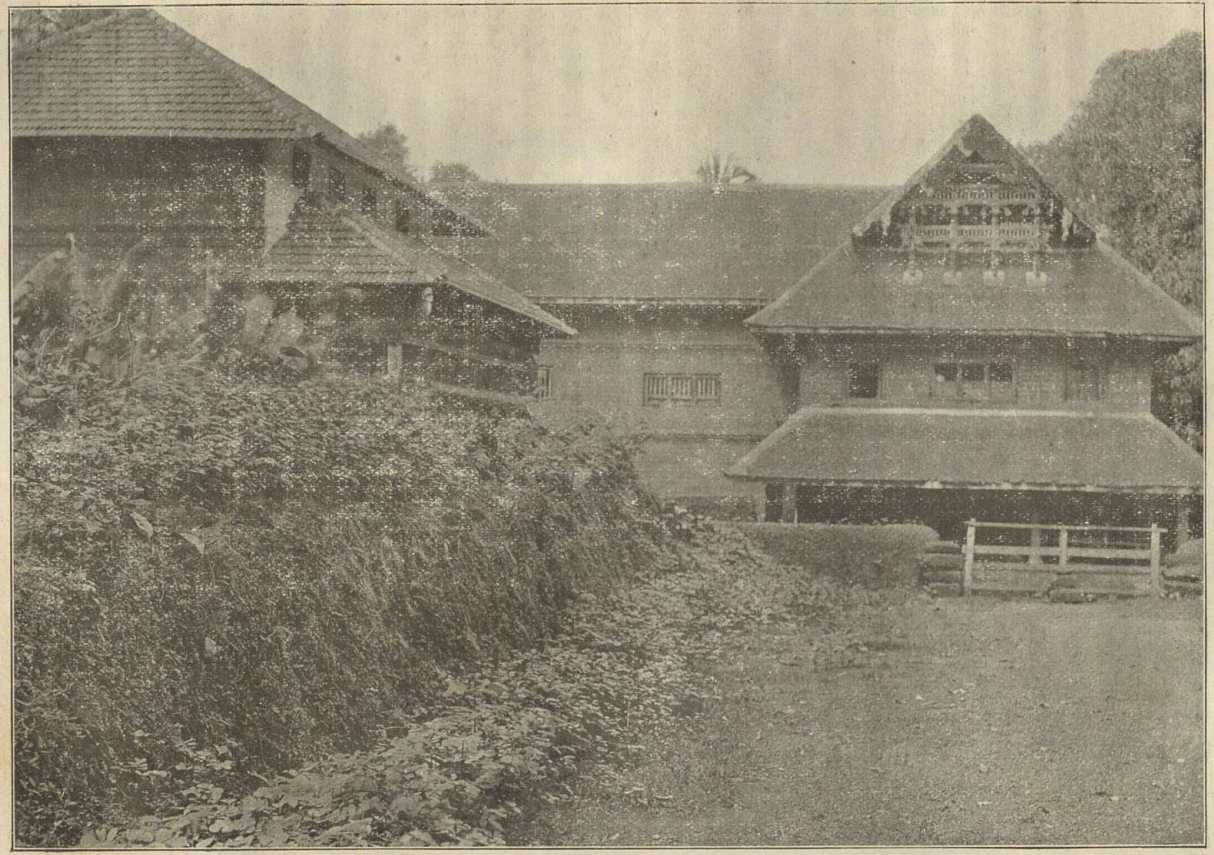
"The wood-work of the dwelling is solid and substantial and is often beautifully carved. The walls are generally of laterite bricks set in mud, for lime is expensive and scarce, and till recent years the roof was invariably of thatch. This custom of the country was very strictly observed, and it was not till after the Honourable East India Company had had settlements on the Coast for nearly a century that they were at last permitted, as a special favour, in 1759, to put tiles on their factory at Calicut. Palaces and temples alone were tiled in former days.

"Of the surroundings of the dwelling there is generally a cattle shed, and sometimes an excavated tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water-lilies; a well of water at the rear of the cooking room, so arranged as to admit of water being taken direct from the well into the cook-room, is generally present. A chapel of the household deity is found in all considerable houses, and there is sometimes a separate dwelling (Madam) for Brahman travellers and Brahman visitors.

"The house of the poor classes, though smaller, are built on the same lines as rule, and are usually kept as neat and tidy, and clean as those of their superiors". [1]

A Namputiri's house has certain distinctive peculiarities of its own. The Namputiri generally chooses sites the most secluded compatible with living in touch with the outside world. He never builds his house on the plains. He likes to live on the banks of rivers, in the valleys of hills, amidst forests scenery and

(1. Pp. 82—4).



A TYPICAL NAMBUTHIRI ILLAM (HOUSE).

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28 MAR 1946
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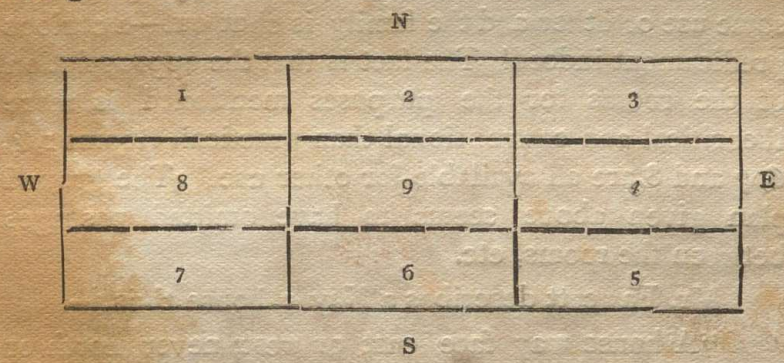
surrounded by luxuriant vegetation. Intensely religious, his vocation lies far from "the madding crowd's ignoble strife". The very idea of "herding with the vulgar multitude" is abhorrent to him. Some of the Namputiri houses are immense structures, almost palatial. These have invariably a temple attached to them where the inmates of the houses worship. Their women are strictly *ghosha* and therefore the Namputiris are obliged to provide themselves with places of worship not far removed from their houses. The entrance to the compound in the centre of which the house is situated is through a small but substantially built gate-house situated on the eastern side of the garden. The gate-houses attached to the larger mansions generally have a second storey with rooms for the use of guests. From the gateway to the house is a raised wall of earth or hardened mud. The yard in front faces the east and is kept scrupulously clean being swept twice or thrice a day, smeared with cow-dung and beaten well. Mr. Fawcett gives the following description of an ordinary Namputiri house:

The Namputiri's house is quadrangular, and is arranged thus.—



Room 1. is for studying the Vedas.
Do 2. is for storing wealth.
Do 3. is for storing grain.
Do 4. is for performing ceremonies to the dead.
Do 5. is for the kitchen.
Do 6. is for household gods.

Do 7. is for performing sacrifices;
sacrifices of no living thing;
offerings merely.
Do 8. is for receiving guests.
Do 9. is the court-yard.

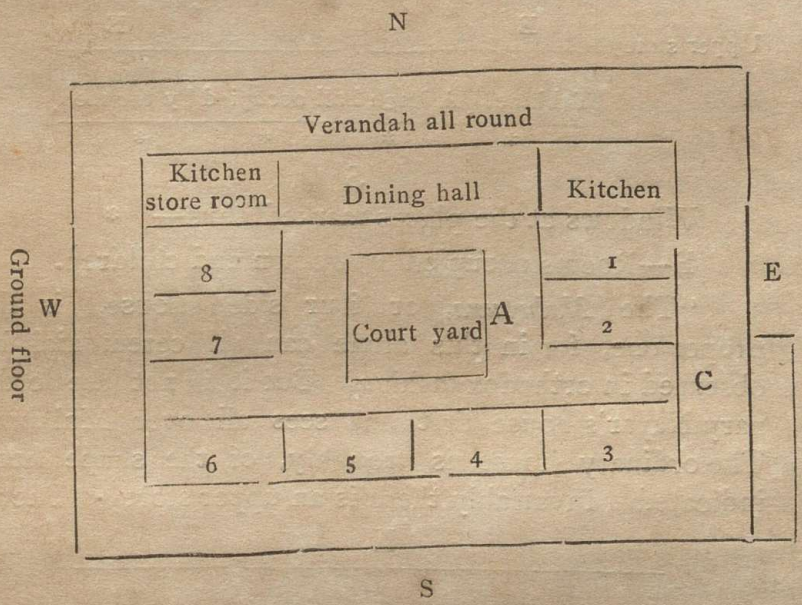
Usually there are outer verandahs and rooms upstairs. The building is, as a rule, erected with blocks —like large bricks, of laterite cemented with mud— mortar is rarely used (not so at the present day. Those who can afford the luxury invariably use mortar and even Portland Cement). Doorways and windows are sometimes well carved. To the north-east is the cow-pen (gōśāla). To the south, the *tekkenisala* or *pathayapura* for receiving Brahman guests. There may be a room in the north-eastern corner of room 3 called *pachakasala* for banquets. To the north-west, may be at a little distance from the house, is the *ellupashala* a grain store. There is a tank in the north-east or south-west of the compound.

Looking at the ground plan of the house given above, the reader will be tempted to ask where does the Namputiri and his family live unless all their houses have a second floor? Every room is appropriated to some use or other and the family is shut out—a curious predicament indeed! The fact is that the appropriation of the rooms for the purposes mentioned is more theoritical and conventional than practical. Rooms 1, 4, 6, 7 and 8 are all available for other use. The ground plan given above seems to have omitted passages between the rooms, etc.

Mr. Fawcett describes a Nayar house thus.—

"A house may face east or west; never north or south. As a rule the Nayar's house faces the east. Evey garden is enclosed by a bank, a hedge, or a fencing of some kind, and entrance is to be made at one point only, the east, where there is a gate-house, or, as in the case of the poorest houses, a small portico, or open doorway roofed

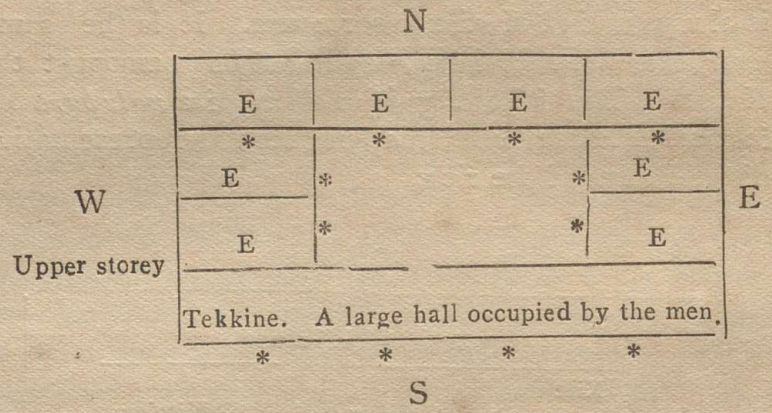
over. One never walks straight through this; there is always a kind of stile to surmount. It is the same everywhere in Malabar, and not only amongst the Nayars. The following is a plan of a *nalupura* or four-sided house, which may be taken as representative of the houses of the rich:



Numbers 6 and 7 are rooms which are used generally for storing grain.

"At A is a staircase leading to the room of the upper storey occupied by the female members of the family. At B is a staircase to the rooms of the upper storey occupied by the male members. There is no connection between the portion allotted to the men and that to the women. No. 8 is for the family gods. The Karanavans and old women of the family are perpetuated in images of gold or silver, or, more commonly, brass. Poor people, who cannot afford to make these images, substitute simply a stone. Offerings are made to these images (or to the stones) at every full moon. The throat of a fowl will be cut outside, and the bird is then taken inside and offered.

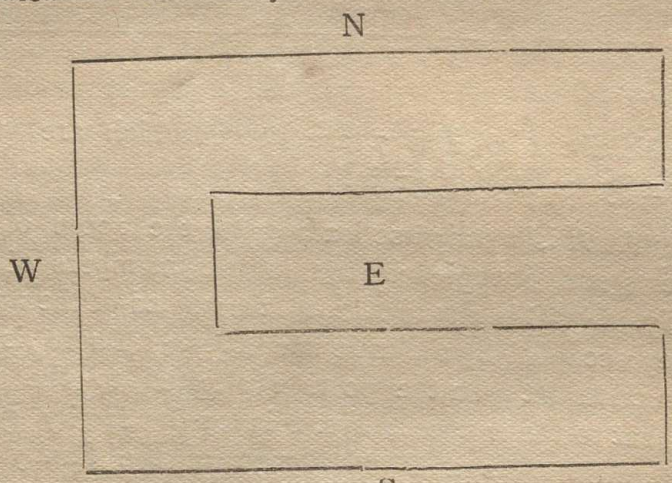
The entrance is at C.



Windows at the places marked thus— *

E—Rooms occupied by women and children.

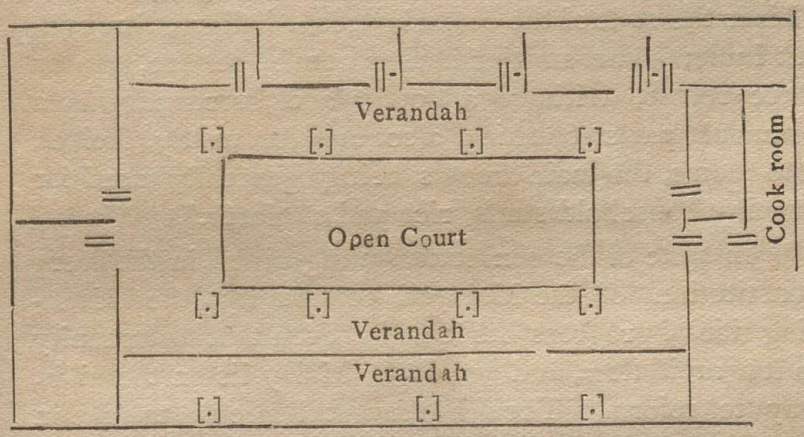
"The *Nalupura*, or four sided house, is the proper one, for in this alone can all ceremonial be observed in orthodox fashion. But it is not the ordinary Nayar's house that one sees all over Malabar. The ordinary house is, roughly, of the shape here indicated. Invariably there is an upper storey. There



are no doors, but only a few tiny windows opening to the west. Men sleep in one end, women in the other, each having their own staircase. Around the house there is always shade from the many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion".[1]

1. Pp. 303—4.

It would be interesting to know something of the habitations of the Christians of Malabar. By far the majority of the richer classes belong to the Syrian Christian community whether of the Syrian or of the Latin rite. The Rev. Richard Collins has given us a fair description of a Syrian Christian house of the better classes at Tiruvella in Travancore, one of the finest he had seen in that part of India. "I insert" says he "a ground plan of it, as nearly as I can remember it.



"The rooms are ranged, as will be seen, round a small court; and the whole, except the verandahs, which are built of stone, and well *chunnamed*, is of wood, and in many places prettily carved, according to the established designs of the country. In many of the houses, and the churches in particular, the beams, and other portions of the wood work, are most elegantly carved—are often, in fact, quite works of art. No expense had been spared on his house. The entrance is, as in all cases, by a verandah about two yards in width, and through a wooden screen, which separates the outer from an inner verandah of the same width. This inner verandah runs round the court, and is raised about two feet from the ground. At the ends it is very wide, and is the reception-room, sitting-room, and bed-room in fine weather, for, I believe, the greater part of the family. A very handsome

cot, on which the master of the house takes his rest, stood in one corner of the verandah, while we were there. The legs were of turned wood, coloured with blue, green, yellow, and red, very pretty in effect. This colouring is done on the turning-lathe, with sealing-wax of the different colours, which they make by beating vermilion orpiment, and other colours with lac. It is then polished with a piece of teak. The rooms of the house are chiefly used as store-rooms, though some of them are also used as sleeping rooms, This is the style of the better houses, I believe, throughout India; The smaller houses consist of one, two or three rooms, without a court, and surrounded by a verandah, parts of which also are frequently divided into rooms, the main rooms being generally used for keeping household stuffs, rice and so forth."[1]

In spite of the conservatism ingrained in the very constitution of the Malayali community, the advancing tide of progress has caught even that community in its rapid flow, and we see the Malayalis on the highway to reform. Though they still prefer to live in detached gardens and not in rows of houses touching one another in streets, the improvement of towns and cities on lines of modern development has brought their garden houses to lie on either side of broad metalled roads thus forming streets of garden houses though not streets of houses by themselves. They still recognise the advantage of having some ground round their houses planted with fruit-trees and vegetables. They still value privacy in their domestic life. They have not been slow, however, to realise the necessities and requirements of progressive society and suit themselves to the circumstances of the age. They were originally colonists in the country being in a position to occupy and cultivate large areas of virgin soil. Thus they acquired the habit of living separate in detached gardens cultivating the grounds appropriated by them whereon

1 *f.* 203.

stood their habitations. As time advanced, their numbers increased and the area of cultivable land became narrower and narrower with the result that they had to be satisfied with small gardens instead of the vast expanses they had originally appropriated. The process is still going on. In the towns and cities, available ground is becoming scarce and scarce every day and large compounds are being continuously parcelled out, so that, in the long run, even the conservative Malayali will have to finally succumb to the influence of time and content himself to live in houses lining the streets. The orthodox style of building habitations is still observed to a large extent. The *Naluket* or *Nalupura* is still the fashion specially among the country folk. But those who live in towns prefer to have large houses furnished in western fashion. But they do not eschew the *Naluket*. More often than not, they have a *Naluket* attached to their bunglows which are invariably two storied. Even those who content themselves with the *Naluket* alone make it more attractive in appearance. Formerly the houses used to be built of wood and much ornamentation and carve-work was indulged in. But in this more prosaic age there is little room for luxury of the kind. An enlightened Government, pressed to find the ways and means of progressive administration, has reserved the right of felling timber in the forests, has made a monopoly of the more prominent kinds of wood generally used for house building and has brought the forests of the country under a rigid system of conservancy which has made it difficult for ordinary people to procure building timber. Houses in Malabar are now built of red laterite stones which are cut in small thick oblong pieces and cemented together with mortar. Burnt bricks too are coming into fashion. Most of the houses are still thatched with cocoanut leaves though tiles are steadily coming into use. The small tiles of a hand broad referred to by Nieuhoff are being displaced by what are known as 'Mangalore tiles' which are broader, longer, and more durable.

The palaces in which the Malabar Rajas lived resembled the houses of the better classes—only they were on a larger scale and more substantial. We have more than one description of the Zamorin's Palace at Calicut supplied us by the Portuguese. On the first visit of Vasco De Gama to Calicut he was taken to the Zamorin's Palace where he had an audience with the King. "Though built with earth, it was very large and made a handsome appearance, being surrounded with a variety of trees and accommodated with delightful gardens adorned with fountains. * * * Before the Palace they found several Kaimals and other noble men who came to receive the General. They passed through five gates, each attended by ten Porters *** Being come to the Palace Gate there met him the King's chief Brahman and High Priest a little old man who embraced De Gama and conducted them all in. The Palace within was set round with seats one above another, like a theatre. The floor covered with green velvet, and the walls hung round with silks of several colours". [1]

Camoens gives the following description of the Zamorin's Palace in the *Lusiad*:

"And now the train with solemn state and slow,
Approach the royal gate, through many a row
Of fragrant wood—walks, and of balmy bowers,
Radiant with fruitage, ever gay with flowers.
Spacious the dome its pillar'd grandeur spread,
Nor to the burning day high tower'd the head;
The citron groves around the windows glow'd,
And branching palms their grateful shade bestow'd
A mellow light a pleasing radiance cast;
The marble walls Dadalian sculpture grac'd
* * * *
They saw the chief o'er prostrate India rear
The glittering terrors of his awful spear.

1. Astley, p. 30.

But, swift behind these wint'ry days of woe.
A spring of joy arose in liveliest glow,
Such gentle manners, leagued with wisdom reign'd
In the dread victors, and their rage restrain'd.
Beneath their sway majestic, wise, and mild,
Proud of her victor's laws, thrice happier India smil'd.

So, to the prophets of the Brahman train
"The visions rose, that never rose in vain."
The regent ceas'd, and now, with solemn pace,
The chiefs approach the regal hall of grace
The tap' stried wall with gold were pictur'd o'er,
And flow'ry velvet spread the marble floor.
In all the grandeur of the Indian State.
High on a blazing couch, the monarch sat,
With starry gems the purple curtains shin'd,
And ruby flowers and golden foliage twin'd
Around the silver pillars: high o'er head
The golden canopy its radiance shed".[1]

A few years later, Varthema observes that "the Palace of the King (of Calicut) is about a mile in circumference. The walls are low, with very beautiful divisions of wood, with devils carved in relief. The floor of the house is all adorned with cow-dung. The said house is worth 200 ducats or thereabouts."[2]

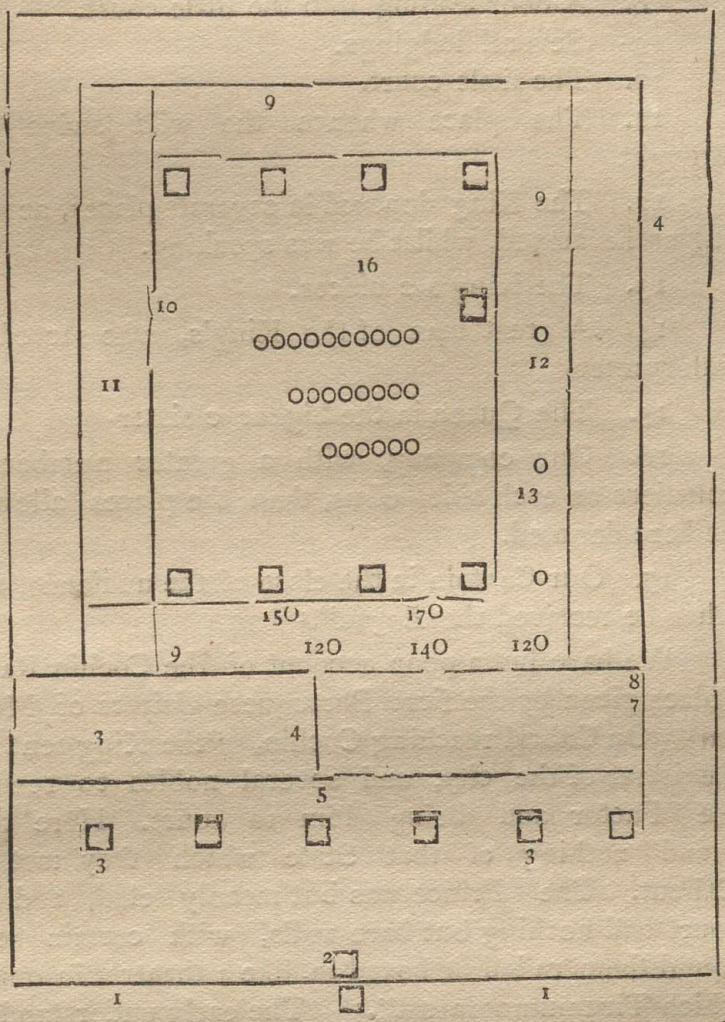
Later still, the Italian Della Vella in giving an account of his visit to the Zamorin in the company of some Portuguese who had been sent by the Governor-General with a message to the King, in December 1623, has supplied us with a more elaborate description of the King's Palace at Calicut —

"The first and principal gate of the Palace opens upon a little Piazza, which is best with certain, very

1. Mickle's translation.
2. P. 155.

great trees, affording a delightful shadow. I saw no guard before it, was great and open, but before it, was a row of balisters, about 4 or 5 feet from the ground, which served to keep out not only horses and other animals, but also men upon occasion. In the middle was a little pair of stairs without the gate leading into it, and another within on the other side, yet, I believe, both the stairs and the balisters are moveable, because it is likely, that when the King comes forth, the Gate is clearly open, otherwise it would not be handsome, but this is only my conjecture. We entered this gate, ascending the stairs upon the rails where we were met by the messenger whom the abovesaid person had sent to the King, and who again invited us into the Palace by the King's order. Within the gate we found a great court, of a long form, without any just and proportionate figure of architecture; on the sides, were many lodgings in several places; and in the middle, were planted divers, great trees for shadow. The king's chief apartment, and (as I believe, by what I shall mention hereafter) where his women were, was at the end of the court, opposite to the left side of the entrance. The edifice in comparison of ours, was of little consideration; but according to their mode, both for greatness and appearance, capable of a Royal Family. It had a covered porch in that form, as all their structures have, and within that was a door of no great largeness leading into the house. * . Nor was it long before order came from the King for us to enter, and accordingly we were introduced into that second Gate; and passing by a close room like a chamber (in which I saw the image of Brahma upon his peacock, and other idolets), we entered into a little open court, surrounded with 2 rows of narrow and low cloisters, to wit, one level with the ground, and the other somewhat higher. The pavement of the porch was also something raised above the plane of the court, so much as might serve for a man to sit after our manner".

Della Vella then proceeds to give "a rough and unmeasured Platform of the Samorin's Palace and the place where he gave us an audience".



"1. The little Piazza without the 1st Gate of the Palace.

2. The 1st Gate guarded with Balisters.

3. A great court within the 1st Gate, which should be longer in proportion to the breadth, but is drawn thus in regard of the scantiness of the paper, it hath lodgings about it in several places.

4. The King's house and the Apartment of his women.

5. The Porch of the said house.
6. The second gate.
7. A dark room locked up.
8. A door leading into the little court.
9. Several lodgings.
10. The little court.
11. The place whence the wild swine was brought.
12. The King denoted in several places, according as he moved, whilst he was speaking.
13. The King's 2 nieces.
14. A great man of the King's, who served for interpreter.
15. The Queen in the higher cloister.
16. Our company, with a greater number of courtiers on each side of us, than the places allow to be here denoted.
17. Our Captain in the close of the audience, and when he received the *Lague*".[1]

We have but a poor account of the Cochin Raja's Palace given by the first Portuguese visitors of Malabar. On Cabral reaching Cochin, "the King sent the Registrar of the city, and several nobles to receive the Factor and bring him to court. Here they found nothing of that State which they met at Calicut. The Prince was but meanly clad, and his court had nothing but bare walls, with certain seats round them, railed or boxed in, like a theatre, in one of which Tirumumpara sat".[2] The early understanding between the Raja and the Portuguese ripened before-long into steadfast friendship and the latter soon became the acknowledged protector of the former. The Portuguese lost no time in supplying their protegee with a residence befitting his position as the ruler of the country. They built for the Raja a Palace at Mattancheri and made a present of it to him.

1. Page 182 *et seq.*
2. Astley p. 47.

In the year 1664, the Dutch Captain Nieuhoff visited the Raja of Porakad or Ambalapuzha at his new residence at Kodamāḷūr and gives the following account of it. "The King of Porka was at this time rebuilding his palace, in which they say, he had already bestowed twenty years; it was but an old fashioned piece of structure, surrounded with walls and a dry ditch. ** ** This palace of the King is a four-square structure of about 40 paces in the square in the midst of which the apartments (of which there is a great number) are built; they are all four-square their chief ornaments within being the carving of leaves and other work in all sorts of fine wood; in some of these lodgings you see fine cisterns for the conveniency of bathing; you ascend (descend ?) to them by certain broad stone steps like our grave stone. In some of these lodgings is a very large basin surrounded with such stones, which are about 20 feet broad and a foot and a half thick, which have been brought thither with incredible pains and charges, a great way out of the country. The palace itself is covered with small tiles of a hand broad the windows being made either of twisted canes or shells which transmits the light".[1]

Captain Alexander Hamilton gives us a description of the Palace of Onitteri, Raja of Kurumbernad, whom he visited.

The reigning Princes of the present day live in palaces built on the western model, but so adapted as to suit oriental ideas of living. A portion of the building is furnished in European style for receiving visitors and transacting business, while the apartments set apart for purely household purposes still retain the old order of things. These palaces are conveniently situated within large enclosures and possess more or less architectural beauty.

In Malabar, houses of different castes and classes received different designations. A few of these are out of common use now.

1. John Nieuhoff's *Voyages and Travels* (1653—1670) p. 222—3.

Mana=Namputiripad's house.

Illom=Nambutiri's house. These two names are indifferently used to denote the house of both classes.

Kovilakam or *Kottaram* =The Raja's house or Palace.

Idom or *Kuttala* or *Bhavanam* =Local chieftain's (Naduvazhee's) house.

Vidu=Nayar house.

Poomatham, *Pushpak*, *Pisharam* or *Variyam* =Houses of Ambalavasies or temple-servants expressive of their caste.

Matham=Houses of Chakkiyar and Nambiyar, also of Tampans and Tirumulpads.

Kudi=Houses of Chaliars, or weavers, the Artizan and other classes.

Pidika=Houses of Mappillas—both Christian and Muhammadan.

Pura=Houses of Ezhuvars or Chogans or Thiyyas.

Chala=The house of Pulayars, Vettuvars, Mukkuvas, etc.

Pura or *Chala*=The house of a blacksmith, goldsmith, silver smith, carpenter, brazier, etc.

In commencing a building, the site is of course first chosen. The rules regulating the choice have already been referred to in connection with the building of temples.

As regards the nature of the ground chosen, the following rules are laid down. A house constructed on ground sloping to the east will bring on prosperity, while poverty will ensue if constructed on ground sloping westwards. If the ground slopes towards the south-east and the house is situated on the north-west, there will be loss of wealth. An edifice on a ground sloping to the south, will cause early death to the members thereof; while in the reverse direction increase of corn will be had. A house built on the north-east side of a slope will be productive of everything in abundance. A house built on the left, and behind a Vishnu temple, on the right of a Siva or Durga temple, or by the right side of a Sastha temple will cause calamity to the occupants; but if built on the opposite

side that will bring on prosperity. Houses should not be constructed near temples, paddy fields, hermitages, the sea or ocean, hills or cowsheds. If constructed near temples, they should be lower in height to the religious edifice. Houses built on ground with an elevation to the north-west, will last for 18 years; if on ground with an elevation towards the east, south and south-east they will last for 100 years. If, however, they are built on ground with elevation to the north-east, west and north, they will last for a 1,000, 500, 12 and 8 years respectively. Houses built on ground sloping, to the north with *Atti* (*Ficus Racemosa*) near them, those sloping to the east with *Arayal* (*Ficus Religiosa*) growing thereon, and ground with *Itti* (*Ficus Venosa*) are fit for the occupation of the members of the four castes.

The following trees, viz., *Elanji* (*Mimisopo Elangi*), *Peral* (*Ficus Indica*), growing on the eastern side of the house, *Atti* (*Ficus Racemosa*), *Puli* (*Tamarindus Indicus*) on the southern side, *Arayal* (*Ficus Religiosa*), *Pala* (the milk plant or *Asclepias Annlaris*) on the west, *Naga* tree (*Trico Santhus Anguina*) and *Itti* (*Ficus Venosa*) on the north, will bring on prosperity to the occupants. The jack and the mango trees, the cocoanut and areca palms may grow on all sides surrounding a house. *Arayal* (*Ficus Religiosa*) growing on the eastern side of a house will cause fear from enemies, *Atti* on the northern side will cause abdominal complaints in the occupants, *Aswastha* (*Ficus Religiosa*) growing near a house should be cut off, but may be allowed to grow, should the distance between the house and the tree be twice the height of the latter. A cowshed may be erected either to the east or to the west of the main building. A shed for bullocks and buffaloes to the south of it.

Having determined upon the site, an *Asari Panikkan*, i. e a carpenter who is a master builder, or one well versed in the rules of architecture is consulted. The dimensions of the building have first to be settled.

The rules of architecture prescribe certain dimensions and one has to conform to them. There are special directions as to the circumambit of the whole building as well as the dimensions of the rooms into which it is partitioned.

The dimensions of buildings with regard to their size are as follows:—

A *Kole*=2½ English feet or 30 inches
A *Viral*=1¼ inches.

5	*Koles*	and	16	Virals—all round.
6	Do	,,	8	do
7	Do			
7	Do	,,	16	do
8	Do	,,	8	do
9	Do	,,	16	do
10	Do	,,	8	do
11	Do			
11	Do	,,	16	do
12	Do	,,	8	do
13	Do	,,		
13	Do	,,	16	do
14	Do	,,	8	do
15	Do			
15	Do	,,	16	do
16	Do	,,	8	do

A building of 17 to 19 *koles* circumambit should be avoided, as the inmates will die soon on account of *Mrithu Yogam*. Then in the above manner up to 25 *koles* it is all right. 26 *koles* is undesirable. Up to 33 *koles* 16 virals it is all right. From there up to 37-16, it is undesirable. From 37 *koles* 16 *virals* up to 50 *koles* it is all right. But between 50 and 54 *koles* it is better not to build. From 54-8 to 67 it is all right. Not so between 67 and 71. From 71 to 84 it is all right, not so between 84 and 88 and so on.

The dimensions of the building would of course be settled with regard to the extent of the land on which it is built. As we have already observed, a Malayali always builds his house in the centre of a garden. To give an example, let us take a garden

me asuring 16 *dandus* (a *dandu* is 4 *koles*). East to West x 16 *aandus* north to south, *i*, *e*. a square piece of ground measuring 256 square dandoos. In this garden a building of 40 *koles* and 8 *virals* circumambit can be built to which may be attached out-houses. The carpenter divides this piece of ground into four equal squares and draws two lines from corner to corner crossing each other in the middle. The main building is put up in the north-eastern section or kōṇu, *i. e. easantha konu* and measures 40 *koles* and 8 *virals* round. At the north-eastern corner of the main building is built the kitchen which is 23 *koles* and 16 *virals* round. To the kitchen is attached a well to supply drinking water. To the north-east of the well is dug a tank to enable the family to have their ceremonial plunge-baths every day. In front and a little further to the east of the main building is the gate-house which affords entrance to the garden and the house. The gate-house is 24 *koles* and 8 *virals* round. The south-eastern portion is divided into two sections diagonally and in the northern half of it stretching towards the east from the south-eastern end of the main building comes the *Thekkini*, or southern building, usually occupied by the male members of the house leaving the main building itself for the use of the females. The southern half, *i. e*, the portion lying to the south of the diagonal line is used as the cremation ground where dead bodies of the members of the family are cremated. Unlike the practice in other places of taking the corpse to be burnt at the common cremation ground, in Malabar there is a part of the garden in which the family residence is situated, which is specially reserved for the purpose. In no case will a Malayali house-holder allow the dead body of an inmate of the house to be cremated outside his compound. No building of any kind is allowed to be put up on the ground so reserved. The western half of the compound will also be seen to be divided into two squares and each square into two halves diagonally. In the northern square, *i. e.*

north-western portion of the garden and to the west of the main building in a line with its north-western end but removed further to the south is the *Orappura* which is 29 *koles* 6 *virals* all round. This is a small building used mainly for having the paddy unhusked and turned into rice as also for sundry other purposes. The other portion lying on the other side of the diagonal line is known as *Vayu Khandam* and it is undesirable to have any buildings on it. In the southern half of the western portion are three buildings, *viz.*, *Thekkini* or the southern building 23 *koles* round, the *Thozhuthu* or cow-shed 24 *koles* and 8 *virals* and the *Marappura* or privy 16 *koles* 6 *virals*.

The above description gives us a fair idea of a medium-sized Malayali household with all necessary accessories. [1] The main building is what is called an *Ottappura* or single block building as opposed to a *Naluket* or *Nalupura*, a quadrangular building, much in vogue with the higher classes.

There are auspicious times prescribed for building houses. If a man erects a house in the month of Medam (April—May) he gets disease; in Edavam (May—June) he gets money and jewels; in Mithunam (June—July) death; in Karkadagam (July—August) servants and jewels, but no animals; in Chingam (August—September) friends; in Kanni (September—October) loss of friends; in Thulam (October—November) death of wife; in Vrischigam (November—December) money and crops; in Dhanu (December—January) he would become a devotee. In Dhanu there will be fear from enemies and thieves; but he will know of profits from many devotions, and fire can be looked for in Makaram January—February); gold in Kumbham (February—March) and so on.

The following asterisms are auspicious in com-(mencing a building: *Aswati* (1st) *Rohini* (4th) *Moolam* (19th) *Choti* (15th) *Atham* (13th).

1. See illustration in outline on next page, p. 176 A.

N

This part is known as Mukhayamam
East to West 18 Danoos

2 Danoos

Tank

Urappura Place for pounding paddy. Circumambit 29 k. 16 v.

7 k. 21 v.
Kitchen circumambit
23 k. 16 v.

3 k. 23 v.

Well

This part is known as Vayu Khandam
and no building should be erected in this

The main building circumambit 40 k. 8 v.

This part is known as Easantha Khandam

8 k. 3 v.
Gate house circumambit
24 k. 8 v.

4 k. 1 v.

W

E

16 Danoos

8 k. 3 v.
Cow shed
Circumambit 24 k. 8 v.

4 k. 3 v.

6 k. 6 v.

12 k. 14 v.
Another Tekhini
circumambit 37 k. 16 v.

19 k—8v.
Tekkini or southern
building circumambit 33k

5 k. 4 v.

Privy circumambit
29 k. 16 v.

No building should be erected in this part. It is used as cremation ground

This part is known as Mukhayamam
East to West 18 Danoos

2 Danoos

S

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As to week days: All days of the week excepting Sunday and Tuesday are auspicious.

All conjunctions except the following are auspicious:—*Vajra*, *Vyghata*, *Soola*, *Vyateepata*, *Atigandha*, *Vishkambha*, *Ganda*, and *Parigraha*.

The building of a house should be commenced on the following parts of the day, known as *Muhoortas*, viz., *Sevata*, *Mitra*, *Mahendra*, *Gandharva*, *Bhima* and also *Raja* and *Savitra*. Pillars should be put up at auspicious *lagnas* or moments when the position of the sun and moon in the firmanent are favourable, other moments should be avoided.

Buildings should never be commenced in the rainy season; nor at the end of the third part of the dark fortnight, and in the first and second part of the bright fortnight. Of the *Thithies* (i e. of the days of the waxing and waning moon), the 4", 9" and 14" should be avoided. Tuesdays should be avoided for fear of bringing injury and bad luck. Days on which there are dangers arising from the earth, such as earthquake, the sky, such as storms with thunder, and the heavenly bodies, such as eclipses, as also days on which calamities such as the death of a relative or friend, ominous days such as Saturday should be avoided. Work should be commenced when the moon and the stars are favourable.

In commencing to build, the foundation stone has to be laid at an auspicious moment. This is attended with many ceremonies. The foundation has to be dug of a point of the compass which represents the 10th sign of the Zodiac counting from the sign which indicates the month in which the auspicious moment falls. A lighted lamp has to be placed to the right of the spot so dug. The God Gaṇapaṭi is then invoked to place himself in front of the lamp. Fried rice, beaten rice, molasses, plantain fruits, etc. are offered to the God—also an offering of money which goes to the presiding carpenter. The God is wreathed with flowers and incense offered to him, and the carpenter performs

Mānasa Pūja or worship by contemplation. The stone to be laid as the foundation-stone is well washed in water, a bit of gold is placed on it in the hope that the store itself will or may turn into gold, and then it is adorned with flowers, etc. The carpenter's measuring rod and chisel are also bathed in water and adorned with flowers and sandal paste, and are placed before Gaṇapaṭi. The owner or proprietor who builds the house is then called up, and he stands close to the stone praying that God may in His infinite beneficence vouchsafe to him all prosperity and happiness in the house of which the foundation is being laid. The carpenter then lays the stone standing face eastwards making the same prayer. Placing the stone in its position, he turns towards the right and walks on and then proceeds to break a cocoanut into two halves. This he does after prostrating himself before Gaṇapaṭi and praying that the process of divination he is going to undertake by means of the cocoanut may end in forecasting good results. Breaking the cocoanut into two by means of a large knife, he fills the two halves with the water which it had contained and puts into each a flower. He then carefully examines the direction in which the flower floats and foretells, as our author observes, whether the house will be lucky or unlucky, whether it will stand for a long time and so on. This process has to be repeated when the basement is built up and when the door posts and the beams which support the lower roof, are also placed in position.

After the building is completed, comes on the ceremoney of Vāsṭu Bali or Kuṭṭi Pūja. Preliminary to the Kuṭṭi pūja a ceremony called Sarpa Bali is performed to propitiate the serpants.

One entire plantain leaf with its point is placed in the middle with the half of another on each side, to the north and south of the entire one. The leaves of the jack tree are placed on the plantain leaves and libations of water are made. In this way the serpants are propitiated.

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N

Jambhakan Yellow

Varakshi Red

Pilip injakan White

Nagam Yellow / Vayu Purple

Mukhyan White

Bhallatan Red

Soman White

Argalan All colours

Aditi White

Iditi Red

Easantan Yellow / Parjanyan Red

Rogan Yellow

Rudrayejan Red

Napan Yellow

Jayantan Black

Soshan White

Rudran Yellow

Maheedharan Red

Apavatsan Green

Mahendran All colours

Asuran Purple

Aditya Red

Bhootanathan White

Mitran White

Brahman Yellow

Aryakan Green

Saragesan Red

Varunan All colours

Tasyan Yellow

Pushpadantan White

Bhrisan Purple

Indrajan Red

Viyalaysyan Black

Sapitan White

Sugreevan Red

Indran All colours

Savendran Red

Antareekshan White

Dowmarikan Yellow / Niruti Red

Mrigan All colours

Bhringarajan Red

Gandharvan White

Yaman Black

Griha Rakshasan Yellow

Vitari All colours

Agni Red / Pooshan White

Bahyajan Colour White

Vidari All colours

Sarvaskandan Black and red

W

E

S

The Vāsṭu Bali follows the Sarpa Bali. It is a sacrifice or Pūja offered to Vāsṭu, the God of the builders, who is supposed to indicate the qualities of each site and direct the workmen. He is said to sleep on the ground, his head towards the southwest and his feet to the northeast. His figure thus lying down is drawn on the ground in a room in the new building on the northeastern side of it, the ground being prepared according to the figure annexed hereto. [1] It occupies the whole ground and is divided into 53 parts. Each part is marked off by a different colour as representing a separate Ḍēvaṭa or spirit whose name is traced on the respective parts. A seat is placed for the God Gaṇapaṭi, who is invoked to be present, and a lamp lit towards the west of it. Pūja is performed to Gaṇapaṭi. Incense, flowers, etc. are offered to him and, by way of food, the following articles are placed before him for him to partake :—Fried rice, beaten rice, molasses, plantain fruits, different kinds of cakes, cocoanuts, peas, pulses of sorts, sesamum, etc. Another seat is placed for the Goddess Bhagavaṭi who also has to be invoked to be present. A washed cloth covers the seat upon which a curved sword is placed to represent the Goddess. The spirit of the deity is infused into it by means of Manṭrams. To the north of this seat a lotus-like figure is drawn in different colours. After this the Goddess is worshipped with many Manṭrams and Ṭanṭrams. The various Vāsṭu Ḍēvaṭas are also propitiated. To each an offering is separately made by placing some rice and a burning wick on a piece of plantain leaf. To each a pot filled with mixed rice and paddy, the mouth being covered with a cocoanut, is offered. In the middle of these pots is placed a larger one for the Vāsṭu Ḍēvan or the Vāsṭu God himself. Into this pot the figure of a fish and a tortoise made of gold or silver is put. The pot is adorned with the leaves of the pipal, the mango and other trees, as also with the sacred ḍarbha (*Poacynosuroides*) grass. It is then covered over with a

1. See p. 179 A.

a red coloured cloth and mantrams repeated over the same. This pot is supposed to represent the God Vāstu. Then follows Gaṇapaṭi Hōmam or sacrifice to Gaṇapaṭi. Cocoanut, cakes, and pulses of various sorts are offered to the God and the sacrificial fire is fed with ghee and sweet smelling articles, incense, etc. After the Hōmam is finished the carpenters proceed to expel the evil spirits haunting the building. It is believed that the evil spirits that had haunted the forests and trees which supplied timber for the building must have come away along with the timber, and unless these are expelled they will still haunt the house and cause annoyance and injury to the inmates. For this purpose, the carpenters go into every room in the house with a burning torch in hand and throw upon it some sifted resin which causes the flame to rise up and blaze. They do the samé outside the house also; in every part of it. The evil spirits are supposed to go upwards with the flames raised by the resin. The guardians of the 8 points of the compass are propitiated by the offer of some rice and a lighted wick placed on a piece of plantain leaf. These are *Indra* (King of Gods), *Agni* (God of fire), *Yama* (God of death), *Nirurti* (guardian of the southwest) *Varuna* (God of water—Neptune), *Vayu* (God of wind), *Kubera* (God of wealth), and *Rudra* (Śivan).[1]

In front of the main door, a figure is drawn with ashes obtained by burning the stem of the plantain tree in honour of Bhaḍra Kāli. This is divided into 9 equal parts. In the middle of it a plantain tree with its bunch of fruits is planted along with a twig of a milk tree called Pāla (*Asclepias Annularia*). The whole plot is decorated with the tender leaves of the cocoanut tree. The carpenter, standing to the south of this

1. ഇന്ദ്രോ വഹ്നിഃ പിതൃപതിഃ
നിഋതീ വരുണോ മരുത്
കുബേര ഈശഃ പതയഃ
പൂർവ്വാദീനാം ദിശാം ക്രമാൽ.

with his face towards the north, places a plantain leaf, entire with its point, and traces the mystic syllable Hrīm on it and then proceeds to sacrifice a cock or a goat and offer the blood to Rakṭēśwari (the Goddess of blood). After this, the carpenters in a body go to a place outside the compound in which the new building is situated called *Purakkalam*,, sacrifice goats, cocks etc. and offer Guruṭi, a mixture of red turmeric and chunam, representing blood. All the while these ceremonies are performed, from start to finish, they will be chanting weird songs and Manṭrams. Here the ceremony of Vāsṭu Bali ends. It need only be added that it is performed in the night, the sacrifice of goats and cocks being made at dead of night.

This ceremony is followed by another known as Ṭachuṭa *or Tachelppu*. This takes place the next day after Vāsṭu Bali and consists in the builders taking upon themselves or upon one among them, the faults of the new erection. As already pointed out, it is popularly believed that the spirits that had haunted the trees that supplied timber for the building had come away to haunt the house and these have to be propitiated and sent away. For this some one of the builders is selected and he undertakes to take them away with him. The process by which this is accomplished is as follows: The person selected is given a sumptuous meal, after an oil-bath and is clothed in new garments, a garland of red flowers is placed round his neck; he is then sewn up in new clothes, as if he was dead and his body was being prepared for cremation, he is laid down with his head towards the south in the central room of the house; the doors are closed. The whole body of builders engaged in the building of the house assemble in front of the room. Each one is given a cocoanut and some money. In front of the door of the room, one para or measure of rice and paddy are placed and a lighted lamp to the right and left of these. The God Gaṇapaṭi is invoked and placed

in front of the lamp on the right side. He is offered pūjas as already explained. The master carpenter takes in his hand a brass vessel to receive the *Tachum Poolum* i.e, chips of wood on which perhaps the spirits are borne out of the building. The vessel is covered with a piece of new cloth and is waved by the master carpenter along with two lighted wicks. As the waving goes on, the builders assembled shout and hurrah and, as the vessel is placed on the ground, the man lying in the room is asked thrice, "Have you taken upon yourself the *Tach*?"- (Ṭachu Ēṛṛuvō ?). meaning have you taken upon yourself all the evil spirits haunting the new erection? He answers thrice, "yes, I have". After this, the door is opened and the man set upon his legs. He is given some money and a cock is thrust into his hands. He is then made to run out of the house, as fast as he could pursued by a number of men, and after he has left the compound in which the building is situated, the path trodden by him is purified by the sprinkling of water mixed with cow-dung. Having thus driven away all the evil spirits, the master carpenter and smith proceed to break cocoanuts and divine the future as already explained.

Before the carpenters, smiths and those who have in any way contributed towards the building of the house are dismissed, they are given a sumptuous feast. Flesh of various animals, arrack and toddy are freely indulged in, and by the time the feast is over, every one gets more or less drunk. In this tipsy condition they toddle on into the presence of the owner of the new building who gives them presents according to their degree. The master carpenter and most of the head men of the various section of builders get bracelets, finger rings or ear rings of gold, while all are presented with new clothes. After the presents are given away, the builders obtain their dismissal from service.

The last ceremony in the series is the Kuṭipūkal i.e. the first entering into the new house. It is also known as Gṛha pṛavēśam and pālukāchchu (milk boiling). Before this ceremony, the house is purified by the Punnyāham and hōmams performed by Brahmans. An auspicious moment is selected for the members of the family to make their entrance into the new house. As they approach, preparations are made at the gate to receive them: two paṛas or measures, one filled with rice and the other with paddy, are placed in front of the main door. A lady of the family stands near these with her upper garment worn in a peculiar style (uṭṭarīyam keṭṭi) with a plate in her hand containing Aṣhṭamangaliam or the eight auspicious things, a light, some rice, a looking glass, a bleached cloth, a book (granḍha), a small round box of saffron, a case containing eyesalve and an arrow. As those who are to occupy the new house approach, holding some rice and flowers in their hands, they are welcomed and received at the gate by the lady standing there with the plate. The party proceed to the central room or Aṛa and the carpenters sing a song in praise of Viśwakaṛma the heavenly Architect and invoke God to confer all prosperity, wealth, peace and happiness to the inmates of the house. At the close of the song, the master carpenter throws into the Aṛa some rice saying Viśwakaṛmāvē Namaḥ, i. e., prostrations to Viśwakaṛma. Then the members of the house also do the same and pass on turning to the right.

By this time the Elayaṭu or the *Purohit* of the Nāyars would have purified the house by *Punnyaham* and prepared for the boiling of milk in the kitchen. A brass vessel well cleaned and burnished is placed on the oven and a small quantity of milk is boiled therein. The boiled milk is served to the members of the family, their relatives and friends. This is generally followed by a sumptuous feast to all who have been invited for the occasion and the poor and the needy are also not forgotten.

4. **Sacred Tree.**—Tree and plant worship has developed itself almost into a religious cult in Malabar and is encouraged by the Brahmans and the Śāstras.

"Tree worship may well be the earliest form of sacred ritual, and has it banyan roots among all the primitive races of the world. All ancient peoples seem to have worshipped some tree or other as the haunt of spirits good or evil, as the abode of a demon or a deity, or as the beloved of some God who must be worshipped with its leaves, flowers, fruits or branches. The Gods of ancient Greece had each a tree of his own; so had the Goddesses. To Zeus belonged the oak, to Apollo the laurel, to Dionysius the vine, to Hera the willow, to Aphrodite the myrtle, and to Athene the olive. In many other lands, tree worship was associated with ancestor worship and offerings to the dead were laid at the foot of trees. The Sradha ceremony in India is generally performed under the banyan or the bo tree, and if done elsewhere the shades of the dead are besought to consider the rites as if done under the banyan. Tree worship survives above all in India, which is as rich in sacred trees as in sacred rivers and hills. The banyan gives shade and shelter to sages, pilgrims and to all and sundry, in a land where shade is a boon. Elders meet and dispense justice under the banyan tree. After the all destroying flood, Bala-Mukunda floats asleep on the banyan leaf. Savitri received her husband back from Yama under a banyan tree. It is a tree of benediction. "Let your family grow as the plantain and take root as the branches of the banyan." The aswatha (peepul or bo tree) has many claims to the worship of the Hindus and the Buddhists. "Of trees I am the aswatha" says Sri Krishna in the Gita. And it was by the root of that tree that Gautama grew calm of heart and discovered the Path to Freedom from Rebirth. Circumambulations under it often no doubt bring beneficial result to the devotee. Neem tree is sacred to the Goddess of cholera and small-pox, and whose leaves have medicinal value. Asoka 'sorrowless tree' is the tree under which Sita sat during the years of her captivity. It is also called 'the tree of modesty'. The Bilva with its trident-shaped leaf is dearly loved by Siva. The auspicious mango, the exquisite Bakula, the beautiful Parijata, and the sweet scented sandal are other sacred trees. But the crown of holiness must be given to the Tulsi, beloved of Vishnu. Of flowers there is the Lotus, red, white and blue. Lakshmi is the Lotus born. Vishnu and Bhagavati hold lotus in their hands. Brahma sits throned on the lotus. Last of all, since the first shall be the last, is the cocoanut palm which alone of the palms is sacred. It is called the "Kalpataru" or the Heavenly Tree. Every part of it serves human use. (Several parts are used for

As observed by Professor Monier Williams, "the adoration of trees, shrubs and plants in virtue of the supernatural qualities of divine essence supposed to be inherent in them, is almost as universally diffused over the globe as the worship of animals and that both forms of religion are of the greatest antiquity." Numerous examples of such worship are given by Sir John Lubbock, Mr. Taylor, and Mr. Fergusson. Tree-worship, we are told, was once common in Greece, France, Poland, Assyria, and many other countries. It has continually prevailed among uncultivated tribes in Africa, America and Polynesia. So also in Persia. The prophetic oak of Dodona, the myrtle of Venus, the poplar sacred to Hercules, the oaks of the British Druids and the sacred groves of Germany mentioned by Tacitus, attest to the practice of Tree-worship in ancient Europe. Even at the present time or at any rate till but recently, the practice exists or has existed in Europe. Monier Williams points out that "every one does not know that there existed quite recently a particular oak-copse in the island of Skye which the inhabitants held quite sacred, and that here and there in remote parts of Europe simple-minded peasants are to be found who still pay homage to certain trees, still hang offerings on their branches, and still believe in willows that bleed, and in trees that speak when about to be cut down." [1] In his work on *Buddhism*, the same learned writer observes:— "Nor can we really condemn, as either unnatural or unreasonable, the feeling of veneration with which trees are generally regarded, bearing in mind the grateful shade and shelter which they afford, the beauty of their foliage, their importance as purifiers

purposes of divine worship.) In most places in Kerala, a jungle of these sacred trees stretches as far as the eye can see and to these sacred groves, no doubt, this most favoured land owes its happiness"—Mrs. Stan Harding in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, p. 18 of 1935 Nov. 24th issue.

1 *Religious Thoughts and Life in India* p. 330.

of the atmosphere, and the hundreds of useful purposes to which their wood, leaves and fruit are applicable."

Tree worship is closely connected with serpent worship, demon worship and Śiva worship. Demons are supposed to be fond of occupying trees, and possessing or taking the shape of serpents, and Śiva is lord of demons, of serpents, and of plants.

Amongst the trees that form objects of worship the Aśwaṭha (Mal. Arayāl), the Kūvaḷam or *Vilva* and the Ṭuḷasi deserve prominent mention.

In the *Gobhila Grihya Sutra* the Aśwaṭha is described as a tree presided over by Āḍiṭya This divinity is identified by Yakṣha with Viṣhṇu. Aṣhwaṭha therefore came to be treated latterly as a tree speciḷally sacred to Viṣhṇu, and Kṛṣhṇa, an incarnation of Viṣhṇu, describes himself in the *Bhagavat Gita*, "the Song Celestial", to be "the *Ashwatha* amongst all trees." It is also said to be occupied by the essence of the god Bṛahma. To plant an Aśwaṭha tree is considered an act of great piety, and to destroy one a great sin. There is no temple in Malabar, whether of Viṣhṇu, Śiva, or Bhagavaṭi or of any minor deities, that has not an Aṣwaṭha tree in front of it. Usually a stone platform is raised round it not only for people to rest, but also to enable them to take their pṛaḍakṣhiṇa or devotional rounds around the tree, an act of great merit with the Hindus. These rounds are regularly gone through chiefly on Saturdays by women, as it is believed that it will ensure the birth of children. Such perambulations are also performed by all for averting the baneful influence of Śani (Saturn) under which every one is said to suffer for 7½ years during the course of his life, the period varying according to the star of his birth. The twigs of the tree are indispensible in all yāgams or sacrifices to the gods. Similarly, the buds of the Pērāl, another tree of the same species, are an indispensible element in the

Mṛṭyunjaya hōmam or sacrifice performed to win over the god of death. Lamps are lighted at the front of the tree and Pūjas offered regularly. It is also closely connected with serpent worship, and we see images of hooded serpents cut in stone placed at the foot of the tree for worship. In the Malayalam language, it is known as Arayāl (*Ficus Religiosa*), while another kind of the fig tree of the same species is known as Pērāl (*Ficus Indica*). Both are popularly termed as the Āl. The description of our author would seem to indicate that he is referring to the Pērāl (Pipal). He calls the tree as *Kalu*. This is not correct. The class to which the tree belongs goes in the Malayalam language by the name of *Aalu* and not *Kalu*. The Baniyan tree, the Vaṭa or Pērāl, has been the theme of many a poet, and travellers have never missed giving glowing descriptions of it. Ben Jonson, Milton, and Southey have sung about it.

"The fig-tree, not that kind for fruit renown'd,
But such as at this day, to Indians known,
In Malabar or Decan spreads her arms
Branching so broad and long, that in the ground
The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow
About the mother-tree, a pillar'd shade
High over-arch'd and echoeing walks between. [1]

Southey in his *Curse of Kehama* has the following verses on the Baniyan tree,

"In the midst an aged Banian grew
It was a goodly sight to see
That venerable tree,
For o'er the lawn, irregularly spread,
Fifty straight columns prop its lofty head;
And many a long depending shoot,
Seeking to strike its root,
Straight like a plummet grew towards the ground,
Some on the lower boughs which cost their way,
Fixing their bearded fibres, round and round,

1. *Paradise Lost*, Book IX.

With many a ring and wild contortion wound,
Some to the passing wind at times, with sway
Of gentle motion swing;
Others of younger growth, unmoved, were hung,
Like stone-drops from the caverns' fretted height" [1]

One more extract from a Poem on the Baniyan tree by an anonymous author may be given.

"****Its pendent branches, rooting in the air,
Yearn to the parent earth and grappling fast,
Grow up huge stems again, which shooting forth
In massy branches, these again despatch
Their drooping heralds, till a labyrinth
Of root and stem and branch commingling
A great cathedral, aisled and choired in word."

Among descriptions in prose, we may quote what Pliny says in his *Natural History* about the Baniyan, as also Bishop Heber's account of the tree he saw:—

Pliny (A. D. 70) says, "First and foremost, there is a Fig-tree (in India) which weareth very small and slender figges. The propertie of this Tree, is to plant and set itself without man's help. For it spreadeth out with mighty arms; and the lowest water-boughes underneath, do bend so downward to the very earth, that they touch it again, and lie upon it whereby, within one year's space they will take fast foot in the ground, and put forth a new spring round about the Mother-tree. So as these braunches, thus growing, seeme like a trail or border of arbours most curiously and artificially made" etc. [2]

Says Bishop Heber:—"Near this village was the finest Baniyan tree which I had ever seen, literally a grove rising from the single primary stem whose massive secondary trunks, with their straightness, orderly arrangement, and evident connection with the parent stock, gave the general effect of a vast vegetable organ. The first impression which I felt on coming

1. XIII—51.
2. Pliny's *Natural Historye*, Philemon Holland, i, 360.

under its shade was, "What a noble place of worship." [1] No wonder then that the "untutored Indian" (Hindu) deems it not simply "a noble place of worship" but in his infantine simplicity identifies it with Nature and worships it looking from Nature up to Nature's God In fact what is worshipped is not the tree as such but the creative Power of that Almighty being materialised into the form of the tree.

In "the mysterious rustling of its tremulous leaves, which resembles those of the poplar," Mr. Monier Williams discovers "one cause of the superstitious awe with which this tree is regarded". "It is remarkable" says he "that no native would venture to tell an untruth or deviate from the strictest rectitude of conduct while standing under a pipal tree".[2]

The *Vilva* tree (*Aeagle Marmelos* or wood-apple) or Malayalam Kūvaḷam is sacred to Śiva. Its leaf is of a triple form with three leaflets and is probably on that account consecrated to Śiva with his triple functions. It is styled the Śrīvṛkṣha, a name whereby, as Pandit Prannath Saraswati observes, hangs the tale of its origin. The legend, says the Pandit, is thus given in the *Yogine Tantra*. "Of the two wives of Vishnu, namely Sri (Lakshmi) and Saraswati, the god was particularly fond of Saraswati and neglected her rival. Weighed with this sorrow, the neglected consort went to the temple of Siva in Śrīśsilam and practised severe austerities in solitude. When this did not effect the propitiation of Siva, the goddess transformed herself into a tree and continuously worshipped the emblem of

1. Heber's *Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 93.

2. P. 336, *Religious Life and Thought* in India.

The tree is worshipped with the following prayer:—

മൂലതോബ്രഹ്മരൂപായ മദ്ധ്യതോ വിഷ്ണുരൂപിണേ
അഗ്രതശ്ശിവരൂപായ വൃക്ഷരാജായതേ നമഃ

Moolatho Bramha Rupaya madhyatho Vishnu Rupine Agratha Siva Rupaya Vriksha Rajaya te Namah.—At the root the form of Brahma, in the middle the form of Vishnu, at the top the form of Siva. I worship thee O! King of Trees.

Siva with the leaves, flowers, and fruit produced therefrom. Such assiduity for a crore of years procured her the favour of Siva, whereby she became the favourite of Vishnu. For this reason the goddess always worships Siva assuming the shape of that tree; and hence the tree is called Sri-Vriksha and its products in every shape highly acceptable". [1]

The *Devi Purana* threatens dire consequences for those who cut down the sacred tree. In Malabar the pulp within the fruit of this tree is removed and the shell is used by the people as a receptacle for the ashes sacred to Śiva which every Malayāḷi rubs on his forehead, chest and shoulders at least once a day, generally, soon after his bath. Barbosa refers to the practice thus:— "And on their breasts, shoulders and foreheads, they make marks of threes with ashes, which they wear in accordance with the custom of their sect, saying that they do it to remind themselves that they have to turn to ashes; for when they die they burn their bodies, and so this ceremony continues among them. And many use it mixed with sandalwood, saffron, aloeswood, and rosewater; all this ground up." [2] It is not necessary to go into the *raison de etere* of the practice here. It would be sufficient to indicate the reason why not only Malayalies but Hindus of the Smārṭha sect constantly wear ashes on their bodies. Apart from the idea expressed by the wording of the Christian burial service 'dust unto dust and ashes to ashes', an idea not altogether foreign to the Hindu, the practice may be supported on hygienic and religious grounds.

The following quotation from the eleventh volume of the *Theosophist*, gives us a fair idea as to how the philosophical Hindu views these three horizontal lines made with ashes of cow dung.

"The third caste mark is three horizontal white lines, and in this a whole and complete Philosophy of evolution and involution, of the way how to obtain

1. P. 243.
2. P. 104.

Moksha, and of what that Nirvanic state is like, is scientifically examined. Let us explain the esoteric significance of this under the heads of (1) the substance of which, and the way it is prepared, (2) the way in which it is worn and (3) the meaning of the mark considered as a whole.

"Cow's dung is taken and balls are made of it and these balls are exposed to the sun's heat and, when thoroughly dried, thrown into the blazing fire with oblation of ghee accompanied by *mantras*, and if, when properly burnt, the balls are found to have become pure white without the admixture of any other color, they form the substance of the caste mark. Cow in Sanskrit means *Pasu* or animal and this *Pasu* is applied in the *Upanishads* to all the souls who are enwrapped in *Pasuthwam* or *Jadathwam*, ignorance or animalism, and hence *Eswara* is called *Pasupathi*, i. e., the lord of *Pasus* or *Jivatmas* (Individual souls), and the dung of the cow is therefore the animal part of man, which is in short his ignorance or *Anjanam* itself. The dung balls represent then so many individual souls, and their exposure to the heat of the sun symbolises the calcining of the ignorance of the individual souls is the sun of wisdom or *Gnanam*. In the next stage, these cow dung balls are thrown into fire with oblation of ghee, and this points out that all the Jivas should throw themselves heart and soul purified into the bosom of the universal fire of *Para Brahmam* if they wanted redemption from "Animalism", and the balls becoming entirely white without any differentiation of colors, suggests that, when once the individual souls merge themselves into the universal soul, all their *Karmic*, *Agnamic* affinities are burnt up, isolated individualisation ceases, and everything becomes part and parcel of *Para Brahma* pure and spotless and the color white therefore symbolises this. To sum up the first head, all individual souls or animals must be dried in wisdom or *Gnanam* and then merge and throw themselves into the bosom of Brahma, and

when once they do so, they become completely extricated from the coils of *Agnanam* and become part and parcel of *Para Brahmic* essence. This highest philosophical theory is explained in this head.

"(2) The way in which it is worn:—The wearer is enjoined to take the white powder, and keeping it in the palm of the left hand to magnetise it by uttering *mantras* having the meaning that it (the powder) is *Akasa*, *Vayu*, *Agni*, *Prithvi* Mind, *Buddhi* and everything in fact. Then he is to apply this magnitised powder to the body by rubbing it from head to foot, and after this he mixes the powder with water and daubs the whole body with it, and finally the three horizontal stripes are drawn all over the body. The rubbing of the powder from head to foot conveys the idea that *Para Brahma* in *Sarva—Vyapakam* (Omnipresent) and the daubing of the powder with water signifies, that *Brahma* joined with *Prakriti* or *Sakti* for evolution, and no sooner did it do so than at once all the *Thruputies* i. e., manifestation by triads came into existence in the phenomenal plane. Thus at the very sight of this caste mark, we are perfectly initiated into (1) the philosophy of existence, (2) the way how to get ourselves rid of animalism, (3) the nature of *Para Brahmam*, (4) the nature of the individual soul, (5) the state of the individual soul at the time of *Moksha*, (6) the combination of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, (7) the evolution into triads in the phenominal plane. It is surely in advance of the other two and expresses occult knowledge in a most masterly and exhaustive symbology.

"The Upanishads describe the three horizontal lines as:—

(1) The three *Saktis—Kriyasakti*, *Itchasakti* and *Gnanasakti*.

(2) The three fires—the terrestrial, the astral and the spiritual.

(3) The three gods— *Maheswara*, *Sadasiva*, and *Siva*.

(4) The three *Gunas*—*Satwa*, *Rajasa*, and *Tamas*.

(5) The three worlds—the higher, the middle and the nether worlds.

(6) The three times—morning, noon and evening.

(7) The three Vedas—Rig, Yajur and Sama" [1]

The *Tulasi* (*Ocymum Sanctum*) or holy Basil plant is an invariable concomitant of a Malayali house. It is sacred to Viṣhṇu. It is believed to be pervaded by the essence of the deity itself and is therefore worshipped as a deity and prayed to accordingly. Throughout Malabar it will be difficult to find a single Malayali house without a raised stone basement in the front courtyard on which is reared this plant so sacred to Viṣhṇu. Every evening a lamp is lighted before the Ṭuḷasi plant and the inmates of the house worship there and make circumambulations round it. It is constantly watered and kept fresh. Old ones are removed and fresh plants take their place. The stem of the aged plant is not however thrown away. They are cut into small beads and strung together, sometimes mounted in gold or silver, and worn round the neck of both men and women. These beads are also used for counting prayers as a help to calculation. They are also preserved to be thrown into the funeral pyre when the dead body is being cremated. Pandit Prāṇṇāth points out that Gopālbhatta quotes many *Slokas* from the *Skanda Purana*, *Narada* and *Agastya Samhitas* regarding the sanctity attached to the planting and worship of Ṭuḷasi trees. The plucking of the Ṭuḷasi leaves is prohibited on the 12th day of the moon, *Dwadasi*, and a text from *Karthikeya Mahatmya* is quoted by Gopalbhatta to authorise the plucking [2] of its leaves on other days for the purposes of the worship of the gods. He also alludes to a ceremony known as the marriage of Ṭuḷasi with Viṣhṇu an act of

1. *Esoteric Hinduism*, pp. 109 to 111.

2. For religious offerings too, only the spikes with the two adjacent leaves on each of their sides should be plucked.

great religious merit to the Vaishnavas. On the 12th day of the waxing or waning moon, the devout Malayali breaks his previous Ēkādasi (11th) day's fast by watering the plant after bath and drinking a few drops that drip from its leaves. The sand from the soil in which it is planted is used to make a mark on the forehead. The prayer generally addressed to the Ṭuḷasi is as follows:— "I adore that Ṭuḷasi in whose roots are all the sacred places of pilgrimage, in whose centre are all the deities and in whose upper branches are all the Vedas."

Yan mulay sarva—tirthani
Yan—madhye sarva—devatah.
Yad—agre sarva vedas cha
Tulasim tam namamy aham.

Mr. Monier Williams remarks, "Possibly its sanitary properties may have been the original cause of the homage it receives. Its leaves are believed to heal the sick, and to be a remedy against the poison of serpents." He adds in a note "Col: Yule informs me that the Basil is also venerated in Sicily for its sanitary properties. The inhabitants keep it in the windows of their houses."[1]

5. **Legend.** There is no trace of any such legend at present. If it had ever existed, it had no hold on the mind of the people and it is now lost.

6. **Transmigration.** The Malayalees are strong believers in the immortality of the soul and, in common with other Hindus, most of them have also faith in the theory of the transmigration of souls. But it is idle to gather together, as our author seems to have done, the floatsam and jetsam of ignorant popular beliefs and superstitions and argue therefrom that the "most intelligent" of the nation hold childish ideas of the future. In the latter portion of this paragraph, our author tells us, "what the majority and the most intelligent of these heathens believe with respect to the

1. P. 333.

soul after death." He does not vouchsafe to us whence he got his information. It is not likely that he could have had any chance of consulting the learned or the most intelligent. It is probable that those with whom he came in contact in his capacity as Chaplain to the Dutch in Cochin, gave him their version of the manners, customs and beliefs of the people, which he took on trust and placed on record for the information of his countrymen in Europe. Fra Bartolomeo has told us that in his time the high roads in the interior part of Malabar were not open for all people, that "the Europeans dare not use them, lest the Brahmans should be polluted by them." "For this reason" says he, "the Europeans must pass along the sea-coast, which is inhabited only by fishermen, the people of the lowest castes. Hence it happens that few Europeans have the least knowledge respecting the interior part of the country, though they talk a great deal of their travels in India."[1]

The above observation affords us a sufficient explanation as to how European travellers who profess to give accurate descriptions of native life, manners, customs, and beliefs in India are often gulled into believing as correct idle stories retailed to them by those who are least capable to form an opinion regarding what they say.

Our author tells us that the natives believed "that in the beginning the deity created a number of souls which inhabit sometimes human and sometimes brute bodies but that on quitting human bodies the souls repose for a century under the refreshing shade of the baniyan after which they transmigrate into other bodies either of men or of beasts." This then is the origin of transmigrations according to our author. Dr. Day dealing with the same question gives a different story. "The origin of transmigrations" says Dr. Day, "is said to have been, that, when some of the angels rebelled against the supreme God, he condemned

1. P. 148.

them to eternal torments. After a time, at the intercession of the faithful angels, they were released, on promising amendment, and admitted to a state of probation. Worlds were created, and mortal bodies prepared for these apostate spirits. First animated in the bodies of lower animals, after a varying number of transmigration, that of human beings was attained, when, if the spirit failed to reform, it again had to pass backwards through the lower grades."[1] If we turn from this to any other writer who attempts to record the popular beliefs of the country, perchance we may get a version altogether different from the above two.

The Malayali Hindu has a strong belief in the soul's continued existence in a life after death. He believes the soul to be not only immortal but also eternal. He has faith both in the theory of the transmigration of souls and of the independent existence of the personal soul, after the death of the body, in a future life. The theory of transmigration has been an article of faith in all races of mankind from the earliest stages of their history and may be traced from the lower races in its progressive development to its present position among the more civilized. Both Brahmanism and Buddhism recognise it and build a theory of rewards and punishments by means of it. It never became one of the great doctrines of Christendom, though not unknown in mediaeval times to certain sects of Christians such as the Manicheans, the Druses of Mount Hermon, etc. Within the limits of modern Christian Europe, the Bulgarians still hold the doctrine of metempsychosis. The fact that Christian Europe has refused to believe in the doctrine is however no argument to class the theory as one without scientific or philosophical bases or to treat it with scorn.

Discussing the vedantic doctrine of the future life, Mr. Sitanath Tattvabhooshan observes in the

1. Pp. 294—5.

Indian Review, "The law of evolution in the physical and physiological world points as we have seen, to a similar law in the spiritual world. Does not the same law, we may now ask, testify to the reasonableness of the vedantic view that the animating principles of all creatures are substantially of the same nature and the transmigration of these principles from one species to another is quite possible ? If man's body is linked to, and is the development of the bodies of the lower animals, where is the unreasonableness of thinking that his soul also has passed through a similar process of gradual development, having animated lower organisms in the more remote periods of its pre-existence, gaining in intelligence and moral strength as it migrated into higher and higher organisms and at last attaining humanity both physically and spiritually"?[1]

"One of the most notable points about the theory of transmigration" observes Mr. Tylor in his well known work on *Primitive Culture* "is its close bearing upon a thought which lies very deep in the history of philosophy, the development-theory of organic life in successive stages. An elevation from the vegetable to the lower animal life and thence onward through the higher animals to man, to say nothing of super-human beings, does not here require even a succession of distinct individuals, but is brought by the theory of metempsychosis within the compass of the successive vegetable animal lives of a single being."[2]

7. **Conduct in past life.** This is according to the law of Karma accepted by both Hindus and Buddhists. "The Bhuddhist theory of Karma or action" says Tylor, "which controls the destiny of all sentient beings, not by judicial rewards and punishments, but by the inflexible result of cause into effect wherein the present is ever determined by the past in an unbroken

1. Vol. 4, p. 686.
2. Vol. 2, p. 18—2nd edition.

line of causation, is indeed, one of the world's most remarkable developments of ethical speculation."[1] Of the Hindu Vedantic doctrine of Karma, Mr. Tattvabhooshan observes, that it is "the doctrine that every action must be followed by its proper effect. This doctrine is sometimes stated in such an abstract shade as to appear like a law of mechanical causality, but really, in its application to rational beings, it has an ethical aspect also. As an ethical law, it lays down, when stated in its broadest form, that every moral action must have a moral effect. In its popular form, it prescribes happiness as the result of every virtuous act and suffering of every vicious act. But thus stated, in looks very much like the Christian doctrine of justice,—the doctrine that every virtuous act deserves happiness as its reward and every vicious act necessitates suffering, as its punishment. Reward and punishment are personal acts,—the awards of a personal judge, and the Christian doctrine of justice is necessarily connected with that of such a judge. Hindu thinkers, on the other hand, distinctly deny the personal character of the law of Karma. In the 34th "aphorism of the first *pada*, second chapter of the *Brahmasutras*, as well as in the commentary thereon, the result of the moral actions of rational beings are described as irrespective of Divine activity and as dependent on the free activity of individual agents. The *Bhagavadgita* also says, in the 14th verse of its 5th chapter ; 'The Lord creates neither people's actions ; nor their agency nor the fruits of their actions in this matter nature takes its course'. [2]

The theory of rewards and punishments is closely connected with that of continued personality through successive rebirth. A man's life in former existences is the cause of his now being what he is, while in his present life he is accumulating merit or demerit whose result will determine his fate in future lives. The popular idea in Malabar is that there is a recording

1. p. 12.
2. *The Indian Review*, vol. 4, p. 601—2.

angel known as Chitraguptan near the judgment seat whose duty it is to take account of all our actions which find reward or punishment at our death and in after life. The eternal judge sends his angel of Death, *Kalan*, to bring away his victim when his allotted span of life is over and this grim and ghastly messenger deals with him according as he had lived a good or bad life in this world. If his career on earth was unspotted, death to him is altogether a pleasing incident, his path upwards to heaven lies through verdant fields and pleasant pastures. He is taken in procession in a celestial chariot beautifully decorated and is accompanied by heavenly beings. If his merits were of a superior order, he is not born again on this earth but lives in the presence of God, holds communion with the spirits of his departed friends and relatives who have been allowed to enter those regions on account of their meritorious actions.

Bad souls are dealt with in a different manner. These part with their tenements of clay with great pain. The sinful man's exit from this world and his subsequent career has been thus described. "Even on his death-bed huge monstrous looking figures surround him at all times and especially towards the closing moments of his earthly career. These make mouths at him, threaten him, terrify him, informing him that the horrors to which he is being subjected are but the mild precursors of those which await him in the nether regions. These beings are visible to him alone, none of those who stand by being able to see these terrible monsters. According to the predestined period of his life, the man may have to exist in this wretched state for days and days together. After his death, he is taken care of by a monster called *Kalan*. This monster is furnished with a long rope and an iron pestle; and with the aid of his grisly-looking attendants he strings up the dead man on his pestle and carries him off into the upper regions. There he is taken before God, when the celestial recorder, called

Chitraguptan, brings forth his books and reads out a full and correct account of all the man's actions. His sins are to be expiated by horrible punishments inflicted then and there, followed by similar and more lasting ones to be undergone later. A large copper vessel is brought and placed over a burning oven. When the fire burns intensely underneath, so that the vessel is practically white hot, it is half filled with sand. When the sand begins to burn, the sinner is placed in the vessel and by means of a large rod with a spread-out tip, he is moved to and fro along with the burning sand. He dies again, is forthwith restored to life, and the process is continued time after time. Afterwards he is taken out and sent to the hellish regions to suffer the pains and torments, incidental to life there. Some believe that he is kept there for ever. But, according to others, when by the continued misery of his existence in hell, he has sufficiently well atoned for his past sins, he is released in order to be born back again into this world and so on *ad infinitum*. It ought to be stated that the conveyance in which men are taken to the upper regions to stand their trial before God threatens every moment to collapse and let them fall. According to some, they are compelled to ascend into the upper regions on a rope-ladder of slender construction which also every now and then threatens to give way under the weight of its human passengers. Their destruction or escape in either of these cases depends upon the good or evil nature of their worldly actions."[1]

The origin of all ills which human flesh is heir to is also traced back to the bad actions of men in their previous generation and it is thought, specially in serious cases, that unless amends are made for bad conduct in the past no medicine will have effect on the health of the patient. Astrology is the means by which what has transpired in the previous life is ascertained, and the *Karmavipaka Prayaschita*, or 'prescriptions of penalties

1. *Malabar and its Folk*, pp. 193—5.

for the expiation of sins committed in the previous existence," come to one's aid in getting absolution from them. The classification of sins and the prescription of penalties are both elaborate and specific and afford considerable scope at every turn for the priest and the magician to enrich themselves at the expense of a credulous patient and his anxious relatives.

8. **Visit of souls.** The practice referred to is not in vogue at present. If ever it was observed by the higher classes, it has been silently dropped. In the interior and among the lower aboriginal races it may be still lingering. The idea of the departed souls visiting their friends is common to many races of different degrees of civilization [1]. Many of the races inhabiting North America believed that the souls of the dead actually came to partake of victuals prepared for them by their relatives. So they are set out in some proper place, especially near the tombs or in the dwelling houses, and there the souls of the dead come and satisfy themselves. In Madagascar, as observed by Tylor, the elegant little upper chamber in King Radamas musoleum was furnished with a table and two chairs,

1. Spiritualism has, thanks to the testimony of great men like Mr. F. W. Myers, Sir Oliver Lodge, Sir Canon Doyle, Sir William Crookes and others, outgrown its bad reputation. It is no more "old women's twaddle" but a subject worthy of serious study and investigation. "Things hitherto held impossible do actually occur" says Sir Oliver Lodge. He says in another place "The Higher Powers seem to be constantly employing fresh methods of arousing our attention". "They have the effect of opening our eyes to another phase of existence, another world of which at present we cannot imagine the scope and possibilities." "For myself, I do not believe that physics and psychics are entirely detached. I think there is a link between them; neither is complete without the other." "The evolution of knowledge always takes time; it has to be carried on at first by a few pioneers in the face of opposition". *Past years* by Sir Oliver Lodge, Chapts. 22 to 24 and 28. See also Chapt. V of *Life Beyond Death* by Babu Mrinal Kanti Gosh where he treats of Obsession cases and their treatment .Ed.

and a bottle of wine, a bottle of water, and two tumblers were placed there conformably with the ideas entertained by most of the natives, that the ghost of the departed monarch might occasionally visit the resting place of his body, meet with the spirit of his father and partake of what he was known to be fond of in his life time. Most of the African tribes also entertain a like belief as also rude Asiatic tribes such as the Bodo of North-East India, the Naga tribs of Assam, the Koles of Chotta Nagpur etc. The Chinese summon ancestral souls with prayer and beat of drum to feed on meat and drink set out on special days when they are thought to return home. The belief and the observances consequent on it may be traced from the level of rude races far upward in civilisation. The Hindu offers to the dead the funeral cakes; oblations of balls of rice and libations of water for a whole year after the death of father or mother; and offer of the same once a year on the *Sradha* day is a prominent feature in Hindu life. In the classic world such rites were represented by funeral feasts and oblations of food. To quote Tylor, "In Christian times there manifests itself that interesting kind of survival which, keeping up the old ceremony in form, has adapted its motive to new thoughts and feelings. The classic funeral oblations became Christian, the *silicernium* was succeeded by the feast held at the Martyr's tomb. Faustus inveighs against the Christians for carrying on the ancient rights. "Their sacrifices indeed ye have turned into love-feasts, their idols into martyrs whom with like vows ye worship, ye appease the shades of the dead with wine and meals, ye celebrate the Gentiles' days with them, such as calends and solstices,—of their life certainly ye have changed not, and so forth." [1] The practice of setting food and drink to be sanctified by the sepulchre of a Christian saint is relic of the custom of laying food on the tomb of the manes. In France according to Saint-Foix cited by Tylor, "on the death of

1. Vol. 2, p. 34—5.

a King his wax effigy lay in state for 40 days before funeral. They continued to serve him at meal-times, as though still alive, the officers laid the table, and brought the dishes, the *maitre d' hotel* handed the napkin to the highest lord present, to be presented to the King, a prelate blessed the table, the basins of water were handed to the armchair, the cup was served in its due course, and grace was said in the accustomed manner, save that there was added to it the De Profundis.[1] " "In Spain and Russia the ancient rite is still observed. The custom of setting empty seats at the St. John's Eve feast, for the departed souls of Kinsfolk is said to have lasted on in Europe to the 17th century. Spring is the season of the time-honoured Slavonic rite of laying food on the graves of the dead. The Bulgarians hold a feast in the cemetery on Palm Sunday, and after much eating and drinking, leave the remains upon the graves of their friends, who they are persuaded, will eat them during night. In Russia such scenes may still be watched on the two appointed days called Parents' Days. The higher classes have let the rite sink to prayer at the graves of lost relatives, and giving alms to beggars who flock to the cemeteries. But the people still "howl" for the dead, and set out on their graves a handkerchief for a table-cloth, with ginger-bread, eggs, curd-tarts, and even Vodka, on it; when the weeping is over, they eat up the food, especially commemorating the dead in Russian manner by partaking of his favourite dainty, and if he were fond of a glass, the vodka is sipped with the ejaculation. The Kingdom of Heaven be his. He loved a drink, the deceased".[2]

9. **Feast of souls.** The new moon day in the month of Karkadagam (July) known as *Karkadaka Amavasy* is considered sacred to the spirits of the dead. On that day, oblations of rice and libations of water are offered to the manes of

1. P. 35.
2. P. 37.

ancestors. It corresponds to the All Souls' Day of the Christians. "When Odilo, Abbot of Clumy, at the end of the 10th century, instituted the celebration of All Souls", says Tylor, "he set on foot one of those revivals which has so often given the past a new lease of life. The western Church at large took up the practice, and round it, on the second of November, there naturally gathered surviving remnants of the primitive rite of banquets to the dead. The accusation against the early Christians, that they appeased the shades of the dead with feasts like the Gentiles, would not be beside the mark now, fifteen hundred years later. All Souls' Day keeps up, within the limits of Christendom a commemoration of the dead which combines some touches of pathetic imagination with relics of savage animism scarcely to be surpassed in Africa or the South Sea Islands".[1] In Malabar, people, if possible, resort to sacred rivers on the day for a bath and to have the *Sradha* for the manes to be performed on their banks. Many take a seabath and perform the ceremony on the seashore. It is held to be most meritorious if one can go to Rameswaram, bathe in the *Rama Setu* and perform the *Sradha* there. The *Sradha* performed on this day is not to propitiate the spirit of any particular diseased, but is designed to propitiate the manes of all ancestors.

10. **Witchcraft.** Malabar is pre-eminently the land of magic and sorcery. There every one believes in the efficacy of the art whether for good or for evil. It is not altogether correct to attribute the belief to mere ignorance and superstition. It is not the ignorant villager or the credulous rustic alone who places implicit faith in the potency of the art. As observed by Mr. Fawcett, "I feel perfectly safe in saying that every Nayar believes in magic through and through. No matter what his collegiate course has been, no matter how full of knowledge such as the west can give him, no matter how thrilled he may be by the higher

1. P. 37—8

Hinduism which condemns it altogether, he believes in magic as the cause of ills and he believes in magic for the removal of these".[1] He thinks with Hamlet that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt in your philosophy. The Malayalees do not of course stand by themselves in their faith in the black art. It lies deep in human nature and as remarked by Mr. Fawcett, "belief in magic and witchcraft, symbolic hurts and cures and the like are very deep in human nature; reason and culture do not efface it. It is one of the earliest heirlooms of the human family, and it will, in all probability, persist to the end. We cannot think of man as being without it". Twenty centuries of Christian civilization has not banished it altogether from England. The publications of the London Folklore Society furnish ample evidence to the persistence of the belief in parts of England even now.

Magic in Malabar may be divided into two broad classes with regard to its use; it is used either for beneficent or malificent purposes. The first class concerns itself with cure of snake-bites and diseases such as epilepsy and the like which defy ordinary treatment; while the second class is resorted to for evil purposes, such as for satisfying one's hate or revenge. No medicine is said to be used in the cure of snake-bite by those versed in the art. The cure is claimed to be effected by means of incantations—*Mantrams*[2] —alone.

1. *Madras Museum Bulletin*, vol. 3.

2. A *Mantra* is a sequence of sounds arranged in a particular order which, when recited, produce definite forms ensouled by divine energy in subtle matter.

According to *Mantra Sastra*, the creative impulse or divine energy which brings about the universe is conceived as sound (*Nada*), not sound as is ordinarily understood, but a higher aspect of it. (The sound that we hear, *Vaikhari Vak*, is said to be the grossest aspect of *Nada*, while its three subtle aspects are *Para Pasyanthi*, and *Madhyama* are inaudible.)

Every manifested object, visible or invisible, is, therefore, a Vehicle of *Nada*, and the natural name of an object is the nearest expression in human language to the subtle natural note of that

It is said that the process consists in extracting the poison by some psychic means or more rarely by getting the snake that inflicted the wound to return and repeat the bite and withdraw the poison. Of the method adopted in the cure of epilepsy

object. Thus *Rum* (so) in Sanskrit is the nearest onametopoetic expression to the subtle note produced by fire. This is therefore called its *Bija Mantra*. Thus when the natural note of an object or entity is sounded, it puts the utterer in tune with the object or entity concerned. It even has the power to create that object. So the *Mantra* of a *Devata* (denizen of a higher world) creates the form of that *Devata* and puts the person who chants it in tune with Him or Her. The Vedic text that Brahma created the Earth with the word *Bhu*, the intermediate world with *Bhuva* and the heaven world with *Suvah* is explained on the basis of this principle. The Biblical statement, that God said, "Let there be light and there was Light" can also be interpreted in this way.

Though to a non-beliver, a *Mantra* may seem but a string of letters bearing on their face a particular meaning or, as in the case of *Bija Mantras*, apparently no meaning at all, to an initiate it is a very mass radiant energy. A *Mantra* is really the *Devata* Himself or Herself in a sound body. In a *Mantra* it is the intonation and not the meaning that is the main factor. A saying or prayer convey an idea, whilst a *Mantra* awakens super-human power or divine energy.

A *Mantra* therefore cannot be translated.

The *Mantra* of a *Devata* reveals the *Devata* to the consciousness of the initiate when it is intoned in the proper way.

The practice of a *Mantra* consists in its constant repetition with concentration of mind on the figure of the *Devata*. A *Devata*, however, according to *Mantra Sastra*, is only a vehicle of divine energy or *Sakthi*. Thus, through the help of a *Devata*, the initiate can get into union with the source of that divine energy.

"When the Sakthi or power with attribute resident in or as the *Mantra* is by dint of practice awakened, then, she opens the gate of monistic truth revealing the true nature and essence of the universe". This is the way of realisation through *Mantra—Mantra Yoga*.

Special injunctions are given in the *Sastras* regarding the purity of body and character of persons who desire to take initiations in certain *Mantras* lest their potency should adversely affect the initiate, if his body and emotions have not got the

and other like diseases we shall have to say something later on.

The *Keralolpathy* says that, after the reclamation of Kerala from the sea and the colonisation of it by the Nambudiri Brahmans of the 64 *gramas*, the hero—saint Parasu Rama assigned various professions to his

tenacity to stand the powerful influence of the *Mantra* and of the *Devata* invoked.

Mantras are, as the world goes in these days, also largely used in Black Magic. There, the deities invoked are of a low order and their influence are generally demoralising. The use and effect of these *Mantras* are given in the *Sastras* as those of poisons in a system of medicine; but a strict warning against their ruinous results is also sounded at the same time.

For this Note, I am indebted to Mr. V. Karunakaran Nayar, Secretary of the Kerala Theosophical Federation. From an Introduction to the *Mantra Sastra* by Mr. S.E. Gopalacharlu, I glean a few further points. The potency of sound has been spoken of in very high terms by writers of antiquity, and by Patanjali in particular in his *Mahabhashaya*, the commentary to the grammatical rules of Panini. *Mantra* is from *Man*, *Manana*, to think. *Mantras* being a combination of sounds, may be either of one syllable or a thousand syllables. *Mantras* are either masculine, feminine, or neuter, according to the nature of the deity addressed to, and of the actions occasioned by them. Those addressed to a female deity are also called *Vidyas*. The exact number of *Mantras* that exist in the Sanskrit language is 67, 108, 863. The objects of the *Mantras* of the Black Magic seem to be subjection (*Vasya*), attraction (*akarshana*), fascination (*mohana*), deadening the faculties (*sthambhana*), creating enmity (vidveshana), death (*marana*), ruining (*uchhatana*), soothing (*apyayana*). The fundamental idea involved in the working of the *Mantras* is that different sounds produce different sorts of disturbance in the *Akasa*. The *Tantras* or *Agamas*, the store-house of *mantras* are of three kinds: *Sakthagamas*, those which deal with the worship of *Sakthi*, *Saivagamas*, those that deal with that of Siva and *Pancharatragamas*, those of Vishnu. These are so called, because they teach of five kinds of knowledge (*ratra*)—of the great realities, of the way to reach the highest goal, of the way to serve the God in *Vaikumtha*, of that which will secure the eight *Sidhis*, of the means to obtain wealth, children, in short, temporal felicities. An *Agama* is a work which deals with the creation and destruction of the universe, the nature and use of the *mantras*, and the nature and

colonists. He is said to have chosen 12 families of Nambudiri Brahmans to practise *Mantra Vadam* or magic. Six of these were instructed in *Dur-Mantrams* or Mantrams designed to ward off the incursions of evil spirits through the mountains of the ghauts, while the remaining six were tought *Sat-Mantrams*, to win over the the beneficent water-spirits coming from the seaside. They were also instructed in the methods of obtaining ascendency over spirits of both kinds, good and evil.

The profession is hereditary in the families selected by Parasu Rama, but at present there are numerous others who practise it, while most of the families originally selected have given it up, or have become extinct with the noteworthy exception of Kallukat *alias* Kallūr and Kāttumātam. These two families, one in South Malabar and the other in the Native State of Cochin, still practise the profession and retain an unrivalled celebrity for it. It should however be noted that these eschew with disdain the low diabolical practices that are usually associated with black magic. Their process is exclusively the performance according to Sastras of *Pujas* to their peculiar household divinities who are supposed to hasten to their aid in accomplishing the objects for which the Pujas are performed. Besides these, there are other Nambudiries who study and practise magic, such as Punchaman Potti and Talaman Potti in Travancore. In South Malabar, there is a class of Nambudiries, known as Chela Nambudiries, who are descendants of those who were forcibly converted to Mahomadanism during the turbulent period of Tippu's invasion, but who returned to their religion almost at once. Notwithstanding this, some stigma still attaches to them, and they are looked down as

worship of the *devas*, while a *Tantra* treats of these as well as twenty other topics, such as the nature of the Brahman, the nature of herbs, *yantras*, four castes, holy rivers, *chakras*, *yugas* astronomy, elements and so on.—Ed.

lowcaste and are tabooed from pure Nambudiri Society. Among this class of Nambudiries there are families in which the business of magician and sorcerer is hereditary. But there is one real high class Nambudiri family in Travancore of the Kālati Illam, which is alleged to have come to possess the art in a rather peculiar manner. The tradition is interesting.

Far back in the early centuries of the Christian Era, when Malabar was under the sway of the Perumāls, a Nambudiri was travelling with his friend, and the two were belated in the *Yakshi Paramba* or haunted garden near Trichur.[1] No human habitation was visible within the ken of mortal eye, it was dreary all round. While looking out anxiously for some place of rest for the night, the travellers were suddenly accosted by two lovely damsels with light in their hands who invited them to pass the night under their hospitable roof. The unsuspecting travellers readily accepted the welcome invitation and were taken to a sumptuous house where they were lodged in separate rooms. As the night advanced, one of them noticed the noise of munching and crunching from the adjoining room. He suspected foul play and turning round was horrified to see the lovely maiden who had accosted him and who was really a demon in disguise resume her demoniacal form. The affrighted traveller realised the situation at once. His friend was being eaten inch by inch by the other demon. His immunity he owed to the possession of a *grandha*, (or book) the *Devi Mahatmyam*, sacred to Bhagavati, which he had on his person. The demon could not touch him so long as he had it with him. Before he realised the plight in which he was placed, his female accoster had more than once requested, with increasing persistence, to part with the *grandha*. But fortunately for him he clung to it tenaciously and was thus saved from the grim jaws of the evil one. The morning dawned and

1. For a similar occurrence, see *Lalitopaharam* by Pandit K. P. Karuppan, Ernakulam. Ed.

he found himself perched on the top of a palmyra tree underneath which lay the bones of his companion.

Sometime after this strange occurrence, the widow of the deceased Nambutiri gave birth to a posthumous son to whom, when he attained his eleventh year, the mother confided the peculiar circumstances under which his father had lost his life. The boy swore vengeance on the *Yakshis* and set himself to accomplish this by propitiating *Surya*, the Sun-god. After having studied the Vedas and mastered all the sacred lore, he retired to the jungle and engaged himself in solitary meditation and prayer for a period of seven years. The Sun-god was pleased at his devotion and presented himself before his votary in human form and handed him a *grandha* which to this day is said to be in the possession of the family and is considered the greatest work on magic in existence. The family still has the name of the Sun-god (Sūrya) prefixed to its own and is known as "*Surya Kaladi.*"

Having got possession of the *grandha*, the young man proceeded to study it and find the means of punishing that *Yakshi*. He made preparations as per prescriptions set forth in the *grandha* to perform a great sacrifice whereat by the force of his *Mantras* the *Yakshi* who devoured his father was compelled to appear before him. The demon was consigned to the sacrificial flames. She pleaded hard for mercy offering to serve him faithfully if spared. But he was inexorable and she was consumed. Then her partner a *Ghandharva* turned up and cursed the Brahman to suffer death on the 41st day following. The Brahman begged for absolution and the *Ghandharva*, seemingly more compassionate than the relentless Brahman, promised absolution if he would on the 41st day following, in expiration of his sin, worship the great God Siva in his temple at Tiruvālur. Now there are two Tiruvalurs and a temple of Siva in each of these places. The one on the East Coast was out of the reach of the victim of the curse within the short span of life left to him,

while the other temple situated at Tiruvalur in the Ālangād District, Travancore, was but at a comparatively short distance. He hastened to accomplish his worship in the latter temple, reached the place and proceeded at once to the temple-tank to bathe and perform his ablutions preparatory to worship. These over, he entered the temple but felt that he wanted to answer the calls of nature and returned towards the tank. Again and again he had to do this and at last when he was going up the steps that lead from the tank to the temple he was suddenly seized with delerium and raved like a maniac biting the wooden beams of the bathing shed. He died after enduring frightful agonies. The marks of his teeth, it is said, were to be seen on the beams for a long time after. From the moment of the Brahman's death the temple was doomed. His spirit, *Brahma Rakshas*, haunted the building, and the Brahman's ghost more powerful than the God Siva himself, brought the temple to rack and ruin. Centuries and centuries passed on, the temple had crumbled away. Siva's votaries had deserted him and all was waste and ruin. After a thousand years had gone by, the Śrī Mūlam Tirunal Maha Raja of Travancore has, after propitiating the Rakshas, restored the temple, at a cost of more than a hundred thousand rupees. The descendants of the Brahman still live near Kottayam in Travancore and are still known as *Surya Kaladi* Bhattatiris. Before the renovation of the temple, the Maha Raja had the *Brahma Rakshas* removed by the descendants of the Nambutiri to their house at Kottayam where His Highness had a temple built for it with sufficient funds for the performance of daily *puja*.

The practice of Black magic is almost the monopoly of the lower races. As observed by Mr. Fawcett, it is always the man of inferier race who is superior in black magic. In Malabar the Parayan, the Pāṇan, the Velan, and other like classes practi e it to a large extent. A few Nairs also practise it but only as a means of getting a living. There are even Mohammadans who dabble

in it. Near Palghat there was a famous magician by name Usanā Rāwuthan who belonged to a class of Tamil Mohammadans similar to the Mopillas of Malabar. He is said to have obtained a *Grandha* of magic from a Rishi from the Kalladi Kode hills, a favourite abode of the demons, which he put to such good use that he died a very wealthy man. Numerous stories are related of his extraordinary powers.

Magic as already observed is practised with a view to bring about either good or evil results. For the latter purpose evil spirits are invariably invoked, good ones seldom. For the former it is the aid of spiritual beings that is sought and in this way magic comes to be connected with religion. He who wants to be a magician has to subdue or to bring to his service the evil as well as beneficent spirits. The high class Nambutiries, such as Chennos Nambutiripad, Kallur Nambutiripad and others, confine themselves to the propitiation of the gods Subramanya, Vēttakkorumakan or Sastha, the goddess Bhadrakali, not in her gross form, etc., and through the intervention of these deities profess to attain the objects they have in view.

Mr. Fawcett has given us an interesting account of spirits evil and beneficent and the way in which they are professed to be subdued. His account is based on information supplied to him by the late Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nair.

The most important among the evil spirits (*Dur Murti*) *are*: *Karikkutti*, *Kuttichathan*, *Maranakkutti*, *Kallatimuttan*, *Bhairavan*, *Kala Bhairavan*, *Chutala Bhadrakali*.

Besides these, there is always an ever increasing supply of evil spirits of local manufacture, such as those mentioned by our author as *Tjatte Pannikerri*, *Tjangadi*, and *Cooli Mootootoe Pannikerri*, while some of the old ones are consigned to oblivion. Souls of those who have committed suicide, who have died in childbirth or from such diseases as preclude their entrance

into heaven, are said to haunt the earth as evil spirits till they are delivered by means of ceremonies performed for their benefit so as to enable them to enter the eternal abode of bliss. These spirits the black magician wins over to his service, and once subdued they have to blindly obey his behests. The names mentioned by our author were perhaps those of some such spirits of local notoriety. These spirits or demons can be bought, carried about, and transferred from one sorcerer to another. In one of the issues of the *Indian Antiquary* [1] a story is quoted from a Madras newspaper which is truly mediaeval in its wildness. "At Bodinaikanoor, near Palani, in the Madura District, a certain Chetty bought of a magician a Malabar demon for Rs. 90, it is said; but ere a day had passed since the transfer the undutiful spirit fell in love with its master's wife and succeeded in its nefarious purpose. A pious Hindu assures me that the woman still lives leading a very unhappy life with the demon, the husband being long dead and gone." Dr. Day observes that in his time there lived in the Cochin State a man of the Izhuva caste who was believed to have under his control a hundred spirits whom he let out by the year for one Rupee, one anna. The process of letting out is thus described. "The wizard must be informed for what purpose the spirit is required, and after he has made the necessary arrangement for parting with him, prayers are then said to the spirit and a feast in his honour must be held when arrack, toddy, eggs, salt-fish, curry, fruits, cocoanuts, rice pounded and raw flowers, oil, ghee, betel, burnt chunnam, sharks and other flesh, fowls, incense, etc., must be offered up to it, each article being separately placed on a plantain leaf and individually worshipped. Then another prayer ensues and the figure of the person to be bewitched is made out of mud, the name being written upon it, with words and letters placed backwards a number of curious ceremonies succeed, before the spirit is permitted to take its departure with its new master" [2]

1. Vol. 5, p. 22.
2. P. 433—4.

Now for the methods adopted by the magician for getting these spirits under his control: we may give the recipe for subjecting the spirit Karinkutti into one's service by way of illustration and example. Mr. Balakrishnan Nayar describes it thus:—"First you bury a dead black or reddish buffalo. You must not catch your buffalo and kill him, you must find him dead. If you say, this is far from easy, I can only remark that the subjection of an evil spirit is not an easy matter. Having buried your buffalo—assuming for the moment that you are a magician such as the instructions are intended for. You bathe, and while your cloths are wet and clinging to your body, draw the figure of a Chakram, which corresponds to a magic circle, on the ground over the buried buffalo. The ground is then plastered over with cow dung. Then you mark out with rice flour an eight cornered Chakram, in the centre of which you place a small piece of cadjan leaf, and you place a similar piece at the four corners. You sit with your back to the Chakram, facing eastwards in the morning and westwards in the evening while performing pūja. This pūja, is, I think, addressed to Karinkutti, not in anyway to the Sun-god who is not then visible. For the pūja you must be supplied with fried grain, beaten rice, rice bran, a fowl, toddy, arrack, some flowers of three colours-one of them the Tulasi (Ocimum Sanctum)—sandalwood paste, camphor, incense. (Note the use of the sacred Tulasi in this diabolical incantation!). While the pūja, which I am unfortunately unable to describe (leaving my directions rather lame), is being performed, the *Mula Mantram* of Karinkutti is to be repeated 101 times.

"In order to do all this you must bathe 7½ Nazhikas (about 2¾ hours) before down, and complete the pūja before dawn arrives. But even before this you must stand up to your chest in water and repeat the *Mula Mantram* 101 times. And you must repeat the whole thing *da capo* in the evening. The *Mantram* is thus repeated 404 times in the day. You are not done yet, in

fact this is only the beginning. The whole thing is done every day for 21 consecutive days and then you will have the evil spirit Karinkutti entirely at your disposal. The person who remains continent, eats but once a day cooking his own food, may, it is said be able to bring the spirit into obedience in less than 21 days".

The following are considered as good spirits:—Sat Murti:—*Bhagavati*, *Bhadrakali*, *Hanuman*, *Ganapathi*, *Subramanian*, *Mookambi*, *Veerabhadran*, *Mohini*, *Sarabhamoorthi*, etc.

We see from the above list that most of those named there are those generally adored and worshipped as divinities. The method of subjecting these to one's will is by propitiating them by long penance and worship. Many of them are said not to lend themselves to the working of any injury on man.

There are in Malabar many treatises dealing with the subject of magic. The names of a few may be mentioned here.

(*1*) *Prapancha Saram*, (*2*) *Sarada Tilakam* (*3*) *Mantra Saram*, (*4*) *Yantra Saram*, (*5*) *Priyoga Saram*, (*6*) *Tantra Saram*, (*7*) *Sara Sangraham*, (*8*) *Kukshi Kalpam*, (*9*) *Hari Mekhala*, (*10*) *Bali Kalpam*, (*11*) *Manaacham*, (*12*) *Ela Mandacham*, (*13*) *Dattatraya Tantram*.

The magicians are so reticent that it is very difficult to get these works or any information on the subject. It will be found that one of the primary lessons taught by all schools of magicians is one inculcating absolute secrecy as to anything connected with the art. The last of the works mentioned, the *Dattatreyatantra*, is a treatise on the subject in the form of a conversation between the god Siva and the Rishi Daṭṭāṭrēya who is anxious to learn the art from the god direct. The sage addressing Siva said. "I implore you, worshipping you with joined hands, O God, the lover of the faithful, to instruct me in *Kala Mantra*, so that it may benefit believers. There are numerous

Yantrams(Cabalistic figures), *Mantrams* (incantations), *Abhicharams* (enchantments) in this world as are described in the Agamas, Puranas, Vedas, Damaram, Radhatantram,, Ṭārāntantram, Amriteswaram, etc. O ! Mahadeva teach me (a) Mantra based on the above authorities which will enable men to attain their wishes." Siva answers,

"*Mantra Vidya* or the art of sorcery is a great secret. Even the gods attain it with great difficulty. Still I speak of it in your presence. I place before you this jewel which ought to be worn on the head. Again and again I repeat, this ought to be kept a secret, a profound secret".

He repeats the injunction once more and says.—

"Secret, secret, a profound secret, again and again, secret, secret."

The *Dattatreyatantra* treats, among others, of the following matters:—

(1) *Maranam.* Destruction ; the taking away of life from animate beings.

(2) *Mohanam.* Enticement ; the art of exciting love between two persons.

(3) *Stambhanam.* Stupefaction, or inhibition stopping, suppressing the use of faculties by enchantment. There are varieties of *stahmbhanam.*

(4) *Vidweshanam.* Separation of friends, creating enemity between them.

(5) *Uchatanam.* Driving away one from one's own village. Sometimes also used to mean exorcism or the driving away of evil spirits.

(6) *Vasyam.* Subjecting the will of another-enchanting.

(7) *Indrajalam.* Making one thing to look like another.

(8) *Rasayanam.* Alchemy. (Chemistry) the making of gold, silver, etc.

(9) *Mritya Kalagnanam.*—The method of ascertaining the approach of death.

(10) *Anaharam.*—How to live long without taking any food or nourishment.

(11) *Vidhidarsanam.*—The means of finding out hidden treasure.

(12) *Vandhya Garbhadharanam.*—How to make barren women bear.

(13) *Mritasanjeevani.*—The raising of the dead.

(14) *Vajeekaranam.*—The improvement of virile powers.

(15) *Bhootagraha Nivaranam.*—Exorcism. The casting away of evil spirits, etc.

(16) *Simha Vyaghra vrischikadi damsanam.*—The obtaining of immunity from the attacks of lions, tigers, scorpions, etc.

(17) *Sarppa Nivaranam.*—Immunity from snake bite.

(18) *Vyagrabhaya Nivaranam.*—Immunity from tigers.

(19) *Agnibhaya Nivaranam.*—Immunity from fire.

It will be noticed that the book treats of a jumble of things, some of which fall scarcely within the province of the magician pure and simple. In Malabar the theory is that every ill to which mankind is subject, physical or mental, is under the direction of a separate spirit and that the world of medicine is presided over by *Dhanvantara Murti* an incarnation of Viṣṇu. The Ḍaṭṭāṭrēyaṭanṭra says:—"It is only with the aid of *mantram* and *tantram* that medicines take effect. Their power leads to the speedy attainment of one's object. So the doctor should also be a bit of *Mantravadi*, magician, if he wants to be a successful practitioner. Butter on which the following *Mantram* is traced and over which

it is repeated a hundred and eight times is administered to the patient by the doctor and not seldom he is made to wear a charm, of which later on. This is a panacea for all sorts of diseases.

Om! namo bhagavate vasudevaya Dhanvanteraye amrita kalasa hastaya sarva roga mayam vinasanaya maha Vishnave swaha.

Om! Prostrations oh! God Vasudeva Dhanuvantari (who) bears the pot of Ambrosia in his hands. Cure me of all my ills. O! Mahavishnu Swaha."

To give an idea of the methods prescribed in the *Dattatreya Tantra* we may notice a few of them under the several headings given above as illustratons 1. Under each head there are a number of receipes given. Śiva wisely refrains from instructing his pupil the art of *Marana* or destruction. But there are other works which treat of it exhaustively and the black magicians of Malabar practise it to some extent.

(20) *Mohanam*: or enticement as for love.

To effect this, take a few seeds of the Tuḷasi plant, the holy basel (*Ocymum Sanctum*), powder it and make a paste of it by mixing it with the juice of the tender leaves of *Poovankurunth* (*Calcalia rotundifolia*); make a mark on your forehead with this paste and the whole world will be at your feet.

(21) *Agnistambhanam.*—Immunity from the heat of fire.

Mix the fat of frog in the juice of the *Kattavazha* (*Aloe Vera*) and smear the body with it and you get perfect immunity from the heat of fire.

Masticate well a piece of dried ginger which has been already masticated once before, but now with some

1. The list is not exhaustive, nor the *mantrams* complete in all details. Even those who believe in the authenticity and efficasy of these are warned not to practise any of these nor to use the medicines except after initiation by and study under a competent preceptor. Ed,

ghee and sugar added to it, and you can safely put into your mouth a piece of red-hot iron.

A *Mantra* also is prescribed for the attainment of this power. It will be seen further on that *Mantras* are also prescribed in addition to the recipes given.

Mantra { *Om! namo Agni roopaya mama sareere sthambhanam kuru kuru swaha.*

Om! Prostrations! O! Fire make my body immune —do, do, swaha.

This has to be repeated a hundred and eight times over. Generally all these *Mantrams* have to be repeated a hundred and eight times so that they may have the desired effect.

(22) *Sasthrasthambham.*—Immunity from weapons aimed by your enemy.

Pluck the plant *Vishnukranthi*, (*Evolvutus alsinoidcs*) on a Sunday which falls on the 8th lunar asterism, (Cancer and the head of Hydra) and wear it on your head or keep it in your mouth, root, stem, leaves, and all. You can destroy every weapon aimed at you by your enemy.

Another recipe promises immunity from the attacks of wild boars, tigers, kings, robbers and enemies.

For this, place a few pieces of the root of the flower-bearing plant *Pichhaka* (*Jasminum grandiflorm*) in your mouth and you are perfectly safe from those mentioned before.

Mantra { *Om! aho Kumbhakarna maharakshasa. Niksha garbha sambhoota para saina stambhana Maha bhagavan Rudropa jayatiswaha.*

Om! Oh! the great Rudra, the possession of the six divine perfections and the one who magically stops the assailant's forces, born of the womb of the Rakshasi (wife) of the great Rakshasa named Kumbhakarna triumphs swaha.

(23) *Gomahishyadi stambhanam*—To stop the milk of cows, buffaloes, etc. Bury a piece of camel's bone

at the four corners of the cow-pen or put some camel's hair on the cow; in either case the animal will cease to give milk.

In parts of Scotland it is still believed that there are people who can cause cows to give milk or to stop them giving. In an issue of the *Chamber's Journal*[1], we read Mr. MacIver (a well known estate agent of the locality) was able to introduce Mr. Gladstone to certain people who believed that there were persons who had the power of injuring the milk of cows belonging to any one they disliked. On one occasion, the cows of Mr. Macdonald of Loch Inver ceased to give milk for a day or two. A sailor on board one of his vessels was credited with the power of restoring it. He was sent for, and said he would require an hour or two in the milk-house for the purpose. After he came out and returned to his ship, it was found that he had drunk the cream off every dish in the diary. The cows are said to have recovered in a day or two."

(24) *Jalasthambhanam.*—To solidify water.

Put into the water of a tank, etc., the medicine known as *Pathmakam* or *Pathumukham* a red coloured wood such as chappang (*Sappan, Caesalpinia*).

Mantram { *Om! namo bhagavate Rudraya jaya stambhaya stambhaya tta, tta, tta.*

Om! Prostrations: victory to the God Rudra, solidify water solidify—*tha, tha, tha.*

(25) *Vidveshana*·—separation of friends.

A dozen prescriptions are given to bring about the separation of friends. The ingredients common to all or most of them are soil trodden on by the victim and animals, birds and reptiles that are natural enemies of one another. A few of these prescriptions may be given here.

Take hold of the wings of a crow in one hand and in the other those of an owl, repeat the subjoined

1. For April 1906, at page 227.

Mantra, tie the feathers of the wings to the heads of the birds with black thread, pour on them water from the palm of your hands, and sacrifice them on the day of the 13th lunar asterism *Atham* (*Coma Berenices*). Continue this process for seven successive days.

Mantram. Om namo Narayana amukam amukena saha vidwesham kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to Narayana do, do hatred between such a one and such a one swaha.

To be repeated 108 times in all cases.

(26) *Utchatanam.*—The driving away of one from his country or village.

This may be effected by burying in the victim's house on a Sunday the wings of a crow, or by the depositing therein on a Tuesday of the two wings of an owl.

Mantrm. Om namo bhagavate Rudraya damshtra Karataya amukam saputra bandhavey saha hana hana daha daha pacha pacha seeghram uchataya uchataya sahum phat swaha ttah ttah.

Om! salutation to Rudra, having tusks and projecting teeth, kill, kill, burn, burn, and soon consume, consume, such and such a man with all his sons and relations.

(27) *Sarvajana Vaseekaranam.*—For the enticing of all men. The methods prescribed consists of forming pastes to mark your forehead with, and the giving of betel and other ingredients for your victim to chew.

Grind a piece of root of the baniyan tree in water, mix it with ashes you use to mark your forehead with, and make a mark with the paste thereon. This will draw towards you all the world.

Dry in the shade the plant *Poovamkurunnila* (*Calcaria Rotundifolia*), powder it and give it to your victim with a betel to chew.

Mantram. Om namah surva loka vasamkaraya kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to the entricer of all the worlds do, do, swaha.

(28) *Indrajalam.*—Superior jugglery, making one thing look like another, etc. Under this head, numerous prescriptions are given to make things appear different from what they really are. The feats of the Indian jugglers come under this head.

The chapter opens with the injunction that he who practises the art must take care to protect himself by means of the following:—

Mantram. Om para brahma paramatmane mama sareere pahi pahi kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to the pre-eminent Brahma and the Supreme Soul, within my body, protect, protect, do, do, swaha.

There are various methods prescribed to create illusive appearances; such as to hoodwink one's eyes, to make oneself look like an animal or a bird, a cat, an elephant, a horse, a bull, a lion, a peacock etc., to produce trees, shrubs and plants with leaves, flowers and fruits; to make the dead look alive; to produce fire, etc., etc. In most of these recipes *Ankolam* (*Alangium Hexapetalum*) finds a prominent place. An ointment is prepared out of the seeds of this tree which is used for various purposes. The process of extracting the oil is thus described: Have the powdered seed mixed with gingelly oil and dry it in the sun for 7 days, add more oil and dry it again. Repeat this process four or five times. Smear the inside of two brass vessels with this preparation and place them on another brass vessel, mouth downwards, so that the oil may ooze out of the two vessels into the third placed below. The oil that falls into the last vessel is the ointment called *Ankola Tailum.* Some of the properties of this *Tailum* are:—If you pour a drop of this oil on the face of the dead, the body will show life for three hours. Drop a

little on a mango seed and it will at once spout, put forth leaves and flowers and produce full grown fruits. Similarly with regard to other trees, plants, etc.

There is a special *mantram for* Ankōlam.

Mantram. Om ankolaya Om rah Om hreem, hreem, hreem.

Om! salutation to the Ankola tree Om! rah Om! Hreem, Hreem.

There are a number of prescriptions given which it is altogether profitless to mention, but which it is seriously asserted will produce wonderful results.

Most of the feats of legerdemain exhibited by Indian street jugglers find mention under this head.

Mantram Om! Namo Narayanaya Viswabharaya indrajala Kautukani darsaya darsaya siddhim kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to Narayana, the protector of the world, show, show, the pastimes of legerdemain, do, do, accomplishment swaha.

(29) *Rasayana.*—Alchemy. Under this head, two separate prescriptions are given to turn copper into gold, and they are curious enough. There is the special injunction that only an ardent and devoted disciple of the Guru (preceptor) should be taught these. They are unattainable even to the gods and should therefore be preserved as great secrets.

Take in equal quantities cow's urine, *Aritharam*, sulphor and *manola* (red arsenic); mix and grind them together till they become dry; do pūja to it for 11 days, offering incense, milk, etc., repeating the *mantra* given below. After the 11 days are over, form it into a pill, wrap it in a piece of cloth and cover it up with clay. Dry it then in the shade, dig a pit on the ground and raise fire in it, deposit it in this and cover it up with firewood of *Pilsa* (*Butea Frondosa*), keep the fire burning for 24 hours (8 yāmās), collect the ashes formed by

the mixture deposited, put them into a copper vessel and place it in fire. The copper vessel will in no time be turned into gold.

Mantram. Om! namo Hari Haraya rasayanam sidhim kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to Harihara do, do, accomplishment of the *elixis vitae* swaha

(30) *Mrityukalajnanam.*—Method of ascertaining the approach of death.

Various tests are given to ascertain this.

(1) He who cannot see his nose by his own eyes is sure to meet with his death in six months, even though Brahma, the creator, may himself undertake to protect him.

(2) A man to whom one thing appears as anóther and not as it really is, for which no special reason can be assigned, will die in two months.

(3) He who fails to see the very small star *Arundhati* placed near the middle one of the constellation *Saptarshi* (*Ursa major*) towards the north, will die in 6 months though God himself undertakes to protect him.

(4) He on whose chest water dries up soon after dipping himself in a tank can live only for 6 months more.

(6) If on walking one's feet moves involuntarily without any sufficient cause, death will follow in one month; surely in a month and a half.

(6) If for two days and nights together breath passes through the right nasal aperture only, death comes in two years.

(7) If you breathe continuously for three nights through either *Eda* or *Pingala naties* alone, i. e. through the right or left nasal aperture alone, you can live only for one year more.

(8) One whose breath passes continuously for one month through the left nasal aperture alone by

night and through the right one alone by day, is sure to die in six months.

(9) He who can every day successfully stop breathing through the left nasal aperture by night and by the right one by day is indeed a *yogi*.

(31) *Anaharam*.—How to attain immunity from hunger and thirst. Grind together a few seeds of the lotus (*Nelumbium Speciosum*), *Katalati* (*Achyranthes aspera*) and of *Tulasi*, the holy basil (*ocymum sanctum*), form a pill of it and swallow it. Drink cow's milk over it and you attain perfect immunity from hunger and thirst for the day.

Grind some lotus seeds in goat's milk, add some ghee to it and take it for twelve consecutive days; you will not feel hunger after that.

Grind a few seeds of *Vayalchully*, *Vijaya*, holy basil and the root of the betel vine in goat's milk, and form a pill of it, and take one every morning as you rise from your bed. Drink some cow's milk over it and you will not feel either hunger or thirst.

(*Triloham* means the 3 metals, and they are gold, silver and copper, the proportion in which these are to be used is 10 parts of gold, 16 parts of silver and 12 parts of copper.)

Mantram. Om! namah sidhi roopaya mama sareere amritam kuru swaha.

Om; salutation to him who is all accomplishment, do do Ambrosia within my body swaha.

(32) *Nidhidarsana*.—The method of taking out treasure hidden under the earth.

Turning to the place where the treasure is known to lie hidden, take the five parts of *Nenmenivaka* (*Mimosa Sirisha*), grind it, boil it in mustard oil, add to it *Vatsa Nabhi* (*Aconitum ferox*), datura seeds, the five parts of *Arli* (*Oleander*), *Vella Cunni* (white *Alerus precatorious*), the excreta of the camel, sulphur and *manola* (red arsenic). Meanwhile repeat the *mantra* subjoined. The Rākshasas, Bhūṭas, Vēṭālas, Dēvas, Asurās, Serpents—all will give up the treasure they

guard, and run away as if from fear of battle; you can then conveniently take the treasure without any hindrance whatever.

Mantram. Om namo vighna vinasaya nidhi graham kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to the destroyer of obstructions do, do obtainment of treasure swaha.

(33) *Vandhya garbhadharanam.*—How to make the barren woman bear.

Barren woman are said to be of three classes:—viz.

(1) *Janma Vandhya.* She who has not borne at all.

(2) *Kakavandhya.* She who has borne once but not after.

(3) *Mritavatsa.* She who loses her child soon after it is born, or within 15 days, one month, or one year, after birth.

With respect to the first class:

(a) Take a leaf of *Plasa* (*Butea Frondosa*), make it into the form of a cup and let the barren woman drink out of it for seven days consecutively at the end of her periods human milk taken from the breasts of a pregnant woman. She should confine her diet to milk, rice, and such other things easy to digest.

(b) Let the woman take for seven days during her menses the berry of *Rudraksham* (*Elaocarpus lanceolatus*) and 105 grains of *Chittaratha* (*Alpina galanga*) ground in cow's milk.

(c) Let her take the root of *Kozhinjil* (*Galega Colonila*) ground in cold water 105 grains weight.

(d) Pluck the plant *poovankurunnila* (*Calecaria rotundifolia*) on a Sunday falling on the 8th lunar asterism, dry the hole plant in the shade, powder it and let the woman take it in the milk of a cow of a single colour. The barren woman will certainly bear children.

With respect to the socond class:

(a) Let the woman take a mixture of *Vishnukranti* (*Evolvulus alsinoides*) ground in buffaloe's milk, with the butter made out of buffaloe's milk, for seven days during her periods.

(b) Let her take for seven days the root of *Amukiram* (*physales flexnosa*) ground in buffaloe's milk, half a *palam* weight. She will bear a child who will live long.

Mantram. Onnama sakthirupaya asya grehe putram kuru kuru swaha.

Om! salutation to him who is all sakti do do son in this house swaha.

With respect to the third class:

Let the woman take a mixture of the root of *katalati* (*Achyranthes aspera*) and *Lakshanamoolam* ground in the milk of cow of a single colour on an auspicious lunar asterism. She will bear and bring forth a child who will live long.

Mantram. Om paramam Brahma paramatmane amukee garbhe deerghajeevi sutam kuru kuru swaha

Om! salutation to the supreme Brahma the supreme soul. In the womb of such and such a woman do do a long living son swaha.

(34) *Vajeekaranam.*—The subjects dealt with under this head are not fit for mention here. So we pass on to

(35) *Kesaranjanam.*—How to turn grey hair into jet black.

Prepare a medicated oil by boiling the flower of *Vishnukranti* (*Evolvulous alsinoides*) in castor oil and apply it to the head. Grey hair will turn into black.

Grind together the dross of iron, *Chempparithippu* (*Hibiscus Rosa sinensis*) and the astringent fruit *Nellikka* (*Phyllanthus Emblica*) and apply to it to the head on three days successively. This will turn grey hair into black and retain the blackness for three months.

To turn grey hair into black and retain the black colour for all time: Prepare a medicated oil by mixing the juice of the plantain in equal quantity of gingelly oil and boil in it the shoe flower, *Triphala*, i. e., *Katukka* (*Terminalia chelula*), *Nellikka* (*Phyllanthus embelica*) and *Tannikka* (*Terminalia belerica*) and apply it to the head for seven days.

(36) *Bhootagrahanivarnan.*—The means of keeping off evil spirits, etc., that generally torment children.

Pluck on a Sunday the flower and leaves of *Vaka* (*Acacia odoratissima*), add to it the excreta of the owl, dog and cat, also camel's hair, cow-dung, sulphur, and *Vella Kunnikkurru* the seed of *glycyrehiza*. Boil these in oil extracted from *Patavalam* seeds, (*Trichosanthes docca*). Fumigate the house with this, repeating the following *mantra*. The devils will be driven away.

Mantram. Om! namah smasana vasine bhootaai palayanam kuru kuru swaha.

Om! Salutation to him who lives in a cemetery do do the driving away of spirits and the like swaha.

Put into an earthen pot the root of the *Erikka* (*Calotropis gigantea*), *Ummam* (*Datura*), *Katalati* (*Achyranthes aspera*), *Karuka* (*Agrostis linearis*), *Peral* (*Ficus religiosa*), *and Arayal* (*ficus religiosa*) the leaves of the *Agni Vriksham* (*Fire tree*). *Athi* (*ficus racemosa*) and mango tree. Add the following:—ghee, milk, raw rice, *Payaru*, (*Dolichus catjang*), *CheruPayaru* (*Phasmungo*), *Gothanpu* (*wheat*), *Ella* (*sesam*), cow's urine, white mustard, Darbha, (the holy grass *Poacynos uroides*), sandalwood, honey; mix them all together and bury it at the foot of a *ficus riligiosa* tree at dusk on a Saturday. Every evil spirit in the house will be removed. So also poverty and sins. The household will be long lived. There will be no more troubles.

(37) *Simhavyaghravrichikadinasanam.*—To avoid attacks from lions, tigers, scorpions. When you meet with a lion, repeat the *Namaskara Mantra* again and again. The king of beasts will run away.

Mantram. Om! namah agniroopaya hreem namah.

Om! Salutation to him who has the form of fire, hreem salutation.

One would rather avoid meeting the king of beasts than meet him and try the experiment.

Again, wear on your right hand a piece of the root of the white *Erikku* (*Culotropis gigantea*) on a Sunday falling on the 8th lunar asterism. There will be no more trouble from lions. To aovid troubles from tigers: On an auspicious day get the root of the Datura plant and wear it on your right arm.

To avoid scorpion stings: Keep in your right ear the root of *Katalati* (*Achyranthes aspera*) on an auspicious day.

To avoid serpent bites: On the day of the 8th lunar asterism (*Pooyam*), pluck the root of *Chittamrita* (*menispermum glabram*) make a garland of it and wear it round your neck.

(38) *Agnibhayanivaranm.*—To remove fear from fire:

Take some water in your hands and pour it seven times into the midst of the fire, repeating the following *mantra*. The fire will at once abate.

Mantram. Uttarasyanchadigbhage mareecho nama rakshasah tasya mootra pureeshabheyam hute vanhi stambhah swaha.

In the North, there is a demon named Māreecha when his urine and ordure are burnt as oblations, fire is magically stopped. Swaha.

To avoid troubles from fire: Take a piece of the root of *Velutha Arli* (*White Oleander*) and wear it on your right hand.

We have observed that the *Dattatreya Tantra* does not deal with the first head māraṇa. This primarily means destruction. But it includes within it also all the methods that are compassed by the magician to do injury to others, bodily and mental, of whatever nature. The *Odi* cult stands foremost, if practised properly, as

the one prominent and certain method of taking away the life of your enemy. There is scarcely anything written on the system. It is practised almost exclusively by the Parayers who stand outside the pale of Hindu caste and whose proximity carries pollution to one of any superior caste within about a furlong. The practice is hereditary, and it is not always that an outsider is admitted into the fraternity. Even those within the charmed circle have to go through a rather trying novitiate before they can practise *odi*. To an outsider a more trying ordeal is assigned. The latter have to prove themselves worthy to join the fraternity. Some of the ordeals prescribed are utterly filthy and abominable even to a Paraya. Mr. Fawcett, on the authority of Mr. U. Balakrishnan Nayar, gives the following account of the novitiate the apprentice has to undergo.

"It is their trials as novices, terrifying and utterly filthy, which are truly difficult. Members of the brotherhood are bound to secrecy by solemn oaths, and the secrets of their craft are not allowed lightly to pass to an outsider. A member of the brotherhood may have one or more disciples or apprentices who are in the first place bound to strict obedience. These apprentices fill vacancies in the brotherhood.

"He who would be a member of the *Odi* cult falls at the feet of him whom he would have as master and begs for initiation into the mysteries. The master tries to dissuade him, but the would-be Oṭiyan persists; and then, when assent is given, comes the trial. He follows his master to a lonely place by night. The master disappears in mist and then reappears as some terrible beast, now standing still, now rushing furiously towards the novice as if to tear him to pieces. If he stands still and imperturbed, the novice is considered to have fulfilled *that* test. He is then required to pass the night alone in the forest which he is made to believe is peopled with strange beings

howling horribly. When he has satisfied the master that he is not afraid, he is subjected to other tests, and he is eventually accepted as a novice. He is introduced formally into the brotherhood on a certain selected day when, having invited them to a feast, pūja is made to the dread spirit worshipped by them. Ñīli of Kalladikōde or Kalladikode Ñīli as she is called (Kalladikode is the place name) through whose aid the *Odiyan* works his devilment. Flesh and liquor are consumed and the novice is taught how to procure the magical *Pilla thilam* (Infant oil)."

The preparation of *Pilla thilam* is described by the author of the *Cochin Tribes and Castes*.

By means of this *thilam*, the *Odiyan* claims to work wonders. He can make himself invisible. He can transform himself into the shape of any animal whose form he wants to assume. In this way he effects his nefarious purpose by waylaying his victim in the dark. It is also said that, by the powerful agency of this *thilam* and by the potency of his *mantram*, he can compel his victim to come out of his house stupified and, while in that condition, the victim is put to death with a hard blow on the medulla or by suffocating him to death with two sticks pressed on his neck. *Odi* literally means breaking and what the *Odiyan* does is really breaking the human body.

There are several methods pointed out in works on *Mantravadam* to cause injury to your fellow being. The practice of this is called *Kshudraprayogam* (working evil with the aid of low genii).

A figure representing the victim to be destroyed is drawn on a small sheet of metal, gold by preference, and to it are added some mystic diagrams. It is then addressed stating that bodily injury or death of the person shall take place at a certain time. This little sheet is wrapped up in another metal sheet or leaf (gold if possible) and buried in some place where the person to be injured or destroyed usually passes; and should

he pass over the place, it is supposed the charm will have effect at the time named. Instead of the little sheet of metal, there is sometimes buried a live frog or lizard, after sticking nails into its eyes and stomach. It is buried within a cocoanut shell, and the death of the person and the animal are supposed to happen simultaneously. Another favourite form is to bury an earthen pot under the threshold of the house of the person who is the object of hatred. The pot is filled with human hair, flowers, charcoal, bones, etc., and a small silver, brass or copper plate with cabalistic figures and characters, to which pūja had been made for a number of days is always added, and sometimes an effigy of the victim as well. If the victim crosses and recrosses the threshold a number of times, it is believed he will be destroyed or paralysed for life or subjected to other maladies.

To cause pains in the body of another: A *mantram* is written on the stem of the *Kaitha* (*Pandanus odoratissimus*). The stem should be of the length of eight fingers. A figure representing the person to be injured is also drawn on the stem. A hole is bored to represent the navel. The *mantram* is repeated and at each repetition a certain thorn *Kara mullu* (*Canthium parviflorum*) is fixed into the limbs of the figure. The name of the person and of the star under which he was born are written on a piece of cadjan leaf, which is stuck into the hole representing the navel. The thorns are stuck in 21 times, i.e., removed and replaced 21 times. Two magic circles are drawn below the nipple on the figure. The stem is then hung up in the smoke of the kitchen. A pot of toddy and some other accessories are procured and with these certain rites are performed by the magician. When he concludes them, he moves three steps backwards. He shouts aloud thrice fixing in again the thorns, thinking all the while of the particular mischief with which he would afflict the person to be injured. When all this has been done, the person whose figure has been drawn on the stem and pricked with thorns is

supposed to feel pain as if he were being pricked with thorns.

There are also means prescribed to counteract the evils caused by the above practices. Elaborate rituals are set forth for this purpose. What is popularly known as *Sathru Idukkal*, i.e., the removal of enemical objects is of frequent occurrence in Malabar. The magician, after the performance of various weired rites, falls into a trance, shouts, shivers and shakes himself very much, and proceeds to find out the instruments of magic deposited by your enemy within the precincts of your house and garden. Cabalistic figures, animals, birds and reptiles, such as the head of a dead cat, fowl, a lizard, a serpent, a frog are unearthed from places almost impossible of access to strangers. Bed rooms, door steps, courtyards, kitchens, the beds of tanks and wells are dug up, and a number of these magical appliances are brought up from beneath the earth. After removal of them, the evil spirits sent by your enemy are fully propitiated and you begin once more to run smoothly the even course of your life.

Mr. V. Nagam Aiya supplies us with some interesting information regarding the way in which the evil machinations of those who practise *Kshudraprayogam* against any one are counteracted. He derived his information from a Śūdra servant of his who had to put himself to an expense of 200 fanams (Rs. 28) which in his case was a serious drain, to rid himself of the ill effects of a wicked sorcery of some unknown enemy against himself and his wife. "He read out to me" says Mr. Nagam Aiya a list of expenses incurred by him for the purpose, on the recommendation of eminent exorcists in his village, and it is gratifying to note that the poor man and his wife feel considerable relief after the exorism was gone through. The list of *Samanams* (things) prepared for exorcism is long and contained a varied assortment. The act of exorcism is called *yethir—er*, literally a return pelt or a hit at the enemy. The ceremony consists of Pūja to Gaṇapaṭi,

a *homam* of jack-wood faggots, medicinal herbs, bazaar medicines, roots, grains, fruits, honey, ghee, dried cocoanuts, peacock feathears, cottonseed, vegetable stuffs, horns of different kinds, eggs, spices, etc. At the conclusion of the *homam* is the sacrifice of two cocks finishing up with an illumination of lighted wicks and torches. The list includes all the articles required for the several stages of the ceremony. The object is to secure the house-holder and his family against the machinations of evil spirits set up by enemies. These beliefs are almost universal and are acted upon by more than 95 per cent of our people. Even the educated man is not free from the beliefs he has inherited from ages past.[1]

Another subject which requires mention is the method of casting off evil spirits. Astrology is the hand-maid of magic, and it is by the aid of the former that the latter attains its end. It is the Kaṇiān or astrolger who is consulted when anything goes wrong. He at once divines by means of the art he practises how matters stand and points out the remedy. The magician now steps in and applies his art to bring about the desired result.

It is generally nervous and hysterical women who are subject to demoniacal influences. An evil spirit may have been bribed to enter into the body of a woman and torment her, or a *Gandharva* (a heavenly spirit) may have become enamoured of a beautiful woman and subjected her to his lustful embraces. The spirits have to be driven out and the expert magician is called in to do so just as one would call in a doctor to cure a patient of his illness. The following passages, extracted from the Ethnological Survey of the Cochin State gives us some idea of the means resorted to, to drive out the spirits.

"Sometimes sacrificial fires (*homam*) in honour of the deity, Ganapathy are also offered for the relief from

1. Vol II. pp. 66 to 69.

it. In some cases the demon can be located in trees. A devil-driver with the aid of his Mantrams makes it reside in a pot which is buried underneath a large stone by the side of a river or a large stream. A woman who is possessed by a demon can be relieved from it by one of the following methods, namely, (1) by causing it to appear in the person who makes some involuntary movements, and making it depart by offerings ; (2) by growing sacrificial fires and (3) by transferring it to some other body. The first of the methods above referred to is described here. The magician who is invited to cast out the devil is furnished with everything he requires for the performance of the ceremony. He chooses a spot either in the house, or outside it in the courtyard and purifies it with water mixed with cowdung. This spot is scattered over with burned ashes over which the *yantram* (cabalastic figure) is drawn, the several portions of which are coloured yellow, green, red, black and white powder. He writes on each portion, a letter of the Gāyaṭri which he mutters at the same time. He also puts on it some rice and flower. Over this, he places a piece of cloth, three betel leaves and an areca nut. Close to it on a small pedestel are placed a few pieces of small plantain leaves with rice and flower on them. A few drops of water are also sprinkled thereon and he mutters the *Mantram*, *Jala-gandha-pushpa-dhoopena Namah* (Salutation with water, frankincense, flowers, aromatic vapour and light).

"A few flowers and some sandal are thrown over the *yantram*. Frankincense is burned and a light is waved in front of it. A lighted lamp is burned at the side of it. The possessed woman is bathed and dressed in a new garment and allowed to take her seat on a plantain leaf with her face towards the east. Muttering the *Gayatri Mantram* and throwing some holy ashes (*Bhasmam*) on her head, he gives her some rice and flower to wave round her head three times and directs her to put them on the figure with a prayer that

she may be relieved from the demonaical possession. With pious meditations on the deity and his guru he mutters the *Mantram*,

Om! Brahma, Rishi, Gayatri Chandah, Kandha Karno Devata, Kandha Karna Viroopaksha Sarvopadrava Nasana Vivakanga Jayam Praptha Raksha Rakshamahabaho Phul Swahah.

Translation.—Of this Mantra of the great Kandakaruna, Brahma is the Rishi, Gayitri is the metre, Kandakarunan is the Deity (God). He is requested to cure her of the demonaical possession.

The woman holds a flower of the areca palm. The magician's desciples at the time, sing songs, keeping time either with beating on a bell-metal or with a tabor and the woman puts the rice and flower on the figure."

The following is the substance of the songs sung.

"As the Devas were oppressed by the Asuras, and as they were not able to perform their daily religious rites they requested the aid of Siva and began to praise him. From his third and sparkling eye came, Kāli in her terrible aspects clad in silk and black skin, with anklets round her feet, with snakes round her neck, and armed with many weapons in her hands, she stood at the gate of the giant Dārīka and called him to battle. His head was at last severed from his body and thrown on earth. His body was burst open by his own sword and the blood which he drank was received in his shield, and his intestines completely eaten. His bones were broken to pieces. As Kali was joyfully returning after the victory, Siva thought that he would be smashed by her. He appeared to her in the form of a bright ire. The goddess stood amazed. May my salutation be to such deity."

Again. "Salutation by me to Narayana, Ganapathy, Parabramham, the tutelary deity, the preceptor and the great sages, who are represented by the symbolic letters of *Hari Sri Ganapathaye Namah.*

"The possessed woman at this stage becomes excited at the musical tunes and utterance of the *mantrams*. The demon is supposed to make its appearance in her body which is thrown into convulsive movements. The frenzied demonaic seems to be tossed and shaken in, ever pained and wrenched as though some living creature were tearing or twisting her from within till she becomes subdued by the exorcist. The devil-driver pretending to have the power to control the demon, asks her the name of the demon living in her body. If she remains silent, he beats her with a cane, believing that his thrashing may affect the demon and not the woman. Sometimes he catches hold of her hair and ties a knot, muttering a *mantram*. This done, the demon speaks through her, and promises to leave her for ever on receipt of the offerings. At once the magician brings a lamp and makes him swear thus: "By me, by thee, by Kali, by Markandeya, I depart from this body." This said, the woman lies prostrate in a swoon. The magician utters the *Jiva prathishta mantram*, and sprinkles some water on her and the woman recovers her consciousness.

Mantram. Om! Jivaya Jiva Prathishtaya Pranaya Pratishtaya Mantram Patatha Markanda Maharishi yana Phalikka Muzhuvanum Phalikka swaha.

O! Markendeya, may thy Mantram be effectual in bringing her back to life and help her for complete relief from the possession of the demon.

"He next performs what is called *Gurisikotukkuka* (giving water with lime and turmeric dissolved in it). Small pieces of plantain leaves, each two inches in breadth are placed on a *chakram* (*yantram*) with 64 divisions made of the bark of the plantain tree. Over the bark at regular intervals are stuck pieces of cocoanut leaves and lighted torches. The magician takes it in his hand, singing songs in praise of Kāli and places it on the ground. He then takes a few vessels

filled with rice flour, toddy and arrack and the *gurusi* is mixed with the blood of a fowl or two which are intended as offerings for evil demons."

Then a song, the substance of which is as follows, is sung: "I am here giving the origin of the cock and he hen. When the great giant Mahishasura requested Brahma for a boon, and was returning home, the sword of Kali touching the body of the giant caused the blood to fall on earth in two drops which became a cock and a hen. The flap of his face, and lips were as red as red hot charcoal and the eyes as convex as the belly. O! Kali, mayest thou come and drink the blood of the hen held in my left hand and killed with the sword in my right hand, as it came running joyfully.

"The *Chakram* is then taken either to a spot where several roads meet, on to the side of a river or a canal at 3 in the morning and placed there. The *gurusi* is poured on the ground. A big torch is lighted and the rice flour scattered on the ground. He extinguishes the torch and returns home.

"Sometimes the above *Mantrams* are dispensed with. The figures of demons are drawn and the songs in praise of Kali sung for devil driving. All kinds of disease are believed to be caused by spirits of deceased men. They are cured by the performance of elaborate ceremonies and offerings to propitiate them. Charms are also worn to ward off their attack. They believe in oracular manifestations. [1]

"Ṭōluzhiyuka and *Beliyuzhiyuka* are two other ceremonies usually performed for the removal of spells. Mr. Logan gives the following description from an account furnished him 'from a trustworthy source'

"Besides this, two other methods called *Tolulika* (a ceremony for removing different sins and punishments by throwing them with leaves into the fire) and *Beliyulika* (a ceremony performed by waving a basket

1. Monograph No. 10, pp. 33—39.

of flowers round a possessed person), are also adopted in the case of human beings, and the mode of performing it is as follows: First a lighted lamp and a nazhi (a wooden vessel containing half a seer) filled with rice are kept in the verandah or in the yard of a house. On the north-east corner of it a representation of *Kala Bhyravan* (a demon) with its head towards the south and feet towards the north, is made in five colours, viz. white, yellow, green, red and black. Rice cleaned and uncleaned, tender cocoanut, plantains, powdered rice, fried grain, betel leaf, arecanut, etc., are placed on all the four sides of it. A *Kypandi* (a triangle made with plantain rind and young cocoanut leaves cut and stuck upon it in rows) having *Kanikkali* (saffron and chunam mixed with water and made after the fashion of a gruel) sprinkled over it, is placed on the east, red *gurusi* (water made red by mixing a little saffron and chunam with it) and reddened, cocoanut on the north, and black *gurusi* (water mixed with charcoal) and a blackened cocoanut on the south, of the said representations. After modes of adoration have been done to these, *Piniyal* (the person on whom exorcism is being practised) proceeds with three betel leaves and three pieces of arecanut, rice and wick in the right hand and with a knife in the other, and goes three times round the said representation and then standing on the west of it, facing towards the east holds out the knife three times against the representation, and cuts three times across it, and at last sticks the knife in its right eye, and then sits down. After this a wick is placed in the Kypandi, one in the red *gurusi*, and a third on the reddened cocoanut after singing hymns in praise of Kali, and wicks are similarly placed in black *gurusi* and on the blackened cocoanut after singing hymns in praise of *Gulikan* (son of Saturn, the ruler of fatal hours). Then either the person who performs the ceremony or any body else takes one handful of the leaves of *Iranynyi* (a tree) and one handful of those of *nochchi* (a shrub), and having caused *Piniyal* to keep a wick

upon them for avoiding the evil eye, keeps them aside. Again one man takes one handful and a second another handful of the said leaves and stand on each side of the *Piniyal* and rub with them from the head to the feet of the *Piniyal*, when *Bharatam* ought to be sung. This ought to be that portion of the *Bharatam* called *Nilal-kuttu* which relates the story of the *Pandus* who were troubled by *Curus* by means of a sorcery. At the end of each verse, the said leaves ought to be tied mixed with salt, chillies, mustard seed, gingelly seed, etc. and burned in fire prepared with jack wood; a piece of iron is also placed in the fire. At the end of the four verses in this manner *Pandi* and *gurusi* are thrown aside having due hymns sung by the person who performs the ceremony. After this, the body of the *Piniyal* is anointed with the ground root of a medicinal plant called Panal mixed with gingelly oil. The said piece of iron is then taken out of the fire and placed in front of the *Piniyal*, and the performer takes in his hands the smoke that bursts out by pouring upon it water mixed with gingelly and lamp oil, and rubs the body of the *Piniyal* with it. A cocoanut is then placed in front of the *Piniyal*, having two wicks one across the other upon it. The *Piniyal* then crosses the cocoanut three times forward and backward, with a knife in the right hand and with a lighted wick in the other, and then sets fire to the wicks already placed on the cocoanut. The *Piniyal* then attempts three times to cut the cocoanut with the knife, and at the fourth time cuts it into two pieces, and then destroys the said representation with the hands and puts a mark on the forehead. Thus it ends.

"This is generally performed for males just before their first marriage and also when they appear to be subject to such injuries as those already mentioned. This is done for females also on the day previous to the Pumsavana (a ceremony generally observed by them in the fifth, seventh, or ninth month of their first

pregnancy). It is also performed for females who are afflicted with barrenness".[1]

When a person is ill, the following *mantram* is muttered and some ashes thrown on the patient in the full belief that it will cure him more easily and much more efficaciously than any medicine that the doctor can administer.

Bhasma sthanathu nityam Sasidhara mritu Sindhu moksham jangarthena tulyam sakala jana sukham Parvatheesam namame.

What this jargon means it is difficult to make out. One can only say that it is a jumble of Sanskrit words strung together with Malayalam endings.

Sometimes the magician takes a thread and makes several knots, muttering the following *Mantra* as the knots are tied. The thread is worn round the neck or tied round the waist of the person obsessed. It is also intended to save one from evil spirits, sickness, etc.

Om! Namo bhagavate, atiyil anantan, mutiyil simham, mooladharathu Sri Garudan, etathu Lakshmanan, valathu Sri Raman, munpinne Hanuman, piraku Ravanan, chuttum mattum keezhum Sri Narayanan kavalayirikka swaha.

This *mantram* is in the Malayalam language but it will be observed that it contains the names of Puranic deities. It may be thus translated: "Salutation to God. May Serpent Ananta below, a lion on the head, in the Mooladhara (the lowest of the yogic sṭānoms or places in the human body) Garuda (the lord of birds, the Brahmanic kite), on the left Lekshmana, Rama to the right, Hanuman in front, Ravana behind and all round, above, below, everywhere Sree Nārāyana, guard Swaha".

Malabar is a country full of charms—not simply in the sense that its scenery, its old-world manners and customs, its womankind, etc., are all charming but

1. Logan's *Manual*, pp. 175 to 177.

also in the sense that there most men and women wear on their body magical charms believed powerful to work good as well as to avoid evil. A domestic animal is ill or a cow or goat, does not milk: at once a magician will be called in to have a charm prepared for the animal to wear. Similarly with men and women who are either ill or suspected to be possessed. Charms are of many kinds, and each one is dedicated to a separate spirit, often of the beneficently inclined class. Geometrical figures are drawn on sheets of metal plate, gold is always preferred, and the *Mantra* peculiar to the spirit invoked, is written on them. These are then rolled up and enclosed in a small cylindrical case made of gold or silver and worn round the neck or waist. These charms are called *yentrams*. They are also at times written on palmyra leaves with an iron style. The *yentrams* are named after the *mantrams* inscribed on the leaf and enclosed in the receptacle.

(1) *Triambakam.* (2) *Purushasuktam.* (3) *Sampadasuktam.* (4) *Muktiyasatakshari.* (5) *Sree Suktam.* (6) *Muktapanchakam.* (7) *Gayatri.* (8) *Beeja Ganapathi.* (9) *Dhanvantari.* (10) *Sree Raman.* (11) *Ashtadesakshari.* (12) *Santana Gopalam.* (13) *Narasimham.* (14) *Sudarsanam.* (15) *Hanuman.* (16) *Swayamvaram.* (17) *Aswaroodam.* (18) *Panchakshari.* (19) *Asvarudha.* (20) *Santi Durga.* (21) *Karta veeraarjunayentram* are the names of a few of them.

There can be no *Yentram* without a *Mantram*. In fact it is the *mantram* that lends efficacy to the *yentram*. The ceremonies, the rituals, the accessories and paraphernalia paraded in the practice of the *Mantravada* are all subordinate to the *Mantram*. It is the *mantram* that has to be properly studied and properly repeated. The methods of reciting and using them have to be studied under the guidance of a *Guru* or spiritual preceptor. A *mantram* must be uttered, breathed, whispered with extreme accuracy. There must be no omission, no false accent, no mispronunciation; anything of the kind destroys its efficacy. It has to be repeated while sitting in certain settled *Yogic*

postures (*Asana* such as *Padmasana*, *Koormasana*, etc.), which itself has to be studied with great care. A Yōgi who has gone through the several stages could wield the *mantra* with greater effect than one who has only studied the *mantra* by heart and could repeat it like a parrot. We have already seen that the *mantravadi* calls in the aid of most of the Brahman divinities and it will also be noticed that the *mantras* by which they are invoked are all or mostly in the Sanskrit language. Minor spirits and especially the evil ones, are of Dravidian origin and are addressed in the Malayalam language. There are works on *Mantravadam* which contain *mantrams* that show a commingling of the two languages of which we have already furnished an example. Those *mantras* in Sanskrit to which the mystic word *Om* is prefixed and which end with the word *Swaha* and to which a *Rishi*, a *Chandas* and a *Devata* are assigned may invariably be taken as of Aryan origin. The Dravidian *mantrams*, besides being in the Malayalam language, have their accompaniments in elaborate ceremonies of an unsavoury nature. While the Aryan *Yentrams* are almost exclusively in the form of geometrical figures, the Dravidian ones, not seldom, partake of the nature of the figures of their deities. The Aryan *yentrams* will be found illuminated with the mystic signs of *Sakti*, *Swastikam*, *Padmam*, etc., besides showing the *beejaksharam* or the first syllable of the *mantram* to which the *yentram* belongs.

The belief in the efficacy of *Mantram* is justified by some on scientific grounds but it is beyond our scope to go into the question here. The following, however, is the explanation as to mesmeric and mantraic cures offered by a Theosophist.

"It is a well-ascertained fact that by means of mesmerism hundreds of thousands have been cured, and by using the will power, people given up for years by physicians as incurable have gone on living, despite professional prognostications. As to the recitation of

mantrams producing an immediate relief, this is quite a different thing. We cannot call their effect mesmerism, since the curative agency in that is an anima, aura, force or fluid in one person, by means of which a peculiar action is set up in the physical system of another whether without or with direct contact. We confess we do not see how anything of that kind—we mean a nervous fluid or force—can be said to reside in a *mantram*, even as a potentiality since a *mantram* is simply a recitation of certain verses held sacred among the Hindus. Yet, if repeated loudly and after a certain rule of phonetics, i. e., chanted in a peculiar way, we do not know why the resultant sound could not possess as curative a power in itself as a mesmeric force. The latter is neither, more ponderable nor more visible, than the former and is certainly not audible, which sound is. If the dulcet tones of a flute have been known to soothe and in many instances to arrest for a considerable time the throbbings of the nerves in fits of sciatica—why not the rhythmic sounds of a Sanskrit *mantram*? The forefathers of many Brahmans, if not the latter themselves—must have certainly known more of the mystery of sound than Professor Tyndall, even though that learned gentleman has succeeded in drawing musical sounds from fire and imponderable gases" [1].

Writing of the efficacy of the geometrical figure, the five-pointed star, in cases of bites and stings of poisonous insects, etc., Babu Kedarnath Basu says:—

"I am of opinion that the Aryans introduced very judiciously signs, mystical incantations and so forth in connection with their magnetic manipulations, to secure the belief and faith of ignorant people who would not have otherwise relied upon their efficacy. It is the innate nature of ignorant people and savages to attribute the cause of cures of diseases to miracles wrought by

1. *Esoteric Hinduism*, Book I, page 111—112.

charms or other supernatural means and this peculiarity is seen all over the world. The Āryans to satisfy and suit the low mental capacities of such people introduced cabalistic signs and *mantras* or mystical incantations and sundry other processes, merely to secure the patient's faith and belief which materially assist the manipulating process towards the cure of maladies. Therefore it cannot be said that the whole mystery and philosophy lie on the cabalistic signs or mantras, themselves, but on the magnetic manipulations and will-power evinced in effecting them."

Speaking of the Pentagram, which when drawn over the part affected is alleged to relieve pain from scorpion sting, Madame Blavatsky says in the Theosophist:—

"Like the six-pointed star which is the figure of the Macrocosm, the five-pointed star has its own deep symbolic significance, for it represents the microcosm. The former—the 'double triangle' composed of two triangles respectively white and black—crossed and interlaced (our society's symbol)—known as a sign of Visṇu in India—is made to represent the universal spirit and matter, one white point, which symbolises the former ascending heavenward, and the two points of its black triangle inclining earthward. The Pentagram also represents spirit and matter, but only as manifested upon earth emblem of the microcosm or the ("little universe") faithfully mirroring in itself the macrocosm (or the great Cosmos), it is the sign of the supermacy of human intellect or spirit over brutal matter"

"The explanation given by the Theosophists for the occasional success obtained in relieving pain (such as scorpion-bites) by the application of the Pentagram —a success by the bye which with the knowledge of the cause producing it might with some persons become permanent and sure—is a little less supernatural, and rejects every theory of "spirit agency accomplishing it

whether these spirits be claimed human or elemental. True the five-pointed shape of the star has something to do with it as will be now explained, but it depends on and is fully subservient to the chief agent in the operation, the alpha and omega of the magical force—Human will. All the paraphernalia of ceremonial magic—perfumes, vestments, inscribed hieroglyphics and nummeries are good ; but for the beginner, the neophyte, his powers have to be developed, his mental attitude during the operations defined and his will educated by concentrating it on such symbols" .

"What is in a sign?' will our readers ask. 'No more than in a name'—we shall reply. Nothing except that as said above it helps to concentrate the attention, hence to nail the will of the operator to a certain point. It is the magnetic or mesmeric fluid flowing out of the finger's ends of the hand tracing the figure which cures or at least stops the acute pain in benumbing the nerves and not the figure *per se*. And yet there are some proficients who are able to demonstrate that the five-pointed star, whose points represent the five cardinal limbs or those channels of man—the head, the two arms and the two legs—from whence the mesmeric currents issue the strongest, the simple tracing of that figure (a tracing produced with far more efficacy with the finger ends than with ink, chalk or pencil) helped by a strong desire to alleviate pain will very often force out unconsciously the healing fluid from all these extremities with far more focce than it otherwise would. Faith in the figure is transformed into intense will, and the latter into energy; and energy from whatsoever feeling or cause it may proceed, is sure to rebound somewhere and strike the place with more or less force; and naturally enough that place will be the locality upon which the attention of the operator is at that moment concentrated and hence—the cure attributed by the self-ignorant mesmeriser to the Pentagram" [1] .

1. *Esoteric Hinduism*, Book I pp. 112 to 114.

11. **Days of luck and of ill-luck.** [1] The days on which the following lunar asterisms fall are considered auspicious days to start on a journey.—

Aswati (1st), Rohini (4th), Makeeram (5th), Punartham (7th), Pooyam (8th), Utram (12th), Atham (13th), Choti (15th), Anizham (17th), Utradam (21st), Tiruvonam (22nd), Avittam (23rd), Chathayam (24th), Utrattathi (26th), Eravathi (27th), Mulam (19th),- in all 16 days.

Of these, Uṭrāṭam and Ṭiruvōṇam are inauspicious days to start for a journey towards the east; Uṭṭraṭṭāṭi and Aśwaṭi towards the south, Rōhiṇi and Pūyam towards the west; Uṭram and Aṭṭam towards the north.

The traveller should in no case start on the day on which his natal star falls to any place. Of the week days—do not start on a Sunday towards the east, on a Tuesday towards the south-east; on a Thursday towards the south; on a Wednesday towards the south-west; on a Friday towards the west; on a Saturday towards the northwest; and on a Monday towards the north.

No one should return to his house on the 9th day or on the 9th month after leaving it. Women should avoid Fridays for starting on a journey.

One should not undertake any monetary transaction on the following days of the lunar asterism—Kārṭika (3rd) Uṭram (12th) Mūlam (19th) Makam (10th) Chiṭṭira (14th) Revaṭi (27th).

The money that you advance on these days will never return to you. And what is more any additional money you may have in hand will also be lost for ever.

A Malayāli forecasts the result of his mission by taking note of the first object he meets on setting out of his house.

If on starting on his errand, he meets with a good *Sakuna* (omen) he is sure of success. If however, he meets with bad omens, he at once retraces his steps;

1. See *South-Indian Customs* by Mr. V. Jagadisa Ayyar.

but if he persists and proceeds onward, his belief is that he would be disappointed.

Good Omens.—The following are considered auspicious objects and sounds good to be seen and heard when one sets out on a mission or journey:—

The sound produced by an Indian lute, a flute, a tabor, a conch, a kettle-drum, a drum; joyful music, a well-shaped woman, a harlot, curdled milk, pigment of rice, saffron and lime, sugar-cane and things of that sort,; sandalwood, a vessel filled with holy water, flowers, a garland, fruits, a virgin, a bell, a light lotus flower.

Another list of such objects is:—

An intoxicating drink, raw flesh, earth, a corpse, a burning light, pigment of rice, etc., as above, ghee, sandalwood, white flowers, a pair of Brahmans, plantain, a harlot, curdled milk, honey, sugar-cane, an elephant, a litter, a horse, a palankin, a Raja, an ox or a cow with rope round its neck.

The following are considered as objects of ill omen, so that if any of these confront any one when he sets out on a journey, the purpose of his trip, it is supposed, would not be realised:—

Ashes, fuel, oils, an ass, a broomstick, a winnow, holy grass, a buffalo, an ox, sesam, salt, rope, buttermilk, an axe, a *sitikan* i.e., one of a class of Nayars who officiate as priest at the obsequies of other class Nayars, a convict, a barber, any one with a physical defect, a widow, a serpent, iron, a beggar, a cat, flowers used at the obsequial ceremony of Nayars.

Mr. Logan furnishes us with a list of objects and sounds which are generally considered as good and bad omens and it is as follows:—

"*Good Omens*—The sight of such birds as crows, cock and pigeons, etc., and beasts as deer, etc., moving from left to right, and dogs and jackals moving inversely, and other beasts found similarly and singly, wild crow, ruddy goose, mongoose, goat and peacock seen singly

or in couples either at right or left; the rain-bow seen on right or left side or behind, prognosticates good, but the reverse if seen in front.

"Butter-milk, raw aice, *Puttalpira* (*Trichosanthes anguina*) Priyangis, flower, honey, ghee, red cotton juice, Antimony, sulpharate, metalic mug, bell ringing, lamp, lotus, *Karuka* grass (*Agrostis linearis*) raw fish, flesh, flour; ripe fruits, sweetmeats, gems, sandalwood, elephant, pots filled with water, a virgin, a woman, a couple of Brahmans, Rajas, respectable men, white flowers, white yak tail, white cloth and white horse.

"Chank-shell, flagstaff, turband, *triumphal* arch-fruitful soil, burning fire, elegant eatables or drinkables, carts with men in, cows with their young, mares, bulls, or cows with ropes tied to their necks, palanquin, swans, peacock, and Indian crane warbling sweetly !!

"Bracelets, looking glass, mustard, *Bezoor*, any substance of white colour, the bellowing of oxen, auspicious words, harmonious human voice, such sounds made by words or beasts, the uplifting of umbrellas, flagstaffs and flags, hailing acclamations, sounds of harp, flute, timbrel, tabor, and other instruments of music, sounds of hymns of consecration and of vedic recitations, gentle breeze all around happening at the time of journey.

"*Bad Omens.*—The sight of men deprived of any of their limbs, such as the lame or blind, etc., of corpse, or wearer of cloth put on a corpse, coir pieces, broken vessels, hearing of words expressive of breaking, burning and destroying, etc., the alarming cry of alas! alas!, loud screams, cursing, tumbling, sneezing, the sight of a man in sorrow or one with a stick, a barber, or widow, pepper and other pungent substances.

"The sight of a serpent, cat, *iguana*, blood-sucker, or monkey passing across the road, or vociferous beasts or birds such as jackals, dogs, kites, crying loud from the eastern side, and of a buffalo, donkey or temple bull, black grains, salt, liquor, hide, grass, dirt, faggots,

iron, and flower used for funeral ceremonies, a eunuch, a ruffian, an outcast, vomit, excrement, stench, any horrible figure, bamboo, cotton, lead, cots. Stools or vehicles being carried with legs upwards, and dishes, cups, etc., with mouth downwards vesse ls filled with live coals, and which are broken and not burning, broomstick, ashes, oil, winnow and a hatchet, etc." [1]

Generally speaking, such things as are pleasant and agreeable to the eye and the palate and such sounds as are relished by the ear will be found to be considered as good omens, while s uch as those that are unsightly or distasteful and inharmonious are classed among the bad ones.

Here we may refer to the explanation offered by the philosophic Hindu in justification of the belief in omens.

"It is said that, when a man starts on an errand, if a Brahman comes opposite to him, it is an inauspicious omen. When a Brahman comes opposite to you, his pure magnetic aura crosses, as it were, your purpose and therefore this omen is inauspicious.

"Whenever one proceeds on a journey, his 'Double' travels through the whole journey quick as thought. Being more amenable to the fine forces of nature, it experiences the same state of things as it would if it accompanied the body. Now, if the double undergoes any serious obstacles or risks on the way it instantly comes back and reenters the body, it may be in a convulsed state, and gives signs of warnings.

Some birds may have the power of observing the convulsed state of the double, and their voice, if properly understood, may warn against danger."[2]

To see a lighted lamp, a fruit tree like the cocoanut and a jackal, the first time you open your eyes in the morning is propitious. A cat and a broomstick is a bad sight.

1. Vol. I, pp. 177—178.
2. *Esoteric Hinduism*, P. 11—56.

The house-lizard, the crow, the screech owl, the snowy owl, the horned owl, are all prophets of future events. The lizard is a great prognisticator of events. There are experts who are versed in the *Gowlisastram* who profess to interpret the import of the chirping of lizards when made in particular ways and at particular periods of time or from particular directions. The *Gowlisastra* is an elaborate treatise dealing with the subject.

If at the time of the starting on a journey a lizard chirps from a point over your seat or from the east, west, or north, the object of your errand will be attained. If from the southeast you attain wealth, if from northwest you will have to wander in foreign climes; if from the southwest you will be overwhelmed with sorrow, if from the southwest you will meet with difficulties and if from the south you will die ere long.

If the lizard happens to fall on your body it forebodes something.

If a lizard falls on the centre of the head, it presages the death of one's mother, brother or *guru*; on the root of the head, quarrel; on the forehead, sight of hidden treasure, on the middle of the forehead, presents from kings; on the tip of the nose, many diseases; on the upper or lower lip, wealth, on the cheeks, loss of money, on the ears, eyes, and sides of the face including the temple, an inclination of the mind to die; on the neck, company with good men; on the armpit, sorrow; on the chest, great pain; on the belly fear of great men; on the hands, gain of wealth; on the sides, pain caused by enemies; on the private parts, fear from serpents, on the thighs or knees, child birth; on the feet, pilgrimage; on the underpart of the feet, a meal with milk.

Note.—Right side for males and left for females.

If by accident a lizard falls while one is in a temple, or on the banks of a river, or near the holy fig tree or the baniyan tree, there is never any evil result whatever.

Ascending is said to indicate prosperity and descending, the reverse of it. As a remedy for the evils have resort to Sankara for refuge.

The crow too possesses prophetic power. Its cry uttered in a peculiar way accompanied with the flapping of the wings is indicative of the arrival of guests from that quarter to which its tail is turned at the time. Again if you see the crow immersing itself in water or if it flaps its wings against you both are indicative of coming deaths in your family.

The hooting of the screech owl is said to forebode a death or birth in the family nearest to the place where the noise is made. The exact nature of the event is thus recognised. If the cry comes from the southern quarter of the house, it shows that a birth is shortly to take place in the house; if on the contrary, it comes from a northerly direction, then it is a death that is to be expected. The cries of the snowy owl and the horned owl also forebode death.

A firefly by getting inside a house at night gives warning that thieves or robbers would break into the house that night.

In Malabar it is not the simple deluded Hindu alone who is superstitious. The Christian, the Mohammadan and the Jew are not a whit behind in superstitious beliefs and observances. These have many charms against the evil eye, etc.

Dr. Day tells us that Syrian Christians are as superstitious as the Hindus. "One of their most extraordinary ceremonies" says he "consists in poking out the eye of Judas Iscariot. On Good Friday, a cake on which is a representation of an eye, is placed in the midst of the family circle. Each person is armed wlth the knife, and in succession makes a dig at the eye, after this is satisfactorily destroyed the cake is cut up and distributed. One sect were said not long since, once a year, to have had their sins written out in a piece of paper by a Kathanar (Priest) and then

placed inside a loaded bamboo gun and discharged, in the midst of a great feast, the uproar thus effectually dissipating and destroying, their year's accumulation of misdemenanours".

The Roman Catholics are as superstitious, as the Syrians if not more. They perform vows, make pilgrimages to certain Churches, perform Sradhas, hang about their necks the picture of the Madonna and the child, wear charms and do a thousand other superstitious things. It is no unusual sight to see, in the interior parts specially, the skull of an animal raised on a stick in a Christian's paddy field to avert the evil eye, in the same manner as in those of the sorrounding Hindus.

Many of the Mohammadan Tangals or Priests dabble in magic, and the use of charms is an accepted fact. They have their own *Mantrams*, texts from the Koran, which are very much used just as the Hindu magician uses his *Mantrams*. That well known magician of Palghat, Usana Ravuthan, was a Mohammedan. They suspend charms from the ceilings of their houses to avert the evil eye. The Jews also put up figure in front of their houses for the same purpose. All classes load their children with charmed jewels, specially tiger's claws and teeth set in gold or silver, as a preventive from the effects of the evil eye.

No doubt these superstitions[1] are wearing away under the stress of progressive education and advancing civilization. In Malabar the Hindu and the Christian vie with each other in taking advantage of the western education given them and they show an adaptability to progressive ideas that is truly noteworthy. Many of the superstitious practices noticed above have been already dropped while many more are being discontinued.

1. From birth to death, almost every important act of a Malayali in that long or short interval is done after consulting a propitious time for each. The auspicious time for the performance of each of the *Shodasa-kryakal* is previously ascertained. For sowing,

reaping and filling the granary; for planting trees and plucking nuts; for starting on a journy or for returning home after it; for taking medicines, even for consulting physicians, for taking loans and liquidating debts for sparing and taking oil-baths, for constructing houses and occupying them—in short, for anything and everything the good hour has to be chosen and adhered to. In old days, the magician and the astrologer loomed large in rural life. Even now, they are not considered as unwelcome or unwanted people.

To the Malayali, the first of Medam, on which the Vishu ordinarily falls, is the beginning of the year. On that day, when he gets up in the morning, he must see nice things only, which would be arranged the previous night. Daily, there are people, who are particular to look at pictures of gods and goddesses when they get up from their sleep at dawn. On Vishu day, after bath and worship, a person is expected to take a fully ripe cocoanut, and after washing it to roll it to the east. When it stops, you can deduce the year's good and civil to the roller from the position of its top. I shall here quote one of the few verses on the subject.

ആയുഷ്പ്രദംഗതേപൂർവ്വേ ശാന്തശ്രീമാൻ സുഖാശനഃ
ഭക്ഷിണേ ജീവഹാനിസ്യാൽ പശ്ചിമേ രോഗപീഡിതഃ

It seems the dawn of every day is good for starting on journeys. Then, you need regard the day of the week or the *pakkam* or *thithi*. Every one will do well to repeat certain *slokams* for the success of the object for which a journey is undertaken I shall transcribe one of them.

അഗ്രതോ നരസിംഹോഽമേ പൃഷ്ഠതോ ഗരുഡധ്വജഃ
പാർശ്വയോസ്തു ധനുഷ്പാണേ സശരേ രാമലക്ഷ്മണൗ.

If a stone or any other hard substance comes in forcible contact with any of the digits of your feet on starting on a journey the following results are likely to happen.

അന്നഞ്ചവസ്ത്രഞ്ചസുവർണ്ണലാഭോ വ്യാധീഭീതിശ്ചൈവ-

Please begin with the small digit of the left foot and the large one of the right to find out the corresponding result.

Similarly, for seing the moon for the first time in the bright fortnight, you have to look to the day of the week. The results of the days beginning from Sunday are thus summarised.

സുഖജളഭീതിഭീതിവ്വിത്തകാന്താപ്തിരോഗഃ

The good and evil omens are given below.

വീണാവേണുമൃദംഗശംഖപടഹധ്വാനഞ്ച ഭേരീരവം
ഗീതം മംഗലമംഗനാഞ്ചഗണികാം ഭക്ഷ്യക്ഷതേക്ഷാഽഭികം

ദൂർവ്വാചന്ദന പൂർണ്ണകുംഭകുസുമം മാലാംഫലം കന്യകാം
ഘണ്ടാം ദീപസരോരുഹേചതുഭടം വിദ്വന്നിമിത്തംബുധഃ

മദ്യം പച്ചയിറച്ചി മണ്ണശവവും കത്തുന്ന തീയുക്ഷതം
നെയ്യും ചന്ദനവും വെളുത്തകുസുമം വിപ്രദ്വയം കാഹളം
വേശ്യാസ്ത്രീ തൈർ തേൻ കരിമ്പു ഗജവും തണ്ടശ്വമന്തോളവും
രാജാവും കയറിട്ടകാള പത്തുവും യാത്രാമുഖേ ശോഭനം.

വെണ്ണീറും വിറകെണ്ണയും കഴുതയും ചൂലും മുറം ഭർഭയും
പോത്തും കുറവന മെള്ളുമുപ്പു കയറും തക്രും മഴഞ്ജീതികൻ
ഭണ്ഡീമുണ്ഡിതനംഗഹീന വിധവാ നൽപാമ്പിരുമ്പാതുരൻ
മാജ്ജാരൻ ബലിപുഷ്പമെന്നിവയെതുത്തീടിൽ സദാ നിന്ദിതം.

To counteract the evil effects of a bad omen, one is advised to repeat the following *slokam* three times.

ആപദാമപഹർത്താരം ദാതാരം സർവ്വസമ്പദാം
ലോകാഭിരാമം ശ്രീരാമം ഭൂയോ ഭൂയോ നമാമ്യഹം.

Good or bad results will follow according to the place where a house lizard falls on one's body. Here is one of the many verses on the subject.

ശിരോർമദ്ധ്യേ പതേൽ ഗൌളിർമ്മാതുർഭ്രാതുർഗുരോർമൃതിഃ
കലഹശ്ചിര ആധാരേ ലലാടേ നിധിലാഭനം

A good Hindu is expected and ordained to read and study the almanac daily. This practice is perhaps intended to keep him in touch with the information given above and also that of a similar sort, not surely to increase the sale of the book where all these bits of information are found scrupulously recorded.

പഞ്ചാംഗം പഠതേ നിത്യം ശ്രോതുമിച്ഛന്തിതേ നരാഃ
അഗ്നിഷ്ടോമഫലം തേഷാം ഗംഗാസ്നാനം ദിനേ ദിനേ,

and so on.

Superstitions are not confined to Malabar or even to India. The records of the Folklore Societies of Europe and America reveal the hold these have on even educated people in those countries also.

On the advent of distinguished visitors to a residence, or when a bridegroom comes to the house of the bride, or *vice versa* for the first time, or when a member of a family returns to his home after a pilgrimage or a long absence, all these are expected to be welcomed by persons holding lights and plates containing *astamangalyam* (eight propitious articles). These are:

മൺപാനി ചാന്തു കണ്ണാടി ചെപ്പും പുസ്തകവും മഷി
വെള്ളവസ്ത്രം സമം പത്തുമഷ്ടമംഗല്യമിങ്ങനെ.

For the first twelve days in Karkadagam (July-August), every house-holder places certain things in front of a light, which should never be allowed to go out. The light and plate of articles are placed generally in the room in front of the granary. The room

will be smeared with cow-dung and purified. These are intended for the goddess of wealth who it is believed will be visiting every house where she is worshipped with faith and devotion. The articles to be placed are.

മണ്ണൂപ്പാനി മഷിക്കുടുക്ക തെളിവേറീടുന്ന കണ്ണാടിയും
ചെപ്പും പുസ്തകവും മടക്കുപുടവാ ദീപം നിറപ്രസ്ഥവും
പുഷ്പം പത്തൊടു കിണ്ടിനീർ പലകയും ഭസ്മം പ്രഭാതാഗമേ
വെച്ചാൽ മംഗലദേവതാഭഗവതിക്കാസ്ഥാനമാസ്ഥാനമാം.

Besides these things, fresh flowers are placed before the light and *ashtagandham* (eight scented articles) are burnt. The old and the young of the family chant their prayers from near the light.

The ten flowers *dasa-pushpam*, referred to in the above *slokam* are.

പുർവ്വാകുറുന്തല മുയൽച്ചെവി തത്ര ദുർവ്വാ
മുക്കുററിയും പനയുമാദരവോടു വിഷ്ണു
നൽപ്പൂളതാളി മറവുള്ളതുഴിഞ്ഞു കഞ്ഞു
ണ്ണീത്യാദി പുഷ്പദശമെന്നതറിഞ്ഞുകൊൾക.

Every one is expected to wear these ten flowers on one's head on those days.

To prepare for a rich harvest, there is a ceremony, called *Illom-Nira*, in the month of Cancer. On the appointed, auspicious day and hour, *dasa-pushpam* with twigs of certain specified trees, bits of certain creepers and spikes of corn are brought in and kept on a purified plank of wood and worshipped in a particular fashion. Then, bits of these are to be kept in the granary, kitchen, etc., until they are replaced by similar things in the subsequent year. These two *slokams* will give the reader an idea of the ceremony.

നല്ലാൽ നെല്ലിയു മില്ലി മാവു പനസം
നല്പാല നാലും പുന

ച്ചൊല്ലേറുന്നൊരമർച്ചവള്ളികൾ കരി
ക്കോടീ വെളീമഞ്ഞളും

കല്ല്യണം ദശപുഷ്പവും നിറപറാകാര
സ്കരം ദീപവും

ചൊല്ലുള്ളാള്ളുകൾ ചൊല്ലിടുന്നതബലേ!
ഇല്ലം നിറയ്ക്കിങ്ങനെ.॥

പൂർവ്വം സമ്പൂജ്യ വിശ്വേശ്വരമഥ ഹരി
പീഠാർച്ചനം തത്ര വിഷ്ണും

ആവാഹ്യാസ്യാങ്കുദേശേ ശ്രീയമപിപുന
രാനായ്യ ധാന്യം യഥോക്തം

പശ്ചാത്തം മൂർത്തിപൂജാപ്രഭൃതികമഖിലം
കാരയൻ പൂർണ്ണ കുംഭം
ന്യസ്യേ ദീശാനകോണെ സുമുഖി! വിധിരിതി
പ്രോച്യതേ ധാന്യ വൃദ്ധ്യൈ.॥ Ed.]

LETTER XXV.

1. **Chronology: of Bible and of gentiles.** Like a devout Christian and a true priest of the Church, our author attempts to maintain the correctness of Biblical chronology and falls foul of the chronological systems of Eastern nations. He quotes as authority the observations of St. Augustine in support of his position as to the relative value of scriptural and Eastern Chronology. But St. Augustine as a Saint of the Holy Church assumes, as he is bound to do, that all that is related in the Holy Scripture is what God spoke to His creatures. From this premise it of course follows that what is said there, "is more worthy of credit than the words of men, because He can foretell long before the things which are to happen." Even among Christians themselves there are those who have conscentious doubts as to the Bible being 'the word of God,' and all who are not Christians in religion do not accept it as a revelation from God. Perhaps our author would be shocked to read Mr. Havelock Ellis' observation that "portions of the Bible, specially of Genesis, are in the strict sense fairy tales, that is legends of early gods and their deeds which have become stories".[1] What value can be attached to the views of St. Augustine on such matters may be gathered from what the great Divine says with regard to the existence of Antipodes. Referring to scriptural testimony on the question, the saint observes, "the story of there being Antipodes or men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, planting their foot steps opposite to our feet, is on no account to be believed", and that "even if the earth be a globe (a thing in his mind very doubtful), it does not

1. *The Nineteenth Century and after* for May 1907, p. 774).

follow that the opposite side is not an ocean, and, even should it be bare of water, it is not necessary that it has inhabitants; since the scripture is in no way false, but secures belief in its narrative of the past, inasmuch as its predictions of the future are accomplished. And it is utterly absurd to suppose that any man should have crossed the vast ocean from this side to that to establish the human race".[1] But geographical researches have demonstrated the incorrectness of the Saint's argument and his conclusion. Speaking of the Era of the creation of the world, the writer on Chronology in the *Encyclopaedia Britanica* says, "The latter (the Christians) began at an early period to imitate the Jews in reckoning their years from the supposed period of the creation of the world. The chronological elements on which both Jews and Christians founded in their computations for determining this period were derived from the Old Testament narratives, which have been transmitted to us through three distinct channels. These are the Hebrew text of Scriptures and Samaritan text and the Greek version known as the Septuagint. In respect of chronology, the three accounts are totally irreconcilable with each other and no conclusive reason can be given for preferring any one of them to another. We have no current testimony with which to compare them; nor is it even known which of them was regarded as the most probable by the Jews themselves, when the books of the Old Testament were revised and transcribed by Ezra. The ordinary rules of probability cannot be applied to a state of things in which the duration of human life is represented as existing to nearly a thousand years."[2]

Science has long ago disproved the correctness of Biblical chronology so far, at any rate, as regards the age of the earth, though attempts have not been

1. *Aug. de Civitate, Dee.* lib., XVI, cap. IX, quoted by Archdeacon Pratt in his *Scripture and Science not at Variance* (Sixth Edition pp. 18—19).

2. Vol. 5, p. 713, 9th Edition

wanting to reconcile scientific chronology with scriptural by giving rather unnatural and far fetched interpretations to certain passages in the Bible.

The Hindu system of *Yugas*, *Maha yugas* and *Kalpams* may be extravagant, taking us back to millions and trillions of years. But we have the authority of great scientists like Professor Giekie, "that geological evidence indicates an interval of probably not much less than one hundred million years since the earliest forms of life appeared upon the earth and the oldest stratified rocks began to be laid down", and of Lord Kelvin that, "most probably, the antiquity of the planet we live and move upon can not be much more than one hundred million years". In these days every educated man may be presumed to know something of the evolutionary progress of the earth and of the animal and vegetable life thereon, so that it is difficult to pin one's faith to the statements contained in the Bible regarding the creation of the earth and its denizens.

2. **Kali Yugam.** While the Hindu chronology relieves us from the absurdity of believing that the earth is only 6,000 years old as asserted by Christian divines, it plunges us into the vortex of a vast ocean of years even beyond the dreams of modern scientists. The Malayalees have accepted the Hindu system. This system as propounded in the Purānās and astronomical works shows but little difference.

The *Vishnu Purana*[1] says:—"The deity Time is without beginning and to him there is no end; from him the revolutions of creation, continuance and final dissolution unremittingly proceed". Again[2], the same work contains the following:—"O wise one, in consequence of the eternal reverend Vishnu coming into being from objects, as Brahmā the grand-father, he is designated as produced. According to the measure set

1. Book I, Chapter 2, p. 26.
2. In Chapter III, 4, *et seq.*

by him, human life is known as consisting of an hundred years. This (age) is called *para*, and the half thereof *Parardha*. O sinless one, do thou listen to me as I mention unto thee the divisions of that which I have named unto thee as the Time-form of Vishnu,—in relation to Him as well as other creatures, and mobile and immobile objects, and the seas and all other things, O best of men. O chief of ascetics, a *kastha* is composed of fifteen *nimeshas*; (a *nimesha* is the twinkling of an eye), thirty *Kasthas* make up a *Kala*, and thirty *Kalas* a *muhurta*; and as many *muhurtas* make up a day and a night unto human beings. As many days and nights form a month; and a month consists of two fortnights. Six months form an *ayana*; and a year is composed of two *ayanas*, one northern, the other southern. The southern *ayana* is the night of the celestials, as the northern is their day. The period of twelve thousand years of the deities constitute the four Yugās, *viz.*, *Krita*, *Treta*, and the others (i. e., *Dwapara* and *Kali*.) Do thou understand that? (The division of the Yugās). Chronologists say that four, three, two, and one thousand divine years successively compose Krita and the other Yugās. A hundred divine years are said to constitute the first twilight, as another hundred years the last, of the Yuga. The space that intervenes between these twilights goeth by the name of Yuga, embracing Krita, Trēta and the rest. And O anchoret, a thousand of the four Yugās, Krita, Trēta, Dwāpara and Kali constitute one day of Brahmā. One day of Brahmā, O Brāhmana, compriseth four and ten reigns of the Manus (a generic name of the progenitors of mankind). Listen to the chronology thereof! The seven saints, the celestials, Sakra, Manu, and his sons—kings all of them—are created at the same time and, as formerly, (I fail to perceive the sense of this, unless it meant *as they have been created afortime—T.*) are destroyed at the same time. O excellent one, a little over seventy-one four Yugās constitute a Manwantara—the period

of Manu as well as the gods. Manwantara takes up over eight *lakshas* (lacs) and fifty-two thousand years; and, O twice-born one, full thirty (one million) *Kotis*, above sixty-seven (ten millions) *niyutas* and about twenty-thousand human years. Ten and fourteen such periods (Manwantarās) form one day of Brahmā. Then comes on his sleep (extending over as many Manwantarās) and at the end thereof, the universal dissolution"[1]

The great work on Astronomy, the *Surya Siddhanta*[2] also speaks of the same divisions. According to it, the *Krita Yuga* with its *Sandhya* and *Sandhyamsa* consists of 1,728,000 years.

The *Treta* Yuga	1,296,000	,,
The *Dwapara* Yuga	864,000	,,
The *Kali* Yuga	432,000	,,

Thus a *Maha Yuga* consisting of these four Yugās comprise 4,320,000 years.

71 such *Maha Yugas* with an additional *Sandhya* at the close of 1,728,000 years make one *Manwantara* of 308,448,000 ,,

14 such *Manwantaras* with another *Sandhya* at the beginning of 1,728,000 years constitute one *Kalpa* of 4,320,000,000 ,,

2 *Kalpas* make a day and night of Brahmā of 8,640,000,000 ,,

360 such days and nights make one Brahmā's year of 3,110,400,000,000 ,,

100 such days constitute his life-time of 311,040,000,000,000 ,,

and there have been and will be many such Brahmās in the eternity of time.

1. Dutt's Translation of *Vishnu Purana*, pp. 11 to 13.
2. Chapter I.

Such division of time is somewhat peculiar to India and the Hindus, and is not common to any other countries, so much so, that Mill in his *History of India* observes that a chronology involving such immeasurably long periods of time is a sure sign of savagery on the part of the people who adopt it. Professor Rangachariar has, after an elaborate consideration of the system of Yugās, come to the conclusion "that most Indian astronomers have all along taken the *Kalpas*, *Mahayugas*, and *Yugas*, though perhaps based on some kind of old tradition, as mere astronomical conventions". He points out that Arybhatta, the great Hindu Astronomer, "was certainly aware of the Puranic and Smriti periods of Kalpa, Mahāyuga and Yuga, as being those that were adopted as authoritative in the Sūrya—and other Sidhantas. Nevertheless, having understood the import and purpose of the astronomical adoption of these periods of time, he did not hesitate to simplify them even by handling them in an unorthodox fashion". In fact the ideas of Kalpa, Manwantara, and Yuga, have no meaning apart from indicating that time is endless—or as the Vishṇu Purāṇa puts it, "The deity Time is without beginning and to him there is no end." Mr. Muir observes in the first volume of his *Sanskrit Texts* "that this elaborate system of Yugās, Manwantarās, and Kalpās finds no place in the hymns of the *Rig Veda*," and Professor Rangachariar says that "in the *Brahmanas* also, so far as at present known, there seems to be no mention made of any such long cycles as our current Kalpās." So also the Vedic Calendar, as given in the *Vedanga Jyotisha*, makes no reference to the long Yugās, Manwantarās and Kalpās.

The immense duration of the ages as quoted above from the *Vishnu Purana* is peculiar to the Purānās. It will be found that the *Mahabharata* and the *Manu Smriti* shorten this vast expanse of time considerably.

Dr. Roth in his monumental lexicon states that, "according to the earlier conception stated in *Manu* and *Mahabharata*, the four Yugās Krita, Trēta, Dwāpara, and Kali, with their mornings and evenings, consisted respectively of no more than 4,800,—3,600,—2,400 and 1,200 ordinary years of mortals."

We read in the *Mahabharata*, *Vana Parva*, Chapter 188:—4,000 years have been said to constitute the Krita Yuga. Its dawn also, as well as its eve, hath been said to comprise 400 years. The Trēta Yuga is said to comprise 3,000 years and its dawn, as well as its eve, is said to comprise 300 years. The Yuga that comes next is called Dwāpara and it hath been computed to consist of 2,000 years. Its dawn as well as its eve is said to comprise 200 years. The next Yuga called Kali is said to comprise 1,000 years and its dawn as well as its eve, is said to comprise 100 years. When the Kali Yuga is over, the Krita Yuga begins. This period of 12,000 is called by the name 'Yuga'. One full thousand of such Yugās would constitute a day of Brahmā. Similarly in the Manu Smriti".

It is by interpreting the years mentioned above to mean not merely the ordinary years of mortals, but 'divine years' or "Deva Varishams" as our author terms them—the years of the gods—that commentators have stretched the periods into the long expanse of time already noticed. But, as remarked by Mr. W. J. Wilkins [1], "in the text of *Mahabharata*, no mention is made of the years comprising the different yugās as being *divine years*." According to the *Taihtriya Brahmana*, [2] "One day of the Devas is a Samvatsara (human year)." The *Suryasidhanta*, the *Vishnu Purana* and a number of other works refer to the same idea. This idea of "divine years" may be said to have some resemblance to the 'period theory' of Biblical interpretation by which it is argued that the word 'day'

1. *Hindu Mythology* p. 297.
2. III, 9,221.

is not always used in Scripture to mean a period of 24 hours.

3. **Year begins in Thulam. Day of 60 hours.** These are not correct. The year begins in Chingam—(August—September) and not in *Tula Masam*—(October –November). Each day is divided into 60 *nazhikas* (not hours) equivalent to twenty-four hours.

4. **Coilam Era.** The Era mostly in use in Malabar is the *Kollam Andu*. There was however another Era known as *Putu Vyppu* which is not in use now.

As to the origin of the Kollam Era, there is much diversity of opinion. Our author says that the Era takes its name from the northern Kollam or Kollam Quilandy. But there are those who maintain that it had its origin from the southern Kollam or Quilon. Just as there are two Kollams, there are also two Kollam Eras, the northern and the southern, with their New Years commencing in different months.

Shungoonny Menon in his *History of Travancore* says, "In the Kali year 3926 (825 A. D.), when King Udaya Marthanda Varma was residing in Kollam (Quilon), he convened a council of all the learned men of Kerala with the object of introducing a new Era, and after making some astronomical researches and calculating the solar movements throughout the twelve signs of the Zodiac, and counting scientifically the number of days occupied in this revolution in every month, it was resolved to adopt the new Era from the 1st of Chingam of that year, 15th August 825, as Kollam year one, and to call it the solar year."

This arrangement was approved of by all the wise men of the time, and every neighbouring country began to adopt the same. And this system of reckoning the year, continues up to the present day throughout Keralam, as well as in every part of the Kingdom of

Chēra, then possessed by the King of Travancore. This Era has been adopted by other kings also, as we see that in Madura, Tinnevelly, and other countries, the Kollam Era is commonly used in reckoning the year. Stone inscriptions are generally found in Tinnevelly, and other localities, which corroborate this statement. The old records in the Trivandrum pagoda shew that on the 5th Chingam of the first Kollam year, i. e., five days after the promulgation of the New year, the members of the five Royal Houses of the Travancore family, the Swāmiyār (ecclesiastical head), and all the nobility, etc., assembled in the Trivandrum Pagoda, and introduced certain new rules or ordinances for the conduct of the daily, monthly and yearly performances of pūjās and other ceremonies in the Pagoda. These rules are still in force in the said Pagoda".[1]

Dr. Gundhert suggests that the Era was meant to celebrate the building of a Śiva temple. But there is no important Śiva temple of antiquity either at Quilon in Travancore or Kollam in Malabar. "In the nature of things", as remarked by Professor Sundram Pillai, "we should expect a grander event of greater national importance, in justification of the starting of an Era, then the building of a nameless temple." Two other events of more importance are sometimes referred to as marking the commencement of a new Era. They are (1) The Mecca pilgrimage of the last Cheramān Perumāl and (2) the promulgation by Śankarāchārya, the great Vēdāntist, of the 64 rules known as *Anacharam*. With respect to the first event, Mr. Logan has accepted the conversion of the last Perumāl to Islamism and his Mecca pilgrimage as historic facts and has gone the length of identifying the tomb of the convert Perumāl with one said to exist on the shores of the Persian Gulf. He has with the help of the reported epitaph thereon tried to fix the date of the Perumāl's death in

1. Pp. 88—89.

Kali year 3931 oa *Kollam Andu* 6. Supposing that the Perumāl was engaged in his voyage for six years, the Kollam Era may be said to have commenced from the date of his leaving Malabar. Elsewhere, we have attempted to show, with some degree of certainty, that there is very little foundation in history for the conversion and the pilgrimage of the Perumāl. Apart from this, as pointed out by Professor Sundram Pillai, antecedent probability is wholly against this theory. It is not likely in the first place that any nation would establish an Era to celebrate a national disgrace. To every Hindu, even after so much of Mahomedan intercourse, conversion of a Hindu to Islamism is still not a very welcome idea, and how much so should it have been a thousand years ago in the case of the conversion of so revered a king as the true representative of the old line of Chēramān Perumāls. Again it is surprisingly strange that all Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore should have united to start an Era exactly at the point of time when their integrity, according to the very hypothesis, was irreparably lost. The Chēra Empire is said to have fallen to pieces because of the apostacy and the disappearance of the Perumāl, and yet the empire was at one, according to the theory, to start an Era which is still in use throughout its original extant. It has also to be remembered that the Era commences in Chingam in Travancore in the south, while in Malabar in the north it begins only in Kanni, a full month later, so that these different dates cannot be said to commemorate the happening of any single event.

Proceeding to the second event, the suggestion is indeed plausible. One tradition in Malabar, alleges that Śankarāchārya promulgated the *Anacharas* or irregular customs peculiar to the Nambutiri Brahmans at Kollam on the 25 August 825 A. D., the first day of the first year of the Kollam Era. The tradition receives some colour from the Chronogram marking the commencement of the Kollam Era, viz:—

0 6 1 4 3 4 1
/ Āch / ār / yā / vā / kā / bhēd / yā /

which means "Āchārya's, i.e. (Śankarāchārya's) word or law is unalterable", or must not be changed. The syllables represent figures as shown above and these written backwards give the age in days of the Kali yuga on the first day of the first Kollam year. The tradition receives support from what is recorded in the *Keralolppatti* [1] which says that when Chēramān Perumāl was ruling prosperously after having driven out the invaders across the ghauts, there arose in Malabar the great Vēdāntist Śankara an incarnation of the God Śiva, and he laid down laws and regulations for the guidance of the various castes and classes of Malabar. The origin of the Chronogram, referred to, is itself shrouded in obscurity. But it is significant that, so far as at present known, all the theories yet advanced converge in pointing to the early years of the 9th century as the probable period of Śankarāchārya. Mr. K. B. Pattak has in the *Indian Antiquary* discussed the age of Śankara and has come to the conclusion that the only definite date that can be assigned with any degree of probability to his death is 820 A. D. which would be 4 years before the commencement of the Kollam Era. The date of his birth according to the *Slokas* in a manuscript volume in the possession of one Govinda Bhattar of Belgaum is Vibhava Varsha Kali year 3889 (A. D. 787) and that of his death, full moon in Vaikāśi Kali year 3921 (A. D. 819) Anyhow the theory has a great deal of plausibility in it. But there is nothing to show that Śankara is the author of the *Anacharams* or that he promulgated them on any particular day or in any particular year or at a particular place. Much less is there anything to show any connection between the promulgation of the rules and the starting of the Era.

I have already observed that the difference in months as to the commencement of the Kollam Era in

1 Mangalore edition, Chapter VI, p. 55.

the north and in the south shows that its origin cannot be attributed to the happening of any single event.

There is the theory put forward by Mr. Logan that the two dates mark the acquisition of independence of the Perumal by the two Kōlaṭṭiri families, those of Travancore in the south and Kōlaṭnād in the north. Mr. Logan thinks that there is much to be urged in favour of this view; but is at the same time of opinion that it is unlikely that the dates of acquisition of independence should have fallen precisely on the first day of two successive months. The so-called acquisition of independence by the two Kolattiris rests wholly on the peculiar view that Mr. Logan takes of the early traditionary history of Kerala with very little evidence to support it.

Another theory which attempts to account for the two dates is that they relate to the founding of the two Kollams; but we have already seen that one of the two Kollams, the southern one, had been in existence for two centuries at least before the date of the commencement of the Era. A third theory is that the dates denote respectively the epochs when Śankarāchārya's Vedāntic doctrines were accepted respectively by the Brahmans of the southern and the Brahmans of the northern portions of Kerala. Here again it is rather curious that these Brahmans proposed to accept the great teacher's doctrines on any particular day, and still more curious that the northerners waited exactly a month, to a day to become the desciples of Śankara. Mr. Logan refers to a still another theory which he is inclined to think "is probably the true explanation of difference". He observes that it proceeds on the assumption "that originally there was but one Era, that it marked an event in the history of the country, and that, as this event fell in the middle of a month, the initial day of the Kollam year was arbitrarily transferred by the respective suzerains of the north and

south (in all probability the two Kolattiri dynasties), the one to the beginning of the zodiacal month next following (1st Kanni), and the other to that of the Zodiacal month next preceding (1st Chingam) the exact date of the event." Mr. Logan does not refer us to any authority for the statements that the Era marked any particular historical event or that this event did fall in the middle of the month. The hypothetical event having happened in the middle of the month, it would be violent to presume that the two Suzerains, however powerful they were, would arbitrarily transfer the date of its happening to an altogether different day, the one by drawing it backward by half a month and the other by advancing it forward by the same period. In fact there is nothing to make the theory probable.

Another event generally referred to as marking the period of the commencement of the Kollam Era is the institution of the *Onam* festival, the great national annual festival of the Malayāḷees. With regard to this theory Mr. Logan observes that "the fact on which this assumption, for it is nothing more, rests is that the Ōṇam festival falls on varying days at or about this time of the year, and that in all title-deeds, horoscopes and other writings in northern Kēraḷam the year is still sometimes written as having ended on the day preceding the Ṭiru Ōṇam day". The Ōṇam festival is a national institution, the heirloom of ages, and it is hard to believe that it was instituted on any particular day or by any particular person. It is supposed to commemorate an event which goes far back into the Purāṇic ages. It is surprising that Mr. Logan thinks that this theory is reconcilable with his own favourite one that the Era had its origin on the day that the last Perumāl sailed to Mecca—only that it should be assumed that the Perumāl sailed on the Ṭiru Ōṇam day, the day on which acknowledgments of fealty should have been made. But why this assumption? Is it likely that the subjects of the renegade Perumāl, who had brought

disgrace on the Malayāli nation and who was deserting his post, leaving the country in confusion worse confounded, would have approached him on the eve of his flight to acknowledge fealty to him? Would not the act of the Perumāl in choosing the day of national festival to quit Kēraḷa and in summoning his lieges to attend on him that day be adding insult to injury? Surely it is somewhat difficult to accept this theory.

Professor Sundram Pillai, after discussing various theories advanced on the question, observes "I can suggest now no other explanation of the Era than it seems to me to be the modification of another older Era current in Upper India under the name of *Saptarashya* or *Sastra Samvatsara*. The peculiarity of this northern Era is that, though it is to-day 4972 (he was writing in the year 1897), it is spoken of as 72, so that omitting all hundreds it will be found to be identical with our Malabar year except for 4 months beginning with *Mesha*. The Cashmīr Calendar calculated in this Era and other recorded dates in it usually begins with this formula. *Sri Saptarshi Charanumakna Samvat* 4972 *tatha cha Samvat*, i.e., the year 4972 in agreement with the course of the *Saptar Shayal* and therefore the year 72. It would thus appear that, up to the year 99, the Kollam year is identical with the *Saptarshi* year. May it not be then that our Kollam year is simply the *Saptarshi* Era with its origin forgotten and therefore counted on into the hundreds? It is by no means extravagant to suppose that the people who lived in the Kollam year 99 went on to name the next year 100 and not the cypher year, in spite of whatever astronomical reminiscences which survived in the minds of the almanac makers of that age. In fact nothing could have been more natural: and once the numeration was permitted, the issue of an independent Era exactly of the kind we have was inevitable. The only fact which would then require explanation is why when the

Saptarshi begins with *Mesha*, Our Kollam should commence with *Simha*. In all probability, the astronomers of the period who determined on the adoption of the Era found it necessary so to amend the northern luni-solar year in order to convert it into a purely solar one as the Kollam year professes to be. While agreed as to the necessity of the amendment, the astronomers of Malabar were apparently not at one with their contemporaries in Travancore as to the number of months that had to be left out; and hence perhaps the divergence we have already noticed as to the month with which the new year was to begin—whether it was to be Simha or Kanya". That the Era current in the southernmost extremity of the Peninsula should thus be assimilated with that obtaining in Kashmīr at the northernmost extremity may at first appear somewhat strange. But it is not certainly stranger than the similarity in the styles of architecture obtaining in Nēpāl and in Malabār pointed out by Mr. Ferguson or the similarity in customs and manners among the Newars of Nēpāl and the Nayars of Malabār, not to speak of the close similarity in the names Nayar and Newar. Prof. Sundram Pillai is inclined to think that a convention like the one mentioned by Mr. Shangoonny Menon, the author of the *History of Travancore*, was likely to have taken place and he asks "what need could there have been for all the 'astronomical researches', 'calculations and scientific countings' (mentioned in the *History of Travancore*) unless the astronomers of the period anxious to start a new Era, were adapting and amending for their purpose one that was actually current at the time? If those scientific men were really adopting an existing Era, none could have suggested itself with greater propriety than the *Saptarishi* year—the *Sastra Samvatsara* the scientific year *par excellence*."

There is indeed much to recommend in Prof Sundram Pillai's theory. It is very likely that the

Āryan Nampūṭiris in their migration from the north brought with them the *Saptarishi* Era (the Era of the seven sages) prevalent in their original homes and that after some time it was adjusted, as we find it now for local purposes.

Mr. Velāndi Gopala Ayyar in his learned essay on the *Chronology of Ancient India*, has started another theory for the origin of the *Kollam Andu*. He thinks that the *Kali Yuga* and the *Kollam Andu* commenced in 1177—76 B. C. The *Kollam Andu*, says Mr. Gopala Ayyar, is according to approved tradition, a cycle of a thousand years, and the present cycle is believed to be the fourth, having begun in the year 825 A. D. He is at one with Prof. Sundram Pillai in saying that it is identical with the old *Saptarshia* cycle, which is referred to by Albiruni (1030 A. D.), Kalhana (1148 A. D.) and the Purāṇās. But he points out, that Sundram Pillai has ignored the fact of the *Kollam Andu* being a cycle and that he was not correct in saying that it was adopted in 825 A. D.

Having discussed the question of the beginning of the Kali Yuga and arrived at the conclusion that it commenced in 1176 B. C., Mr. Gopala Ayyar argues "The earliest starting point for the modern *Saptarishi Kala* is the 'birth of Parīkshit when the Rishies were in Māgha, and the Kali Yuga then commenced.[1] Thus the Purāṇās identify the Saptarishi Kāla with the Kali Yuga. As the Kollam Era has been identified with the Saptarishi Era we may safely conclude that the *Kollam Andu*, the *Saptarishi Kala* and the Kali Yuga, all commenced in 1176 B. C." The forefathers of some at least of the modern Nampūṭiris are said to have separated from the main body of the Āryan people about 165 B. C. and settled first in the Andhra country and, after the lapse of a few more centuries, to have permanently fixed their residence in Kerala. "It is thus apparent" continues Mr. Gopala Ayyar

1. *Vishnupurana* IV—24.

"that when the little band of the forefathers of some at least of the modern Namputiriṣ saw the end of the Yuga of 1,000 years which commenced soon after the Mahābhārata War, they followed it up by another cycle, lasting for a like period, led no doubt thereto by the fact, which they seem to have faintly remembered, that two such Yugās of 1,000 years each had expired about the time of Mahābhārata war. By the time that this second cycle came to an end in 825 A. D., they had for some time been settled in Malabar. The third cycle which began in 825 A. D. came therefore to be known as the Kollam Era after the name of a famous town in Malabar."

We may now refer to the views of some European scholars also. Till recently European scholars seem not to have known so much as that it was an Era. They term it as a cycle. Mr. Prinsep calls it the cycle of Paraṣu Rāma. So also Dr. Buchanan who says that "the inhabitants of Malayala reckoned time in cycles of thousand years from 1176 B. C. and that in September 1800 A. D. there were two cycles and 976 years expired of that Era". Warren, writing in 1824 says in his learned work the *Kalasankalita*, "that there had expired on the 14th September 1800, two cycles of a thousand years and 976 of a third cycle."[1] Mr. R. Sewell in his *Indian Calendar* says that the years of the Kollam Andu "run in cycles of thousand years. The present cycle is said to be the fourth. If there were three cycles ending with the year 1000 which expired 824—5 A. D., then it would follow that the Kollam Era began in Kali 1927 current or the year 3528 of the Julian period."[2] Dr. Burnell in his *Elements of South Indian Pabography* says that it was no cycle and adds that "it began in September 824 A. D." and "is only used in the Tamil country and Travancore." In Travancore and in the Tinnevelly District where the Era is used, we have already seen that the year begins not

1. Page 374.
2. Page 25.

in September but in the middle of August (Chingam or Simha) and the province where it begins in September (Kanni or Kanya) is not Travancore or South Tamil country but Malabar proper which Dr. Burnell does not mention as using the Era.[1]

5. **Pudu Vaipum.** The Pudu Vaipu Era or the Era of the new formation is said to have commenced from the year 1341 A. D. when the Periyār forced a passage through the opening into the sea at Cochin, thus detaching Vaipu from the mainland forming it into an island. We have already noticed this. The Era is practically gone out of use at present. [2]

6. **Paroese Raman Cycle.** The cycle mentioned here is used mostly in the Tamil country. In religious ceremonies it is the one used by the Nampūṭiri Brahmans of Malabar also. There is nothing to show that it was ordained by Paraṣu Rāma, and the fact that it is used all over the Tamil country tends to cast doubt on the origin suggested by our author. Each of the 60 years has a peculiar name. These names are:—

Prabhava	Pramadi	Khara
Vibhava	Vikrama	Nandana
Sukla	Vrisha	Vijaya
Pramodata	Chitrabhanu	Jaya
Prajolpathi	Subhanu	Manmtha
Angara	Taruna	Durmukhi
Sreemukha	Parthiva	Hevilambi
Bhava	Vyaya	Vilambi
Yuva	Sarvajit	Vikari
Dhatu	Sarvadhari	Sarvari
Eswara	Virodhi	Plava
Bahudhanya	Vikriti	Subhakrit

1. The following formula is given to convert the year of the Kollam Andu into its corresponding year of the Kali-Yuga and that of the Christian Era;

കൊല്ലത്തിൽ തരളംഗമെത്ത കൂട്ടുമ്പോൾ കലി വത്സരം
കൊല്ലത്തിൽ ലാജം കൂട്ടി ക്രിസ്ത്വബ്ദം കണ്ടുകൊള്ളണം.

If to the Kollam year you add 3926 you get the Kali year; and by adding to the former 825 you get the year of the Christian Era. Ed.

2. See *Sri Rama Varma Research Institute Bulletin*, No. 4, for more information about this Era. Ed.

Sobhakrit	Virodhakrit	Sidharthi
Krodhi	Parithapi	Rowdra
Viswavasu	Pramodi	Durmati
Parabhava	Ananda	Dundubhi
Plavanga	Rakshasa	Rudhirolkari
Keelaka	Nala	Raktaksha
Sowmya	Pingala	Krodhana
Sadharana	Kalayukti	Akshaya

7. **Division of year.** As already observed, according to Hindu ideas, time is eternal. It had no beginning ; it has no end ; the ages are eternally revolving. While their division of time at one end shades itself into an infinitesimally small extent, at the other end it goes beyond even the wildest imagination of modern scientific men. The Malabar system is founded on Āryabhatta's dictum:—

"All the heavenly bodies enter the sign Aries and rise above the horizon at one and the same moment on a certain day, which moment is reckoned as the commencement of a Kalpam, of a Yugam, of a year, of a month and of a day. Time is deviation with no beginning nor end, but capable of being computed by means of the relative position of the planets and stars."

It is accordingly by the Sun's position in the heavens that the lengths of the Malayāli months and years are determined. Hence the months correspond with the signs of the Zodiac:

Malayalam months.	*Signs of the Zodiac.*	*Corresponding English months.*
Medam	Aries	April—May
Edavam	Taurus	May—June
Mithunam	Gemini	June—July
Karkadagam	Cancer	July—August
Chingam	Leo	August—September
Kanni	Virgo	September—October
Thulam	Libra	October—November
Vrischigam	Scorpis	November—December
Dhanu	Sagettarins	December—January
Makaram	Capricornus	January—February
Kumbham	Aquarins	February—March
Meenam	Pisces	March—April

The months have no fixed number of days; they vary according to the Sun's position.

The Malayālīs recognise both solar and lunar months and years. It is the solar month and year that is used invariably in transacting business, while the lunar month and year regulate religious festivals, etc. The year is divided into months of 365 days 6 hours 12'-30. The day again is divided into 60 nāḻikās (=24 minutes) and each nāḻika into 60 vināḻikās (=24 seconds) and each vināḻika into 60, what is called "long letter utterance time" (the time taken to pronounce a consonant and a long vowel=2/5 of a second.)

Another division is as follows:—

8 Noti (the snapping of fingers)	=1 Muhurtha
4 Muhurtha	=1 Gunitam
10 Gunitam	=1 Vinazhika
60 Vinazhikas	=1 Nazhika
60 Nazhikas	=1 day

Another division of the day is that which divides it into (yāmas) or watches. The night is divided into four *yamas*, so that the first two last till mid-night and the other two till morning. There is a similar division of the day also. The hours of the day are not reckoned from mid-night to mid-night or from noon to noon, but from the rising and setting of the sun. According to some there are only 6 *yamas* of four hours' duration each, commencing with the rise of the sun and their names are:—*Sri*, *Arya or Jeshta*, *Parvathi*, *Durga*, *Bhadra Kali*, and *Saraswathi*. The goddesses, whose names these watches or *yamas* bear, are said to preside at their respective periods.

There is some difference between the northern and southern systems of astronomy. If the sun enters

a sign of the Zodiac (*Samkramam*) during the day time, that day is reckoned in the northern Calendars as the first day of the month corresponding to that sign; whereas in the south, in order that a day may be reckoned as the first day of the month corresponding to any Zodiacal sign, the sun must have entered the sign within the first three of the five parts into which the day is divided. If the entry takes place in the latter two of the five parts of the day, the day next following is accepted as the first day of the month. According to both systems the months are of the following duration:

Months.	*Days.*	*Nazhikas.*	*Vinazhikas.*	*Long letter utterances.*
Medam	30	35	30	13
Edavam	31	24	3	31
Mithunam	31	36	26	5
Karkadagam	31	28	4	30
Chingam	31	2	4	59
Kanni	30	27	23	15
Thulam	29	54	11	55
Vrischigam	29	30	31	6
Dhanu	29	21	2	13
Makaram	29	27	23	36
Kumbham	29	48	30	14
Meenam	30	20	19	38
Total	.. 365	15	31	15

With regard to the above table, Mr. Logan observes, "As the fractional parts of the day set forth above correspond to 6 hours 12 minutes and 30 seconds, it is clear that the Malayāli year is too long by 23 minutes odd and this is no doubt due to the omission in the above calculations, as in all other Hindu astronomical systems, of any compensation for the error caused by the precession of the equinoxes. The astronomers, it is understood, did recognise the fact of precession (*ayanamgah*) but they failed to utilize it to obtain a correct computation of the solar year."

The lunar month is reckoned according to the 27 constellations which the moon passes through every month. They are:—

1. Aswathi	10. Makam	19. Moolam
2. Bharani	11. Pooram	20. Pooratam
3. Karthika	12. Utram	21. Uttradam
4. Rohini	13. Atham	22. Tiruvonam
5. Makeeram	14. Chithira	23. Avittam
6. Tiruvatira	15. Chothi	24. Chathayam
7. Punartam	16. Vishakham	25. Pooruruttathi
8. Pooyam	17. Anizham	26. Utrattathi
9. Aeelyam	18. Trikketta	27. Eravathi

The moon continues in each of these constellations during the period of 60 *Nazhikas* or twenty-four hours. The Malayalīs like other Hindus do not take into account, in their calculations the days of new and full moon, which are called the "black moon" and the "white moon" but reckon only those of her increase and decrease. After the new or full moon, the reckoning is as follows.—

Prathama, the 1st day; *Dwithia*, the 2nd day; *Tretia*, the third; *Chathurthi*, the 4th; *Panchami*, the 5th; *Shashti*, the 6th; *Saptami*, the 7th; *Ashtami*, the 8th; *Navami*, the 9th; *Dasami*, the 10th; *Ekadesi*, the 11th; *Dwadesi*, the 12th; *Treyodesi*, the 13th; *Chathurdesi*, the 14th. The increase of the moon is called *Purvapaksham*, the forepart or *Veluthapaksham*, the 'white part', and her decrease *Aparapaksham*, the hind part or *Karuthapaksham*, the 'black part.' According to this mode of reckoning, a lunar month would seem to consist of fourteen days: two such lunar months and two days make a solar month.

The days of the week are known as follows and their names are significant;

1. *Njayar Azhcha.*—The day of *Njayar*=Sun=Sunday.

2. *Tinkal Azhcha.*—The day of *Thinkal*=Moon=Monday.

3. *Chowva Azhcha.*—The day of *Chowva*=Mars =Tuesday.

4. *Budhan Azhcha.*—The day of *Budhan*=Mercury=Wednesday.

5. *Vyazhazhcha.*—The day of *Vyazha*=Jupiter=Thursday.

6. *Velli Azhcha.*—The day of *Velli*=Venus=Friday.

7. *Seni Azhcha.*—The day of *Seni*=Saturn=Saturday.

The Nampūṭirīs reckon time for religious purposes by the *Salivahana Sakabdam*, a lunar year the months of which are:

Chitra (March—April), *Vaishaka*, *Jeshta*, *Ashada*, *Sravana*, *Bhadrapata*, *Asvaniya*, *Kartika*, *Margasirsha*, *Paushya*, *Magh* and *Phalguna*. Every three years or thereabouts there is added another month called *Adhika*.

As Malabar is inhabited by people of various religions, it will be well to give here the Eras by which they reckon time and their equivalent Malayalam dates.

1st Medam 1081 of *Kollam* Era—Beginning of *Kali* 5008.

Do do do of *Pandavabdam* 5008

Do do do *Vikramabdam* 1147

Do do do *Bhojarajabdam* 1147

Do do do *Cheraman Perumal-abdam* 1079

Do do do Beginning of *Sakabdam* 1829

Do do do *Ramadevabdam* 634

Do do do *Prataparudrabdam* 629

Do do do *Krishnarajabdam* 378

18th Dhanu Kollam 1081 —A. D. 1906

13th Kumbham do do *Hijira* 1324

13th Meenam do do *Plavanganama Samvatsara* begins Jewish Era.

The following list shows the names of the months as used by various classes in Malabar.

Lunar months	Malayalam months	Tamil months	English months	Muhammadan months	Jewish months
Chitra	Medam	Chithira	January	Moharam	Tisiri
Vysakha	Edavam	Vykasi	February	Saphire	March-sthan
Jeshta	Mithunam	Ani	March	Ravilaval	Kaslo
Ashada	Karkadagam	Adi	April	Ravisani	Tibata
Sravana	Chingam	Avani	May	Jamadilval	Shevarth
Proshtapada	Kanni	Purattasi	June	Jamadisamni	Adar
Aswina	Thulam	Alpasi	July	Rajub	Tisan Alib
Karthika	Vrischigam	Karthika	August	Shaban	Jyar
Margasirsha	Dhanu	Markazhi	September	Eesan	Sivan
Pousha	Makaram	Tye	October	Shaval	Samab
Magha	Kumbham	Masi	November	Sikarth	Aba
Phalguna	Meenam	Pankuni	December	Siharj	Eloor
354 days	365 days	365 days	354 days	354 days	354 days

8. **Annual Festivals.** There are many festivals, religious and social, celebrated in Malabar, all partaking more or less of the religious elements.

Biloo. Our author uses this term for Vishu, a most important festive day throughout Malabar. It falls on the 1st day of Medam. Vishu is a purely social celebration, having nothing to do with religion ; yet it is observed with religious solemnity. Our author is not correct in saying that this feast is solemnised in honour of Vishṇu. Unlike other festivals which are determined with reference to the lunar asterisms on which they fall and therefore may vary in dates, the 1st of Medam is the unchangeable day on which Vishu falls. It is the astronomical new year's day and is celebrated as such. Formerly the ruling chiefs of Malabar expected their subjects to present them on Vishu day with large *nuzzers* failing which they were exacted with a high hand. The British Government, after the acquisition of Malabar, prevailed upon the Princes to forego these forced presents, as they formed a great burden on the people. But, in some parts, even now, the tenants of the jenmies visit their landlords on the day previous to Vishu taking with them plantain fruits, vegetables, etc., the fruits of their labour, and expect small money presents in return when they visit them on the morning of the Vishu day. The Malayāḷīs believe that the fortunes of the day depend more or less on the nature of the object you first set your eyes on every morning. They also believe that a man's prosperity for the year depends upon the nature, auspicious or otherwise, of the first thing that he happens to fix his eyes upon on the morning of the Vishu day—a belief which has its well-known counterpart throughout Europe. To secure an auspicious and pleasing object to gaze on as one opens one's eyes in the morning, every family takes particular care to prepare the previous night sightworthy things for the new year's morning. This is called in Malayalam *Kani Vaykkuka*. A room in the house is decorated for the occasion in which lamps are lighted. A circular bell-metal vessel known as *Uruli* in Malayalam is placed in a prominent position in the room

between two burnished well-lighted brass or bell-metal lamps. In this vessel is spread some raw rice, and over it other things are artistically arranged with the object of presenting a fine, pleasant appearance. A *Grandha* or a book of palm leaves, a gold ornament finely worked, a newly washed cloth folded up, a so-called looking-glass made of fine bell-metal, the yellow flower of the *Konna* tree (*Cassia fistula*), these are tastefully arranged in the vessel. Inside it are also placed the two halves of a broken cocoanut containing oil and lighted wicks. A fine looking painted picture of the God *Krishna*, or of the Goddess *Lakshmi* or *Saraswati*, is often placed in the background, and in the foreground, and on the sides of the vessel will be placed fruits of a few varieties. In the front of this arrangement is placed either a long narrow plank or a mat. Early in the morning of the Vishu day at about half past four or five, one of the inmates of the house who has got up first would trim the lamps, illuminate the room and then, one after another, wake up the others who are strictly enjoined not to open their eyes. They wash their faces, put on new cloths, wear ashes on their forehead, and are led up, all the while blind-folded so that they may not perchance gaze on something else, and are seated on the mat or plank in front of the *Kani*. Having placed them there, they are made to hold the sides of the vessel or to place their hands on the jack-fruits placed on either side of the vessel, so that they may not miss the sight and then asked to open their eyes and carefully look at the *Kani*. They are expected to look at the picture, the golden ornament, the fruits and flowers in turn. After this is over comes the ceremony of *Kynettam Maruka* or the exchange of the first gift. A few gold coins or gold rings will have been previously placed near the *Kani* and the Karanavar or the eldest member would take one of them along with some raw rice and *Konna* flowers and hand the whole over to a junior who reverentially places it on both his eyes and then returns it to the giver or places

it on the ground. In doing this care is taken that the junior selected is suitable for the ceremony. The suitability is adjudged according to *Porutham*, i. e., the conjunction of favourable symptoms between the giver and the taker, such as *Rasi Porutham* (agreement of the nativities), *Dina Porutham* (of week days), *Nal Porutham* (of planets), *Gana Porutham* (of descent). The process is gone through between the other members of the family in a similar manner. Then the *Kani* is taken round the garden for the benefit of the animal and vegetable creation outside the building. Bonfires are at times lighted round the house and the little ones make merry, firing away strings of small crackers which they had stored for the occasion. The next item in the celebration consists in the giving of money presents. The Karanavan of the family takes his seat in a prominent position facing east towards the rising sun. The junior members of the family, servants of the household, etc., assemble and approach the Karanavan in the order of seniority and receive small money presents in silver or gold according to the affluence of the family; copper is seldom, if ever, given. After this the seniors distribute similar presents to their juniors and so on downwards. These presents are received with due reverence and are taken to be the forerunners of more splendid incomes all round the year. Similar gifts are also made to the indigent poor, to those who do work in the family from outside, according to the status and financial position of families.

By 9 o'clock in the morning all bathe, put on their finest clothes, adorn themselves with ashes, sandal paste, etc., and go to worship in the nearest temple. The women deck themselves in jewellery. After worshipping and returning home, all the members of the family sit for a sumptuous breakfast at which, besides rice, various delicious condiments are served. In some parts of Malabar, this meal is confined to rice *Kanji* and its appendages, of course, on a grand scale in the morning,

reserving a fine feast for the evening. After the meals are over, dancing and games of various kinds are carried on. Out-door game are seldom indulged in and the merry makings close by the evening.

There is another ceremony in connection with *Vishu* by the observance of which it is said one can ascertain how the year commencing with that day will fare for him.

On the morning of the *Vishu*, day after worshipping God and when your mind is calm, you go to a prominent level place in your house which had been previously cleaned and adorned by spreading threashed out paddy grain (*Sudhá Tandulam*) and with well lighted lamps. Then doing such *puja* to the soul as you are entitled to do, take a round cocoanut in your hands, wash it well in water, adorn its face end with sweet smelling flowers, dung, etc., and sitting with your face eastwards roll it towards the east earnestly praying to God that the process may reveal plainly what good and evil are in store for you during the course of the year. Note with particular care when it stops rolling the point of the compass towards which its face-end is turned. This will indicate to you what you desire to know.

If the face-end of the cocoanut is turned towards the east, the person who rolls the cocoanut will enjoy throughout the year, success in all his endeavours, success in cultivation, good meals, increased prosperity and get good cattle. If it turns towards the south-east, he will be quarrelling, will be subject to wounds from sharp instruments and illness almost unto death, have losses in calculation, etc. If towards the south, loss of life. If towards the south-west, illness, increase of enemies, loss in cultivation and loss of relatives. If towards the west, gain in wealth, gain in cultivation, acquisition of wealth from a distance. If towards the north-west, sorrow in mind, quarrels with your wife, fear from thieves and robbers, poverty, fear from fire and you will be subject to wounds, etc. If towards the north, attainment of auspicious wealth, presents from

kings, life, good cultivation. If towards the north-east, loss in all endeavours, loss in cultivation and gain of cattle.

If the face-end looks up or down, death, illness preceding death and fear from enemies.

9. **Pattamoedasjam.** This stands for *Pattamudayam*. This festival is not universal throughout Malabar. In certain temples, such as at Taṅṅikkotam near Trichur, it is kept up as a festive day. There is however little warrant in saying that the solemnities last for 40 days and terminate in the *Pattamudayam*. The festival is dedicated to the sun, for on that day the sun attains its meredian and the nights and days are of equal duration. It falls on the 10th day of the month of Medam. Hence the name of *Pattamudayam*, the tenth rising of the sum or dawn of day. But *Pattamudayam* at Taṅṅikkotam comes on in the month of Dhanu not in Medam.

10. **Baawu.** Vāvu here New Moon.

This is celebrated on the New Moon day or as it is called in Malayalam the 'Black Moon' day in the month of Karkadakam (July—August). On this day oblations and cakes are offered to the manes of the deceased ancestors, *Sradha* is performed and the cakes or rice balls or *pinda* offered are, after the *Sradha*, placed in the yard for the crows to feed on, the belief being that the spirits of the deceased come in the form of crows to partake of them. Those who can afford to have a sea-bath go to bathe in the sea. Bathing in the sea at Rama Sēṭu, i. e., at Rameswaram on this day is considered very meritorious.

11. **Onam.** This is the great national festival of the Malayālīs, and it is observed with great eclat throughout the land of Kēraḷa. It falls in the month of Chingam (August—September) when nature puts on her gayest attire in Malabar. The violence of the monsoon will have abated and the incessant fall of rain ceased. Nature appears as if assuming a new garb.

Trees blossom, flowers shoot up, the days are pleasant and the nights delightful. It is the opening of the spring season in Malabar. The harvesting of the crops will have been commenced and there is an air of plenty all around—so much so that *Onam* has been supposed to be the celebration of the harvest festival. The *Onam* festival is preceded by two other festivals which lend colour to this theory. They are the *Illam Nara* and *Puttari*. The former means the filling of the granary with paddy recently harvested, and the latter the feeding on new rice. In an agricultural country like Malabar where rice is the staple of food, the harvesting of paddy is an occasion of great rejoicing. Before the harvest is over and when the ears of corn are still full ripe, the *Nara* ceremony is performed. Stalks of certain plants and creepers together with some ears of paddy are all kept inside a basket at the gate-house. Certain figures, circular, horizontal and perpendicular, are drawn in the outer and inner courtyards of the house and on the floor of the house in prominent places with rice-flour mixed with water. Then some one who has bathed early takes the basket in hand and brings it home, repeatedly muttering in an audible, gladsome tone the words, *nara* (fill), *nara* (fill), *Illam nara* (fill the house), *Kollam nara* (fill the whole year round), *Pathayam nara* (fill the granary), *Vatti nara*, *kotta nara* (fill the basket), *nara*, *naro*, *nara*. He places the articles in the basket in the inner yard where some pūjas are performed before they are taken out. Then some raw rice already prepared from that particular year's paddy is cooked and sweetened with sugar, and all the inmates then partake the preparation. The consumption of new rice (i. e., that particular year's rice) is strictly prohibited before going through this ceremony. For both *Nara* and *Puttari* (new rice) auspicious moments have to be selected. Both these may be performed on one and the same day or they may be on different days according to the turning up of the auspicious day and convenience of the people. Considerable

importance is also attached to the auspicious nature or otherwise of the first guest or animal or thing that finds its way to the house immediately after the *Nara* ceremony, and the prosperous career of the family for the whole of the ensuing year depends upon the nature of the first comer. These ceremonies are, however, in no way connected with the Ōṇam.[1]

Tradition says that the *Onam* festival is celebrated in commemoration of the reign of Māhabali, an Asura king, who had by his austereties and penances propitiated Brahmā and obtained unlimited sway over Bhāraṭavarsha. His reign is believed to have been one of uninterrupted peace, plenty and prosperity. In fact, it is alleged to be the golden age of Malabar. Theft, robbery, murder and other crimes were altogether unknown in his time. A Malayalam couplet describes his reign thus:—

Maveli natakom vazhum kalam
Kata kketilla kalavu milla

that is, when Mahabali ruled over the land, there was no bad season, nor dread of thieves.

As a recent writer has put it:—

"The national calm that prevailed was not disturbed by any acts of cruelty or oppression. The sanctity of contracts was fully realised. Honesty of purpose and probity of character were the dominant guides to every man's actions. In short men in those days lived in what has been called 'a state of nature'. This reign of nature was brought to a close by Vāmana, the fifth incarnation of Vishṇu, one of the members of our divine Trinity. Mahābali was an Asura King against whom and whose prosperous reign the Dēvās entertained the deepest class-hatred and jealousy. With the object of putting an end to Mahabali's reign, the Dēvās repaired to Vishnu's presence and importuned him to adopt some means to cripple the increasing prosperity of Mahābali. Vishṇu readily acceded to the

1. *Malabar and its Folks*, p. 189.

request and appeared as Vāmana unto the King in 'all the glory and freshness of his youth.' The King was so madly enamoured of this 'gilded youth' that he resolved to welcome him at any cost. He asked the youth what he wanted; to which the boy replied that he wanted nothing more than three feet of earth (perhaps the deluded King thought that what the boy wanted was enough space for him to be buried). The demand was at once conceded; when the boy immediately assumed a gigantic figure and with huge feet began to measure the earth. It was then found that the whole of the land measured less than three feet and for the rest of the proferred earth Vamana trod upon Mahabali's head and pushed him down to the infernal regions. But the popular outcry consequent upon Mahābali's deposition was so great that the ex-ruler was eventually allowed to return to earth once a year. The period of his visit was fixed for the Malayalam month Chingam corresponding to about August or September; and his stay in the country, short though it is, has ever since been celebrated as a grand national occasion which is now identified with the Ōṇam festival" [1]. Such then is the origin of the festival as popularly accepted.

Speaking of the *Onam* festival, Fra Bārtolōmeo says, "The fourth grand festival, celebrated in Malayala, is called Ōṇam, and happens always in the month of September, on the day of New Moon (not always). About the 10th of September the rain ceases in Malabar. All nature seems as if renovated; the flowers again shoot up, and the trees bloom, in a word, this season is the same as that which Europeans call spring. This festival seems, therefore, to have been instituted for the purpose of soliciting from the Gods a happy and fruitful year. It continues eight days and during that time the Indians are accustomed to adorn their houses with flowers and to daub them over with cow's dung; because the cow, as already observed, is a sacred animal dedicated to the Goddess Lekshmi, the *Ceres* of the

1 *Malabar and its Folk*—Ibid pp. 90-1.

Indians. On this occasion they also put on new clothes, throw aside all their old earthen-ware and supply its place by new. The men, particularly those who are young, form themselves into two parties and shoot at each other with arrows. These arrows are blunted, but exceedingly strong; and are discharged with such force, that a considerable number are generally wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the *Cerealia* and *Juvenalia* of the ancient Greeks and Romans." [1].

The festival lasts at the least for four days. But in many parts it goes beyond that period and occupies 6—8 or even 10 days, for the Malayalīs are generally a holiday-loving people and seek occasion always to find a gala day. It commences practically from the lunar asterism *Atham* which comes on ten days before the asterism *Onam* or *Tiru Onam*. *Atham* itself is enjoyed as a holiday but it is the younger generation who keep up the mirth and jolity set on foot this day till the end of the festival. The elders join them only on the last four days. The children of the village assemble early morning and set about collecting flowers to decorate the yards of their houses. As they go about in parties bent on this pleasant errand, they sing ballads and make themselves merry. We may extract here, with advantage an interesting description of what takes place in the mornings for these ten days given by a Malayali writer in the *Calcutta Review*, for January 1899.

"Having set out at dawn to gather blossoms, the little children return with their beautiful spoils by 9 or 10 a. m., and then the daily decorations begin. The chief decoration consists of a carpet made out of the gathered blossoms the smaller ones being used in their entirety, while the large flowers and one or two varieties of foliage of differing tints are pinched up into little pieces to serve the decorator's purpose. This flower carpet is invariably made in the centre of

1 A *Voyage to the East Indies*, p. 360.

the clean strip of yard in front of the neat house. Often it is a beautiful work of art accomplished with a delicate touch and a highly artistic sense of tone and blending. Among the flowers that contribute to the requisite design may be named the common red as well as the rarer variegated, *lantana*, the large red, shoe flower (*Hibiscus rosa sinensis*), an indispensable feature of the cultivated vegetation in a Malayali's homestead, the yellow marigold, the yellow aster, the scarlet button flower, the sacred (*Tulsi Ocimum Sanctum*), the wee, modest *thumber* (a vermifugal member of the Nepetac tribe), the common *tagara* (yellow wild Cassia), the beautiful bluebell and another common species of Cassia which the natives call the "Ōṇam flower'. In addition, various little violet and purple wildings that adorn the margins of rice fields, and beautiful specimens of the lily and allied orders of tropical plants are requisitioned by the weavers of these remarkably handsome, but alas! quickly perishable, carpets. The carpet completed, a miniature pandal, hung with little festoons, is erected over it, and at all hours of the day neighbours look in, to admire and criticise the beautiful handiwork. This object is peculiar to the naturally well favoured province of Keralam; and it serves to remind us that the people who possess the refined taste to produce such a pretty work of art must have long enjoyed a very high order of civilization".

Speaking of the ballads that are sung at the Ōṇam season the same writer observes:— "There are a great many of these Oṇam ballads; but most of them are of a piece with the specimen given. It is a delight to hear them chanted in the early morning hours by bands of light-hearted children with clear bell-like voices,—

"Chombil house maiden, little maiden,
What did he give you who yesterday came ?
A new dress he gave me, a small dress he gave me.
A lounge likewise on which to recline,

A tank to disport in, a well to draw water from, a compound

To gambol in, a big field to sing in,
Freshen up flowers, oh freshen for me.

On the south and the north shore, in the compound of

Kannan, there grew up and flourished a thumba flower plant.

Out of this plant were fifty boats, gotten; at the head of each boat a banyan tree grew.

From the banyan there grew a tiny little babe, and a drum and a stick for the baby to play with,

The drum and the drum-stick, the house hold domestic, all together they flew away and they vanished.

Freshen up flowers, oh freshen for me.

A measure and a half measure, and elephants' chains and earings, who goes under the flower tree beneath which the elephant passes?

It is no one at all, it is no one at all; it is Kuttikat baby god; when we went forth to pluck off ripe fruit, a mischievous urchin sprang up and bit us.

With bitten foot when we went to the Brahmin's, the Brahmin lady, we found, had been injured.

With bitten foot then we went to the house of Edathil whose lady with fear lay stricken.

At noon of Attam day a bamboo fresh sprouted, and therewith we made us a good fish trap.

And when to the tank afishing we went, we baited a minnow.

By its tail did we hold it, on the *bund* did we dash it, and of cocoanuts, with milk full, eighteen we ground.

With elephant pepper we dressed it; with asafoetida we filled it, right to the elephant's head.

Freshen up, flowers, oh freshen up for me".

The important part of the festival opens in some localities on *Tiru Onam* day and in others on the day previous, known as *Utradam*. The preparations for the celebration will have commenced from *Atham* day. The houses are well cleaned and made to look nice and spruce, and food-stuffs for a sumptuous feast to last for four successive days are collected. Even the poorest of the poor manage to find something for himself to celebrate the national festival in his own humble way. No Malayali will be found to beg for alms on the *Tiru Onam* day. Even the poorest family sells its all to keep the *Onam* though it comes to begging for the rest of the year. There is a Malayalam saying *Kanam Vittum Onam unnanam*. (The Oṇam feast must be enjoyed even by selling one's Kāṇom estate).

The *Onam* celebrations open early in the morning of *Tiru Onam* day when at about 4 or 5 a. m. the quasi-religious portion of the ceremony takes place. In the front yard of the house where the flower carpets are daily formed, a portion is cleaned and smeared with cow-dung. This done, conical figures made of sticky clay, painted red, are placed there. These images are of various forms. While some represent figures of divinities, others are mere cones. These latter are known as *Trikkakra Appan* or the God of *Trikkakara*. The tradition is that the festival had its origin at *Trikkakara*, now in Travancore,[1] where there is a very ancient temple, now in utter ruin covered with forest growth[2]. It is said to have been of great splendour at one time, the temple festival lasting for 28 days. All the Rajas of Kerala came to attend the temple festival and each of them seems to have had some duty assigned to him and a separate place of abode there. The Zamorin's place is still pointed out. The Pūjāri of the shrine was the Nampūṭiri Raja of Edapilly and it is significant that it is that Raja's nominee who is still performing pūja at the ruined shrine as his deputy.

1. Formerly, this part belonged to Cochin.

2. A part of it has recently been renovated by the Travancore Government. Ed.

The Cochin Raja and the Zamorin still celebrate on *Atham* day a ceremony known as *Athachamayam*. On that day both these Rajas set out in procession with the pomp and glitter of oriental panoply, make a round with great grandeur attended by their ministers and leiges, after which they return to their respective palaces and distribute presents to all. This is said to be indicative of the start usually made by these Princes in early days to attend the festival at the temple at *Trikkakara*. Anyhow it is significant that the *Trikkakara Appan* or the god of *Trikkakara* is worshipped throughout Kerala during the *Onam* days.

These images are adorned with lines tastefully drawn along and about with rice flour mixed with water and are kept not only in the front yard, but also in all prominent places commencing from inside the house and ending with the gate-way outside. Flowers are strewn all along and pūjas performed to the images every day morning and evening. On the first day the pūja is an elaborate one. One of the inmates of the house acts the part of priest or *Pujari*. He bathes in the morning before dawn and prepares *Ata*, a preparation of rice flour and molasses for *Nivedyam*—offering for the God. Lamps are lit in front of the images and the Pūjāri proceeds to do his *puja* in the presence of the family assembled in the yards. He tries to imitate as closely as he can what the Brahman priests do in the temple. The *Ata* is placed in front of the images and he offers it to them. He strews flowers, pours water, shows certain signs with his fingers, puts on a solemn air and closes the ceremony apparently satisfied that he had fed his gods sumptuously. After the dedication of the images, the male members band themselves together and raise loud rhythmic shouts of joy which ring the air. This is known as *Aarppu Vilikkukal*. It is this that practically proclaims to the outside world that the great national festival of the Malayalīs has commenced.

As the day dawns, the inmates of the house, males and females, bathe and worship in the village temple, put on their finest clothes and go about in the neatest possible fashions. Then comes the distribution of new clothes, as presents, which is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the *Onam* festival. The clothes given as *Onam* presents should be of yellow colour or at any rate some part of it, at least, must be yellow. Generally small yellow pieces of cloth are given along with larger and valuable ones. Mr. Fawcett conjectures that this suggests a relic of sun worship in a form more pronounced than that which obtains at present. The Malayalīs themselves are not aware of any connection between the giving away of yellow cloths and sun-worship. At any rate, the *Onam* celebration in Malabar has nothing to do with the sun and sun-worship. In South Travancore, in addition to yellow cloths, blue ones are also given away and no one has yet suggested any particular significance to this.

The Kāraṇavan of the Tarawad gives these presents to the juniors, the servants and dependants of the family and others. The junior members also sometimes make such presents to their relatives, etc.

After the distribution of presents, comes the feasting. The most prominent place in the house is selected, and all the members of the family sit in a row, with the Kāraṇavan in the middle of the line. They sit, so far as they can, facing the east. A bright shining lighted brass lamp is placed in front of the Kāraṇavan at a slight distance. In front of the lamp towards the west of it is spread a small plantain leaf with its point towards the lamp. Plantain leaves which take the place of plates are also spread before those sitting in a line. The viands are served on these leaf-platters out of which the eaters help themselves. Before those who sit to dinner are served with the viands, a little of every thing is placed on the leaf spread before the lamp. This is supposed to be for the god Gaṇapaṭy to partake. Sometimes Ganapaṭy is only allowed to have a plantain

fruit and pieces of molasses which are taken to represent the whole *Menu*. The lamp is removed towards the close of the meals, always before the diners leave their places. One of the inmates not engaged in the dinner approaches the lamp with a basin of water and spills some part of the liquid round the lamp three times and then removes it towards the north, never towards the south, for that is inauspicious. After the lamp is thus taken away, the diners get up from their seats for the washing of their hands. The leaf and the viands placed before the lamp for Gaṇapaṭy go to the barber whose perquisites they are.

Preparations for the feast will have been commenced from *Atham* forwards. The tenants of the family, those holding lands under it, dependants and hangers-on present themselves before the Kāraṇavan the day previous to *Tiru Onam* with the fruits of their labour, such as vegetables of divers sorts, cocoanut oil, plantains, pumpkins, cucumbers, brinjals, etc. This is called *Onakazhcha*. The custom of the country enjoins such presents by tenants to their landlords and every lease or Kanam demise makes provision for them. In return for this the tenants have to be given a sumptuous feast on one of the *Onam* days before the festival terminates. Every village artizan will present the Kāraṇavan of each Nāyar Tarawad of any position in the village a specimen of his handiwork. The carpenter brings an wooden vessel or a top for the children, the smith a knife, and so on. These are graciously received and either presents of cloth or rice and curry-stuffs are given in return.

The feasting on all the *Onam* days is on a grand scale. Meat is scrupulously eschewed. Rice of course is the chief article of food. With it are served preparations of various kinds, elaborate and rich. There are several sorts of curries, *Upperies* (things fried in oil), *Pappadams* (round crisp flour paste cakes of peculiar make) large and small, *Uppilittathu* (pickles of various

kinds), *Sambhandhi* (Chutnies). *Payasoms* and *Prathamans* or puddings of various descriptions.

Of curries there are various kinds, such as:—

Erisseri. It is made of raw plantains and yams sliced and boiled in water with salt and chillies added. The pulp of the cocoanut is ground with a little cummin seed added to it, and, when the whole thing is properly boiled, a few mustard seeds along with scraped cocoanut pulp fried in cocoanut oil, is thrown into it to give it flavour.

Kalan or *Pulisseri.* Literally sour curry; it is a preparation of buttermilk. Sliced plantains, specially of the class known as *nenthra-kaya*, and yams (*chena*) are boiled in water with salt and chillies. Buttermilk mixed with ground cocoanut pulp is poured in proper time and the preparation is flavoured by the addition of mustard fried in cocoanut oil.

Olan. Sliced cucumber and brinjals with peas or pulse sometimes added, are boiled in water with salt, but no chillies; when properly boiled some fresh cocoanut oil is poured and for flavour *kariveppila*, i. e., (the fresh leaves of *Bergera koenigei*, is added.

Aviyal. This is a preparation into which all sorts of vegetables go. The term itself means a compound of miscellaneous things. These are boiled in water with salt and chillies. Some tamarind and well ground cocoanut pulp are also added, in proper time. So also cocoanut oil and *kariveppila*.

Thoran. This is no watery preparation. Brinjals and other vegetables are sliced into very small pieces, boiled in water with salt and chillies till all the water dries up, otherwise the water is strained away, ground cocoanut pulp is added, also mustard fried in cocoanut oil.

Mulakoshyam. This is somewhat like *Olan.* These are all purely Malayalam curries. But of late other curries have also come into fashion, and they are:—

Koottukari. In this currry a miscellaneous assortment of vegetables and some Bengal gram are used.

The difference between this and Aviyal is that no tamarind is added and, instead of pouring oil, various things, such as mustard, beans and other like things are fried in cocoanut oil with little pieces of sliced cocoanut pulp and poured into it.

Sambar. This is highly relished and is purely an East Coast curry recently introduced into Malabar. The chief ingredients are dhall and vegetables, such as brinjals, drum-sticks, *pavakkai* (*momordica charantia*) etc., boiled in water with salt and chillies. Tamarind is added, as also certain other things such as coriander, cummin seed, etc., fried in oil and powdered. Mustard fried in oil is an invariable element and the whole preparation is flavoured with a little asafoetida. This is the same as the Malabar *Pulinkari* with a slight vàriation.

Pachchati } These are different forms of the
Kichchati } same curry in which cucumber, mustard and sour butter-milk or curds form the principal elements. In the case of the latter, the cucumber will not be of the ripe sort but young and slender and the very small slices into which it is cut up will not be boiled.

Besides these there are several other minor curries which do not call for details.

Now to come to the sweet things:—

Payasam. This is a sort of pudding made of boiled rice to which is added molasses and cocoanut milk. It is then flavoured with spices. There is another sort in which rice is boiled with milk and sweetened with sugar, when it goes by the name of *Pal Payasam* (milk pudding).

Prathaman. Of this there are various kinds, such as *Ata*, *Pazham*, *Parippu* and *Palata Prathamans*. The various ingredients used are:—

In *Ata Prathaman* rice flour mixed with molasses is formed into a paste cut into small pieces and boiled in water. To these cocoanut

milk and molasses are added in proportion. It is then flavoured with ghee.

Palata is just like the above with the pieces of flour paste boiled in milk and sweetened with sugar. No ghee or spices are added exceptp erhaps some cardamoms.

Pazham. Plantain fruits of a special kind, indegenous to Malabar, known as *Nentra Pazham* are well boiled in water till the whole water is dried and the whole thing is reduced to a pulp by constant pressing. Then it is tempered with ghee. Cocoanut milk is added and the thing sweet in itself is further sweetened with *molasses*. The kernal of a dried cocoanut, cut into small slices, is boiled in ghee and added to it.

Parippu. This preparation is not unlike the rest. The main ingredient used being *Parippu*, *i. e.*, pulse skinned in water, halved and dried.

Many more kinds of *Prathamans* are made of other articles as with Bengal gram, pumpkins, etc.

Besides the above, fruits are served, mainly plantain fruits of various kinds. The chief among them is the *Nentra pazham*. These are not eaten at dinner without being boiled. They are cut in twos and threes and boiled in water, and when well boiled a little molasses mixed with water is poured while yet on the fire. The pieces are served along with other articles of food at meals.

At these feasts the eaters vie with one another as to who can consume the largest quantity and sometimes they gorge themselves to such an extent that they can scarcely move from their seats. Those round the good eaters egg them on and the gourmands excel themselves. The articles of food most indulged in are *Pappadam* and *Pazham* and the *Prathamans*. *Palpayasam* and *Palata* are relished very much and the quantity consumed by some are past belief.

By 12 in the noon the meals will be over and then each one betakes himself to participate in the games most congenial to him. There are both in-door and out-door games. The older and more sedate members of the family have a game at chess, dice or at cards, while the younger and the more robust join in the noisy merry-makings outside. The out-door games consist chiefly in (1) foot-ball matches, (2) personal combats, (3) archery, (4) boxing, etc.

The foot-ball is *par excellence* the game for *Onam*. It differs altogether in details from its European prototype. Describing our national games, Mr. M. Raja Raja Varma Raja, M. A., & B. L., speaks of the foot-ball thus:—

"Of the several (games) which are played foot-ball, or adhering to the Vernacular name, head-ball, *Thalapandu* is the most important out-door game. The foot-ball as in the case of its English prototype, is played with a ball, made mostly of thick leather, occasionally of woven flax, and stuffed with cocoanut fibre or cotton. In size it is not more than half that of an English foot-ball. The rules of game bear little comparison, except that there are two parties and a goal on the winning side. An extensive open space forms the play ground. There is a boundary marked only at one end, *i. e.*, the playing side, the other three sides being determined only by the length and breadth of the field. When the players have all assembled they divide themselves into two parties by casting lots. There is neither restriction as to the number of players on either side nor that the players on either side should be equal in number. Equality in strength and not in number is the rule. There may also be players who do not belong to either party, but assist the party who is in. The two parties are designated the 'ins' and 'outs', the former who play on the winning side and the latter who play on the losing. A stick two feet long is planted on the ground on the winning side, and it marks the boundary there.

Should any ball thrown by the adversaries hit the stick or by a kick from them the ball goes behind the stick unstopped previously by those who play on the winning side, then they lose and the adversaries gain. The rules of the game are briefly (1) The party to begin the game is determined by casting lot. (2) There are seven minor games each consisting of three consecutive hits to constitute one round, and these are:- (a) *Talapantu* or preliminary game. (b) *Otta* or first game, (c) *Eratta* second game, (d) *Kettu*, game with tied hands, (e) *Talam* or game with intermediate clapping on the thigh, (f) *Kalumkeel*, game by throwing the ball from below the leg, (g) *Ittuvettu* or game with the foot. (3) Whichever party is first in taking collectively the whole round and also repeats the preliminary game, and wins one blow of the first game is declared victorious, and the defeat is indicated by drawing a circle called *Pattam* round the stick and derisive hurrahs by the victorious party. (4) Each one f the players on one side plays in continuation of his predecessor. (5) When all on one side have played and lost, the other party is in. (6). For the preliminary game the adversary can defeat the player by catching the ball by the hand before it touches the ground or by hitting the stick with the ball. During all the other minor games the adversary can use his feet also, by kicking the ball in motion and driving it behind the stick. Besides these general rules, there are several minor restrictions which the reader can understand only by actual experience. The game gives much exercise to all parts of the body, and is so exciting that very often feuds arise in consequence. Betting is freely made on such occasions by spectators and players".[1]

(2) *Combats*. Combats are of two kinds, viz., those that are undertaken singly and those held in batches. The first is known as *Kayyankali* and the

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review* pp. 138—139 of Vol. V. See also the Chapter on Sports in the *Progress of Cochin*.

second as *Attakalam*. To quote Mr. Raja Raja Varma Raja "*Kayyankali* is a violent game. It possesses all the risks of an ancient duel only no weapons or horses are allowed. The combatants should only use their fists in the attack. As in *Kondoti* the players form two opposing parties. The number in each party is equal and well matched. On both sides stand spectators. When everything is ready, one man issues from the ranks of one party and advances to the middle of the field. He does so with certain measured steps pertaining to the technology of the game. At once his match from the opposite party goes out to meet him with the same measured steps. So far this game bears resemblance to *Kondoti*. When the opponents have met they come to blows. Blows and counter-blows, fists and counter-fists constitute the game. The left elbow supplies the shield and the right arm the weapon of attack. If the match is good no single blow will fall on the opponent, however well aimed. It is not unfrequently happens that when amateurs play the game some blow hits on some vital part and kills the opponent. In the hurry of the game everything else is forgotten and the spectators stand dumb in expectation of the final result. Each party shouts at the victory of their champion, which is indicated by the falling of the opponent to the ground. Again another couple continue the game, and in the end victorious party earns the prize and applause of the spectators".[1]

The second or *Attakalam* is essentially a boyish game. It is thus described by Mr. Gopala Panickar: "A large circle is drawn on the plain sand floor and people are selected for each of the two sections from amongst the assemblage. One section is then placed in a collective body inside the circle while the other stands around the outside. The latter then try, with of course as little personal injury, to themselves as possible, to strike at and bring outside, the former who are inside, each by each. In the interval between one

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review*, p. 227 of Vol. IV..

outsider getting inside and touching the body of any one amongst the inside group the latter are allowed to beat and worry the antagonist. But the moment he touches the person of the inside man he obtains complete immunity from voilence at the hands of the rest of the inside batch. But the person who is caught is at liberty to strike him and struggle to prevent his being driven out. If he gets turned out, then he is no more to remain inside; and when the whole of the inside section are thus driven out, the first batch has finished its turn, and is then followed by the other batch; and if any body is left inside who cannot be driven out, his party is declared successful. Sometimes presents are given to the winners as tokens of appreciation of their training and strength" [1].

Forbes in his *Oriental Memoirs* gives us a graphic account of an *Onam* tournament which he witnessed in Travancore. In some parts of Malabar, despite the advancing tide of western education and its depressing influence on the national sports and the distinctive characteristics of the Malayali nation, the *Onam* games have not yet lost their original rough enjoyable character. Mr. Fawcett points out that in the south-east of Malabar, in the neighbourhood of Palghat, the tenants of certain jenmies (land-lords) still turn out under their respective leaders, and engage in sham fights in which there is much rough play. "Here too", says Mr. Fawcett, "is to be seen a kind of boxing which would seem to be a relic of the days of the Roman pugiles using cestus in combat. The position taken up by the combatants is much the same as that of the pugiles. The Romans were familiar with Malabar from 30 B. C. to the decline of their power. We may safely assume that 'the 3,000 lbs. of pepper' which Alaric demanded as part of the ransom of Rome when he besieged the city in 5th century, came from Malabar"[2].

1. *Malabar and its Folk* pp. 95—96.
2. P. 295.

(3) *Archery.* Fra Bartolomeo writing in the beginning of the 18th century says that "the men, particularly those who are young form themselves into two parties and shoot at each other with arrows. These arrows are blunted but exceedingly strong and are discharged with such force that a considerable number are generally wounded on both sides. These games have a great likeness to the ceralia and javenalia of the Ancient Greeks and Romans". Even to-day the game is practised in some parts of Malabar at the *Onam* season. Mr. Fawcett witnessed it played by the Nayars in the southern portion of Kurumbarnad during the ten days preceding *Onam*. He says, "There is a semicircular stop-butt, about two feet in the highest part, the centre, and sloping to the ground at each side. The players stand 25 to 30 yards before the concave side of it, one side of the players to the right, the other to the left. There is no restriction of numbers as to 'sides'; each player is armed with a little bow made of bamboo about 18 inches in length, and arrows or what answer for arrows, these being no more than pieces of the midrib of the cocoanut palm leaf, roughly broken off, leaving a little bit of the leaf at one end to take the place of the feather. In the centre of the stop-butt, on the ground, is placed the target, a piece of the heart of the plantain tree, about 3 inches in diameter, pointed at the top, in which is stuck a small stick convenient for lifting the cheppu as the mark which is the immediate objective of the players is called. They shoot indescriminately at the mark, and he who hits it (the little arrows shoot straight and stick in readily) carries off all the arrows lying on the ground. Each side strives to secure all the arrows and to deprive the other side of theirs. A sort of beggar my neighbour. He who hits the mark *last* takes all the arrows, that is he who hits it, and runs and touches the mark before any one else hits it. As I stood watching, it happened several times that as many as four arrows hit the mark, while the youth who had hit it first was running the

25 yards to touch the 'cheppu'. Before he could touch it, as many as four other arrows had struck it; and, of course, he who hit it last and touched the mark secured all the arrows for his side. The game is accompanied by much shouting, gesticulation, and laughter. Those returning after securing a large number of arrows turned somersaults, and insultatory motions expressed their joy".[1]

The bow is still an instrument of reverence on *Onam* days. At the installation of the image of *Trikkakara Appan* on *Tiru Onam* day bows and arrows are stuck behind them. The members of the Royal Family of Travancore receive from the deity at Trivandrum through the hands of the officiating priest bows and arrows along with new cloths on the morning of the *Tiru Onam* day, when they go to worship at the shrine. They are of elaborate and artistic workmanship well painted and looking exceedingly beautiful.

There is yet another sort of bow used during the *Onam* for an altogether different purpose. These are made of slightly elastic wood or bamboo splits with a small cord of bamboo materials and attached to both ends of the bow by means of two knobs which when played by means of a small stick produces a very dulcet musical tone. The children have a peculiar liking to it and they form themselves into a sort of bow parties and go about singing and playing on these instruments. It is the function of the Vilkurup to supply these bows and arrows.

Mirth and hiliarity mark the life of the female members of the Tarwad during the *Onam* season; young maidens decked in their gayest and finest attire and wearing beautiful and costly jewels spend the days in dancing and singing. The dancing is peculiar. They stand in a circle and dance. The evolutions are pretty and in keeping with the harmony of the vocal music. One of them leads off by singing the first

1. *Madras Museum Bulletin*, Vol. 3, pp. 293—294

couplet of a song which is caught up by the others in equally melodious and profuse strains. The leader then sings the second couplet followed by others as before and so on until the whole song is exhausted. When one strain is over another is set up and so the singing and dancing continues till the shades of evening fall when the company breaks up. Thus the whole surrounding atmosphere of many a leading household is filled by the vociferous yet dulcet melody of the charming choir of lady singers adding to the jollity and attractiveness of the occasion all round. In South Travaṇcore where the *Onam* is not kept in such a grand style as in the northern parts of Malabar, the ladies enjoy themselves in swinging on swings made of coir ropes and by singing in the meanwhile songs of a melodious character.

The festivities continue for four and in some parts for eight or even ten days. On the last day the images set up are removed at an auspicious moment. Preliminary to this pūja is offered and the removal is announced by the rhythmic shouting with which they were installed. This does not actually close the *Onam* festivities. For the holiday loving Malayāḷīs love to linger on with the feasts and games and look forward anxiously for *Makam* which falls on the 16th day after *Onam*.

12. **Magam.**—It is known as *Ayillyam-Makam*. It is in fact the tail end of the *Onam* and has nothing to do with *Parameswari or Parwati* as observed by our author. *Parameswari* means the 'supreme woman'. She is but Nature personified under the figure of a woman. *Parameswari* is not *Vishnu* in another form. *Parwati* is the wife of *Siva* or *Maheswara* the third head of the Hindu Trinity while Vishṇu is the second head.

These were neither transmigrations nor is the number 13 correct. Our author is evidently referring to the *Dasa Avatar* or the ten incarnations of Vishṇu.

Avatar means a descent. It has been remarked that "the three principal powers of the Deity, their consorts and offspring, the inferior deities, and almost the whole host of mythological personages have had their *Avatars* or descents on earth, for various purposes, of punishing tyrants and sinners, rewarding the good or reclaiming the wicked". But when we speak of the *Avatars* it is generally meant to be confined to the ten incarnations of Vishṇu, of which nine has already appeared, as distinguishing them from others of a less important or less potent nature. It is said that "Brahma, the creator, after finishing the creation has not much to do and, so long as the creation is to last, the destroyer Maheswara has no work, but it is otherwise with the preserver Vishṇu. He cannot remain idle or cease to work so long as the creation is to be preserved and maintained intact. So in the mythological books is found a great deal of literature devoted to Vishṇu and his doings and incarnations, Even in the *Bhagavat Gita*, it is to be read that Vishṇu informed Arjuna that whenever truth is clouded and untruth spreads on earth, Vishṇu has the necessity to incarnate himself for the protection of saints and destruction of evil-doers in every age".

The *Dasa Avataras* are usually arranged in the following order:—

(1) *Matsya* or Fish; (2) *Kurma* or Tortoise; (3) *Varaha* or Boar; (4) *Narasimha* or Man-lion; (5) *Vamana* or Dwarf; (6) *Parasu Rama* or Rama with the axe; (7) *Rama* of the *Ramayana*; (8) *Krishna* of the *Mahabharata*; (9) *Buddha* or Goutama.

These 9 are past; the tenth that of *Kalki* is yet to come.

The Malayalam version of the *Mahabharata* by Thunchat Ramānujan Eḻuthachan, said to have been composed in the 17th century A. D., gives the following description of these incarnations.

(1) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who didst conquer Hayagrīva (the ringleader of the wicked),

and who with a view to free us from our first terror (occasioned by the flood), didst assume *the form of a fish* and bring us back the lost Vēda.

(2) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who in the sea of milk, in which the world with its monstrous burden had sunk and was near being plunged to the bottom, didst assume *the form of a huge tortoise* and didst raise it up, and save it from apparent destruction.

(3) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who didst assume *the form of a boar*, and in that form didst destroy Hiraṇṇya, who through malice threw the world from its equilibrium, and hurled it to destruction, but which thou didst save by thy wisdom, and hast again fixed on its centre.

(4) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who didst assume *the mixed form of a lion and man*, in order to destroy Hiraṇṇya, the leader of the wicked demons who wished to force mankind to worship him.

(5) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who didst assume *the form of a dwarf* and didst give thyself out as a son of the goddess Didi, to deceive King Bali, the prince among the sons of the goddess Didi and punish him.

(6) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who didst assume *the form of a hero, who called himself Parasu Rama*, thine is the victory, thou preserver of the world, thou who didst destroy twenty-one of those Kings who rebelled against the celestial gods, and who didst free the earth from their oppressive burthen.

(7) "Thine is the victory, O! Vishṇu, thou who was *born as man*, of the race of King Raghu, *under the name* of *Raghava*, who didst destroy the Panktikanta (the giant Rāvaṇa), and didst free the world from that pest.

(8) "These apparitions of Vishṇu were over—He now appeared in *the from of a child* produced by Vāsudēva (the name of the father), and Dēvaki (the

name of his mother), and thereby fulfilled the desire of the gods, who, as soon as they were informed of it, raised themselves together to heaven ..... He was born in *the form of Krishna*, and so Vishṇu became lord of the world, honoured and worshipped by all the upright to the present day.

(9) "The ninth apparition of Vishṇu was made *in the person of Buddha*, the attentive, cunning, and vigilant god, who observes the good and bad actions of men, in order to punish or reward them, when the tenth apparition of Vishṇu shall take place."

We shall now proceed to notice in some detail the various *Avataras*.

(1) *Matsya* or Fish. In the first, second, and third *Avataras* European critics profess to find a reference to the Deluge. Speaking of the *Matsya Avatara* Professor Monier Williams says, "The next episode I selected is one (from the Vana-parva) illustrating in a striking manner, the wide diffusion of the tradition of the Deluge. *Manu*, the Noah of the Hindoos, ...is represented as conciliating the favour of the Supreme by his penances in an age of universal depravity. The earliest account of him is in the *Satapatha Brahmana*. It is so interesting to compare the simple narrative of this ancient work (which represents the tradition of the flood as it existed in India, many centuries B. C., perhaps not much later than the time of David), with the poetical embellishments of the Epic version, that I commence by translating an extract from the Brahmana, as literally as I can.

"It happened one morning that they brought water to Manu, as usual for washing his hands. As he was washing, a fish came into his hand. It spoke to him thus:—'Take care of me and I will preserve thee.' Manu asked, 'From what wilt thou preserve me?' The fish answered, 'A flood will carry away all living beings; I will save thee from that.' He said, 'How is my preservation to be accomplished?' The fish

replied 'While we are small, we are liable to constant destruction, and even one fish devour another; thou must first preserve me in an earthen vessel; when I grow too large for that, dig a trench and keep me in that; when I grow too large for that, thou must convey me to the ocean; I shall then be beyond the risk of destruction." So saying it rapidly became a great fish and still grew larger and larger. Then it said, 'After so many years, the Deluge will take place, then construct a ship and pay me homage and when the waters rise, go into the ship and I will rescue thee.' Manu, therefore, after preserving the fish as he was directed, bore it to the ocean; and, at the very time the fish had declared, he built a ship and did homage to the fish. When the flood arose, he embarked in the ship and the the fish swam towards him and he fastened the ship's cable to its horn. By this means he passed beyond this northern mountain. The fish then said, 'I have preserved thee: now do thou fasten the ship to a tree. But let not the water sink from under thee while thou art on the mountain. As fast as it sinks, so fast do thou go down with it.' He therefore so descended, and this was the manner of Manu's descent from the northern mountain. The flood had carried away all living creatures. Manu alone was left. Wishing for offspring, he diligently performed a sacrifice. In a year's time a female was produced. She came to Manu. He said to her, 'Who art thou?' She answered 'Thy daughter,' He asked, 'How, lady, art thou my daughter?' She replied 'The oblations which thou didst offer in the waters, viz., clarified butter, thick milk, whey and curds, from these hast thou begotten me. I can confer blessings.' With her he laboriously performed another sacrifice, desirous of children. By her, he had offspring, called the offsprings of Manu, and whatever blessings he prayed for were all granted to him.'[1]

1. *Lectures on Indian Epic Poetry*, p. 34.

In the *Mahabarata* account, the fish which is an incarnation of Brahma, appears to Manu whilst engaged in penance on the margin of a river, and accosting him craves his protection from the larger fish. Manu complies, and places him in a glass vessel which he soon outgrows and requests to be taken to a more roomy receptacle. Manu then places him in a lake, still the fish grew, till the lake, though three leagues long, could not contain him. He next asks to be taken to the Ganges but even the Ganges was soon too small and the fish is finally transferred to the ocean. There the monster continues to expand till at last, addressing Manu, he warns him of the coming deluge.

Manu, however, is to be preserved by the help of the fish who commands him to build a ship and go on board, not with his own wife and children, but with the seven Rishis (Sapthari shis) or patriarchs, and not with pairs of animals, but with the seeds of all existing things. The flood comes: Manu goes on board and fastens the ship as he is directed to a horn in the head of the fish. He is then drawn along.

While the vessel was thus resting, a monster named Hayagrīva stole the Vēdās and mankind had consequently fallen into the depths of ignorance and impiety. To recover the Vēdās Brahma and Vishṇu together fought the monster, slew him and recovered the Vēdās after which the world was progressively repeopled.

(2) *Kurma* or the Tortoise. As the Devas and *Asuras* were churning the ocean for the recovery of *Amrita* or beverage of immortality, Vishṇu became incarnate in the form of a tortoise to sustain the mountain *Mandara* placed on its back as an axis, the vast serpent *Vasuki* serving as a rope. Besides the *Amrita* or water of life, this churning of the ocean is said to have produced 14 gems which may be enumerated as follows:—

Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty, (2) *Dhanwantari*, the physician of the gods, (3) the *Apsarases* or nymphs

of Indra's heaven, (4) *Sura*, the goddess of wine, (5) the Moon, (6) the jewel worn by Vishṇu, *Kaustubham*, (7) the all bestowing tree, *Asoka*, (8) the cow of abundance, *Kamadhenu*, (9) the elephant of Indra, *Ayravatham*, (10) His steed, *Uchaisravas*, (11) Poison, *Halahalam*, (12) Ambrosia or *Amrita*, (13) the bow of Vishṇu *Sarngam* and (14) the chank of Vishṇu *Panchajanyam*.

The following observations of Mrs. Annie Besant on the "Churning the milk ocean" are of peculiar interest. "In speaking of the genesis of the elements Sir William Crookes takes protyle as a starting-point, which is really *Vayu* in its form on this physical plane—Prithivi Vayu—and out of that builds one atom after another-making all the chemical elements to the bodies aggregated together by the action of a positive and a negative force. If you had read your Vishṇu Purāṇa, with your brain and not merely with your eyes through modern spectacles, you might have learnt that theory of Sir William Crookes, long, long, before he gave it. He has drawn a picture, and that picture shows an immovable axis, and around it a special coil, and at points in that coil are atoms of chemical elements, generated by that coil which represents a swinging and cooling force. That spiral is in the great ocean of protyle or primeval matter, and as that spiral goes round and round the immovable axis it generates chemical elements one after another, and so brings into existence the material out of which the world is to be formed. That is the dry scientific statement summarised from his own address. But I have read in an ancient book of a mountain—which is the emblem of stability of an axis round which everything is to revolve—thrown into a mighty ocean; and I have read of a great serpent turned round that mountain in spiral coils ; on the one side the Surās are pulling, and on the other side the Asurās are equally busy. Between the two—the positive and negative of modern science—evolution is started and the serpent spiral begins to turn and turn

round that axis. They call the axis Mount Mandara, and they call the spiral coil the serpent Vāsuki, while the axis rests on Hari as a pivot ; they call the positive and negative forces, the Gods and Demons ; and their churning the ocean gives rise to the materials of the universe. [1]

(3) *Varaha* or the Boar. Two etherial warders of Vaikuntah or Viṣṇu's abode were banished from the God's presence and doomed to eternal exile on earth for insolence shown to certain Rishis who were approaching to reverence Viṣṇu. The sentence was afterwards commuted to transmigrations, during which they were enjoined to faithfully serve Viṣṇu, after which they would be restored to their old place. They were further told that, if they would prefer to be enemies of Viṣṇu during the transmigrations and take the consequences, they would be taken back after their third unholy lives. They of course preferred this and became Daytyās or Asurās of the 3rd and 4th Avaṭārās, Hiraṇyāksha and Hiraṇyakaśipu.

Hiraṇyāksha had by his rigorous religious penances propitiated Brahma and secured from him the right of universal domination. After this, he became inordinately overweening and oppressive to such a degree that he did not hesitate to seize the earth itself and carry it with him into the depths of the ocean. The Devās complained to Viṣṇu who, assuming the form of a boar, dived into the depths of the ocean and, after a dreadful contest of a thousand years with the Asura, slew him and brought up the earth on its tusks. In this Avaṭāra also, certain critics profess to find a reference to the Deluge. It is said "that this as well as the two former *Avataras* seems to be a repetition of the story of the Deluge: the second combines with it a portion of astronomical allegory: and none of the former *Avataras* have any apparent reference to the universal catastrophe, so pointedly indicated by the three first, which are

1. *Esoteric Hinduism*, p. 62.

understood to have occurred in the earliest ages of Hindu history; if such a chaotic mass as their fabulous records may be dignified by such a term".

(4) *Narasimha.* The Asura Hiraṇyakaśipu also propitiated Brahma by severe penances and obtained not simply the boon of universal monarchy like Hiraṇyāksha but secured also immunity from death at the hands of man or beast; either by night or by day; within doors, or without; on earth or in the heavens.

After this, he became extremely arrogant and impious, ordered on pain of death that his subjects should no longer worship God but that they should transfer it to himself. All were enjoined to repeat *Hiranyaya Namha*, i. e., adoration to Hiraṇya! He had a son called Prahḷāda a devout, virtuous youth who was always absorbed in contemplation of Viṣṇu. The father became furious that of all his subjects his son should so openly set at naught his authority, and tried his utmost to ween him from his pious ways. The son stood stubborn and publicly professed his devotion to Viṣṇu. Incensed at his contumacious conduct, the king one day admonished him when Prahḷād protested that the God he worshipped was omnipotent and omnipresent. "Is then thy deity here?" roared the irate parent, pointing to a pillar that stood just on the threshold of the palace. The virtuous youth answered firmly in the affirmative, whereupon in blasphemous defiance the wicked king cut assunder the pillar with his sword, and behold! wonder of wonders!! from the rent thus made there emerged a fierce being, half man and half lion—*Narasimha*—which sprang furiously upon Hiraṇyakaśipu and tore him with its claws. It was just dusk The doomed king was dragged by the hair to the doorsteps and there torn to pieces at the moment when the day ends and night begins. Thus the blasphemous king met with his death at the hands of a creature neither wholly man nor wholly animal, at a time which was neither day nor night, and at a place which was

neither within doors nor without, neither in the heavens nor on bare earth.

(5) *Vamana* or the Dwarf. We have already referred to this *Avatara* in our account of the *Onam* festival. Viṣṇu is said to have condescended to become the son of Kāśyapa and Aditi for the purpose of checking the influence of Mahābali. He took the form of a Brahman Dwarf and, as we have seen, deprived Mahābali of his kingdom on earth.

(6) *Parasu Rama* or Rama with the axe. This *Avatara* requires more detailed mention as Paraśu Rama is the reputed reclaimer of Kerala or Malabar from the ocean and is universally acknowledged as its hero-saint.

Paraśu Rama was born in the Trēṭā Yuga on the banks of the Jumna. He was the son of Jamadagni, one of the Rishis and of his wife the virtuous Rēṇuka. King Kārṭavīrya in the course of a hunting excursion visited the hermitage of Jamadagni who regaled the king and his followers sumptuously. The king wondered how a poor Rishi as his host could give such a magnificent reception to him in this wilderness. He soon learned that the secret lay in the Rishi's possession of the all-bestowing cow *Surabhi* or *Kamadhenu* which at once existed his avarice. He felt no shame in demanding the cow from the Rishi, and on refusal an attempt was made to wrest it by force which resulted in the death of the holy saint. The animal itself disappeared. Jamadagni's wife became a *Sati*, that is, burnt herself on her husband's funeral pyre, charging the king with the guilt of double murder, imprecating fearful curses on his head and abjured her son Paraśu Rāma to take vengeance on the inequitous and murderous king. Paraśu Rama was absent from home at the time. On his return, he came to know of what had happened and, being endowed with a portion of Viṣṇu's divinity, he challenged Kārṭavīrya to battle and slew him. The military race of Kṣheṭriyas was annihilated and the

world delivered from its oppressors. After accomplishing this, Rama gave away all his conquered countries in alms to the Brahmans who required him to quit their land. Having no place to rest, Rama retired to the Western ghauts, reclaimed Kerala from the sea and is still supposed to be living in the wilds of the Konkan.

The above story has its variants. In the *Vishnu Purana* it is said:—"Once when her sons were all absent to gather the fruits on which they fed, Rēṇuka, who was exact in the discharge of all her duties, went forth to bathe. On her way to the stream, she beheld Chitraratha, the prince of Mṛiṭṭikāvaṭi with a garland of lotuses on his neck sporting with his queen in the water, and she felt envious of their felicity. Defiled by unworthy thoughts, wetted but not purified by the stream, she returned disquited to the hermitage, and her husband perceived her agitation. Beholding her fallen from perfection and shorn of the lustre of her sanctity, Jamadagni reproved her and was exceeding wroth. Upon this there came four of her sons from the wood and each as he entered was successively commanded by his father to put his mother to death; but amazed and influenced by natural affection none of them made any reply; thereupon Jamadagni was angry and cursed them and they became as idiots, and lost all understanding, and were like unto beasts or birds. Lastly, Rama returned to the hermitage when the mighty and holy Jamadagni said unto him, 'Kill thy mother who has sinned, and do it, son, without repining.' Rama accordingly took up his axe and struck off his mother's head whereupon the wrath of the illustrious and mighty Jamadagni was assuaged, and he was pleased with his son, and said, 'since thou hast obeyed my commands and done what was hard to be performed, demand from me whatever blessings thou wilt and thy desire shall be fulfilled'. Then Rama begged of his father these boons: the restoration of his mother to life, with forgetfulness of

her having been slain, and purification from all defilement, the return of his brothers to their natural condition, and for himself invincibility in single combat, and length of days; and all these did his father bestow[1] ."

The following account, extracted from the *Mahabharata*, differs from that in the above text:— "It happened on one occasion that, during the absence of the Rishi's sons, the mighty monarch Kārṭavīrya, the sovereign of the Haihaya tribe, endowed by the favour of Daṭṭāṭrēya with a thousand arms and a golden chariot that went withersoever he willed it to go, came to the hermitage of Jamadagni where the wife of the sage, received him with all proper respect. The King, inflated with the pride of valour, in return to her hospitability, carried off with him by violence the calf of the milch-cow of the sacred oblation and cast down the tall trees, surrounding the hermitage; when Rama returned, his father told him what had chanced and he saw the cow in affliction and he was filled with wrath. Taking up his splendid bow Bhārgava, the slayer of hostile heroes, assailed Kārṭavīrya who had now become subject to the power of death and overthrew him in battle. With sharp arrows Rama cut off his thousand arms and the king perished. The sons of Kārṭavīrya to revenge his death attacked the hermitage of Jamadagni when Rama was away and slew the pious and unresisting sage who called repeatedly but fruitlessly upon his valiant sons. They then departed and when Rama returned bearing fuel from the thickets, he found his father lifeless. * * * * Thus lamenting bitterly and repeatedly, Rama performed his father's last obsequies and lighted his funeral pyre. He then made a vow, that he would extirpate the whole Kṣhetriya race. In fulfilment of this purpose he took up his arms and with remorseless and fatal rage singly destroyed in fight the sons of Kārṭavīrya and after then whatever Kṣhetriyas he encountered, Rama the first of warriors, likewise slew. Thrice seven times

1. Wilson's *Vishnu Purana*, p. 401.

did he clear the earth of the Kshetriya caste and he filled with their blood the five large lakes of Sāmanṭa Panchaka, from which he offered libations to the race of Bhṛgu." The object of this incarnation is said to be the destruction of the insolvent and oppressive race of Kshetriyas.

(7) *Rama* and (8) *Krishna*. These incarnations are well known and their story is related in the great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. They need not therefore detain us here.

(9) *Buddha* or Goutama. The Purānās have appropriated Buddha to their side and he is represented in them to be an incarnation of Viṣnu. The spread of Buddhism was a patent fact which cannot be denied and it was a protest against the system of caste which Hinduism was advocating at that time. This required explanation and the Puranic writers cleverly adopted the method of treating the new teacher Buddha as an incarnation of their own deity. The *Vishnu Purana* relates how the Dēvās complained to Viṣṇu of the seizure by the Dāityās or Asurās of the three worlds, their appropriation of the offerings which were the rightful portion of the Dēvās, taking care however not to transgress the precepts of the Vēdās. They besought the aid of Viṣṇu saying "Do thou whose wisdom is immeasurable, instruct us in some device by which we may be able to exterminate the enemies of the Gods."

"When the mighty Viṣṇu heard their requests, he emitted from his body an illusory form which he gave to the gods and thus spake. 'This deceptive vision shall wholly beguile the Daityās, so that, being led astray from the path of the Vēdās, they may be put to death; for all gods, demons or others who shall be opposed to the authority of the Vēda, shall perish by my might, whilst exercised for the preservation of the world. Go, then, and fear not, let this delusive vision precede you; it shall this day be of great service unto you; oh Gods!'

"After this, the great delusion, having proceeded to earth, beheld the Daityās engaged in ascetic penances upon the banks of the Narbada river, and approaching them in the semblance of a naked mendicant, with his head shaven, and carrying a bunch of peacock's feathers, he thus addressed them in gentle ascents: 'Ho! lords of Daitya race! wherefore is it that you practise these acts of penance, is it with a view to recompense in this world or in another?' 'Sage' replied the Daityās, 'we pursue these devotions to obtain a reward hereafter, why should you make such an enquiry?' 'If you are desirous of final emancipation', answered the seeming ascetic, 'attend to mywords, for you are worthy of a revelation which is the door to ultimate felicity. The duties that I will teach you are the secret path to liberation, there are none beyond or superior to them; by following them you shall obtain either heaven or exemption from future existence. You mighty beings are deserving of such lofty doctrine'. By such persuasions and by many specious arguments, did this delusive being misled the Daityās from the tenets of the Vēdās, teaching that the same thing might be for the sake of virtue and of vice; might be and might not be; might or might not contribute to liberation, might be the supreme object, and not be the supreme object, might be effect and not be effect; might be manifest and not be manifest, might be the duty of those who go naked, or who go clothed in much raiment, and so the Daityās were reduced from their proper duties by the repeated lessons of their illusory preceptor, maintaining the equal truth of contradictory tenets, and they were called Arhatas from the phrase he had employed of 'Ye are worthy (Arhaṭa) of this great doctrine;' that is of the false doctrines which he persuaded them to embrace". [1]

It is thus that Buddha came to be regarded as an *Avatara* of Viṣṇu.

1. *Vishnu Purana*, Book III, section XVIII.

(10) *Kalki* or Horse. This *Avatara* is yet to come. When the Kali age has debased and degenerated society, Viṣṇu, mounted on a white horse and armed with a drawn sword, blazing like a comet, will appear and punish the wicked. The fourth book of the *Vishnu Purana*, after giving a striking description of the increasing degeneracy of the Kali age prior to the tenth *Avatara*, prophecies as to what will happen in exact terms. It says,

Property alone will confer rank, wealth will be the only source of devotion, passion will be the sole bond of union between the sexes; falsehood will be the only means of success in litigation; and women will be objects merely of sensual gratification. Earth will be venerated for its mineral treasures, the Brahmanical thread will constitute a Brahman; external types (as the staff and red garb) will be the only distinctions of the several orders of life; dishonesty will be the universal means of subsistence, weakness will be the cause of dependence; menace and presumption will be substituted for learning; liberality will be devotion; simple ablution will be purification; mutual assent will be marriage; fine clothes will be dignity; and water afar off will be esteemed a holy spring.

"When the practices taught by the Vēdās and the Institutes of law shall nearly have ceased and the close of the Kali age shall be nigh, a portion of the divine being who exists of his own spiritual nature in the character of Brahma, and who is the beginning and the end and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon earth; he will be born in the family of Viṣṇuyaśas, an eminent Brahman of Sambhala village, as *Kalki*, endowed with the eight superhuman faculties. By his irresistible might he will destroy all the *Mlechchhas* and thieves and whose minds are devoted to iniquity. He will then re-establish righteousness upon the earth, and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali age shall be awakened and shall be as pellucid as crystal. The men who are thus changed

by the ritual of that peculiar time shall be as the seeds of human beings and shall give birth to a race who shall follow the laws of the Kriţa age or age of purity. As it is said, 'when the sun and moon and the lunar asterism Tishya and the planet Jupiter are in one mansion, the Kriţa age shall return" [1].

According to Mr. R. C. Dutt the very idea of divine incarnation is modern and was unknown to Vedic Hinduism or even to Manu, and Wilson has pointed out that "it is very doubtful if these incarnations are adverted to in the *Vedas*, at least in the text. They are mentioned in some of the *Upanishads*, supplementary treatises of the Vēdās, but these compositions are evidently from their style of later date than the Vēdās, and some of them especially those referring to Rama and Krishna are of very questionable authenticity" [1]. "Vedic gods" says Dutt "are described as descending to earth and sharing libations offered to them, and departed spirits and manes are similarly described as sharing the offerings made to them. But the idea of a deity being born as man, and living among men, like Rama and Krishna, belongs to modern Hinduism. It is impossible not to suspect that the idea is borrowed from the *Jataka* stories of the Buddhists" [2].

In the *Isis—Unveiled* Madame Blavatsky, after enumerating the *Avataras* in the order of their alleged appearance, remarks, "In this diagram of Avatārs, we see traced the gradual evolution and transformations of all species out of the antesilurian mud of Darwin and the ilus of Sanchoniathon and Berosus. Beginning with the Azoic time, corresponding to the ilus in which Brahma implants the creative germ, we pass through the Palocozoic and Mesozoic times, covered by the first and second incarnations as the fish and tortoise; and the Cenozoic, which is embraced by the incarnations in the

1. Wilson's *Works*, Vol. 2, p. 65.

2. Vol. 3, p. 277.

animal and semi-human forms of the boar and man-lion, and we come to the fifth and crowning geological period, designated as the 'era of mind, or age of man' whose symbol in Hindu Mythology is the dwarf-the first attempt of nature at the creation of man. In this diagram we should follow the main idea—not judge the degree of knowledge of the ancient philosophers by the literal acceptance of the popular form in which it is presented to us in the grand epical poem of Mahābhārata and its chapter the Bhagavatgīṭa" [1].

The following extract from the *Theosophic Thinker* makes an attempt to explain the *Avatars* in a rational manner.

"The Avatāra stories might seem absurd and illogical but there is no doubt that the Purānās contain some absolute truths, which according to ancient practice, are expressed esoterically as stories; but if the key is once secured which would explain them, their meanings are fully realised, and the truth understood and followed. One fact, however, becomes apparent from the stories even to a cursory observer that these incarnations or Avatārs follow the law of evolutions. In the first incarnation the god appeared as Matsya, because there was then only one element, water, and when the second element appeared as earth, god assumed the shape of a tortoise or an amphibious creature which can reside in both the elements. Then when the 3rd element, air, was formed, whose quality is scent, the form of a boar, which has the strong sense of smell, was taken. When fire, the fourth element appeared, which is the same as intelligence, the shape assumed was that of an intelligent lion, which is to kill the prey in such a way as not to spill any blood on earth. And in the fifth incarnation, the Dwarf is said to have taken hold of all the Ākāśa with his feet, thus showing the appearance of the fifth element the ether.

1 *Esoteric Hinduism* pp, 44—45.

"The bodies assumed also became denser and denser and more complex at each successive incarnation, thus showing the descent of spirit in grosser matter which is to be evolved again gradually to higher and purer state as will be shown in the later incarnations.

"The last incarnation was that of Buddha, whose followers now number nearly a third of the whole population of the world.

"The tenth incarnation is expected to come at the end of this Kali age. It is prophesied that the shape would be of a man riding on a horse. Then he is to collect all the true believers and rescue them from the hands of infidels, who it is said, would oppress them, and so these infidels would be killed.

"It will be seen that from the fifth incarnation all the shapes are human, thereby proving clearly that in evolution a superior being cannot revert to something below its ranks; and so in re-incarnation there cannot be retrogression. As in the physical plane gradual development from the simple to complex and higher forms of life is seen; so in the nine incarnations, from that of a fish to Buddha, gradual development is the result and likewise in the mental plane great improvement is seen to take place gradually from the life led by Paraşu Rama in the jungles to that of Ramachandra in his wanderings and nomadic life, and then settling down in kingdoms and principalities, and cultivation in Krishna and Balarama. In the spiritual plane, similarly, the same development is seen from the anger or the prevalence of Ṭamasa in Paraşuram to the mixture of Ṭamasa and Rājasa in Rama of Daşaratha and of Ṭamasa, Rājasa and Saṭwa in Krishna, to the full display of sāṭwic qualities in the last incarnation of Buddha." [1]

13. **Magam or Onam.** We know of no second festival called thus in September or October. Our

1. *Esoteric Hinduism*, pp. 45—46.

author is simply repeating the one already noticed by him in the previous para. He says that this one is in memory of *Patrakali* or more correctly *Bhadrakali* called *Pagodi* or *Bhagavati*. If his reference has anything to do with what is known as the *Mandalam* ceremony in Bhagavaṭi temples we can understand him. It lasts for 40 days during which special pūjās are offered to the goddess. It generally lasts from the 1st of Vrischigam to the middle of Dhanu (November—December).

14. **Tirawedira.** Our author has thoroughly misconceived the scope and the *raison de etere* of this national festival. The "new woman" has not to show herself in Malabar to assert equality with man in every respect, for she is already there. The position of woman in Malabar is altogether different from that of her sister on the eastern coast. She is practically mistress of her house, whether as mother or sister of the karnavan. She has a recognised legal position. The principle of Malabar law is that the whole tarwad property belongs to her and the karnavan is simply the manager on her behalf. She has no reason to bewail that she has "not been equally endowed intellectually with man", for she does not admit her inequality. Her general education is on a *par* with her brothers and her intellectual capacity in the matter of special studies is in no way inferior. There have been and there are ladies of remarkable attainments in Malabar.[1]

The Ṭiruvāṭira festival has been so well described by Mr. Gopala Panikkar, himself a Nayar, that I need only quote it here in *extenso* from his work *Malabar and its Folk*, already alluded to: "Ṭiruvāṭira is one of the three great national occasions of

1. "The three Native States of Cochin, Travancore and Baroda take rank (in matters educational) above all British provinces except Burma; while, in aspect of female education, Cochin divides with Burma the honour of the first place." *South India Census Report* of 1911.

Malabar. It generally comes off in the Malayalam month of Dhanu (December or January) on the day called the Ṭiruvāṭira day. It is essentially a festival in which females are almost exclusively concerned and lasts for but a day. It has got behind it a traditional antiquity streching back to time almost out of mind. The popular conception of it is that it is in commemoration of the death of Kāmadēvan, the Cupid of our national mythology. As recorded in old Purāṇas, Kāmadēvan was destroyed in the burning fire of the third eye of Śiva, one of the chief members of our Divine Trinity. Hence he is now supposed as having only an ideal or rather spiritual existence, and thus he exerts a powerful influence upon the lower passions of human nature. The memory of this unhappy tragedy is still kept alive amongst us, particularly the female section, by means of the annual celebration of this important festival. About a week before the day, the festival practically opens. At about 4 in the morning, every young female member of the Nayar families with pretensions to decency, gets out of her bed and takes her bath in a tank. Usually, a fairly large number of these young ladies collect themselves in the tank for the purpose. Then all or almost all of these plunge in the water and begin to take part in the singing that is presently to follow. One of these then leads off by means of a peculiar rhythmic song chiefly pertaining to Cupid. The singing is simultaneously accompanied by a curious sound produced with her hand on the water. The palm of the left hand is closed and kept immediately underneath the surface of the water. Then the palm of the other is forcibly brought in a slanting direction producing a loud deep noise. This process is continuously prolonged together with the singing. One stanza is now over along with the sound and then the leader stops awhile for the others to follow her in her wake. This being likewise over, she caps her first stanza, with another at the same time beating on the water and so on until the conclusion of the song. Then

all of them make a long pause and then begin another. The process goes on until the peep of the dawn when they rub themselves dry and come home to dress themselves in the neatest and grandest possible attire. They also darken the fringes of their eyelids with a sticky preparation of soot mixed up with a little oil or ghee, and sometimes with a superficial coating of antimony powder. They also wear white, black or red marks lower down the middle of their foreheads close to the part where the two eyebrows near one another [1]. They also chew betel and thus redden their mouths and lips. Then they proceed to the enjoyment of another prominent item of pleasure: *viz.*, swinging to and fro, on what is usually known as an *uzhinjal*. A long bamboo piece is taken and rent asunder from the root end of it leaving the other end whole untouched. Then two holes are bored, one on the cut end of each one of the two parts into which the bamboo is split. Now another but a small piece of the same material about a yard in length is divided along the grain in two equal parts. One of these is taken and its both ends are cut into points which are thrust into the two holes of the long bamboo pieces spoken of before. This is securely nailed and strongly attached to the long bamboo, which is then hung by means of a very tight strong rope to a horizontal branch of a neighbouring tree. Then the player seats herself on the small piece attached between the split portions which are firmly held by her two hands, and then the whole thing is propelled amain by some one from behind. These ladies especially derive immense pleasure from this process of swinging backwards and forwards, sometimes very wide apart so as to reach the other and higher branches of the tree. Nevertheless, accidents are few and far between. This as well as the songs and early bath all close on the festival day when still greater care and scrupulousness are bestowed upon the various elements of enjoyment.

"On the festival day, after the morning bath is over, they take a light chota and, in the noon, a family-dinner

1. Next they go to the temple for worship.

is voraciously attacked, the essential and almost universal ingredients of which being ordinary ripe plantain fruits and a delicious preparation of arrow-root powder purified and mixed with jaggery or sugar and also cocoanut. Then till evening dancing and merry-making are ceaselessly indulged in.

"The husband population are inexcusably required to be present in the wives' houses before evening, as they are bound to do on the Ōṇam and Vishu occasions; failure to do which is looked upon as a step or rather the first step on the part of the defaulting husband towards a final separation or divorce from the wife. Despite the rigour of the bleak December season during which commonly the festival falls, heightened inevitably by the constant blowing of the cold east wind upon their moistened frames, these lusty maidens derive considerable pleasure from their early baths and their frolics in water. The biting cold of the season which makes their persons shiver and quiver like aspen-leaves before the breeze, becomes to them in the midst of all their ecstalic frolics an additional source of pleasure. In short, all these merely tend to brace them up to an extent the like of which they can scarcely find anywhere else. Thus at the stated season of the year the morning hours are invariably filled with the melodious warblings of certain indigenous birds diversified by the sweet cheering songs of our country maidens and constantly disturbed by the rough crowing of the domestic cock; all of which drag their pleasing length long until the morning dawns upon them and bathes them in the crimson effulgence of the orb of the day, driving off the country's face the mist of night which enveloped them in its hazy cover: thus forming the signal of the party to retire to their accustomed abodes for the day's festivities.

"The two items described above, viz., the swinging process and the beating on the water, have each its distinctive significance. The former typifies the attempt which these maidens make in order to hang themselves

on these instruments and destroy their lives in consequence of the lamented demise of their favourite deity, Kāmadēvan. It is but natural that depth of sorrow will lead men to extreme courses of action. The beating on the water symbolizes their beating their chests in expression of their deep-felt sorrow caused by their Cupid's death. Such in brief is the description of a Nayar festival which plays a conspicuous part in the social history of Malabar. Naturally enough, while within the Christian fold the festive pleasantry and mirth of the Christmas season are going their jolly round, within the limited circle of the Nayar Society a mournful occasion which time has completely altered into one of mirth, constitutes one of the best enjoyments of our national life." [1]

At this national festival the tenants of Malabar are required to present their landlords with ten cocoanuts for each *paramba* or garden held by them. This gift is known as *Thiruvatirappattu*. In return for this the tenants are given plantain fruits, rice, etc.

Mr. Gopala Panikkar has in his fine description of the celebration of the festival failed to notice certain details which are worth mentioning. On the Ṭiruvātira day the women divert themselves by a peculiar kind of dance. Young bejewelled maidens in their gayest attire join together, stand in a circle and perform evolutions to the accompaniment of songs, keeping tune in the meanwhile by the clapping of their hands. This is called Kaikottikaḷi (also Ṭiruvātirakaḷi) and the songs Ṭiruvāṭirappāttu [2]. In the night they keep vigils for Śiva. It will be observed that the festival is celebrated in commemoration, not simply of the consumption of Kāmadēva, the God of love, in the fire proceeding from Śiva's eyes, but also of the restoration of the God to life at the intercession of Pārvaṭi. Hence

1. *Malabar and its Folk*, pp. 105 to 107.

2. See *Folksongs of Kerala* in the *Jubilee Souvenir* of the Oriental Mss. Dept. p. 65—Trivandrum.

it partakes of the nature both of a mourning and a rejoicing ceremony which accounts for the prevailing mirth. The story of the death and restoration of *Kama Deva* is worth telling and is as follows:—

Kama, the God of love, is said to be the son of *Maya* or *Lakshmi*. *Maya* is described "as the general *attracting* power; the mother of all; the *Sakti* or energy, of Viṣṇu, the personification of *spirit*; she is attraction, unites all matter, producing love in animated nature, and in Physics, the harmonization of atoms. *Kama* or love is her offspring, and is united in marriage to *Reti*, or *Affection*, the inseparable attendant on the tender passion; and in friendship to *Vasanta* or spring, denoting Love's season, both literally in regard to the time when most animals are impregnated and vegetables burst into existence, and metaphorically, touching the early portion of man's passage through life". In the words of Sir William Jones, he made "the bold attempt to wound the great God Mahādēva, for which he was punished by a flame consuming his corporeal nature, and reducing him to a mental essence, and hence his chief dominion is over the minds of mortals or such deities as he is permitted to subdue".

The incident has been thus described :—

"Mahādēva and Pārvaṭi while once playing with dice at the game of *Chaturanga*, disputed, and parted in wrath; and severally performing rigid acts of devotion to the Supreme Being, kindled thereby such vehement fires and threatened a general conflagration. The Dēvās in great alarm hastened to Brahma, who led him to Mahādēva, and supplicated him to recall his consort; but the wrathful god answered, that she must return to him of her own choice. They accordingly deputed Ganga, the river goddess, who prevailed on Pārvaṭi to return to her husband, on the condition that his love for her should be restored. The celestial mediators then employed Kāma Dēva, who wounded Śiva with one of his flowery arrows; but the angry deity reduced the god of love to ashes. Pārvaṭi, soon

after, presented herself before Śiva in the semblance of a Kirāti, a daughter of a mountaineer; and seeing him enamoured of her, assumed her own shape, and effected reunion: and in the place of reconciliation a grove sprang up, which was named, from the impression which her appearance then made on the uxorious deity, Kāmavana, or the wood of desire. The relenting Śiva consoled the afflicted Reṭi, the widow of Kāma, by assuring her that she should rejoin her husband, when he should be born again in the form of Pradyumna, son of Kriṣṇa and put Sāmbara to death. The favourable production was in due time accomplished; and Pradyumna was seized by the demon Sāmbara, who placed him in a chest and threw it into the sea. The chest was swallowed by a large fish, which was caught and carried to the palace of the tyrant; where the unfortunate Reṭi had been compelled to menial service: it fell to her lot to open the fish, and finding the chest and its contents, she nursed the infant in private, and educated him until he had sufficient strength to destroy the malignant Sāmbara. He had before considered Reṭi as his mother; but their minds being now irradiated, the prophetic promise of Mahādēva was remembered and the god of love was reunited to the goddess of pleasure."

The Rāmāyaṇa notices the same event thus:— "Kandarpa, the wily one, wounding Sṭhāṇu, the lord of the gods, while, with uplifted arm, he was engaged in sacred austerities, met the desert of his crime from the eye of the great Rudra, all his members, being scorched with fire, fell from his body; he was thence called *Ananga* (bodiless), and the place where it happened, *Kama*[1] (Desire)"

15. *Parany Mal. Bharani.* The second asterism, supposed to be specially dedicated to Bhagavaṭi— the goddess.

1. Book 1, Sect. 22.

Sri Couroumba. The goddess presiding over the temple at Cranganore or Kodungalore is known as the *Sri Kurumba Bhagavati* and the Devaswam or the endowment is known as *Sri Kurumba Kavu Devaswam.* The temple at Cranganore is an ancient one and is dedicated to Bhadrakāli. We have notices of it by European travellers of the 17th century as also in books on Malabar by Spanish and Portuguese writers of the period. The annual sacrifice of cocks with its accompanying orgies are also referred to by some of them. Baldeous states that "the heathens considered Bhadrakāli to have her chief residence in the great Pagōda of Cranganore. It was in 1662 known as the Pagoda of Pilgrims from the vast number of zealots that flocked thither, and brought a revenue of many thousand fanams to the Hindu Raja. Ixora; they say, gave to his daughter Kali, the name of *Basuri* (or rather *Vasuri*) which to this day is the common name for small-pox". It is significant that the word *Kuruppa* in Malayalam denotes small-pox and that it has some affinity with the name by which the goddess at Cranganore is known. Faria-y-Sousa while not mentioning the temple of the goddess itself, notices the adjacent one of *Kshetrapala* which forms part of the main building. He says, "That of upper Cranganore has an idol on whose head one of the Brahmans gives several strokes of a hammer every day. For they think if these were not done, he would by this time touch the stars with his head."[1] The strokes are, as we have already said, given with a piece of sandal wood even to-day but not with a hammer.

The ancient Tamil poems, the *Manimekala* and the *Chilapatikaram* give us an account of the origin of the Bhagavati Temple at Cranganore. It is said that a certain loving couple known as *Kovalan* and *Kannakay* belonging to the famous city of *Kaveripoompattam* having had to leave their home under certain

1. Vol. 2, Chap. 4.

distressing circumstances reached the city of Madura where, while Kōvalan, the husband of Kannakay, was attempting to sell one of her rich anklets, was set upon by the king's goldsmiths and accused of having robbed one of the Queen's anklets. He was doomed to death and was executed. Hearing of the murder of her husband, the high-spirited and disconsolate wife rushed into the royal presence and proved her husband's innocence by producing the other anklet which was in her possession and comparing it with the one seized from her husband. At this, the king was amazed, and struck with the inequity he had unwittingly committed, fell down and died. The bereaved widow left the royal presence and in her determination to put an end to her miserable existence, and at the same time to take vengeance on her wrong-doers, she twisted round and plucked her left breast and threw it over the house of the court jeweller who had brought about the arrest and execution of her husband. The irritable mob that had collected round the place, lynched the jeweller and set fire to his house. She subsequently died in the territory of the Chēra King Chenkuttuvan. The story was carried to the King who was greatly moved at the sad end of the King of Madura while the Queen was interested in the account of the heroine. At the request of the Queen, Chenkuttuvan built the temple at Cranganore, their capital, in honour of Kannakay who was supposed to be an incarnation of Bhadrakali to whom the temple was dedicated.

The goddess Kāli or 'the black one' known also as Bhadrakāli or 'the strong Kāli', is said to have been the wife of Īśwara. She is also known as *Durga*, *Chamundi*, *Chandika*, *Bhavani*, etc. Faria-y-Sousa writing of Malabar Hindus in the 17th century speaks of "Patrakāli" as "Ixora's daughter". She "is black; she has eight faces, and 16 arms, great round eyes, hog's teeth, two elephants for tendants. She is clothed with snakes, her hair like peacock's tails, has several things in her hands, particularly arms, the Devil Medala waits on

her; she seeing her father could not overcome the giant Daridabaxada, conquered him by Policy".[1]

Sacrifices are but too common to the goddess in her character of Kāli and human sacrifices too used to be offered in former days though not in Malabar. The religious rites that accompany the sacrifices to Kāli are detailed in a chapter of the *Kalika Purana*.

Our author's description of the *Bharani* festival is not correct. What he calls *Parany* stands for *Bharani*, which however is not reckoned as the birthday, of the goddess presiding over the shrine of Sri Kurumba at Cranganore. The temple there is called Sri Kurumba Kāvu and we have already given an account of its origin.

We have accounts of the annual Bharaṇi festival given by Mr. Logan in his *Manual of the Malabar District*, as also by Mr. Gopala Panikkar in his *Malabar and its Folk*. Mr. Fawcett quotes Mr. Logan in his account of the Nayars of Malabar and improves upon it by adding what he obtained from his informant. These accounts are, however, but hearsay, and some of them are so garbled as to throw a lurid and unsavoury light on the whole festival. What takes place in connection with it and under its shadow and in its name is shocking enough. But it is rendered to appear more repulsive than it actually is by the addition of filthy particulars which exist only in the wild imagination of informants who trade on such nasty stuff.

The festival comes on, not in the month of January as observed by our author, but in the Malayalam month of Meenam which corresponds to March—April. Bharaṇi is the second asterism of the lunar month and that is the most important day of the festival. Hence it is known as the Bharaṇi festival of Kodungallur. The temple is held by the people to be dedicated to Kāli or Sri Kurumba, the goddess who presides over that fell

1 Chapter 1, Pt. 4, Vol. 2.

disease, the small-pox, and she and her satelites are supposed to revel in their greed for blood. Hence the shedding of blood by the sacrifice of a large number of cocks forms a distinguishing feature of the revolting adjuncts of this horid festival.

Pilgrimages to the shrine at Kodungallur for the Bharaṇi festival are undertakan from one end of Malabar to the other. As the festival approaches, immense bodies of all castes except the Brahmans flock to Kodungallur from all parts of Malabar. Most of them make their offerings and return home before Bharaṇi day. Mr. C. Gopala Panikkar gives us a substantially correct, though gruesome, account of the doings of the pilgrims. He says, "Pilgrimages undertaken to the temple on this occasion are potent enough to safeguard the pilgrims and their friends and relations from the perilous attacks of cholera and small-pox. Hence people resort thither annually by the thousands from almost all parts of Malabar; and the more north you go the stronger will you find the hold which the goddess has upon the popular imagination. The chief propitiatory offering on the occasion is the sacrifice of cocks. In fact, every family makes a point of undertaking this sacred mission. People arrange to start on it at an auspicious moment on a fixed day in small isolated bodies. Of course all the necessaries they take care to carry about their persons. Preparations are made for the journey. Rice, salt, chillies, curry-stuffs, betel leaves and nuts, a little turmeric powder and pepper and above all a number of cocks form an almost complete paraphernalia of the pilgrimage. These are all gathered and preserved in separate bundles, inside a large bag. When the appointed hour comes they throw this bag on their shoulders, conceal their money in their girdles, and with a native fashioned umbrella in the one hand and a walking stick on the other they start, each from his own house, to meet the brother pilgrims at the rendezvous. Here a foreman is selected practically by common consent.

"Then commences the vociferous recitation of that series of obscene songs and ballads which characterises the pilgrimage all along. The foreman it is that opens the ball. He is caught up by others in equally loud and profuse strains. This is continued right up till the beginning of their homeward journey. Nobody whom they come across can successfully escape the course Billings-gate of these religious zealots. Even women are not spared. Perhaps it is in their case that the pilgrims wax all the more eloquently vulgar. A number of cock-feathers stuck or tied upon the tip of a stick, and with this as a wand they begin to dance and pipe in a set style which is extremely revolting to every sense of decency.

"Some of the pilgrims walk out all the distance down to the temple, while others go by boat or some other common conveyances; but in neither case do they deign to spare any passer-by. They usually cook their own meals on the way; which consist of the ordinary rice preparations plenty of fish and flesh. Hundreds of gallons of *arrack* and toddy are consumed during the festivals. In fact you can hardly find a single sober pilgrim during their continuance. The pilgrims reach the temple in their dirty attire. Thier very words smell strongly of a mixture of arrack and undigested animal food. They bathe and have their meals again. The temple premises are crowded to overflowing. The worship of the goddess is then commenced. The offering consists of the sacrifice of cocks at the temple-altar, turmeric powder, but principally of pepper, as also some other objects of lesser importance. A particular spot inside the temple is set apart for the distribution of what is called *Manjalprasadam* (turmeric powder on which divine blessings have been invoked). The work of doling it out is done by young maidens who are also during the process subjected to ceaseless volleys of vile and vulgar abuse. With surely stoical endurance they submit to attend to their work.

"Now leaving out of account the minor ceremonies we come to the principal one, viz., the sacrifice of cocks.

"The popular idea is, the greater the number of cocks sacrificed, the greater is the efficacy of the pilgrimage. Hence men vie with one another in the number of cocks that they carry on their journey. The sacrifice is begun and then there takes place a regular scramble for the sanctified spot reserved for this butchering ceremony. Now one man holds a cock by the trunk and another pulls out its neck by the head, and in the twinkling of an eye, by the intervention of a sharpened knife, the head is severed from the trunk. The blood then gushes forth in a forceful and continuous jets, which is poured directly on a granite piece specially reserved. Then another is similarly slaughtered, and then as many as each of the pilgrims can bring. The same process of butchering is also taken up by thousands of others, and in no length of time the whole of the temple-yard is converted into one horrible expanse of blood, rendering it too slippery to be safely walked over. The piteous cries and death-throes of the poor devoted creatures greatly intensify the horror of the scene. The stench emanating from the blood mixing with the nauseating smell of arrack renders the occasion all the more revolting."[1]

Mr. Logan adds a few more particulars. He says, "of what takes when the pilgrims reach this spot perhaps the less said the better. In their passage up to the shrine the cry of 'nada-a nada-a' (march, march away) is varied by terms of unmeasured abuse levelled at the goddess (a Bhagavaṭi) of the shrine. This abusive language is supposed to be acceptable to her. On arrival at the shrine, they desecrate it in every conceivable way, believing that this too is acceptable; they throw stones and filth, howling volleys of oprobrium at her house. The chief of the

1 *Malabar and its Folk*, pp. 130 to 132.

fisherman caste, styled Kuli Muttatta Arayan, has the privilege of being the first to begin the work of polluting the *Bhoot* or shrine. Into other particulars it is unnecessary to enter." Quoting this passage Mr. F. Fawcett remarks, "It is a pity Mr. Logan is reticent—my information is that the head-man of the Mukkuvans (fisher caste) opens the festival by solemnly making foecal deposit on the image. Here again there is the same strange union of everything that is filthy, abusive, foul and irreverent with every mode of expressing the deepest religious feeling.[1] "

The excesses committed by the pilgrims on the way and their doings on arriving at Kodungallur, especially of the lower classes, are really revolting. But there is no warrant for some of the statements contained in the above extracts, and it is indeed surprising that Mr. Fawcett should have been too easily gulled into believing the gross travesty of the festival given him by his informant. The pity of it is, that he should have given currency to his informant's account by making a record of it in a Government publication without taking the trouble of testing its correctness by making local enquiries, especially, when the truth could have been easily ascertained by making a reference to the Devaswam Department (*i. e.*, the Department of Religion) of the Cochin State. The danger of leaving such statements uncontradicted is great, very often they are made the basis of theories as to the religion and manners of the people. I have therefore taken care to ascertain the truth of Mr. Fawcett's informant's statement. Mr. K. Raja Rama Row, B. A., who was for some time Tahsildar and Magistrate of Cranganore and who had, in his official capacity superintended the celebration of the festival, gives me the following account:

"It is true that the Koori Kuzhi Aravans (not the Koob Mattuth Aravan) have the privilege of polluting

1 Madras Museum Bulletin, Vol. V, No. 3, p. 272.

the shrine. But how do they do it? Generally, they (200 in number) run up from the Kāvil Kadavu (the landing place for boats at a slight distance from the temple) to the northern side of the temple, and stand with long clubs in their hands in 3 or 4 rows one behind the other, at a respectable distance from the northern door-way of the temple. After the special pūja (*Tri Chandana podi Charthi pooja*) is over, the Cranganur Chief, the Tahsildar and his subordinates leave the temple house through the eastern door-way, unobserved, if possible, by the large concourse of the polluting classes that stand on the northern side of the temple. 'Unobserved' I say, because the exit of these folks through the eastern gate is the signal for them to approach and run round the temple. The impatience of these classes is simply indescribable. Those that stand in the forefront are generally pushed forward, but they, from consciousness of the impropriety of approaching the temple before the pūja is over, every moment, will be receding. The men in the forefront may be aptly compared with the waves of a stormy sea which beat up against the shore and then recede into the foamy waters. *These Aravans make no foecal deposit on the image.* Curiously enough, they have not been allowed even the privilege of having a look at the image, for the northern door-way will be closed for about a fortnight, from the fowl-cutting day to the *Nata Thurappu* or opening day. The various door-ways are fastened before the polluting classes approach the temple. I have superintended the festival from the beginning to the end for four consecutive years and *I have not noticed the deposit adverted to by* Mr. Fawcett. I may also observe that the Bharaṇi pilgrims comprising Nayars and other classes are bodily very clean though their tongues know no bounds."

I may now proceed to give an accurate account of the festival as it takes place on the authority of those who take part in it.

The festival opens on the *Bharani* asterism of the month of Kumbham (February—March) with a Malabar gold-smith of the polluting caste, going round the temple three times, ringing a bell, at about 7 in the morning. He is supposed to have polluted the temple and the act is called *Kavu Teendal* or polluting the temple. A few minutes after, the eldest female member of the Pilāppilly house attached to the temple, appears and announces that the temple has been swept clean, the process having been gone through previous to announcement. Upon this, the Nampūṭiri priests enter the temple, proceed to the *sanctum* and conduct the usual services. The trees standing near the temple, specially the banyan and the peepul, are decorated by hanging flags on their boughs. The porticoes of the pagoda on the north and the east are also similarly decorated.

From this day forward till after the Bharaṇi day of the next month of Meenam is over, and the temple is opened to public worship after the closing of the festival, certain offerings such as *Satassatam* (a kind of pudding in the preparation of which 25 measures and 1 *nazhi* of rice, 101 cocoanuts, 101 *palams* of Malasses, 101 *kadali* plantain fruits and 101 *tavi* of ghee are required) for the goddess, *Guruti* (an offering of water mixed with chunnam and turmeric along with other adjuncts) to *Vasurimala*, i. e. the goddess of small-pox whose idol is placed in a building outside the main fane, and *Chamayam* (another offering consisting in the de coration of the idol to Kṣhēṭrapālan or the guardian angel of the shrine, are prohibited. In the village of Kodungallur people desist during the period from having dramas (Kathakali) performed.

Nāyar pilgrims from north and south Malabar begin to arrive some 10 days before the *Bharani* day in Meenam, while those from the south come some days before. The sacrifice of cocks commence on the *Avittam* or *Chatayam* asterisms, i. e., six or seven days

before the *Bharani* day. The cocks are sacrificed by their heads being severed by a sharp knife and the blood split on the two stones that stand covered with sand *outside* the line of circumambulation round the temple (*pradakshana vazhi*). Thus the sacrifice takes place *outside* the pagoda precincts though within its outer boundary. The pagoda is from this day forward regarded as polluted. The sacrifice goes on till *Aswati* or the first asterism. The sacrifice is commenced by a Nāyar belonging to a house known as *Kodungallur Bhagavati Veetu*, i.e., 'the Cranganur goddess's house,' and the cocks sacrificed by him are brought from the Tarwads of *Tacholi Otenan* and *Karampilty Kurup* in British Malabar. On that day the eastern portico of the pagoda is decorated by hanging strings of flags and festoons. It is on account of this sacrifice of cocks that the Kodungallur Bharaṇi is also known as the Cock Festival of Cranganore.

The Ṭiyya or Īlava pilgrims begin to come from *Eravati* and *Aswati*, i. e., the twenty-seventh and the first asterisms. On the *Aswati* day the pilgrims throw into the inner precincts of the temple, over the roof of the quadrangle, small packages containing turmeric, pepper and other articles together with some coins, a cocoanut and a live cock. Mr. Logan's story as to the throwing of filth and stones is of a piece with Mr. Fawcett's account of the foecal deposit. On the same day the Pulayars commence their sacrifice of cocks; at a place called *Pulappatam* or 'the Pulayas' field', situated at about a furlong to the east of the pagoda. The sacrifice is set on foot by a Pulaya holding the sṭhānam or dignity of *Kottu Kovilakathay Vatikkaran*, i. e., the rod-bearer of the Palace of the Raja. The Pulayas continue their sacrifice till the forenoon of the *Bharani* day.

Meanwhile on the *Aswati* day, that is the day previous to *Bharani*, the ordinary services of the day are all closed by 10 a. m. At 12 o'clock the *Atikal*, a

priest who is not a Brahman but who belongs to a peculiar sect and whose occupation is offering pūja to Bhadrakāli, enters the *sanctum* and performs the service of *Trichchandanappoticharthal* which means literally 'the smearing of the idol with holy sandal powder'. This is done with shut doors and lasts till about half past three. The doors of the *sanctum* are then opened.

As soon as the above service of the *Atikal* is over, all within the inner precincts are ordered to come out, and the doors all round are locked up. The *Valia* or senior Raja of Cranganur then gets on the platform round the peepul tree standing on the east of the eastern portico of the Pagoda and spreads out a green coloured umbrella. The moment the green coloured umbrella of the Raja is spread, a rush is made by the surging crowd which till then is kept back by the *Velichappad* who is venerated by the pilgrims; and *Palakkal Velan* (a low caste washerman or *mannan*) approaches the shrine first, with great eclat, and formally and ostentatiously pollutes the temple by touching it. He is followed by the surging mass of Tiyyans and Aravans who in a frenzy circumambulate the temple in a wild manner and then retire. The *Koori kuzhi Aravans*, and not the *Kooli mutta Aravan*, have the privilege of polluting the temple by approach, besides the *Palakkal Velan's* right to do so by touch.

Early next morning at about 3 a. m., the *Atikal* goes into the temple and serves *Payasam* or sweet pudding made of *vari ari* or wild rice, and molasses to the goddess. The *Atikal*, it should be noted, could not perform such service on any other day of the year.

A carpenter who is designated *Veerasari* or the brave carpenter hoists a flag on an arecanut tree planted to the east of the column of lights standing on the eastern side of the temple.

At 6 a. m. on the *Bharani* day cocks are sacrificed in front of the western gate of the

pagoda and *Palakkal Velan* once more approaches and pollutes the shrine, as if it had not been already polluted. After this, men of all castes approach the temple and throw into the inner quadrangle offerings of coins, cocoanuts, pepper, turmeric, live cocks, etc., but never stones and filth. Towards evening the Sirkar authorities go into the inside quadrangle opening the eastern door alone of the pagoda and collect and secure the offerings thrown in by the pilgrims. The collections amount from ten to fifteen thousand Rupees and the people that congregate come to more than twenty or thirty thousand men.

On *Kartika* day, i. e., the next day after the *Bharani*, the premises of the pagoda and its vicinity are swept clean, and the wells purified. In the evening, the eastern door is opened, and the inner precincts also are swept clear. The Nampūṭiri priests now go in and perform the *punnyaham* or purificatory ceremony, and give away *Pasu Dhanam* or gift of cows as an adjunct of the purificatory ceremony. After this, the usual services commence. At about 8 in the night, the eastern door of the inner shrine is opened, and pūjas performed. As soon as these are over, the door is closed once more and locked up. The next day, that is on the *Rohini* asterism, at about 9 p. m., the eastern door of the inner shrine is opened, pūja performed and locked up again. The next pūja is performed at 6 a. m. on the subsequent day, in, on the *Makeeram* asterism. On the next day, i. e., the *Tiruvatira* asterism, service takes place at 9 a. m. On the *Punartham* asterism, i.e., the day following, service is performed at 6 p. m. The usual daily services are resumed from the next day forwards, i. e., from the *Puyam* asterism when as usual the northern door is opened for worship. A large number of devotees attend this and it is esteemed a great merit to worship when this door is opened after the festival.

The pilgrims make their return journey in a quiet noffensive manner and take home the *Prasada* which

consists of sandal paste mixed with turmeric, and a black paint of burnt rice, etc., known as *Chantu*.

16. **Paldurti.** There is a temple of Bhagavaṭi at Palluruthi just a couple of miles to the south of Mattancherry in Cochin. The celebration of the Bharaṇi here is called *Vela*.

At Cherṭalay in Travancore also there is a similar celebration in the month of Meenam on the day of the *Pooram* asterism though not on the day of *Bharani*. Both at Palluruthi and at Cherṭalay, huge figures, worked in wicker and painted and decked in gaudy colours and tinsel drapery, to represent the Pāndava brothers and the stories and incidents of the Mahā bhāraṭa and the Rāmāyaṇa, are constructed and placed in front of the temple. They are lighted during the night and on the *Pooram* or *Bharani* day are either carried on men's shoulders or are dragged on huge wheels round the temple. There are also figures known as *Annam* (a kind of huge bird-like figure) of beautiful workmanship carried round the temple sometimes on wheels and sometimes on the shoulders of men. There is the *Paddayani* (literally patayani)[1] or *Vela* in which the devotees who come to take part in the celebration carry torches by night and advance towards the temple in a body with drums beating, fifes playing and with shouts. A similar party advances from the opposite direction and the two come face to face at the temple. Much noise is made and, amidst this tumultious revelry, pop guns are fired, rockets let off, and other fire-works exhibited. The votaries are often the worse for liquor and ganja. Very often it ends in a free fight between the opposing factions. Obscene songs and vile abuse are freely indulged in. Long established custom is made the excuse for this unedifying freedom.

At Cherṭalay this sort of revelry is allowed on the *Pooram* day only. The other days of the temple festival are celebrated as in other temples. Fra Bartolomeo

1. The word means a military formation in warfare.

has given us a description of the festival as he saw it in March 1777. "I had an opportunity of seeing the image of this deity (Bhagavati) during the celebration of her festival. It was exhibited to the populace, amidst the sound of various musical instruments, by a Brahman, who sat upon an elephant, and held an umbrella over it. Some Indian dancing girls[1] preceded the statue and the procession was closed by an immense multitude of people, who seemed frantic with joy, and who sing all kinds of indecent songs, on the subject of generation which they say is effected by the influence of this female deity, combined with that of her husband Śiva or the son."[2]

At the celebration of Bharani and Pūram, all castes, high and low, are alike allowed to approach the temple but get no admission into it.

17. **Causes to be suspended by an iron.** This is known as *Tookkam* or hook-swinging generally held in certain Bhagavaṭi temples but not in all. For instance at the Cherṭala temple there is no hook-swinging.

Vows are taken when a person is dangerously ill or in some other bad way that he would subject himself to hook-swinging or some other self-mortification to gratify the dreaded goddess Kāḷi under the deluded impression that the evil is caused by the anger of Kāḷi. Frair Jordanus in the 14th century tells us that in Greater India meaning Malabar, "Many sacrifice themselves to idols in this way: When they are sick or involved in great mischance, they vow themselves to the idol if they should happen to be delivered, then, when they have recovered, they fatten themselves for one or two years continually eating and drinking fat things, etc. and when another festival comes round they cover themselves

1. The writer evidently mistook the *Talam* bearers or females carrying lights before the image for dancing girls. The Malabar temples have fortunately no dancing girls attached to them as on the East Coast.

2. p 121~2.

with flowers and perfumes and crown themselves with white garlands and go with singing and playing before the idol when it is carried through the land; and those men who are sacrificing themselves to the idol carry a sword with 2 handles like those (knives) which are used in currying leather; and after they have shown off a great deal they put the sword to the back of the neck cutting strongly with a vigorous exertion of both hands and so cut off their own heads before the idol".

We do not, of course, now hear of this sort of self-immolation, but hook-swinging, such as is mentioned by our author (perhaps a substitute of what is described by Jordanus), is still prevalent though the Government has prohibited it for some time past.

Hook-swinging is performed in fulfilment of vows made to Kāli to propitiate her and gain her favour with a view to avert mishaps. The performance takes place in the Kāli temple in the presence of the goddess. The performer has to prepare himself early by undergoing some sort of preliminary penance. He should for the period of 41 days attend the temple early morning after bath and worship the goddess, abstaining from animal food, intoxicants as also from association with women. His body has to be prepared for the hook. For this, during the morning hours, the body is rubbed with oil and is shampooed particularly on the back, a portion of the flesh is by manipulation stretched and made thin by constant rubbing, so that the integument may be somewhat pulled out. The instructor teaches him to perform various feats in addition to this. This sort of preparation goes on regularly till the appointed day arrives.

There are two kinds of Hook-swinging known as *Garudan Thookkam* or kite-swinging and *Thony Thookkam* or boat-swinging. For the former a sort of car is constructed which will rest on two axles with four wheels. On this is set up a horizontal beam resting on two vertical supports. The hook which is inserted

through the integument on the back of the performer is connected with a ring attached to the beam by means of a strong rope. He is then raised or hauled up. Over the beam there is a small decorated roofing made, and beneath this the performer swings. In some parts this arrangement is simplified by having only a small pole on which rests a horizontal beam provided with a metalic ring at one end. The beam acts as a lever so that one end of it can be either raised or lowered so as to give some rest to the swinger. The rope tied to the ring is connected with the hook and the waist-band of the performer. For boat-swinging the same kind of apparatus is used only that it is not set up on wheels.

For kite-swinging the performer has his face painted green, with a red coloured beak, as that of the kite, attached to his mouth, and is supplied with artificial wings so as to simulate the bird, Garuda,—the Brahmani kite. He wears long locks of artificial hair and performs the feats taught him by his instructor, from his perilous position on the swing, to the accompaniment of music, with which the car is drawn or the pole or the frame work is carried round the temple 3, 5, 7, 9 or 11 times. In boat-swinging the man has not to put on the false wings and beak. In both forms he carries sometimes a sword and shield in each hand which he flourishes aloft while swinging. He has to put on a pleasant countenance despite the excruciating pain he must naturally be suffering from. The swinging is often done by proxy. The man who has taken the vow engages a professional swinger, of whom there are many, who swing for some remuneration. In the case of children for whose benefit the vow has been made the swinger carries the child in his arms while swinging. The remuneration given does not go beyond a few rupees, and it is surprising that people offer themselves to swing in this risky fashion for such paltry consideration. At present in many of the temples the victim supports himself not simply on the hook attached

to the ring, but also on a strong waist-band attached to the poles or the frame work. Any way it is a wonder that civilised Governments should countenance such performances to be exhibited in public.

The origin of this form of worship is thus accounted for by the Cochin Ethnological Surveyor. "In the fight between the goddess *Kali* and the demon *Darika* the latter was completely defeated, and the former, biting him on the back, drank his blood to gratify her feelings of animosity. Hook-swinging symbolises this incident and the blood-shed by the insertion of the hook through the flesh is intended as an offering to the goddess". However this may be, one is inclined to think that it is but a substitute for the self-immolation described by Frair Jordanus. Of course it is performed to propitiate the dread deity *Kali* who it seems is never satiated with the blood of her victims. In the place of the self-ordained and self-committed human sacrifice of the olden days, she now, perhaps, satisfies herself with this form of simulation of it—the shedding of the victim's blood.

18. **Sister of Pagodi.** There is not even the support of tradition for the statement that the pagoda at Palluruthi is dedicated to "the sister of the goddess Sri Couroumba called *Assagia*". The name itself is not known in the locality; nor does it appear in the roll of the names of the Hindu gods and goddesses. It is probable that the word *Assagia* stands for "*Azhakiya*" or the Malayalam name *Azhakiya Kavu*, i. e., 'the handsome temple' by which the pagoda, and not the goddess, is known.

19. **Oel Fouram.** There is no Malayalam equivalent to the first word *Oel*. The other stands for *Pooram* a festival celebrated on the Pūram asterism at "Arad Polda", i.e., Āṟāṭ-puḻa, which means literally "the river where the god or goddess is bathed."

Our author says that the "feast" of *Pooram* is celebrated, in memory of the visit of the sea god to the

pagoda at *Arattu Puzha*. The local tradition is different. We gather the following information from a Report submitted by the Oorakam Devaswam authorities to the Raja of Cochin, for the year 1073 M. E. (1898 A. D.)

After the reclamation of Kēraḷa from the sea, Paraśu Rāma brought several colonies of Brahmans from the East Coast to people his land. One of these colonies came from the Chōḷa country and from the vicinity of the great Śiva shrine of Ṭiruvālūr. These Brahmans were averse to leave their homes and to migrate to a distant country as they had hitherto enjoyed prosperity under the auspices of the god Mahādēva of Ṭiruvālūr. Paraśu Rāma, however, persuaded them to accompany him promising that similar, if not greater, prosperity and affluance would attend them in their new abode. He settled his colony at *Peruvanam* (otherwise *Pooru+Vanam*) the consecrated forest-ground where the renowned *Rishi* or ascetic *Pooru* performed his penances. *Vanam* literally means forest, and it is in forests or secluded places that these ascetics perform their *Tapas*, meditation and penance. Having established his colony of Brahmans there, the sage installed the *Sivalingam* and *Salagramam* left by the *Rishi Pooru* at his death, on a stone-built pedestal rising as high as the tree on which the Rishi had deposited them. These were solemnly consecrated and pūjas performed there. The two together, i. e., the *Salagramam* and the *Sivalingam* form one deity still known as *Madathilappan* i. e., the god sitting on the high pedestal wherein was installed the combined forms of Viṣṇu and Śiva representing the god Mahādēva of Ṭiruvālūr, now known as *Eratta Appan*, the double deity, and a little to the east but inside the same shrine, was set up the goddess *Sri Parvathi*, the spouse of the god Mahādēva. Paraśu Rāma then instituted an annual festival in exact imitation of its proto-type at Ṭiruvālūr to be celebrated in the month of Meenam (March-April). His Brahman

colonists were exceedingly pleased at this and the festival continued to be celebrated for a long time on a very grand scale. In course of time, dissensions set in. The Brahmans and the Rajas quarrelled, and the festival ceased to be performed for about 200 and odd years. At length in the *Kali* year expressed by the cryptogram *Ayathu Siva Lokam*, i. e., 1326 years ago, the Brahmans and other *Yogakkar* assembled at Peruvanam and resolved to resume part of the ceremonies in connection with the annual festival by having the various deities of the Peruvanam[1] *gramam* or village brought in procession to the Peruvanam temple on the Puyam or 8th asterism and by taking the god at Peruvanam in procession to *Arattupuzha*[1] on the Pooram day for *Arat* or bathing.

In pursuance of this resolution, various deities are carried in procession to *Arattupuzha* and bathed at a sacred spot in the river known as *Mantaram*. The more important of the deities that take part in this celebration are the gods of Peruvanam and Ṭrippurayār and the goddess of *Oorakam*[1] and *Cherpu*[1]. There are a number of minor deities too that are taken there during the celebration. All the processions start from the temples of the respective deities and converge towards the broad fields on the banks of the river. Here they meet and arrange themselves in a row of about 50 or 60 elephants gorgeously apparelled with elaborately worked shining gold facings carrying on their backs priests holding the idols in front, with others behind holding gold, silver and silk umbrellas with gold or silver fringes, broad pea-cock feather-fans and milk-white yalk tails. These latter are waved from time to time in unison. A large and extending array of lighted lamps and torches and clusters of lights lend an imposing appearance to the scene. The air is rent by eternal drumming accompanied by the play of various musical instruments and the firing of pop-guns. A large concourse of sight-seers gather numbering almost 25,000 as our author estimated in his time. Men and women,

1. All these are in the Trichur taluk of the Cochin State.

mostly of the Nāyar class gather in holiday attire, and there is no lack of Nampūṭiri gentlemen. The crowd though large is orderly, clean and pleasant. The gods are bathed in the river and it is considered a great merit to bathe along with them. The proceedings at *Arattupuzha* last till day-break when the gods wend their way to their respective homes, of course not with the same splendour with which they had come.

20. **Oelsagam.** *Utsavam* means feast and festival specially in temples whether of Śiva, Viṣṇu or of any other deity, male or female. These generally last generally from five to ten days. They do not take place in March invariably in all temples. Each temple has its own period of *Utsavam*. But generally they never come during the rainy season. There is a saying in Malabar, "when the *Maran* (drummer) stops, the *Makkan* (frogs) begin". When the monsoon rains set in, the large frogs in the tank have a gala time of it, and begin to make an unearthly noise in the nights. By this time the temple feasts will have been closed on account, apparently, of the inconvenience caused by the rains, and the loud drumming in celebration of the festivals will also have stopped.

There are three sorts of *Utsavams* known as—(1) *Paṭahadi*, (2) *Dhwajadi* and (3) *Ankuradi*. In temples where all the three are celebrated the festival lasts for 27 days, 9 days being set apart for each.

In Purchas we read of a feast which he calls the feast of the Ganges which is not known now or appears to have been known at any time unless it has some hazy reference to Mahā Māgha or *Mamamkam*.

"The King of Calicut and the other kings of Malabar keep a solemn feast every twelve years in honour of this river. Because that long since a certain Brahman(falsely accused)fled into Ganges, and there led, an austure life 12 years, worshipping that stream and his idol, to whom when he proposed to return home, after

those twelve years expired, that image of Ganges appeared, and said, that on the last day of *February* he would appear in a river of his own country, and cause the waters thereof to arise, and run backward of his innocency and bade him assemble all the Lords of Malabar to the sight, which accordingly came to pass, and the memory thereof is by this feast solemnised."

Our author's list of Malayali feasts and festivals is not exhaustive. There are a few which he has left unnoticed and are of importance such as—

Ashtami Rohini; *Vinayaka Chaturthi*; *Navaratri*; *Deepali*; *Trikkartika*; *Sivaratri*; *Ekadesi*; *Pradosham*; *Shashti*; *Amavasi*, etc.

Some of these have been noticed by Faria-y-Sousa and Fra Bartolomeo. The former observes "They have several Fasts, one called *Ekadesi* which is kept the 11th day of every Moon; on this feast they eat nothing but fruit; that called Giveraseri (*Sivaratri*) begins by night in February and they neither eat, drink, nor sleep, in twenty-four hours. They walk round the pagoda rehearsing stories out of their scripture. If any happen to shut his eyes, overcome with sleep, he washes himself as oft as it happens, and continues his former exercise. In the morning they offer some money to the idol: The fast *Tirivadira* belongs only to the women. That for the dead [1] which the kindred of the deceased keep, lasts a year, during which time they do not eat fish, flesh, eggs, drink wine, or chew betel.

"The Fast Māsa Upāsa is the most religious of them all, and few account themselves so happy as to observe it. He that does begins the last day of October; he washes himself, puts on clean cloths, and visits the pagoda of Viṣṇu. On the first of November, he goes round it one hundred and one times, (the devoutest one thousand and one) at each turn, in the nature of a prayer, repeating the name of Viṣṇu, one hundred and one times; this must be done every day of November and the ten first of December. He must eat only

1. *Deeksha.*

eggs and milk, not look upon women: he must think on nothing but that name, and praises of it. Next year he must do the same, beginning the first of December, and ending the tenth of January, so he must go on every year till twelve be over ; and then begins again the first of November, and fasts the forty days ; after this he is canonized for a saint, in such a manner, that only the sight of him gives forgiveness of sins" [1].

Bartolomeo also refers to the fast of *masopavasa* which he describes as "a festival observed by the devout every month, and in which they use nothing but a little fruit, herbs, and roots. (He does not mention eggs which are not used and are not allowed for fasts). By means of this festival, they hope to obtain forgiveness of their sins, and pave the way for a tranquil and happy passage into the other world" [2]. This fast is but seldom practised at present having apparently gone out of fashion.

Ashtami Rohini. Otherwise known as *Gokulashtami* and *Krishna Jayanti* or *Jenmashtami.* It is celebrated as the birthday of Krishṇa and falls on the fourth lunar asterism *Rohini* and the 8th quarter of the moon *Ashtami.* Krishṇa was the son of Vāsudēva and Dēvaki, the sister of the reigning king Kamsa who had been foretold that he would meet with his death at the hands of his sister's son. The king had resolved to avert this by killing his sister's children as soon as they were born. He had accordingly cast her in a dungeon along with her husband, chaining them with irons, and had also guards set over them. "Krishna was born in his four armed form shining out for the moment in the dungeon. At His birth he came as Viṣṇu, for the moment showing Himself with all the signs of the Deity on Him, with the discus, with the *Shrivatsa* on his breast, with all the recognised emblems of the Lord. But that form quickly vanished, and only

1. Vol. 2, Part IV, Chap. VI.
2. P. 362.

the human child lay, before his parent's eye". The birth took place in the middle of the night, and the father, whose chains had been miraculously removed, eluding the vigilance of the guards, conveyed the infant over the Jumna, the river itself giving way for the purpose and entrusted it with Yaśōda, the wife of an honest herdsman Ṉanḍa, who acted as its foster mother. During the journey the child was protected from rain by the spread hood of the serpant Ananṭa or Śēṣha. It is in honour of this incident that *Ashtami Rohini* is observed as a fast. On this day, women, specially, refrain from food and keep vigil in Krishṇa's temple till after mid-night when, after the pūjas are over, they partake of things that have been already offered to the god. The temple is illuminated with myriads of oil fed lamps and worship goes on almost till the early hours of the morning.[1]

Navaratri. This is the *Durga puja* of Bengal, *Dussara* of Bombay and the *Saraswati puja* and the *Ayudha puja* of Malabar. Though its entire course runs over 9 days, it is the last three that are most important. These are known as *Durga Ashtami*, *Mahanavami* and *Vijaya Dasami*. On the night of Durga Aṣhṭami day, there is the ceremony known as *Puja Vayppu*. It consists in decorating a room splendidly, illuminating it with many lights and arranging on a platform raised in the middle of the room, the things necessary for doing pūja to *Saraswati*, the goddess of learning. Books and weapons of various kinds are tastefully arranged and a picture or image of the goddess placed in the centre. The worship then commences with accompaniment of music, etc. This is kept up night and day till the morning of the third day when takes place *Puja Eduppu* or the breaking up of the pūja. At an auspicious moment, after the performance of special religious services, the arrangements on the platform are formally removed and the pūja broken up.

1. For *Vinayaka Chaturthi* see note 23, Letter XXII.

Then follows *Vidyarambham* or the beginning (renovation) of learning. For, on the three days of the pūja, all sorts of learning are kept in abeyance, no one will read or write or do any handicraft, or work with any materials, every sort of business is at a standstill. After the removal of the pūja, work commences anew. During the *Puja Vayppu* people generally fast. In Travancore the *Navaratri* is a State ceremony celebrated with great magnificence. We have from Fra Bartolomeo an account of its celebration as he witnessed it at Padmanābhapuram in 1783 A. D.

"*Saraswathi* is the wife of Brahma, the creator of the universe, and the harmony proportion, and order observed in it, are according to the doctrine of the Brahmans, to be ascribed to her influence alone. Her opponent is the goddess of disorder and contention, named *Mudevi*. A tabernacle had been constructed for *Saraswathi* under a large tent and a great number of Brahmans were busily employed in waiting upon her. After many libations, the statue of the goddess was at length carried round in procession, strewed over with flowers, and then placed on an altar. After this the King approached in great magnificence and with the most devout respect presented to her his dagger as an offering. During this time all gates of the city were beset with soldiers, and no one was suffered to go out or enter. The festival continued eight days, and when it was finished, the King distributed presents to Brahmans. Each received a rupee, though more than 4,000 were sometimes assembled. The high-priest presented to the King a *Vastram*, that is a piece of silk or cotton stuff, a *viraghen*, worth about three scudi, and a cow, as the support of life, because these people live chiefly upon milk and butter. Such a present is called *Godanam* (gift of a cow). It has been usual in India since the earliest ages, and no greater favour can be shown to a Brahman by the King than to give him a cow".[1] The learned Carmalite is

1. Pp. 184—185.

evidently not correct in saying that the *Godanam* or gift was made *to* the King *by* the High Priest. It is the other way. The gift must have been made *by* the King *to* the High Priest. That this is but an unconscious mistake is clear from the concluding sentence.

On *Vijaya Desami* day the Maharaja goes in state accompanied by the State officers and escorted by the military to a place called Pūḷappura a couple of miles from the fort at Trivandrum, and shoots an arrow into a consecrated tender cocoanut placed for the purpose. After this the procession returns and His Highness standing in the verandah of the Karivēlappura Māḷika in front of the Trivandrum temple strews money amongst the crowd collected below.[1]

The origin of *Navaratri Puja* is to be found in the *Skanda Purana* It is briefly as follows:—

In the Kṛṭayuga there lived a famous king named Sukēṭu. He was well versed in politics and his only pleasure was to attend to the welfare and comfort of his subjects. The name of his queen was Suvēḍi. She was young, beautiful and much attached to her lord. It so happened that Sukēṭu was defeated by his enemies and compelled to fly for his life with his queen. The royal pair wandered in a forest for several days without food and unable to bear the exhaustion, fell ill. Suvēḍi carried her weak lord on her shoulders and was trying to find her way out of the woods when she was met by the sage Angiras who said: "Who are you that have ventured alone into this deep forest? You seem to be much afflicted. Relate your history and I shall try my best to relieve you." Suvēḍi related her history and Angiras was extremely moved on hearing it. The sage at once recommended to Suvēḍi, a pilgrimage to Panchavati and the worship of Durga there, during the *Navaratri* days. The queen with Sukēṭu reached Panchavati and worshipped the goddess Durga very devoutly. First Sukēṭu was restored to perfect health; then Suvēḍi gave

1, See also Note 25, Letter XXII.

birth to a son whom Angiras named Sūryapratāpa. This prince in due course became very powerful. He defeated his enemies and got back his kingdom and reinstated his father in it. The current belief is that everyone will attain his object by the *Saraswati Puja* as Suvēḍi did by the observance of this pūja.

The esoteric meaning of the Durga Pūja has seen thus explained. "When therefore Durga or Śakṭi means supreme Śakṭi or wisdom, it is easily conceivable after the nine dark nights of conflict of good or evil, all arts and learning and knowledge and work and sport should receive their light and life at the pūja to Mahādēv; Mahālekshmi and Mahāsaraswaṭi and weapons and tools (Āyudha pūja), etc., should be celebrated. This was originally celebrated in the spring, when after the death and darkness and misery of water, nature herself put on her best and freshest robes and everything assumed beauty and life and light. But it was changed from spring to Autumn as Rama worshipped Durga in this season before commencing his great fight with Ravana and Arjuna invokes her aid in the famous battle of Kurukṣhetra. [1] "

Deepali. Dīpāvali or a cluster of lights. The chief feature in the celebration of this festival in Malabar is that all bathe early in the morning rubbing their head and body with oil, though an oil bath is prohibited on the new-moon day on which the festival generally falls. After bath they take sweets and enjoy themselves. The children fire off crackers. All this is done as a thanks-offering for ridding the world of the oppression of the known as Naraka by the god Krishṇa.[2]

Trikartika, Is celebrated in honour of Bhagavaṭi. It falls on the day of the 3rd lunar asterism and is the birthday of Bhagavaṭi. The houses are all well lighted and lights are also left burning in the verandah, front yard and at the gates. There is general illumination

1. *Esoteric Hinduism*, pp. 133—134.
2. See also Note 26, Letter XXII.

throughout; offerings are made at the temple of the goddess and women turn out in the evening for worshipping the goddess.

Maha Siva Ratri, means 'the great night of Śiva', and is celebrated in the month of March. On this day the people fast. Some abstain from any kind of food whatever for the whole day, while others content themselves with one meal. Strict vigil is kept in the night. The people cluster round the Śiva temple, and after bath smear their bodies with holy ashes, and keep on reciting prayers to Śiva. Enthusiasts, more devout than the rest, perform rolling circumambulations round the temple, while the ordinary worshippers go round it on foot a number of times. Pūja to the image of Śiva is kept up all the night. Early next morning people bathe once more, worship Śiva and return to their ordinary avocations. The celebration of this festival at the Śiva temple at Alwaye on the banks of the Periyār River is attended with great eclat. The *Lingam* of Śiva rises out of the sand on the sand bank by the river. There is only a temporary shed to serve as a temple, as the whole place will be flooded during the rainy season. The sand bank here is extensive and the pilgrims repairing to the place amounting to many thousands congregate here. All classes, castes and creeds come up for this festival. Some for worship, some for merchandise, some for mere sight seeing. The fair held is on a very large scale. There are rows of sheds built where merchants expose every kind of merchandise for sale. There are shows, dramas, dances, etc., supplied for the pilgrims to keep them away from sleep. There are a number of small sheds spread about the sand banks where the devout Śiva worshipper sets up his own *Sivalingam* for worship. In all not less than 10 or 15 thousand people attend the festival at Alwaye.

The following is a description of the *Sivaratri* by Fra Bartolomeo :—

"Besides these grand festivals, there are several others; such as *Sivaratri*, or the night of *Siva*; in which the *Phallophoria* ceremonies that relate to the worship of the *Lingam*, are celebrated. This festival, on the coast of Malabar is held always in March, when the sun enters the last sign of the Zodiac or Pisces. On this occasion all the inhabitants of both sexes hasten in great numbers to the temple of *Shiva* or *Mahadeva*; remain there the whole night, sing all sorts of indecent songs in honour of the *Lingam* [1], go a hundred times in solemn procession either round the temple or around a tree under which the *Lingam* is placed; and carry about with them, at the same time, a wooden representation of the *Lingam*, [1] amidst dancing and singing. These circular perambulations have an allusion to the circle which the sun describes in his course through Zodiac, and the *Lingam* represents the creative power of that luminary"[2].

The *Scanda Purana* thus relates the origin of the celebration of *Siva-Ratri*:—

"There is in *Jambu-Dwipa* a large town known by the name of Vārāṇasi, where dwelt a man belonging to the *boya* or huntsman caste, who was short of stature, very dark in complexion, and of a most violent and passionate temper. One day when out hunting in the woods, as was his wont, he killed such an enormous quantity of birds of all kinds that he was hardly able to carry them, and was obliged to sit down and rest at almost every step. Dusk was coming on while he was still in the middle of a thick forest, and anxious not to lose the spoil of his day's hunting or to become a prey to the wild beasts that infested the place, he went up to a *vepu* (it should be the *bilva*, not the *vepu*—Ed-) or margosa-tree, hung his game upon one of the

1. These are absolutely incorrect.
2. Page 361.

branches, and climbed up into the tree, intending to spend the night there. Now that night happened to be the night of the new-moon of the month of *Phalguna* (March), a time of year when dew falls heavily and the nights are chilly. The hunter, benumbed with cold, tormented by hunger (for he had eaten nothing during the day), and half dead with terror, passed a very miserable night. At the foot of the tree was a *lingam* and this circumstance proved to be the salvation of the hunter. The discomforts that he was enduring obliged him to change his position frequently, and the shaking of the branches of the *vepu* [1] caused some drops of dew, together with some leaves, flowers, and fruit to fall on the *lingam*. This fortunate accident was sufficient to win Śiva's favour and to obtain for the hunter absolution for all his sins. For Śiva, to whose worship this night was specially consecrated, was much gratified at the offering thus made to his adored symbol, and he ordained that he who had made it, involuntary though his offering was, should be rewarded, and that his long fast and attendant anxieties should be reckoned in his favour. The hunter regained his house the following morning, and died a few days afterwards. Yama, King of Hell, on hearing of his death, immediately sent his emissaries to secure him and bring him away. But Śiva, on hearing of this, also sent his own emissaries to oppose those of Yama and to claim the dead man. Yama's messengers declined to yield, and a violent quarrel ensued between them and the emissaries of Śiva. From insults they quickly proceeded to violence. Śiva's party, being the stronger, put the agents of *Naraka* to flight, after severely punishing them. The latter, in shame and bitterness, went and told their story to their master, and to excite his wrath showed him the wounds that they had received in the combat. Yama, beside himself with indignation, went at once to *Kailasa* to make complaint to Śiva in person. At the

1. It should be *bilva*, not the *vepu*.

gate of the deity's palace he found Ṅandi, the prime minister, to whom he explained the object of his visit, at the same time expressing his surprise that Śiva should thus declare himself the protector of a common *boya*, a hardened sinner, whose trade necessitated the slaughter of many living creatures.

"'King of Hell', replied Ṅandi, 'It is true that this man has been a great sinner and that he has not scrupled to shed blood, but before he died he, fortunately for himself, fasted, watched, and offered a sacrifice to the *lingam* during the night consecrated to Śiva. This meritorious action has obtained for him the remission of all his sins, the protection of Śiva, and an honourable place in *Kailasa*'.

"When Yama heard Ṅandi's words, he became thoughtful, and withdrew without uttering another word.

"This is the origin of the feast of *Sivaratri* or Night of Śiva. In commemoration of the fortunate *boya* the devotees of Śiva spend the night and the preceding day in fasting and without sleep, entirely absorbed in worshipping the god, in offering him sacrifices, and presenting him with the bitter leaves of the *vepu*[1] or margosa-tree as *naiveddya*, which they afterwards eat."[2]

Ekadesi. The fast comes on twice every month and falls on the 11th day of the moon. It is not observed by all and is optional. Both men and women observe it. It is in honour of Viṣhṇu. People bathe in the morning, worship in the Viṣhṇu temple and fast the whole day. There are those who do not take anything but a few drops of water poured over a *Tulasi* plant, sacred to Viṣhṇu, and dripping from its leaves. Others content themselves with one meal and that not of rice, their daily food, but of what, *vari*, or *chama*. Early next morning, i. e., on *Dwadesi*, the 12th lunar day they

1. It should be the *bilva*, not the *vepu*.

2. *Hindu Manners, Customs and Ceremonies* by Dubois, Vol. II pp. 711—12.)

bathe, worship in the temple, obtain *Prasadam* or leavings of offerings, such as sandal paste and *Theertham* or holy water with which the image is bathed. They drink the water and apply the paste to their forehead, breast and arms and then break the fast. The more devout feed a few Brahmans and make them money presents. Fra Bartolomeo's account of *Ekadesi* is altogether incorrect. He says, "On this day, all women who have been delivered in the course of the week, or who approach the time of their delivery; all barren females or those who suffer from a suppression of the menses; likewise all patients who have been cured of the small-pox, and all fishermen and farmers, must observe a strict fast in honour of the goddess *Bhagavati*. All these people are fully convinced that the moon assists women in labour, expels the fever of the small-pox, promotes the growth of the fruits of the earth, is propitious to fishing, and has an effect on menstrual purification. They repair, therefore very early, as I had an opportunity of seeing several times at *Feira da' Alva* and *Barcale*, either to the sea, or, as circumstances may serve, to some river or pond, where they perform their usual ablutions, and then cause a half-moon or some other sacred mark which has symbolical relation to the moon, to be painted on their foreheads. When this is done, they hasten to the temple of *Bhagavathi*, bring her an offering of cocoanuts, rice, butter, pepper, flowers and other vegetables; deposit all these before the door of the temple, and pray to the goddess with uplifted hands. On this day they are not allowed to take the least nourishment before sunset; and even then they must use nothing but boiled rice, fruits, pulse, and water. Milk, fish and betel are strictly forbidden during these fasts"[1]. The learned Carmelite has evidently mistaken the observances he witnessed at Alwaye and Varkalay with respect to some other ceremony for that of Ekādeśi, which has nothing

1. pp. 357—358.

to do with the goddess *Bhagavathi*. Neither is it a feast or fast for women specially.

As already observed, the *Ekadesi*,[1] i. e., the eleventh day of the moon, is religiously observed as a day of strict fast in honour of Viṣṇu. The following is what the *Vishnu Purana* says on the subject:—

"The *Ekadesi* is a day specially set apart for the worship of Viṣṇu; those who offer him *puja* on this day ensure for themselves immortality. Even before the creation of the world, the 'Man of Sin' was created by Viṣṇu to punish mankind.[2] He is of enormous stature, with a terrific countenance and a body absolutely black; his eyes are wild and glaring with rage; he is the executioner of mankind. Kriṣṇa, having seen this 'Man of Sin', became thoughtful and pensive. Touched by the woes with which mankind was overwhelmed, Kriṣṇa resolved to remedy the evil. With this end in view, he mounted the bird Garuda, son of Binota, and went in search of Yama, the King of Hell. The child of the sun, delighted at this visit of Nārāyaṇa, who was master and *guru* of the world, hastened to offer him *puja*, and placed him on a massive throne of gold. No sooner had Kriṣṇa seated himself thereon than he heard the most piteous and plaintive cries. Moved with compassion, he asked the King of *Naraka* whence these lamentations proceeded, and what caused them.

'The lamentations that you hear, O Lord of the World', replied Yama, 'are the tears and groans of the unfortunate beings who, having spent their whole lives in sin, are now suffering the tortures of Hell, where they are treated according to their deserts'.

'Then', said Kriṣṇa, 'let us go to this place of torment, that I may see for myself what these sinners are enduring'.

1. Rao Bahadur A. C. Mukerji, M A., I E. S., has an interesting book on *Ancient Hindu Fasts and Feasts*. There he refers to Uthana-Ekadesi. Ed.

2. See the description in the chapter on the *Sandhya*.

And he did see, and his heart was softened.

'What!' cried he, overcome with grief, 'is it possible that men, who are creatures and children of mine, are enduring such cruel agony! Shall I be a witness of their sufferings and do nothing to help them? Cannot I give them some means of avoiding them in the future?'

"Thereupon be considered how he might bring the reign of the 'Man of Sin' to an end, he being the sole cause of all mankind's misfortune. Accordingly, to preserve henceforth the human race from the torments of *Naraka*, he transformed himself into the *Ekadesi*, or eleventh day of the moon. This is, therefore, the blessed day that Viṣṇu has selected in his mercy to redeem and save mankind. It is the happy day that procures the pardon of one's sins; it is the day of days, since one must look upon it as being Kriṣṇa himself.

"The inhabitants of Hell, full of gratitude for the kindness that Viṣṇu had showed towards them, worshipped him and chanted his praises loudly. Thereupon Viṣṇu, being much pleased by their prayers and praises, wished to give them an immediate proof of his goodness. Turning to the 'Man of Sin,' he addressed him in the following words: —

'Begone, wretched being, begone! Thy reign is over. Till now thou hast been the tormentor of mankind; I command thee to let them live in peace for the future. They are my children, and I desire them to be happy. I wish, nevertheless, to assign to thee a place where thou mayest live, but thy place shall be unique; it shall be here. The *Ekadesi*, or eleventh day of the moon, is myself in another form. It is the day that I have chosen, in my mercy, to save men and deliver them from their sins. Nevertheless, in order that they may be worthy of so great a favour I expressly forbid them to eat rice on this day. I ordain that thou shalt dwell in this rice. This is the abode that I assign to thee. Whoever shall have the temerity to

eat this food, thus defiled by thy presence, will incorporate thee with himself, and will forfeit all hope of pardon'.

"Thus spake Viṣṇu; and the following is the sentence of life and death which is pronounced, and which cannot be too strongly impressed on the attention of mankind:—

'I repeat, therefore, again, because I cannot say it too often; do not eat rice on that day; whoever you are, be your position and condition what they may, do not eat rice. Once more I say, do not eat rice'.

"To fast on this holy day and to offer *puja* to Viṣṇu is to ensure the forgiveness of sins and the gratification of all one's wishes".[1]

Pradosham. This is an optional fast to propitiate the God Śiva. It falls on the evening of the 12th or 13th lunar day, when special pūjas are offered to Śiva in his temple which will be illuminated for the occasion. The devotees who observe the fast bathe and worship the god early in the morning and keep fasting till the evening when they take a second bath and attend the temple smearing their body with holy ashes. They wear also rosaries of *Rudarksha.* They circumambulate the temple reciting prayers to Śiva till the pūja is over which will be by half-past 7 or 8 p. m. They will have supplied the temple with tender cocoanuts as offerings to the image. The priest will return these to their owners who break their fast by opening them and drinking the water in them. After this they leave the temple taking along with them rice offered to the image. They partake of this and nothing else that day. The *Vilva* or *Koovala* (*Cratoeva religiosa*) sacred to Śiva which is offered to no other deity is the chief article of pūja to Śiva. Siva or Mahādēva alone wears a chaplet of its flowers. Its leaves are always employed

1. *Hindu Manners, Customs, and Ceremonies* by Dubois, Vol. pp. 706—708.

in his pūja. If a pious Hindu should see its flowers or leaves fallen on the ground, he would remove them reverently to a temple of Mahādēva. What the sacred *Tulasi* is to Viṣṇu that the sacred *Vilva* is to Śiva.

Shasthi. An optional fast in honour of Subramaṇya, the son of Śiva. Here also the fast is broken in the evening after doing pūja to the god. This fast is generally observed by those who are subject to diseases such as leprosy, etc. There are elaborate rules for the observance of the *Shashti* fast.

Amavasi and Pournami. The 'white moon' and the 'black moon' or the full-moon and the new-moon. These days are also observed by the Hindus as fasting days. But the fast is in the evening. In the morning, after bath, the ordinary meal is taken, but in the evening either no supper is taken at all or only some gruel or *Kanji.* In all fasts abstention from flesh, fish, eggs, etc., are strictly enjoined. Fra Bartolomeo gives us an account of the celebration of the *Pournima* or full-moon which he witnessed in Malabar.

"In Pourṇima, in the month of March, the festival of the goddess *Bhagavathi* is celebrated, which, next to that of the sun, when a ram is sacrificed, is the most celebrated of all. The principal part of the solemnity is, that the Brahmans, in honour of the moon, present a large offering, which they call *Somayaga* (the moon-offering) on this occasion they bruise certain aromatic herbs, and prepare from their juice a particular kind of beverage, which they partake of, repeating at the same time a great number of private forms of prayer, called *Mantra.* These *Mantras* always end with the words *Om* or *Svaha,* which signify, Be it so, or Amen! Happiness, health and prosperity, be thine! For example: *Pranani Svaha; Abane Svaha; Samane Svaha; Vyana Svaha:*—that is: *Profit,* May it do thee good, spirit of life (*Prana*). *Profit,* etc., spirit of those below (*Abana*)! *Profit,* etc., spirit of breaking! *Profit,* etc., spirit of sight! *Profit,* etc., spirit of hearing!

These in all probability, are the five spirits which the Egyptians worshipped, as we are informed by Origen in his fifth book against Celsus; and to which they added, besides others.

"*Crepitus Ventris*. This festival is always celebrated in the month of March on the first Monday after the equinox. I had an opportunity of seeing it at Muttam Trivandrum, and Cranganore. The concourse of people on these occasions is immense. Through religious zeal, the Indians bring with them a great many cocks, and give them to the Brahmans, who slaughter these animals before the door of the temple of *Bhagavathi*, and besprinkle the earth with their blood".[1]

The learned Carmelite Father pledges his personal testimony for the correctness of the description he is giving. Otherwise it would be difficult to accept it in *toto*. For the *Soma Yaga* is a *vedic* sacrifice of some importance which very few Brahmans (they alone are entitled to perform it) undertake to perform; and when undertaken, it is performed only once in the course of one's life. It does not form part of a festival. The sacrifice is not made to *Bhagavathi*. It is difficult to believe that the Carmelite Father has correctly understood the nature of the sight, he says, he saw at Muttam, Trivandrum and Cranganore. One can safely assert, despite the testimony of the Carmelite Father, that the Brahmans never soil their hands or have ever soiled them with the blood of animals or birds sacrificed to the grosser divinities of the Hindu Pantheon. *Ahimsa paramo dharma* (the supreme duty of preserving life) is one of their greatest tenets to which they have clung tenaciously. The very assertion that the Brahmans "slaughter these animals before the door of the temple of Bhagavathi and besprinkle the earth with their blood" gives the lie to the statement. Indeed there is a temple of Bhagavathi at Muttam (Chertalay) and another at Cranganore; but no sacrifice of cocks takes place in the first while at the second

1. p. 356—57.

cocks are sacrificed *outside* the temple by non-Brahman votaries, *never by the Brahmins* and by them only at the annual Bharani festival. We know of no temple of Bhagavathi of any note at Trivandrum. Anyhow there is no trace at present of any ceremony or sacrifice of the sort mentioned by Bartolomeo either at Muttam or at Trivandrum, while at Cranganore there is no cock-sacrificing ceremony except at the annual *Bharani* festival. It should also be remembered that there is no animal scrifice at a *Soma yoga*.

There are a few local festival which require mention, such as *Guruvayoor Ekadesi*, *Trisivaperoor Pooram*, *Kottiyoor Utsavam*, *Kalpathi Theru*, *Ochira Kali* [1]. *Kongappata* [2], *Thai Pooyam*, *Pisharikavu ceremony*, *Vykat Ashtami*.

Guruvayoor Ekadesi. Guruvāyūr is a village near Chowghat in the collectorate of Malabar about 30 miles to the south of Calicut. There is an important temple located there dedicated to Kriṣṇa which is held in great reverence and resorted to largely by the Hindus throughout Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. Those who are ill make vows to this

1. *Ochira Kali*. Ochira is a village in the Karunagapilli Taluk, Quilon District. *Ochira Kali* is a mock fight exhibited during the annual festival, in commemoration of battles fought on the spot by the Kayankulam and Chembakasseri Rajas. The festival falls about the 15th of June and lasts for two days when a cattle fair is also held.

Nagam Ayyar's Travancore State Manual, Vol, III. p. 592.

2. *Kongappata* is an yearly festival conducted at Chittur in the Cochin State. It is reminiscent of a fight and victory which the Chittur Nayars had over the army of the Chola Ruler, Rajadhiraja, who ruled before Parantaka (895—946), in the 18th of Kumbham 71. Mr. M. P. R. Menon has written a very interesting booklet on this subject. Even the ladies took part in the actual fight. The tradition is that even the Chittur Bhagavathi assisted the Chittooreans, for which even to this day their descendants express their devotion and gratitude to the goddess in an unbounded degree. Ed.

temple, specially rheumatic patients. The festival of *Ekadesi* is celebrated here in the month of Vrischigam (October—November). Besides the devotees who crowd to the temple in thousands, there are those who congregate there to take part in the annual fair. Merchants erect booths in front and behind the temple and carry on trade in various articles. The celebration within the temple consists in pūjas and processions. The gathering is very large amounting to ten to fifteen thousands. Mr. Fawcett says in connection with this festival—

"Near Chowghat about 30 miles to the southward of Calicut, on the backwater, an arm of the sea and separated from it by a thin stip of land between the rivers, at a place called Guruvāyoor, is a very important temple the property of the Zamorin, yielding a very handsome revenue. I visited this festival on one occasion and saw there much which was of interest, but which must find place in the account of regions of others than Nayars. Here purchase was made of a few offerings such as are made to the temple in satisfaction of vows. A very rude representation of an infant in silver, a hand, a leg, an ulcer, a pair of eyes, and, most curious of all, a silver string which represents a man—the giver. Symbolisation of the offering of self is made by a silver string as long as the giver is tall! Goldsmiths working in silver and gold are to be seen just outside the gate of the temple ready to provide at a moment's notice the object any person intends to offer, in case he is not already in possession of his votive offering "[1].

Trisivaperoor Pooram. This takes place in the month of Medam (March—April). It is like the *Utsavam* processions of other temples but on a more magnificent scale. There is a grand display of fireworks. There being two parties representing the two divisions of Trichur, *Paramelkavu* and *Tiruvampadi*, each puts forth its best exertions to make its display grander than

1. P. 226.

that of the other. The crowds that gather to witness it is very large. Commencing one morning the celebration goes on to late in the morning of the next day.

Kottiyoor Utsavam. This festival partakes in part of the nature of *Vela* and Pooram as already noticed. The temple is situated at the foot of the Wynad hills rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet from the sides of the little glade where it is situated. Though the festival is attended by all classes they do not mix together. The Nairs go first, and after a few days, the Nairs having done, the Ṭiyans, and so on. The pilgrims like those bound to the cock-festival at Cranganore, indulge in the vilest and filthiest abuse and feel that they have a right to do so. They also use personal violence to person and property all along the road. Returning they are mild as lambs. The festival is held not in the temple which is a low thatched building but in the forest about a quarter of a mile away from it. There is a stream between the spot where the festival is held and the temple. About a hundred yards beyond the stream is a little glade in the forest which is the sacred spot. It is held extremely holy and the very idea of visiting it except at the festival is deemed dreadful. In the centre of the glade is a circle of piled stones, 12 feet in diameter and in the middle of the pile of stones is a rude *lingam*. Temporary sheds are put up for the occasion. Pilgrims carry with them offerings when they go up for the festival.

Kalpathi Theru. This is the usual car festival of the East Coast and is not a Malayali institution. It is celebrated by the Pattar Brhamans of Palghat. A beautifully decorated car conveying the deity is drawn along the four streets of the village. There is a similar festival on a grand scale performed in the South at Suchīndram in Travancore, and but for these there is no instance of such celebration in all Malabar. Except that these places, Palghat and Suchīndram, are

situated within the bounds of Kēraḷa, there is nothing to indicate that the car festival has anything to do with the Malayalīs. At both places a large fair is held where merchants congregate.

Pishari Kavu Festival [1]

Thye Pooyam. The celebration of this festival in Malabar is of recent growth. The god Subramaṇya, the son of Śiva, has been popular in Malabar for a long time past, and there are many temples dedicated to him. The worship in these temples differs in no way from worship in temples to other deities. But of late the festival of *Kavati abhishekam* has been imported into the Subramaṇya temples of Malabar. It used to be confined to the temple of the god situated on the Palni hills, whither the Malayalīs used to take their *Kavaties.* At present a large number resort to local temples of Subramaṇya, and one of the most important of these is situated at Vykam in North Travancore. The festival comes on in the month of March on the *Pooyam* asterism which coincides with the full-moon day. More than a thousand pilgrims take their *Kavaties* to the temple on the morning of the day. Their contents are emptied either on or before the image and the devotees return contented that their vows have been fulfilled and accepted. We have already given a description of these *Kavaties.* The devotee who has to take a *Kavati* has to serve a period of penance before he undertakes the task, during the course of which he has to fast and attend the temple of Subramaṇya. He carries in his hand peacock feathers, the peacock being the vehicle of Subramaṇya and a rattan, smears his body with ashes, wears strings of beads round his neck and arms and dresses in ochre coloured cloth and grows his hair. During the period of penance he waits eagerly to get a revelation in a dream as to what article, ghee, milk, rose water, sandal paste,

1. For the festival of Pishari Kavu near Quilandy, the readers are referred to a detailed description of it by Mr. Fawcett in No. 3 of Vol. III of the *Madras Museum Bulletin*, pp. 255-265.

etc. he is to take as an offering to the god. His fixed idea is realized in his dreams, the god comes to him and gives directions and he starts with his *Kavati* so as to reach the temple on the due date. These pilgrims undergo various mortifications. One vows silence and ties a handkerchief over his mouth; another has an oval band made of metal over the lower portions of the forehead so as to cover his eyes; one has his tongue protruding between his teeth and kept in position by a silver skewer through it; another has a mouth lock, the mouth being covered up by a silver band, the ends reaching over the cheeks, a skewer through both cheeks keeping the ends together and so on. They march in parties and reach the well-known Śiva temple of Vykam the previous evening. There they fast within the temple walls keeping vigil through the night. At dawn they proceed to the Subramaṇya temple at *Udayanapuram*, a couple of miles to the north amidst the din of drum and fife accompanied by bands of devotees calling out Harō! Harā! Harō! Harā! *Velayudhaswamikku* Harō! Harā! etc. Those who carry the *Kavaties* jump and dance, delerious with excitement, unconscious of all but the spiritual frenzy which seems to overtake them. They enter the temple by the eastern door, deposit their *Kavaties* before the idol and look as if they have wakened from a trance. The contents of the *Kavaties* are then emptied by the officiating priest either on the idol or before it according to the nature of the articles—all liquids being poured on the idol while the solids are placed before it. If the articles presented—milk, honey, oil, rosewater, sandal paste, sugar, sugar-candy, molasses, etc.—are in their original state and not decomposed or deteriorated, the devotee retires in great peace of mind. But if it happens that they are in any way the worse for time, the offer is not simply taken as not accepted by the god but the devotee becomes distressed as he believes that the god is displeased and angry towards him and would soon punish him unless early measures are exerted to avert the

doom. The temple authorities serve the devotees with their meals after which they disperse. They have of course to pay a fee for admission of their *Kavaties*. This is paid the previous evening at the Vykam temple to the Sirkar authorities who issue tickets to those who pay and only such as those who produce these tickets are allowed admission the next day at the Udayanapuram temple, a rather up-to-date prosaic arrangement for an antique ceremony. *Kavati abhishekams* take place in other Subramaṇia temples also such as Eḷangunnapuḻa and Vayaṟṟela in the Cochin State and Maṉṉath and Uḷḷur in Travancore.

Vykathu Ashtami. This festival is celebrated in the month of Vrischigam (October—November) in the well known Śiva shrine at *Vykam* in Travancore. Though Malayalīs take part in it, the majority of pilgrims come from Madura, Tanjōre, Trichinopoly, Tinnevelly, etc. The pilgrims generally amount to 15 to 20,000. It is a purely religious affair and the little sight-seeing provided for is but a mere accompaniment of it. The chief part of the festival consists in the pilgrims worshipping Śiva early in the morning before day-break, and in order to accomplish this, they rush into the temple, and there have been occasions on which people have been trodden to death. Of late the Sirkar has made excellent arrangements to let in the worshippers in batches at one gate while they are let out through another after worship. This worship goes on till morning . The Brahman portion of the pilgrims is given a grand feast, and in the night the God is carried in procession round the temple on a richly caparisoned elephant with all the temple paraphernalia used on such occasions. It is considered highly meritorious to worship the God before the Sun's rays fall on the copper plate roofing of the temple. Merchants congregate from distant places and all sorts of wares are for sale.

Ochchira Kali. This is an annual festival celebrated at Ochchira, a village near Kāyamkuḷam in

Travancore, in memory of a hard fight between the Rajas of Quilon and Kayamkulam. As usual to add a religious significance to it stories of miracles having taken place in the locality have also been invented. What actualy takes place is thus described by a writer in the *Malabar Quarterly Review*.

"Only Nairs could take part in it; of course it is not open to women. It is now conducted on the first and the second days of Mithunam or Auṇy (June—July). For seven days beginning with the first, it is popularly believed that there will be incessant rain. On the first day the fight is conducted from 8 a. m. to 11 a. m. and on the second from 12 to 3 p. m. The appearance of a kite hovering in the air summons the players to arms. But in these 'degenerate days', no such divine appıoval is shown. Each player is well dressed in the native fashion and armed with the apology of a sword and a shield. The combatants do not fight in pairs, but in sets. The parties advance towards each other; they perform a number of movements, forwards and backwards, commencing with a single individual on each side. The movements are first slow, but they become quicker and quicker. These resemble the movements of assault and retreat in regular warfare. The kite appears again and this time it is the signal for the tournament to stop. The same programme is repeated on the second day. Stones were thrown from slings to the detriment of public peace"[1].

Modern requirements necessitated a change in the manner in which the festival is celebrated and the Travancore Government has stopped all sorts of violence and has given it a turn in a new direction. In addition to the mockfight which still takes place, a fair is also held at which merchants from all parts of Cochin and Travancore bring their wares for sale. Recently a cattle show and an industrial exhibition with popoular lectures on

1. Volume 4, page 301.

agricultural subjects have also been started and ere long the whole thing bids fair to become an institution of material advantage to the country.

Now for the religious element we may once more quote the writer in the *Malabar Quarterly Review*:—

"The games are attended by an immense throng from all the neighbouring country. To the east of the play-ground stands a roofless enclosure of wooden frame work set with hundreds of primitive brass or iron lamps. Those are lighted on the two festive days. It might rain cats and dogs; the heavens might thunder; the wind might blow a hurricane and tear down the neighbouring trees; but not a single lamp would go out on these days; at any rate, that is what credulous old folk would make us believe. This, they hold is an infallible proof of the sanctity of the Bhagavaṭi, the presiding deity of the neighbouring temple. It is worthy of note that no image is enshrined in that room-like wooden frame-work. On a raised floor in it are placed a conch-shell, the horns of a deer and a drawn sword. The offerings to the deity consists of heaps of *pori* (fried paddy), bunches of plantain fruits and pieces of burning camphor. This is perhaps the only instance of a place of worship among the Hindus on the West Coast where veneration is paid to no image. Among the worshippers might be found all sorts and conditions of men, from the Brahman to the Panchama. Several sets of native musicians assemble and wait for custom in the neighbourhood. By way of propitiating the deity, any votary might order a party of them, for a trifle, to play a course of music to the accompaniment of the drum. If you be an ardent Bhakṭa you pay some one for a "holy roll" round the sacred enclosure. Pandarams or professional Chakṭas could be hired for half an anna to lay by religious merit on your behalf. Religious fervour makes up for all the inconveniences caused by the gnawing winds and the beating rains which are characteristic of the season of

the year on the Malabar Coast in which the festival is celebrated. Farmers and tradesmen of the neighbourhood take advantage of this occasion to hold an annual fair on an extensive scale"[1].

The *Keralolpathi*, after mentioning the various religious institutions established in Malabar by Paraśu Rāma, gives the names of the festivals to be celebrated in connection with them. These are:—

Oottu. Feasting of Brahmans.

Pattu. Singing hymns in praise of Bhagavati at the temple of the Goddess during *Mandalam* (41 days) in the month of Vrischikom (October—November).

Utsavam. Annual temple festivals in honour of its inauguration.

Vela. Dancing ceremony at the Bhagavati temple such as has been already described.

Vilakku. Holy services in the temple. Illumination—lighting of lamps. It is also used to denote processions of the image in the night during *utsavam*.

Thira. An offering; an inferior feast, in which Malayar, Vannan, etc., dressed like Gods and demons. It also means a dance in burning dress to the honour of Bhagavati.

Tiyyattu. The ceremony of jumping through fire before temples.

Bharani Vela. Feast such as at Kodungaloor already described.

Arattu. The ceremony of bathing the idol on the last day of *utsavam*.

Kaliyattam. The performance of religious plays.

Poora Vela. The Saturnalia of Malabar. A feast in Meenam (April) in memory of Kama's death called the day of license.

Daivamattam. A ceremony in which a person clothed in the attributes of a lower deity acts the chief part.

Thanniramritam. A cake offered to the Gods. Literally liquid nectar.

1. Pp. 301—302.

Talappoli. An annual feast of Bhagavati when girls offer in procession a large dish of rice on which is placed the two halves of a broken cocoanut with lighted wicks, etc. It is said that the girls make this kind of offer to get good husbands.

Bārbōsa speaking of a ceremony at the Zamorin's Palace says that a thousand Nair women assemble at the King's house "very much adorned by jewelry, gold belts, pearls, and many bracelets of gold, and many rings with precious stones, and ankle rings of gold on their legs and dressed from the waist downwards with very rich silk stuffs, and others of very fine cotton, and from the waist upwards bare, and anointed with sandal and perfumes, and their hair wreathed with flowers, and rings of gold and precious stones in their ears, the feel bare, as they always are accustomed to do. These thousand women have each got a brass dish full of rice, and on the top of the rice, lamps full of oil with many lighted wicks and between chandaliers are many flowers, etc. (These are the *Talams.*) The nobles, their admirers, go along with them talking to them with much courtesy and they remove the perspiration from the ladies' faces and from time to time put into their mouths the betel which both men and women are constantly eating; and they fan them with fans, because their hands are fully occupied with salvers". This is a fair and accurate description of the *Talapoli* as it was in the palmy days of the Zamorin's rule at Calicut. At present the young women who carry the *Talams* or salvers, have become few and though they go bejewelled in front of the image of the goddess, borne on an elephant with all the paraphernalia that usually accompany such processions; they are not accompanied by their admirers; neither are they 'fed' with betel, nor the perspiration wiped off their faces, nor fanned from time to time. But we see occasionally rose-water sprinkled on them from silver sprinklers. The procession starts from the temple of the goddess, goes a certain distance and returns or goes to a neighbouring temple of Śiva, takes a round and then comes away. Illuminations

at both temples and all along the line of procession with constant display of fire-works from a prominent feature. The ceremony generally comes on in the month of Dhanu (December—January).

Of the festivals mentioned in the *Keralolpathi*, the *Mamankam* requires special notice [1], and has been dwelt upon.

Games and Amusements.[2]

Supplemental Note. Before leaving the subject of festivals, it will be well to say a few words on the national games of Malabar. Mr. Raja Raja Varma Raja, M. A., B. L., had in the pages of the *Malabar Quarterly Review* begun a series of articles on "Our National games", which, if continued and completed, would have given us a comprehensive idea of what they are. He points out that there are festivals in Malabar which partake of the nature of serious religious observances, but which at the same time have the characteristics of games. He instances the *Utsavams* in temples and the *Dassara* carnivals, the *Bharani* and *Puram* carnivals, etc. "Looking into the history of games", remarks Mr. Raja Raja Varma, "it will be observed that they had their origin in religious observances, or were connected with the worship of God. The Grecian games formed part of religious observances, and were held near a shrine or other consecrated spot. Not unusually they were connected by some myth or legend, with some hero, demigod or local deity". The *Ludi Publici* of the Romans wear a similar religious aspect. The Hindus, if anything, are a religious nation *par excellence*. No institution of theirs exists, but is in a manner dubbed with the ecclesiastical sword. No wonder then that in course of time secular and religious elements imperceptibly blended together into an undefined whole wherein gradually the former

1. See Note 17 of Letter XI in Vol. II of this work, pp. 85—404.

2. See *Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. V and *Progress of Cochin*, Ch. XXIX.

sank into insignificance by the side of the latter which has the stronger hold.

Malabar games may be looked at from different standpoints.

They may be classed as :—

A (1) Physical,(2) Intellectual and (3) Aesthetic; or

B (1) Military, (2) Civil; or

C (1) Religious, (2) Civil; or

D (1) Indoor, (2) Outdoor; or

E (1) Games played on land, (2) Those played in water; or

F (1) Masculine, (2) Feminine, (3) Infantine.

A few of the games and amusements may be named hereunder with short descriptions of some of them.

(1) Yātrakkaḷi or Samghakkaḷi; (2) Pāna; (3) Ēḷamuṭṭikkaḷi; (4) Kaṭhakaḷi: (a) Kṛshṇāṭṭam, (b) Rāmanāṭṭam; (5) Ōṭṭam Ṭuḷḷal; (a) Ōṭṭan, (b) Sīṭankan: (c) Paṟayan; (6) Kuṟaṭṭiyāṭṭam; (7) Mōhiniyāṭṭam; (8) Āndiyāṭṭam; (9) Ōḷappakkūṭṭu; (10) Kōḷamṭuḷḷal; (11) Māchānkaḷi; (12) Kallyāṇakkaḷi; (13) Aivarkaḷi; (14) Pāvakaḷi; (15) Chākkyārkūṭṭu; (a) Angulīyāmgam; (b) Kūṭiyāṭṭam; (16) Pāṭhakamparayuka; (17) Ṭūkkam: (a) Ṭōṇiṭṭūkkam, (b) Garudanṭūkkam; (18) Ammānāṭṭam; (19) Ñaṇinmēl Ḍaṇḍippu; (20) Vāḷēṟu, Kunṭēṟu; (21) Valayaṭṭil chāṭṭam; (22) Kaviṇayēṟu; (23) Kaṭunṭuṭiyēṟu; (24) Kōḷaṭi; (25) Cheppaṭividya; (26) Panṭukaḷi. (a) Ṭalappanṭu, (b) Kuḷippanṭu, (c) Pēyppanṭu; (d) Panṭaṭi; (27) Kondōṭi; (28) Kuṟṟiyimkōlum; (29) Ēḷunāyum Puliyum; (30) Kampiṭṭayam; (31) Ṭāyam; (32) Chūṭukaḷi; (33) Pāśikaḷi; (34) Śīṭṭukaḷi; (35) Chaṭurangam; (36) Vaṭṭukaḷi; (37) Gōḷikaḷi; (38) Uppukaḷi; (39) Māssukaḷi; (40) Pulikaḷi; (41) Kallukaḷi; (42) Pallānkuḷi; (43) Ṭūṇukaḷi; (44) Valakaḷi; (45) Vēḷakaḷi; (46) Aiṭṭu; (47) Kayyāmkaḷi; (48) Gusṭi;

(49) Kasarāṭṭu; (50) Nāyāṭṭu; (51) Ṭiruvāṭirakaḷi; (52) Uluñālāṭṭam; (53) Nīṇṭal; (54) Mungānkuḻi; (55) Muṭalakkuṭṭu; (56) Vanchikaḷi.

(1) This is an aesthetic-military indoor, masculine amusement peculiarly religious and has been already described in this work. [1]

(2) This too is a religious ceremony classed as an amusement because it consists of a man's dancing in a peculiar dress with bells, etc., attached to his ankles and waist, with a bunch of cocoanut flower in his hand, round a lighted lamp in front of which is placed the Nandakam or sword of the goddess Bhagavaṭi to the accompaniment of songs and drumming in a peculiar manner. The place is decorated with hangings of red cloth, flowers, etc. The Veḷichappāḍ, the Deity's representative, takes a prominent place in the performance. It is an indoor masculine amusement.

(3) This is an aesthetic, civil, indoor, masculine amusement already described.

(4) This is the pure Malayalam Drama—a dumb show. It is an aesthetic, civil, indoor, masculine amusement already described.

(5) This too is an aesthetic civil, indoor, masculine amusement already noticed.

(6) This is the dancing by Koṙava women or by men in the guise and habit of a woman of the Koṙava caste to the accompaniment of songs and symbols. It is a feminine, indoor, civil, aesthetic amusement. Persons of other caste also have taken to this dance.

(7) This the counterpart in Malabar of the performance by dancing girls on the East Coast. It is an aesthetic, indoor, feminine amusement. It has of late gone much out of use.

(8) This is a dance by a man in the guise of an Āndi or Paṇḍāram to the accompaniment of songs

1. See also the *Chathu Panikar Memorial Lecture on Sankakkali* by H. H. Appan Thampuran on p. 239 *et seq* Vol. II of the *All-Kerala Parishat Journal*.

sung in a peculiar tone. "It resembles Ramanāṭṭam. The difference consists in this, there is only one pantomime without the usual headgear and there is less of hand symbols and expression. In this respect it resembles *Tullal.*" It is played in the night before a lamp. An indoor, aesthetic, masculine amusement.

(9) This is an imitation of No. 4. The performers are mere dolls dextrously moved by means of strings held by men, experts at it, from behind the screen. The dolls dressed in the way suitable to the puranic characters they represent are placed on the stage and perform their pantomimie shows according as the string is pulled from behind. There are the usual accompaniments of songs, which are partly in Tamil and partly in Malayalam, drum, finger drum cymbals, gong, etc. An indoor, aesthetic amusement.

Nos. (10)to (13), are masquerading games.

(10) This is generally played by Kaṇiyāns. "Kōlamṭuḷḷal" says Mr. Raja Raja Varma, "is a game played for a whole night. It is believed to have a propitiatory effect in warding off the evil influence of devils and demons, and is often vowed by the devout for the removal of hysterics and similar maladies. By eight or nine at night, for it must be noted that it can be celebrated only after the first quarter of the night, a number of Kaṇiyans, men and women, gather and begin the preliminary incantations and songs. A metallic bow with a number of bells attached is blown with a stick to supply the music, and a burning faggot to give the light. This occupies a good two hours. By midnight, mask after mask begins to appear. These masks represent the several demons of the forest and glade, *Marutha* or the spirit of small-pox, *Madan* or the demon of the woods, and the rest of the horrible crew in quick succession. Their terrible appearance with torches in their hands and mouths, fierce gestures, and fearful roarings make the scene indeed so weird, that the weak-minded are frightened out of their wits. To

the beating of the drum, these pantomimic ghosts and spirits dance their horrible rounds of midnight revelry. Powdered dammar is often thrown into the flambeau to give a flash and make the scene horrible. Blood scenes are got up by preparing a boiled solution of chunam and turmeric. This is a demonaic game, enjoyed mostly by the unrefined rural population, whose imagination soars no higher than the appreciation of vivid and fantastic representations of strong passions"[1].

(11) This is much the same as No. (10). It is generally played by the barber caste. The players put on the mask of various animals and birds and mimic their habits, their voice, etc.,to the delight and laughter of the spectators.

(12) "*Kalyanakali* as the name indicates", says Mr. Raja Raja Varma, "is a game played during marriage festivals in Nayar families. The players are Nayars of the village, who clad themselves in neat white cloth and a head-dress of the same stuff in the antique fashion and adorned in sandal paste, sing merry songs and dance to the tune in many merry-go-rounds. There are several harmonious steps, measures and symbolisms to be acquired of a *Chattampi* (teacher) lest the performer should be hooted out by his comrades. This game is most prevalent now in Chirayankizh and some Southern Taluks of Travancore"[2].

(13) "*Aivarkali* is a two days' game performed during the day-time only, the actors being Ēlavas or Ṭiyas. It is a mimic representation of the story of the five Pāndavās, each of whom is represented by one person. The whole story of the Mahābharaṭa is epitomised in songs, and they are sung and acted to the accompaniment of hand-drums called *Tappu*. The *Asan* sits on a raised platform and on the closing day a big piece of jaggery is hung in the middle of the

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review* Vol. 5, pp. 142-3.
2. Ibid. p. 143.

dancing ground and is divided according to custom among the players and their kinsmen assembled. This pastime also is mostly confined to the Southern Taluks of Travancore." [1]

(14) This is something like No. 9 but on a small scale. The dolls are made to dance being held in the hand.

(15) This is a strictly religious amusement. It has already been described in this work. [2] It can be performed only in temples. It is an aesthetic, indoor, masculine amusement.

(16) This is very much like the previous one. All castes above the Nayars perform this and the religious element is but slight if any at all. No peculiar dress is worn by the performers and the performance is not confined to temples. It may take place in private houses also. The performer repeats appropriate slokas from Champūs, dramas, etc., in Sanskrit and expounds them in Malayalam to the delectation of the audience. The performer has not the same license as the Chākkiyār. Still he is allowed to indulge in good humoured railleries which are not of a personal character. In the course of his expounding Purāṇic stories, he is allowed to digress by way of illustration to passing events, and this affords him occasion to make caustic remarks on men and things about him. It is an aesthetic, indoor, masculine amusement very much liked by the literate class.

(17) This partakes of a religious character and has been already described. It would be hardly correct to class it as a game or amusement unless for the occasion affording an opportunity for people to gather together and indulge in amusements and sight seeings of various kinds. Left to itself it is a somewhat cruel observance which ought very much to be discountenanced.

1. *Malabar Quarterly*, p. 143.

2. See also *Chattu Panikkar Memorial Lecture* on *Kutiyattam* etc., by Profr. Kerala Varma Tampuran, B. A., B. L., Lekshmi Bhai Publication, Trichur.

(18) This is a throw and catch play with a number of balls, in which six or even more than six balls are used by the player at a time. These balls are sometimes made of bell-metal; but more often they are of some heavy wood and coloured. They are in size slightly less than cricket balls. The players perform wonderful feats with these balls. The player throws the balls up in pairs or one after another in rapid succession from his hands to the measure of the drum and the cymbal and never misses catching the balls when they come down and throwing them up again into the air with a dexterity and ease that can be attained only by a life-long practice of the play. According to the Travancore *State Manual* which gives a description of it, the players are generally *Ampalavasies* or temple servants. They need not necessarily belong to that caste. The play is held at *utsavams* in important temples and affords one of the most favoured of recreations to the people. Mr. Raja Raja Varma Raja informs us that "Not unfrequently the player of this game shows other tricks, such as turning a brass plate on the tip of a long cane. Holding one end of the cane in his hand he turns the plate so swiftly at the other end that it appears almost motionless; then bending the cane gradually he brings the plate down and again by unbending it, he takes it up. Then he throws the plate up and catches it at the tip of the cane. Another trick which he exhibits is making two paper butterflies fly like living ones by blowing with a fan." [1]

This is an aesthetic, indoor, masculine game. Sometimes females also amuse themselves by this game inside their houses.

(19) We have the following description of this by Mr. Raja Raja Varma:

"Rope-dancing or *dandippu* partaks more of military games than civil, involving as it does, several of

1. *Malabar Quarterly*, Vol. V, page 142.

the physical feats pertaining to the former. It would have been classed as such had it not been for the purely civil purpose of diversion for which it has ever been practised and exhibited. A strong thick rope is tied tight end to end on the ground and raised by propping it on cross bamboos at both ends to not less than eight feet above the ground, or even higher when experts play. The play begins with the beating of the drum and clanging of cymbals, which supply music to the game. The dancer is attired in tight trousers and a waist-cloth with a number of superfluous ball thread hangings reaching up to the knee, a decorated tie at the lower end of each of the legs and a head-dress similar to that of the *velakalikaran* described in the previous paper. After paying reverence to the Power above, the *melakar* or the drummer and cymbal sounder who represent his *gurus*, and also the audience, the performer jumps upon the rope and perching thereon as on horse-back tries the strength of the rope by swinging up and down, to and fro. This done, the real game commences. The *melakars* ask him a number of questions as to whether he is capable of performing a certain feat. He answers them first pointing out the dire consequences of falling down, and the easy way in which those who stand on safe *terra firma* can ask one on a flimsy small rope to perform break-neck feats. These questions and answers are often full of wit and humour and afford food for laughter to the audience besides giving them an idea as to what will be the next item of the performance. After some argument the performer consents to show the feat by crying out *thithai* or "here goes", and he does it to the astonishment of the spectators. In this wise the game goes on for an hour or two. High jumping, walking and somersaults on the rope, jumping through rings and on swords from the rope, mounting the loads on a pole supported on the rope, sword play and a number of other feats are shown. Some very expert rope-dancers do these feats on thin metallic wire; and recently one of these

rode on the bicycle on a wire. It is a pity for all his pains, the rope-dancer is given but a dole of rice and sometimes a rupee or two in addition; while circus players, who show little more, are remunerated by the hundred." [1]

(20) Of this game the same writer observes:— "*Valeru* is a game in which rapiers or small swords are thrown and caught. The number of rapiers handled at one time is never less than three. The larger the number the greater the dexterity of the performer. He uses both his hands in the game and takes his stand at one spot. A big drum and cymbals supply the music for this game. In addition to the above he exhibits the methods of wielding and flourishing the swords, jumping in various attitudes, passing through rings and other aerobatic feats." [2]

(21) This is a game in which the player jumps through hoops large and small. He first jumps through one at first; then through two, three and so on held close together in the first instance and then at slight distances from one another. Much dexterity is required in its performance. It is an out-door, masculine, civil amusement.

(22) This is the throwing of stones placed in slings, the stones being thrown with great force by the player after the slings are made to take a number of sweeps. It is an out-door military masculine, physical amusement. Mr. Raja Raja Varma has the following description of this game:—

"*Kavanayeru* is a game of throwing rockets of stones. In former times, it was useful in warding off the attacks of enemies from a distance. The stones are usually made of hardened clay; metals and other hard substances are also not uncommonly used. The stones are tied to a pretty long thread and after a number of

1. Pp. 141—2
2. Vol. IV, p. 226.

wavings to gain force is shot in the direction required. Should it issue out of an expert hand, it is sure to hit the mark. What in modern warfare is served by bullet shot, the *Kavanayeru* supplied in olden days. It required a good deal of practice and precision. The man who shoots a stone and hits the stone that is shot from the other side cannot but be admired." [1]

(23) This is an out-door, physical, masculine game. It partakes the character of a boyish amusement. It consists in balancing a piece of wood made in the form of a small hour glass on a piece of string to the ends of which are attached two small sticks, by which the string is held stretched by both hands. After the contrivance is made to balance for some time on the string it is projected upwards and caught on the string when it comes down. The dexterity consists in throwing it up to a great height and catching it on the string without missing as it comes down. It gives much innocent amusement and requires much practice to become dexterous.

(24) Mr. Raja Raja Varma gives the following description of this game :—

"*Kolati* or game with the sticks, is an amusing diversion to see. Around a lighted lamp a number of persons stand in a circle with a stick one foot long and as thick as the thumb, in each hand and begin to sing, first in slow and gradually in rapid measure. The time measure is kept by each one hitting his neighbours' sticks with his own on both sides. Much dexterity and precision are required as also experience in combined action and movements, lest the amateur should be hit on the kunckles by his neighbours as the measure is accelerated. There is only one refrain for every song, so that it becomes monotonous after some time. The songs are invariably in praise of God or man. Experts often remove the ennui of the spectators by variations of strokes and motions" [2].

1. Vol. IV, p. 226.
2. Vol. V, p. 140.

(25) This is the Indian jugglery which requires no special description.

(26) This is an out-door, physical, masculine game which has already been described in this work.

(27) Here again we may quote Mr. Raja Raja Varma "*Kondoti* is a game in which there are two opposing parties, each containing an unequal number of men who are more or less matches. They stand at a distance, and as soon as both parties are ready, one from the right hand party takes a small ball in his hand and walks into the arena. At the same time a match from among the other side advances towards him to take the ball by force. Soon they join in close combat. Great skill in fencing and throwing is displayed here. At length one succeeds. Then the ball is taken by another and from the ranks of the opposite party a combatant is selected to wrest the ball from him. In this wise the game continues for a long time until the party which gains the ball is declared successful.[1] "

(28) This is a boyish out-door game. A small pit is made on the ground and a small piece of stick is placed across its mouth. This is struck by one larger, and when it jumps up is propelled by the larger stick. The distance of the small one then from the pit is measured by the other stick.

(29) This is an in-door game drawn from the chase. It means the seven dogs and the leopard. The dogs pursue the leopard whom they bring to a corner. The game has already been described in another part of the work.

Numbers (30) to (33) are games at dice. Numbers (30) and (31) are played for mere amusement while the other two partake of the nature of gaming prohibited by law to be played in public.

No. (34) is card play of which there are various forms while No. (35) is chess play.

1. Vol. IV, p. 226.

Numbers (36) to (44) are boyish games in which school boys indulge. Numbers 36, 37, 41 and 42 are played with stones or marbles. Numbers 38, 39, 40, 43 and 44 are out-door games which give ample exercise to the body. In all of these the boys range themselves into two parties, one party trying to pass through a line guarded by the other or one by one of party No. 1 trying to pick out one by one of party No. 2 while well guarded. The games give intense excitement to the boys.

Numbers (45) and (46) are two of the more important military games. These as well Nos. (47) to (49) require previous training in *Kalaries* as already described before. No. (45) is thus described by Mr. Raja Raja Varma:

"Among the military games, prominence has to be given to *Velakali* or mock fight as it exhibits a finished product of physical feat. Originally designed to keep alive the practice of military tactics in times of peace, and, with the gradual decline of the age of militarism continued for the amusement of a patriotic people, *Velakali* now finds its place only on occasions of festivals in temples. It is now supposed to be a representation of the great battle between the Pāndavās and the Kauravās. It is seen at its best now in Ampalappuĭa in Travancore, where it is under the superintendence of Mathur Panicker, a rich land-lord who was the hereditary *Asan* and minister of the Chempakasēri Royal Family, which reigned over the Taluk, till subdued by Maharaja Martānda Varma of Travancore. At Trivandrum, during the annual Panguny festival, Vēlakaĭikārs assemble from various Taluks, and Māthūr Panicker commands the battalion and leads it to the attack on the Pāndavās, who are represented by gigantic wooden images erected for the time in front of Sri Padmanābhaswāmi temple. Nāyars form the battalion, being the class chiefly employed in military service. It closely resembles the modern military review held on important occasions of festivity.

"The game commences with a flourish of trumpets and kettled-rums, corresponding to a call at arms in a military cantonment. In a few minutes each house sends forth its men, well armed and equipped to the field. We shall pause for a few minutes here and look at the war dress and equipment of the soldier. Clad in an under-wear of a sheet of long and narrow cloth tied lightly round the waist in a peculiar fashion reaching only up to the knee so as to leave the legs free, with a triangular piece of red cloth ornamented with silver knobs and dots, hanging in front of the waist cloth, with a head dress of red cloth tied into an elongated knot on the right side and adorned with silver lace, the primitive soldier, half naked in his out-of-date uniform, presents to modern people a spectacle both comic and significant. He wears as ornaments a string of golden beads on the neck and a tie on each hand round the biceps muscles. Caste marks are made with sandal on the forehead, breast and arms and the eyes rubbed with black dye. His equipment consists of a shield and sword, the former worn on the left and the latter (which is blunt and often an imitation now) on the right hand. This completes the figure of a Vēlakaḷikāran.

"Now to the game itself. At the call of the trumpet these soldiers living far and near, gather round the flag. A number of pennons large and small of various colours and designs and some made of silver and gold, probably belonging to the various corps in former times, are unfurled and wave beautifully in the evening sun. The band which consists of the horn, *Kombu*, the clarion or *Kurunkunzhal*, the kettle-drum or *Thakil*, hand-drum or *Thappu* and *Maddalam* another hand-played instrument, then begins to sound the mustering tune, and its dissonant din wakens the drooping spirits of these rude warriors. No sooner have they assembled and formed themselves into line, than the march is sounded. The younger ones take the front, the elders keep the rear; and the flagmen form the rearmost line.

This mock army is accompanied by animals and birds used in olden times for military purposes, such as swans, oxen, etc., made of sticks and cloth. These, borne on shoulders come last. In this array the army marches from its place of encampment (now a banyan tree) to the battle-field (now the front court-yard of the temple). There it makes its stand. In the absence of the opponent in the field, the combat is single-handed. First it performs the tactics of a combined attack moving against the imaginary enemy in full column. Then begin the single combats. Two of the young warriors step to the front, and to the time of music perform various feats with the sword and shield, shew their skill in jumping, fencing, thrusting, and the various physical exercises. They then retire and fall into line. Again, two more warriors take the field and go through similar exercises. At the end all form together into columns and make a march and with shouts of victory move on to the tank. Their frisks and gambols of joy round the tank for a few minutes indicative of the bath which an army takes after the day of battle, close the game, which is repeated daily in temples during *utsavam* days.

"During the palmy days of the age of chivalry in Malabar, this game supplied an amusement, to the patriotic sons of the soil which modern military review with its bright uniforms and glittering panoply, its splendid cavalry and powerful artillery, its waving pennons and musical band, fail to afford. It stamped a force of character, a spirit of self-confidence and a readiness for action on the people which form the life-blood of national existence and supply an incentive to further progress. Who can contemplate the decay of such institutions only with a sigh"? [1]

For the *Velakali* in the temples at Trivandrum and Ampalappuḷa, the Travancore Sirkar had assigned lands to *Viruthikkar* whose duty it was to assemble in

1. Vol. IV, pp. 121—3.

the temples during *utsavam*, provide themselves with the necessary accoutrements and perform the *Velakali*. Though the *Viruthi* system under which various kinds of service were exacted in consideration of assignments of lands were abolished at the recent Revenue Settlement, the lands being enfranchised and the services paid for in ready cash, 200 *Viruthikars* have been retained in the Karunāgappilly Tāluk for performing *Velakali* in the Sri Padmanābhaswāmy temple at Trivandrum during the Pangunni *Utsavam*, while the *Viruthi* service in the Ampalappuïa Tāluk has been abolished, the services of a staff of 70 *Velakalikar* for the annual *utsavam* in that temple having been engaged on an annual stipend of Rs. 6 each per head. A staff of 30 men on an annual stipend of Rs. 4 per head has also been engaged for Ampalappuïa for carrying flags, etc.

This game, though not in this elaborate form and in all its details, is still practised in many places. Ōchirakkali, and other mock fights exhibited even now in innocent forms in various places are remnants of the original game.

(46) *Archery*. Of this a description has already been given. [1] This game also had its origin in the warlike habits of the people. As already observed, the Nāyars of Malabar are acknowledged to have been the very best of bowmen. Before the introduction of gunpowder into India, bows and arrows formed the most important weapon of offence. The Puranic heroes were all armed with these in their battles with their enemies. The mysteries of the art are explained in the fourth or *Atharva Veda* and what is more the art itself is taught in what is called the *Dhanurveda* or the *Veda* that treats of bows and arrows. As a weapon both of offence and defence it was believed that, when used with the repetition of certain *mantras*, the arrows became peculiarly efficacious and fatal. There were arrows of fire, *Agneyastram*, of air, *Vayavyam*, of water, *Varunam*,

1. See Note 11, Letter 25.

of Brahma, *Brahmastram*, of Śiva, *Pasupadastram*, and so on. Poetical accounts of the battles of the Purāṇic heroes gives descriptions of how arrows of one class are opposed by arrows of another class and how certain arrows bring on certain results, etc. There were different kinds of bows also such as those that were the weapons of Sri Rāma known as *Kodanda*, of Arjuna the most famous of the Pāṇḍavās, known as *Gandivam*, the *Sarngam* of Viṣṇu, etc.

Archery is now a simple game devoid of all its military elements enjoyed by the people mostly during the Ōṇam festivities.

*(48) and (49) *Fencing and gymnastic.* Of these we have the following description by Mr. Raja Raja Varma:—

"*Kasarath*(*gymnastics*), in which is included all the feats of the acrobat, is too well known to require any description. The primary object being to develop the various muscles of the body, gymnastics serves also the purpose of a diversion. The various feats of balancing, jumping, crawling on the ground, walking on hands and somersaults are familiar to the modern circus-going public. *Gusti* or fencing differs little from that which obtains in other countries. It is essentially a game played with hands and legs. A knowledge of the various vulnerable positions of the legs and hands, and methods of attack and defence and the counter moves have to be acquired by practical experience from a *Chattampi* or drill-master. Success in the game is levelling the opponent to the ground. This, as well as *Kasarath*, from their very name, suggest a Mahomedan origin, and as a matter of fact they are largely practised by Pathans." [1]

(50) is the game of hunting which as practised in Malabar has been already described.

* For (47) see Note 11, Letter 25.

1. Volume IV, pp. 226—227.

(51) and (52) Are purely feminine amusement which have already been described.

(53) and (54) These are feats in water, viz., swimming, going under water, swimming under water, etc., practised both by males and females.

(55) Is jumping into water like a crocodile or alligator, head foremost.

(56) Is boat racing. From time immemorial, this has been a favourite out-door sport of the Malayāḷīs. Boats are of various sorts and propelled by oars and paddles. There are songs innumerable to be sung to the accompaniment of rowing and paddling. Many of these songs are classed high as literary works.

We have endeavoured to give a rapid sketch of some of the national games of Malabar. It will be hardly correct to say that they are all still practised in the country. Many of them are steadily giving way to games of foreign importation especially among the school-going population and among those who have come under the influence of western education. A penchant for anything foreign is more or less the ruling passion of the Malayāḷīs and "such high class civilised games as tennis and billiards, foot-ball and cricket, golf and hockey, with their furnished and superior appliances, their inviting company, and their social elevation charm away our country-men". While the excellence of these games is not denied, it is difficult to see how any or all of them are superior to the many distinctively Malayāḷi games described above. The tendency towards denationalization all along the lines is a matter of supreme regret, and Mr. Raja Raja Varma approaches the subject of "Our National Games" with a view to preserve at least a description of them before they are altogether blotted out. "If a carved block of stone, a piece of stained glass, a mud-burnt old pitcher, or a soot-covered palm-leaf *Grandha*, deserves careful preservation as valuable relics of a by-gone

civilisation, how much more precious are the monuments of a nation's individuality and inherent strength, for both of which the men of Malabar now stand at such a discount? Disdaining to touch even the very fringe of a once glorious heritage as if it were a plague or pariah, running at a tangent from the old traditions of time-honoured family and customs, cast off in foreign waters to drift in whichever way the wind blows, the modern son of Kēraḷa, fresh from the barber's hands and decked in his borrowed feathers of tell-tale poverty, present a spectacle sorrowful to behold. Whence comes this degradation? Whence this fall of a once sharp-witted and enterprising race? Whence this mania for all that is foreign? Why this aping, which but tends to prove the Darwinian theory of the origin of man? Why this detestation of all that is one's own? are a few of the thousand and one questions, which will suggest themselves to an impartial student of social history. These the writer neither undertakes to answer, nor thinks it necessary to do in view of the subject under his immediate consideration, except, of course, for the fact that games have gone the way of other national institutions, and their history affords very important testimony to the national downfall. Obsolete in the main our military games are; and the civil games have become more or less child's play or the poor man's friend." [1]

1. Vol. v, p. 137.

LETTER XXVI.

1. **Malabar, Mother of Pepper.** The spices of Malabar have always attracted the attention of foreign nations and it was in fact the desire to enrich themselves by trade in those articles that brought European nations to India. Traced to its ultimate source, we may derive the origin of British supremacy in India to the spice trade. Of all the spices, pepper formed the chief article of commerce between the East and the West.

"A greed for the profits from the trade in this article particularly", says Mr. Whitehouse, "was one of the inducements which stimulated the Portuguese to find their way to India *via* the Cape of Good Hope. When they first set foot on shore at Calicut in the dominions of the Samori Raja, in 1498, and a Musalman who understood their language, surprised at what he saw, in no very courteous strain inquired 'What *devil* has brought *you* here'. They replied 'Our King has sent us to get *pepper*'"[1].

For centuries pepper has been an article of export to European countries from the Western Coast of India. Although a product of many countries in the East, that which comes from Malabar is acknowledged to be the best. During the Empire, it was considered an article of the greatest luxury to the Romans, and is frequently alluded to by historians. Old Pliny could not understand why people should take so great a fancy to such a hot article. A pound of white pepper was sold in Rome at 7 dinars or 2 Rs. and a pound of black pepper for a little more than 1 Re. Persius gives it the epithet *sacrum* as it were a thing to set a store by, so much was it esteemed. Even in later ages, it was considered so valuable an article of commerce,

1. *Historical Sketches* p. 5.

that, when Attilla was besieging Rome in the 5th century, he made a particular demand among other things of 3,000 lbs. of pepper as ransom for the city. We have the following account of the spice given us by Pliny in A. D. 70.

"The cornes or graines * * * lie in certaine little huskes or cods * * * If that be plucked from the tree before they gape and open of themselves, they make that spice which is called *long pepper*; but if as they do ripen, they cleave and chawne by little and little, they shew within the *white pepper* which afterwards being parched in the Sunne, channgeth colour and waxeth blacke, and therewith riveled also * * * *Long pepper* is soone sophisticated, with the senvie or mustard seed of Alexandria: and a pound of it is worth fifteen Roman deniers. The *white* costeth seven deniers, a pound, and the *black* is sold after foure deniers by the pound."[1]

The next notice we have is in the *Periplus* (A. D. 80—90). We read: "and there come to these marts great ships, on account of the bulk and quantity of *pepper* and *malabathrum* * * * . The *pepper* is brought (to market) here, being produced largely only in one district near these marts, that which is called *Kottonarike*".[2]

According to the *Periplus Kottonarik* pepper was exported in large quantities from Muziris (Cranganore) and Nelkunda (Kallada), and long pepper from Barugaza (Broach).[3] Pliny[4] quoting from some other *Periplus* observes:—"The region, however, from which they convey pepper to Becare in boats formed from single logs is Cottonara".

"The correct identification of the places mentioned in the above extracts will enable us to determine the

1. *Pliny, Tr. by Phil. Holland, Bk. XII, Ch. 7.)*
2. §. 56.
3. §. 49·56.
4. VI—XXVI—104.

localities from which pepper was exported in those early days, from Malabar to Europe.

As to Muziris, we have already observed that it has been satisfactorily identified with Cranganore or Kodungallur. There remain Nilkynda, Becare and Cottonara, and Barygoza situated outside Malabar. Nilkynda and Becare may be taken together for the purpose of identification. The latter is mentioned as Becare by Pliny, as Bacari by the author of the *Periplus* and as Bacare by Ptolemy. The Periplus places it at the mouth of the river on which at a distance of 120 *stadia* or 12 miles inland from the sea was situated the great mart of Nilkanda or Melkynda as Ptolemy has it. It was the shipping port of Nilkanda. According to Muller it is now represented by Markari (Lat: 12 N.), while Yule conjectures that it must have been between Kannetti and Kollam or Quilon in Travancore. Nilkanda is mentioned by various authors under varying forms of the same name. It is Melkynda in Ptolemy, Neacyndon in Pliny, Nilkunda in the *Periplus*, Nineylda in the *Peutinger Tables* and in the Geographer of Ravenna, Nileynna. One manuscript of Pliny writes the second part of the word not *Cyndon* but *Canidon*. Dr. Caldwell says that *Melkynada, i. e.*, probably Western Kingdom seems to be Kannetti the southern boundary of Kerala Proper. According to the *Periplus*, the distance from Musiris to Nilkanda is but 500 *stadia*, *i. e.*, 50 miles. "At this distance from Cranganore it is somewhat difficult to point to a quite satisfactory Nilkanda. The site selected as the most probable is nearly 800 stadia south of Musiris. That site is Kallada on a river of the same name 12 miles north-east of Quilon. That the choice is a happy one and that it is moreover accurate will be evident from the following circumstances:—(1) Nilkanda is placed by the author of the *Periplus* on a river, at the mouth of which stands Bakre 120 stadia, *i. e.*, 12 miles distant from the great interport, and Kallada stands exactly 12 miles inland

to the north-east of Quilon close to Bakre or Markari. (2) Kallada or its vicinity is believed to be the Kannetti of the *Keralolpathi*, the southern boundary of Malabar Proper and Kannetti is a town and river situated to the north-east of Quilon not far away from Kallada. Now according to Pliny, Arrian, and Ptolemy, the territory of Coelobothras or Kerobothras or Keprobothras extended southwards only to Nilkanda whence the sway of the Pandion began. (3) Kallada is the only navigable river on the south-west coast except the Periyar or the Alwaye river near Cranganore. The *Periplus* says that the river has sunken reefs and shallows which make its navigation difficult, so much so that the ships despatched from Nilkanda to Bakare had to sail down empty and there take their cargo. This description exactly fits in with the navigable condition of the Kallada river and the Quilon or Ashtamudi backwater into which it pours out its waters. (4) The *Periplus* says that after Bakare occurs the mountains called Pyrrhos (or the red) towards the south near another district of the country called Paralia. There can be little doubt that this refers to the bar of red laterite known as the Varkalay Barrier which extending from Quilon southwards cuts short the backwater navigation, and which has been not long ago pierced through by two long tunnels to carry the waterway direct to Trivandrum, the capital of the Travancore State. (5) After referring to the importance of Nilkanda, Pliny proceeds to say that the region, however, from which they convey pepper to Bakare in boats formed of single logs is Cottonara. It is indeed well known that Kallada is a great interport of Travancore pepper which is sent from there to ports on the coast for shipment in boats formed of single logs exactly as they used to be in the days of Pliny. A reference to the map of Travancore will show that Kottārakkara, which produces pepper in abundance and of the finest quality, is situated close to Kallada, and looking to the respective positions of Bakrae and Cottonara, there can

be little doubt that the latter is represented by the modern Kottarakkara.

The Kottiara of Ptolemy could not evidently have been the Cottonara of Pliny or the Kottonarike of the *Periplus*. It is indeed singular that Ptolemy does not make mention of Cottonara though Pliny refers to it as the region where the best pepper was produced and whence that commodity is brought to the port of Bakrae for shipment. Buchanan indentifies Cottonara with Kadaṭṭuñād in the Collectorate of Malabar, while Burnell identifies it with Kōlaṭṭuñād the district about Tellichery also in the Collectorate of Malabar, both well known for their produce of pepper. But neither of these localities satisfactorily answers to the description given by Pliny. If Nilkanda is Kallada or Kannetti near Quilon in Travancore as has been satisfactorily shown by Burnell himself, if Bacare stands at a distance of 120 *stadia* or 12 miles at the mouth of the river on which Nilkanda is situated, if the pepper of Cottonara was brought to Bacre for shipment in boats formed out of single logs, then certainly the district of Cottonara could not be so far away as Kadaṭṭuñād or Kōlaṭṭuñād in North Malabar. Indeed, there was no necessity for the pepper of those districts to be carried so far south as Quilon in Travancore to be conveyed to foreign marts. The ports of Calicut, Cannanore, Pudupattanam and Cranganore, not to mention many another port lay near and more conveniently at hand; add to this the fact mentioned both by Pliny and Arrian that Nilkanda belonged not to Celobothras or Keprobotras but to Pandion. It cannot have been that Pandion had any territory in North Malabar, seeing that Pliny, Arrian and Ptolemy all agree in fixing Nilkanda or Kallada as the northern limit of the Pandion Kingdom. The district of Cottonara can in no way be situated at a distance from Nilkanda or its shipping port Bacre. We may safely point to the district of Kottārakkara in the vicinity of Kallada as the Cottonara of the Greeks. "On the east of Collam (Quilon) and towards the

interior part of the country", says Fra Paolino "lie Perumanadu and Cirumuttu, two beautiful and uncommonly fertile districts, which belong to the ancient Kingdom of Kottarakkarai and which produces great quantities of pepper, ginger, cardamom, gum-lack, cotton, and various kinds of valuable wood. The river on which these articles are transported takes its rise in the Ghauts and proceeding past Collare (Kallada), Tuyam and on the north side of Collari, discharges itself into the sea, towards the south not far from the town of Aybica".[1] The first part of the name of this latter town certainly leaves behind a trace of the name by which Ptolemy called this part of the country *Aiorum Regio* and it is significant that Nilkanda is placed by Ptolemy in the country of the Aioi.

Dioscorides (A. D. 100) notices the plant in the following terms: "the *Pepper* Tree is related to grow in India; it is short, and the fruit as it first puts it forth is long, resembling pods; and this *long pepper* has within it (grains) like small millet, which are what grow to be perfect (*black*) pepper. At the proper season it opens and puts forth a cluster bearing the berries such as we know them. But those that are like unripe grapes, which constitute the *white pepper*, serve the best for eye-remedies, and for antidotes and for theriacal potencies."[2]

Cosmas (545 A. D.), giving a drawing of the pepper vine says, "This is the *Pepper* tree. Every plant of it is twined round some lofty forest-tree, for it is weak and slim like the slender stems of the vine. And every bunch of fruit has a double leaf as a shield; and it is very green, like the green of rue' [3]

Cosmas mentions five ports on the West Coast of India whence pepper was exported. He refers to Malabar as "Male" or the country "where the pepper grows".

1. P. 35.
2. *Mat Med.* II, 188.
3. Book XI.

In the 9th century, Sinbad the Sailor is said to have visited Malabar in the course of his 4th voyage. Mr. Major in his *Introduction* to his *India in the 15th century* observes that Sinbad "was carried to an Island (for all countries were regarded as islands by navigators who are unable to complete their explorations). He gives no name to this island, but relates that he found there men gathering pepper. This would seem to be the Coast of Malabar. In the district of Cottonara on this coast, the best pepper is gathered and in the largest quantity to the present day. On this coast Ptolemy places the island of pepper. On this coast Cosmas in the middle ages, mentions five ports whence pepper was exported".[1]

Ibn Khurdadba (870 A. D.) says, "The mariners say every bunch of pepper has over it a leaf that shelters it from the rain. When the rain ceases, the leaf turns aside; if rain re-commences, the leaf again re-covers the fruit".[2]

Edrisi Geographer at the court of Roger of Sicily (1099) makes mention of the pepper and cardamoms of Malabar.

Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (1159 A. D.) speaking, it is supposed of Quilon, says—"The pepper grows in this country; the trees which bear this fruits are planted in the fields which surround the towns, and every one knows his plantation. The trees are small and pepper is originally white, but when they collect it they put it into basins and pour hot water upon it; it is then exposed to the heat of the sun and dried in order to make it hard and more substantial, in the course of which process it becomes black in colour". [3]

The well known Arabian Geographer Abulfeda (1273—1331) makes mention of the abundance of pepper grown in Malabar. He defines the position of

1. P. XXXII.
2. *Journ. As. Soo.* VI. tom V, 284.
3. Wright p. 114.

Quilon as at the extreme end of *Baladul Falfal*, i. e., the pepper country or Malabar.

Marco Polo (A. D. 1291) makes mention of the pepper of Coilam (Quilon), Ely and Cannanore and of Melibar. Of the first, that of Quilon, he observes:— "Pepper too grows in great abundance throughout this country, and I will tell you how. You must know that the pepper trees are (not wild but) cultivated, being regularly planted and watered; and the pepper is gathered in the months of May, June and July."

Long before European merchants found their way into India for trade, the famous Minorite Friar Odorico Di Pordenon (1281—1331) visited Malabar and observed the great attention paid to the production of pepper. "It grows", says he, "with numerous bright looking green leaves, and climbs up the trees; the pepper pods hanging down in clusters like grapes;". He speaks of a pepper forest of 18 days circuit. Though not so extensive, it is worthy of note that the island on which the British Residency of Cochin stands is still known as *Molakukad* or 'Pepper Forest'. Speaking of the difficulties connected with the gathering of pepper, the Friar adds, "Crocodiles and huge serpents infest this forest; and, in the season of getting the pepper, the people are obliged to make large fires of straw and other dry fuel to drive away these noxious animals". It is likely that the river and the broad backwater that skirts the island, was in the Friar's days infested by crocodiles and huge serpents.

The Arab traveller Ibn Batuta (1304—78) passing through Malabar observes:— "Their country is that from which black pepper is brought; and this is the far greater part of their produce and culture. The pepper tree resembles that of the dark grape. They plant it near that of the cocoanut, and make framework for it, just as they do for the grape tree. It has, however, no tendrils, and the tree itself resembles a bunch of grapes. The leaves are like the ears of a

horse; but some of them resemble the leaves of a bramble. When the autumn arrives, it is ripe; they then cut it just as they do grapes,and thus it is dried by the sun. As to what some have said, that they boil it in order to dry it, it is without foundation."[1] And so it is really.

Marignolli describes Quilon in 1347 A. D. as "where the whole world's pepper is produced. Now there pepper grows on a kind of vines, which are planted just like our vineyards." "These are things," protests the Minorite Friar "which I have seen with mine eyes and handled with mine hands during the fourteen months that I stayed there. And there is no roasting of the pepper as authors have falsely asserted; nor does it grow in forests, but in regular gardens, nor are the Saracens the proprietors but the Christians of St. Thomas."[2]

Nicolo Conti (1419—1444) and Athanasius Nikitin (1468), Hieronimo Di Santo Stepano (1494—99), Varthema (1503—1508) and Durate Barbosa also mention pepper as one of the chief articles of export from Malabar.

Since the advent of European nations to the West Coast, the desire to possess a monopoly of the trade in pepper has always directed their policy and the pepper contracts originally entered into between them and the Malabar Princes have invariably led to political relations which have terminated in the subjugation of these Princes by the Western powers and finally in the British supremacy.

The Portuguese designated a particular part of Malabar *Peimenta* or Pepper Country and its ruler the Pepper Queen.

2. **Cultivation, Value and properties.** The following note by the Editor of our author on the pepper vine and its cultivation is useful. "The Black pepper vine (*Piper nigrum*) is indigenous to the forests

1. *Lee's Translation* p. 167.
2. *Cathay* II 342 *et seq.*

of Malabar and Travancore; and for centuries has been an article of exportation to European countries from that coast. Although growing in other countries of the East, Malabar pepper is considered to be the best. Its cultivation is very simple, and is effected by cuttings or suckers put down before the commencement of the rains in June. The soil should be rich, but if too much moisture be allowed to accumulate near the roots, the young plants are apt to rot. In three years the vine begins to bear. They are planted chiefly in hilly districts, but thrive well enough in the low country in the moist climate of Malabar. They are usually planted at the base of trees which have rough or prickly bark, such as the jack, the erythrina, cashew nut, mango tree, and others of similar description. They will climb about 20 or 30 feet, but are purposely kept lower than that. During their growth, it is requisite to remove all suckers, and the vine should be pruned, thinned and kept clear of weeds. After the berries have been gathered, they are dried on mats in the sun, when they turn from red to black. They must be plucked before quite ripe, and if too early they will spoil. White pepper is the same fruit freed from its outer skin, the ripe berries being macerated in water for the purpose. In this latter state they are smaller, of a greyish white colour, and have a less aromatic or pungent taste. The pepper vine is very common in the hilly districts of Travancore, especially in Cottayam, Meenachel and Chenganachery districts, where at an average calculation about 5,000 candies are produced annually.

"Long pepper (*Chavica Roxburghii*) is another cultivated species. It is readily propagated by cuttings. The stems are annual, and the roots live for several years, and when cultivated, usually yield three or four crops, after which they seem to become exhausted, and require to be renewed by fresh planting. The berries of this species of pepper are lodged in a pulpy matter like those of *P. nigrum*. They are first green, becoming red when ripe. Being hotter when unripe, they

are then gathered and dried in the sun, when they change to a dark grey colour. The spikes are imported entire. The taste of the berries is pungent though rather faint."[1]

Pepper is still cultivated to a large extent in Malabar though not as formerly. The tenants who cultivate the vine under the landlords are entitled at ejectment to compensation. Major Walker in his *Report on the Land Tenures of Malabar* gives the following table containing an account of the four periods of the *Mooloo valli* (*Mulaku valli*) or pepper vine under each period, and its value under each stage, until it becomes a bearing vine.

The periods or stages of valuation	First			Second			Third			Fourth		
The names and description of the periods	*Koolly valli*, a vine within the pit whole in which it is planted with 10 or 15 leaves			*Aegum Padinda vine* with roots shooting out, and fastening to the ttee			*Payi Tevi*, a vine with flowers appearing			*Kachadu*, a complete bearing pepper vine		
	Rs.	Qs.	Rs.	Rs.	Qs.	Rs.	Rs.	Qs	Rs.	Rs.	Qs.	Rs.
If the *kudian* (tenant) returns the *paramba* (garden) to the *jenmkar* (landlord) this person must pay for each vine at the annexed rates and also 20 per cent *arya*	0	0	25	0	0	50	0	3	0	2	0	0
If the *jenmkar* demands the *paramba* from the *kudian* he must pay him at the sub-joined rates, and 20 per cent arye on the total amount	0	0	50	0	3	0	2	0	0	4	0	0

"Should the whole of the pepper vines, or a considerable number of them, be in the fourth stage, the

1. Pp. 153—154

jenmkar must allow the kudian to enjoy the produce of the bearing vines for one year, or pay him a sum of money equal to their produce for that period.

"1. *Koolly valli—Koolly*, a pit or hole; *valli*, a vine: the state it is in when first planted.

"2. *Negum Padinho—Negum*, the nail of the finger; *padinho*, to fasten, or cling to; implying that the vine in this stage fastens or clings to the tree like a claw or finger.

"3. *Payi teri—Payi* none; *teri* a candle, a wick. This refers to some fanciful resemblance which the flowers bear in this stage to the wick of a lamp.

"4. *Kachadu*, yelding.

"The pepper vine is commonly propagated from cuttings.

"The natives allege that plants from the seed are not so productive, and do not attain the strength of those from cuttings; when it is young, the plant in the dry weather ought to be watered daily. The quantity and quality of the produce depends very much on the care of the cultivator. It must at first be well manured. It does not attain the fourth period before five years; i.e., although it begins to bear on the second or third, the produce is trifling and it seldom becomes a complete bearing tree until the fifth"[1].

Regarding the properties of pepper and its use, Col. Drury observes as follows in his work on *The Useful Plants of India*:

"Pepper contains an acrid, soft resin, volatile oil, piperin, gum, bassorine, malic and tartaric acids, etc. The odour being probably due to the volatile oil, and the pungent taste to the resin. The berries medicinally used are given as stimulant and stomachic, and when toasted have been employed successfully in stopping vomiting in cases of Cholera. The root is used as a tonic, stimulant and cordial. A liniment is also prepared with them of use in chronic rheumatism.

1. Pp. 24-25.

The watery infusion has been of use as a gargle in relaxation of the uvula. As a seasoner of food, pepper is well known for its excellent stomachic qualities. An infusion of the seeds is given as an antidote to arsenic, and the juice of the leaves boiled in oil externally in scabies. Pepper in over doses acts as a poison, by over exerting the inflammation of the stomach, and its acting powerfully on the nervous system. It is known to be a poison to hogs. The distilled oil has very little acrimony. A tincture made in rectified spirit is extremely hot and fiery. Pepper has been successfully used in vertigo, and paralytic and arthritic disorders"[1].

3. **Contract for Sales.** It was in December 1660 that the Dutch captured Quilon, their earliest settlement in Malabar. Within the next three or four years, they entered into alliances with almost all the principal Princes of Travancore. The most important of these treaties is the one dated the 21st February 1664. By this Captain John Nieuhoff on behalf of the Dutch Company engaged with the Kings of Martan (Karuṅāgapilly), Signaty (Quilon), Goenrue (Kundra), Travankoor (Travancore), and Barriyetta Pule (Vataya**ṭṭ**u Pilla) that "Nobody, without any exception, shall be permitted to export any pepper or cinnamon out of this country or to sell them to anybody except to the said Company". By the 3rd article of this engagement, "A certain price was settled betwixt both parties and what share each should have in the customs whereby all former pretensions shall be annulled". Engagements of a similar nature were also concluded with the Kings of Kayamkulam and Ambalapuḻa or Porcad. The 4th article of the treaty entered into with the Cochin Raja in 1663 stipulated that "the King of Cochin should cause all the pepper and cinnamon grown in his dominions from Cranganore in the north to Poracad in the south to be brought weighed and delivered to the Dutch Company in the Fort at Cochin and

1. P. 357.

that henceforward these articles should be given to no one else". In the same year, there was another engagement entered into by the Dutch East India Company and the Rajas of Cochin and Chempakaśśēry or Porakad, article 5 of which ran thus :—"It is hereby agreed that the Chempakaśśēry Raja will not allow the weighment or delivery to any one else of the pepper and cinnamon of his country without the permission of the Raja of Cochin or of the Dutch Company. The right to these will vest with the Company as already arranged".

On the 4th January 1710, the Zamorin ceded the monopoly of the pepper trade in his dominions to the Dutch exclusively under an engagement executed at Chowghat with the Dutch Commodore. In 1740 a new treaty was concluded with the Raja of Edappilli according to which that Prince was obliged to deliver up all his pepper to the Dutch Company and to stop and punish all smugglers in that article. We have already discussed the result of this forced system of monopoly; how, it compelled the Company to keep up a large military establishment, how it led them into political and financial difficulties and how at last it ended in the destruction of their power on the coast. At first the Dutch Company had its own way in the matter of monopolies with Travancore, the Kōlaṭṭiri and the Zamorin. But those Rajas were not slow to perceive the disadvantages accruing from it and, as soon as they found themselves in a position to resist by force the illegal and unrighteous demands of the Dutch, they did not hesitate to withdraw from their forced engagements.

4. **Zamorin's grant of exclusive right.** There is no authority for this statement. It has been shown that at no time did the Zamorin exert any superiority over all the other Princes of Malabar. He did indeed assert it at times but as often as it was asserted, it was denied and never submitted to by all. It will be

remembered that Commandant de Jong gave in his *Memorial* (1757) as his opinion that monopolies in pepper did not exist in Malabar before the advent of the Dutch and were illegal combinations of the rulers, as he hints for defrauding the people.

5. **Turmeric.** We have the following description of this plant given by Drury:

"Cultivated in most parts of India. According to Rumphius, the Javanese make an ointment with the pounded roots and rub it over their bodies as a preservation against cutaneous diseases. The root is considered a cordial and stomachic, and is prescribed by native doctors in diarrhoea. It is also an ingredient in curries. There is a wild sort which grows in Mysore; the natives consider turmeric in powder an excellent application for cleaning foul ulcers. The root in its fresh state has rather an unpleasant smell, which goes off when it becomes dried; the colour is that of saffron and the taste bitter. Mixed with juice of the Nelli-kai (*Emblica officin alis*), it is given in diabetes and jaundice. The juice of the fresh root is anthelmintic, and the burnt root mixed with Margosa oil applied to soreness in the nasal organs. The root is applied by the Hindoos to recent wounds, bruises, leech-bites, etc. * * * * It is raised in April and May. The cuttings or sets, viz., small portions of the fresh root are planted on the tops of ridges prepared for the purpose, about 18 inches or two feet apart. One acre thus sown will yield about 2,000 lbs., weight of the fresh roots."[1]

The name "Burri-Burri" is unknown in Malabar at present. Turmeric powder forms an ingredient in all *curries* in Malabar. "Curry" is a general term denoting the various vegetable and meat preparations usually taken along with rice and does not mean any particular one. There is no dish made of turmeric alone for that would be altogether nauseous to the taste.

1. P. 177—178.

6. **Cardamom.**—Col. Drury has the following note on the uses, etc., of this article in his *Useful Plants of India*:

"Produces the Cardamoms of commerce. They are either cultivated or gathered wild. In the Travancore forests they are found at elevations of three to five thousand feet. The mode of obtaining them is to clear the forests of trees, when the plants spontaneously grow up in the cleared ground. A similar mode has been mentioned by Roxburgh, who states that in Wynad before the commencement of the rains in June, the cultivators seek the shadiest and woodiest sides of the loftier hills: the trees are felled and the ground cleared of weeds, and in about 3 months the Cardamom plant springs up. In four years the shrub will have attained its full height, when the fruit is produced and gathered in the month of November, requiring no other preparation than drying in the sun. The plant continues to yield fruit till the seventh year when the stem is cut down, new plants arising from the stumps.[1] They may also be raised from seeds. Cardamoms are much esteemed as a comdiment, and great quantities are annually shipped to Europe from Malabar and Travancore. In commerce there are three varieties known as the *short*, *short-longs* and the *long-longs*. Of these the short are more coarsely ribbed and of a brown colour and are called the Malabar cardamoms or Wynad Cardamoms. They are reckoned the best of the three. The *long-longs* are more finely ribbed and of a paler colour. Seeds are white, and shrivelled. The *short-longs* merely differ from the latter in being shorter or less pointed. It is usual to mix the several kinds together when ready for exportation. Some care is required in the process of drying the seeds as rain causes the seed vessels to split and otherwise injures them, and if kept too long in the sun their flavour

1. For a good description of plantations of Cardamom in Coorg, see *Coorg Memoirs* by Rev. H. Moegling p. 75.

becomes deteriorated. As cordial and stimulant they are frequently used medicinally, but more frequently as correctives in conjunction with other medicines. A volatile oil is procured from the seeds by distillation which has a strong aromatic taste soluble in alcohol. It loses its odour and taste by being kept too long. The natives chew the fruits with betel and use it in decoction for bowel complaints and to check vomiting. In infusion they are given in coughs. Malabar Cardamoms are worth in the London market from 2 to 3 shillings per lb. In Travancore they are chiefly procured from the high lands overlooking the Dindigal, Madura and Tinnevelly districts. In these mountains the cultivators make separate gardens for them as they thrive better, if a little care and attention be bestowed upon them. Cardamoms are a monopoly in the Travancore State, and cultivators come chiefly from the Company's country obtaining about 200 or 210 Rupees for every candy delivered over to the Government". [1] The Cardamom monopoly has been recently abolished in Travancore and the lands have been assessed with revenue. The yield of Cardamoms in Travancore has of late been steadily going down.

The description of this plant given by Forbes may be quoted here, as the information he supplies suppliments that which our author gives us.

"The Cardamons (*amomum repens*, Lin) which grows in this part of Malabar, is a spice much esteemed by the Asiatics; they chew it separately or with betel: it is a principal ingredient in their cookery, and used medicinally as a stomachic. The plant in appearance resembles the ginger, it attains the height of 2 or 3 feet, and sometimes more, before it bears fruit; the blossoms are small, white, and variegated with purple; some have a brownish appearance; they are succeeded by small pods, containing the seeds, which become of a light brown when the seed ripens, grows

1. P. 205—206.

black, and acquires the aromatic flavour for which it is estimable. This valuable species is indegenous to many parts of Malabar but flourishes most on the acclivity of moist cool hills, among low trees, bushes, and little springs of water. Altho' the Cardamom delights in such a situation, it will grow in other places, and is sometimes planted in gardens and orchards of plantain trees; the roots are taken up and divided. The Cardamom hills are generally private property when the plants are discovered, they are preserved with great care, by cutting down the bushes, and attending to the shoots for 3 years at which time they begin to bear; they usually attain their full growth, and produce their best crop in the 4th year, after which they generally decay. The plants spring up in the rainy season, those under cultivation are not permitted to grow too close to each other; when it so happens, the roots are divided and planted at a greater distance. The seed begins to ripen about the middle of September, and continues more or less for the space of 2 months. The capsules, or seed-pods, sometimes grow on a high stalk, often in short clusters near the root; such as are ripe are daily gathered, and carefully dried for sale; otherwise the birds and squirrels would carry off a large share. It is supposed that these animals scatter the seed in the unfrequented spots, where the Cardamom is unexpectedly found; diligent search is always made for the springing plant at the commencement of the rainy season. I was informed that in some places they burn the bushes, which are always cut down at the time, as the ashes produce an excellent manure without injuring the growing plant".

7. **The Areca.** It is the seed of the palm *Areca Catechu* L. commonly though some-what improperly called betel-nut. The word is derived from the Malayalam term *Atakka* and comes to the English through the Portuguese. Garcia D'Orta points out that "in Malabar they call it *pac* and the Nairs (who are gentlemen) call it *ataca*". This is a correct statement,

for while the higher orders call the nut *Atakka*, it is known as *Pak* to the others. In the south it is generally known by the latter term which is Tamil while *Atakka* is Malayalam. It is noticed by all the mediaeval travellers as being exported from Malabar in large quantity. Grose gives the following description of it. "The areca-nut is exactly in form and bigness like a a nut-meg, only harder, marbled in the inside with white and reddish streaks, insipid to the taste, and must be shredded with a kind of scissors, they are never without for that purpose, so as to wrap it up with the leaf. They use it both raw and boiled, which last they say preserves and adds strength to it. But I would not advise any one to taste it green, since it affects the animal spirits so powerfully, that instantaneously as it were, those who are not used to it, fall down as in a trance; it is true they recover presently, and without ill consequences"[1].

Col. Drury's account of it is full and interesting. "In appearance, the Areca Palm is perhaps the most graceful and elegant among Indian palms. Its native place is unknown, but it is extensively distributed in India. It yields the betel-nut of commerce. These nuts when young, are in conjunction with other things prescribed in decoction, for costiveness and dyspepsia. They are much relished by the natives, being chewed with the leaf of the betel pepper (*Chavica Betel*), spread with chunam. They sadly discolour the teeth, but they imagine that they fasten them, and clean the gums. A strong decoction of the nut is used in dying. A tree will produce annually on an average three hundred nuts. By Hukeems they are considered to have astringent and tonic properties. Roasted and pounded they make an excellent charcoal powder for the teeth. The catechu which they yield is of a very inferior quality. There are two preparations of it which are respectively called by the Tamools, Cuttacamboo and Cashcuttie; in Teloogoo, Kansee, and in

1. Vol. I, p. 237.

Dukhanie, Bharab-cutta and Acha-cutta. The first (Cuttacamboo) is chewed with the betel-leaf. The other is the astringent medicinally used in fluxes and ulcers. Like most of the palm tribe, the trunk is much used for ordinary building purposes, and in Travancore is especially used for spear-handles, etc. The spathe which stretches over the blossoms, which is called Paak-muttay, is a fibrous substance with which the Hindoos make vessels for holding arrack, water, etc., also caps, dishes and small umbrellas. It is so fine that it can be written on with ink. A decoction of the root is applied to sore lips. The juice of the tender leaves mixed with oil is applied externally in lumbago. The Areca Palm is found chiefly in Malabar, North Bengal, the lower slopes of the mountains of Nepaul, and the South-west coast of Ceylon. It will produce fruit at five years, and continue to bear for twenty-five years. Unlike the Cocoa Palm, it will thrive at high regions, and at a distance from the sea. In the Eastern Islands, the produce of the tree varies from 200 to 1,000 nuts annually. They form a considerable article of commerce with the Eastern Islands and China, and are also one of the staple products of Travancore, The nuts are gathered in July and August, though not fully ripe till October. In the latter country, the nuts are variously prepared for use. Those that are used by families of rank, are collected while the fruit is tender; the husks or the outer pod is removed; the kernel, a round fleshy mass, is boiled in water; in the first boiling of the nut, when properly done, the water becomes red, thick and starch-like, and this is afterwards evaporated into a a substance like catechu; the boiled nuts being now removed, sliced and dried, the catechu like substance is rubbed to the same, and dried again in the sun, when they become of a shining black, ready for use. Whole nuts without being sliced are also prepared in the same form for use amongst the higher classes, while ripe nuts, as well as young nuts in a raw state, are used by all classes of people generally, and ripe nuts

preserved in water with the pod are also used. When exported to other districts the nuts are sliced and coloured with red catechu, as also the nut while in the pod. The average amount of exports of the prepared nuts from Travancore is from 2 to 3,000 candies, annually, exclusive of the nuts in their ordinary state, great quantities of which are shipped to Bombay and other ports. According to the last survey, there were upwards of a million trees in Travancore."[1]

"On the mountains of Travancore and Malabar, a wild species, the A *Dicksonii*, is found in great abundance. Of this, the poorer classes eat the nuts as a substitute for the common betel-nut, but no other part of the tree appears to be employed for any useful purpose."[2]

We have seen that the areca-nut is chewed with the betel leaf. In fact the one is an invariable concomitant of the other in chewing.

The areca tree is known also by the name *Kazhunga*. Major Walker gives the following Table showing the "Names of the Tree under each Period, and its value in every stage until it becomes a bearing Tree", the value shown being what a cultivating tenant is entitled to get on his being ejected by the landlord.

1. P. 46—47.
2. P. 48.

The period or stages of valuation	First	Second	Third
The names and description of the periods	*Tayi Kayanga*, a plant about the thickness of a finger	*Maram Vakshu*, a plant something thicker than the arm	*Kachudu*, a tree beginning to bear fruit
	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.
If the *Kudian* returns the paramba to the *jenmkar*, he must be paid at the annexed rates, which are according to the custom of the country, and also 20 per cent arye on the total amount.	0 0 16	0 0 20	0 0 25
If the *jenmkar* demands the paramba back from the *kudian*, he must pay for the trees of all ages at the rate of the third period, and also 20 per cent arye	0 0 25	0 0 25	0 0 25

"Should the whole of the plantation, or a considerable part of it, be in the state of the second and third periods, it is not demandable by the jenmkar, without allowing the kudian to reap the benefits of it for three years, or paying him a sum of money as an equivalent.

"The jenmkar is still subject, in case of resumption, to pay for the trees at the above rates, and for all the expenses of kuli kanam.

"1. *Tayi Kayanga*—Tayi, a young plant; Kayanga Kallovoo, a gallows; from the resemblance which the tree is said to bear to that on which criminals were formerly executed in Malabar.

"2. *Maram vakshu*—Maram; a tree; vakshu, set, a tree has assumed a fixed appearance.

"3. *Kachadu* or Kachudu, yielding, bearing. A full-bearing tree is also called Kayanga and areka maram." [1]

1. P. 21—22.

8. **Betel.** It is the leaf of the Piper Betele. The word is Malayalam *Vettila*, said to be from *Veru+ila*, "simple or mere leaf," and comes to the English through the Portuguese *betre* and *betle*. Garcia says "We call it *betre* because the first land known by the Portuguese was Malabar, and it comes to my remembrance that in Portugal they used to speak of their coming not to *India* but to Calicut * * * * in so much that all the names that occur which are not Portuguese are Malabar, like *betre*."[1] The translation of Casteheda by Litchfield has *betele*[2] and also *vitele*[3] the exact Malayalam term. Barbosa calls it the 'Indian leaf'. In Vasco da Gama's *Roteiro*[4] the word used for betel is *atombor*, i. e., *al tambul*, Arabic from the Sanskrit *tambula*. The term more generally used in northern India and by the Anglo-Indians is *Pan*. The nut is known as *Soopari*.

The practice of chewing betel is universal throughout India and has been noticed by mediaeval travellers and writers.

Speaking of Cael, Marco Polo says, "All the people of this city as well as of the rest of India, have a custom of perpetually keeping in the mouth a certain leaf called *Tumbul*, to gratify a certain habit and desire they have, continually chewing it and spitting out the saliva that it excites. The lords and gentlefolks and the King have these leaves prepared with camphor and other aromatic spices and also mixed with quicklime. And this practice was said to be very good for the health"[5]. Upon this Yule has the following note: "Marseden supposes the mention of camphor among the ingredients with which the *pan* is prepared to be a mistake, and suggests as a possible origin of the error that *Kapur* in the Malay language means not only camphor but

1. f. 37 g.
2. f. 35.
3. f, 44.
4. P. 59.
5. Vol. II, p. 371.

quicklime. This is curious, but in addition to the fact that the lime is mentioned in the text, there seems ample evidence that his doubt about camphor is unfounded".

"Garcia de Orta says distinctly: 'In chewing *betle* * * they mix areca with it and a little lime * * * some add *Licio* (i.e., catechu), *but the rich and grandees add some Borneo camphor*, and some also lignaloes, musk and ambergris". (31 v. and 32). Abdur Razzak also says: 'The manner of eating it is as follows: they bruise a portion of *faufel* (areca), otherwise called *Sipari*, and put it in the mouth. Moistening a leaf of the bétel, together with a grain of lime, they rub the one upon the other, roll them together, and then place them in the mouth. They thus take as many as four leaves of betel at a time and chew them. *Sometimes they add camphor to it*'.[1] And Abdul Fazul: 'They also put some betel-nut and *Kath* (catechu) on one leaf, and some lime paste on another, and roll them up; this is called a *berah*. *Some put camphor and musk into it*, and tie both leaves with a silk thread', etc.[2] Finally one of the Chinese notices of *Kamboja* translated by Abel Remusat says: 'When a guest comes it is usual to present him with *areca, camphor and other aromatics*'".[3]

Marco Polo's city of Cael has been identified by Dr. Caldwell with Kayel and Barbosa tells us that it belonged to the King of Colam (Quilon, Travancore). He tells us that "the King of Colam lives always near this city" (Kayel). It is therefore evident that Marco Polo is referring to the Malabar practice of the chewing of betel. Even to-day camphor is occasionally added to the other ingredients in chewing betel.

We read in Purchas, "Betel is a leaf somewhat like a Bay-leaf and hath no other fruit: neither is any fruit

1. P. 32.
2. See Blochman's translation p. 73.
3. *Nouv. Mel.* 184.

more in use than these leaves: at bed and board, and in the streets they pass, they chew these leaves; and in their gossippings or visiting of their friends, they are presently presented with them; and eat them with *areca*, which is a kind of Indian nut. It saveth their teeth from disease, but colour them as if they were painted with black blood. When they chew it, they spit out the juice, and it is almost the only exercise of some, which think they could not live, if they should abstain one day from it" [1]. Padre di Vincenzo Maria also observes: "They pass the greater part of the day in indolence, occupied only with talk, and chewing betel and areca, by which means their lips and teeth are always stained" [2]. We may make one more quotation and that from Della Vella: "These leaves", says he "the Indians use to champor chaw all day long, either for health's sake, or for entertainment and delight (as some other nations for the same reasons, or rather through evil custom continually take tobacco) and therewith they mix a little ashes of sea-shells, and some small pieces of an Indian nut sufficiently common, which here they call faufel, and in other places *Areca*, a very dry fruit, seeming within like perfect wood; and being of an astringent nature, they hold it good to strengthen the teeth: which mixture besides it comforting the stomach, hath also a certain biting taste wherewith they are delighted; and as they chaw it, it strangely dyes their lips and mouth red which also they account gallant: but I do not, because it appears not to be natural. They swallow down only the juice after long mastication and spit out the rest. In visits 'tis this first thing offered to the visitants; nor is there any society or pastime without it." [3]. Even foreigners did not fail to observe the custom, and Captain Alexander Hamilton informs us that "(I) presented the Officer, that waited on me to the seaside (at Calicut) with five Zequeens for a feast of betel to him and his companions"—evidently

1. Pp. 645—6.
2. P. 232.
3. Pp. 19—20.

the Captain had no betel or areca with him, on board to offer and so he gave his attendants their value.

Betel and areca take a prominent place in all ceremonial occasions. At every religious and social function they are in evidence. Every present to a Brahman on religious occasions must be accompanied with them. There is a special donation known as *Tamboola Danam* when bundles of betel leaves with areca are given to a Brahman along with some money. At every social function when guests arrive, they are served with these along with chunam and spices for chewing. At marriages, etc., guests are given these to be taken home. In some places the presenting of guests at ceremonial visits with sliced areca mixed with chunam and cardamoms, folded up in betel leaves and secured by a clove is a sign that it is time for the visitor to take leave.

At Vasco da Gama's first visit to the Zamorin, Da Gama found the King attended by a page who served His Majesty with betel. "Near him (the king) stood a basin on a high stool all of gold, out of which one of his attendants served him with *vetel* which he chewed with salt and areca, an apple no bigger than a hazel nut. There was another gold vessel for the king to spit into and spurt the composition. Likewise a gold fountain with water, to wash his mouth after it" [1].

People invariably have with them a receptacle for holding the chewing materials. Small boxes elegantly made of gold, silver, brass or wood are always carried about when going out and Forbes tells us that in his day Malayali ladies in the south when dressed in gala attire for ceremonial occasions carried a silver box, suspended by "a chain on one side containing the areca or betel-nut, with its appendages of chunam, spice and betel leaf" as "a principal ornament".

In Malabar, the Nayars add tobacco also to betel leaf and other chewing materials, a practice not in vogue on the other coast. The betel has other uses than for chewing. It has medicinal properties also.

1. Astley p. 32.

Col. Drury informs us that "the freshly expressed juice is also employed as a fibrifuge medicine and as an antispasmodic, especially against obstinate dry coughs * * * . It is a powerful stimulant to the salivary glands, and digestive organs, and diminishes the perspiration of the skin" [1].

In former days the betel-leaf was in South India the subject of a monopoly of the East India Company. It was so in the days of the Portuguese also. In 1585 there is a King's letter extent granting the revenue from betel (*betre*) to the Bishop and Clergy of Goa [2].

Seeing that both the betel and areca are cultivated to a large extent in Malabar and that the people set great store by them, it will not be out of place to append the following tables taken from Major Walker's Report in addition to the one already quoted.

The periods or stages of valuation	First			Second			Third			Fourth
The names and description of the periods	*Kooly Kody*, or *Kooloo Valloo*, the vine when it is first put in the hole			*Kanny Kadotha Kody*, vines with buds shooting out			*Kanny Pattia Kody*, vines with several arms spread out			*Kody* vined complete with leaves
	Rs.	Qs.	Rs.	Rs.	Qs.	Rs.	Rs.	Qs.	Rs.	
If the *kudian* returns the paramba to the *jenmkar*, he is paid for the vines at the annexed rate, and receives 20 per cent arye	0	0	25	0	0	50	0	1	0	At this stage the vine is valued at the bazaar price, and the *kudian* paid accordingly
If the *jenmkar* demands the paramba from the *kudian*, he must pay him double for the first period, and one year's produce for the second, third, and fourth, and likewise 20 per cent arye on the total amount										Its produce is judged by the year, by calculating the average produce of that period

1. P. 131.
2. *In Arch Port Cr. fasc. 3, p 38.*

"1. *Kooly kody*—Kooly, a hole or pit; kody or vallu, vine. The state of the vine when it is first planted.

"2. *Kany kadotha kody*—Kanny, shooting, germinating; kadotha, near.

"3. *Kanny pattiadoo*—Pattiadoo, fastners, creepers; when the roots of the vine begin to fix themselves on the tree on which it is supported.

"4. *Kody*, a vine, i. e., complete.

"The vine attains the last period according to the quality of the soil. In a year and a half, or two years the leaves are fit for plucking. It is propagated from cuttings, and planted round the roots of trees, which it penetrates with its roots, and ascends to the height of ten or fifteen feet. It must be watered once every other day, and demands considerable attention to its cultivation".[1]

1 Pp. 23—24.

LETTER XXVII.

1. **Cocoa palm.** A palm found in all tropical countries, and the only one according to Yule and Burnell common to the Old and the New Worlds. The etymology of its name they say is very uncertain. "Ritter supposes, from a passage in Pigafetta's *Voyages of Magellan*, that the name may have been indegenous in the Landrone Islands, to which that passage refers, and that it was first introduced to Europe by Magellan's crew. This is however a mistake, as we find the term used earlier not only in Barbosa but also in the Roteiro of Vasco da Gama. * * * The more common etymology is that which is given by Barros, Garcia de Orta, Linschoten, etc., as from a Spanish word applied to a monkey's or other grotesque face. But after all may the term not have originated in the old Spanish *Coca* 'a shell' (presumably Latin *Concha*) which we have also in French Coque? properly an egg-shell, but used also for the shell of any nut.

In Sanskrit it is called *Nalikera* and sometimes *Narikela* whence the Persian Nargil. Mediaeval writers such as Marco Polo, Fra Jordanus and others call the fruit the *Indian Nut*, the name by which it was known to the Arabs. [1]

Yule and Burnell observe that "there is no evidence of its being known to classical writers nor are we aware of any Greek or Latin mention of it before Cosmas." If the tree had existed in Malabar at the time of the *Periplus*, it is difficult to believe that its noteworthy products would have escaped the notice of the shrewed early Greek merchants. However in Photio's abridgment of the *Indika* of Ktesias (about B. C. 400) reference is made to "palm trees" and "their dates" which were said to be "thrice the size of those in Babylon,"

1. *al Jauz-al-Hindi. Hobson Jobson* p. 175.

and in another abridgment of the same author by a different editor the palm fruits are referred to as "the largest of nuts." It is conjectured that these refer to the cocoanut tree and its fruit. The earliest definite notice we have of the tree is by Cosmas in the sixth century A. D. in his *Topographia Christiana*. He calls it *Argellia* evidently an erroneous transliteration of the Sanskrit *Nalikeram* or *Narikelam*. We may safely conclude that the tree was introduced into Malabar between the dates of the *Periplus* and Cosmas, the 1st and 6th centuries A. D. In Malayalam the fruit is called *Thengga* or *Thenkai* and the tree *Tengu*, meaning, as already pointed out, 'the southern fruit and the southern tree'. In speaking of the Iluvas we have noticed the theory that it was they who brought the tree into Malabar from Ceylon. Varthema, Barbosa, Barros, and Garcia use the Malayalam term *Tenga*.

It is no exaggeration to say that the cocoanut tree and its produce form the wealth of Malabar; it has been so for ages. Besides our author, many others have discanted upon its various uses and we may content ourselves here by referring to three of them. Varthema says that "these trees are found over 200 miles of country and all have owners. As to the goodness of this tree, when the Kings are at enmity with one another, and kill each other's children, they nevertheless sometimes make peace. But if one King cut down any of these trees belonging to another King, peace will never be granted to all eternity." [1]

The Portuguese however introduced the practice of cutting down all cocoanut trees and destroying plantations when they had occasion to take revenge on the Malabar chiefs. Thus, on attacking Poracaud in the absence of the Raja, they had all the cocoanut trees on the vicinity destroyed. So also at the attack of Bardala.

1. Pp. 166—7.

Purchas speaks of the tree thus:— "But of greater admiration is the Coquo tree (of this besides Linschoten, see Garcias ab Horto with Clusius' notes. Exst, li 7-c. 2-6.) being the most profitable tree, in the world, of which in the Islands of Malduiva they make and furnish whole ships so that (save the men themselves) there is nothing of the ship, or in the ship, neither tackling, merchandize, or ought else but what this tree yieldeth. The tree groweth high and slender, the wood is of a spongy substance, easy to be sawed, when they make vessels thereof, with cords made of *cocus*. For this nut (which is as big as an Estridge (Ostrich?) egg-hath two sorts of husks as our walnuts, whereof the uppermost is hairy (like hemp) of which they make Occam (okum!) and cordage, of the other shell they make drinking cups. The fruit, when it is almost ripe, is full of water within; which by degrees changeth into a white harder substance, as it ripeneth. The liquor is very sweet, but with the ripening groweth sour. The liquor extracted out of the tree is medicinable; and if it stand one hour in the sun, it is very good vinegar, which being distilled, yieldeth excellent *Aquavitae*, and wine. Of it also they make by setting it in the sun, sugar. Of the meat of the nut dried, they make oil. Of the pith or heart of the tree, is made paper for books and evidences. Of the leaves, they make coverings for their houses, mats, tents, etc. Their aparell, their firing, and the rest of the commodities, which this tree (more plentiful in the Indies, than willows in the low countries) yieldeth, would be too tedious to recite. They will keep the tree from bearing fruit, by cutting away the blossoms, and then will hang, some vessel thereat, which removeth from thence that liquor, of which you have heard. It is the *Canariju's* living, and they will climb up these trees, which yet have no boughs but on the top, like apes. This tree hath also a continual succession of fruits, and is never without some"[1].

1. Book 5, Chap. 13.

Grose in the 18th century says:—"As to the cocoanut tree itself, not all the minute descriptions of it, which I have met with in many authors, seem to me to come up to the reality of its wonderful properties and use. Nothing is so unpromising as the aspect of this tree; nor more yields a produce more profitable, or more variously beneficial to mankind: it has some resemblance to the palm tree; perhaps one of its species: the leaves of it serve for thatching, the husk of the fruit for making cordage, and even the largest cables for ships. The kernel of it is dried, and yields an oil much wanted for several uses, and makes a considerable branch of traffic under the name of Copra. Arrack, a coarse sort of sugar called jagree, and vinegar are also extracted from it, besides many other particulars too tedious to enumerate. The cultivation of it is extremely easy, by means of channels conveying water to the roots, and by a manure laid round them, of which I have spoke already. An owner then of 200 of these trees is reckoned to have a competency to subsist on".

The following account extracted from Drury's *Useful Plants of India* will be found interesting. "The principal distribution of the Cocoa palm lies within the intertropical regions of the Old and New Worlds, requiring a mean temperature of 72 degrees. It is cultivated in great abundance in the Malabar and Coromandel Coasts, Ceylon, the Laccadives, and, everywhere in the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago. It thrives best in low sandy situations, within the influence of the sea breeze, and although it grows far inland on the continent, yet whenever found in places distant from the sea, the vigour of the palm is less than if cultivated in those maritime situations, which nature has evidently determined should be its best and proper locality. Few if any products of the Vegetable Kingdom, are so valuable to man in those countries where it is indigenous as the cocoanut palm, for there is scarcely a part of the plant which cannot be applied more or less to some use by the inhabitants of tropical

climates. Of these uses, the chief are the oil from the nuts, the nuts themselves, the fibres, the leaves, the stem, the toddy, etc·; but before detailing these separately, it may be as well as give a short account of the palm itself, its history, cultivation, etc. Many botanists have enumerated the manifold uses of the Cocoa palm, and among them especially Koempfer and Loureiro have collected much valuable information. One of the earliest accounts is that by Marco Polo whose description of the 'Indian nuts,' as he terms them, is remarkably accurate. When speaking of an Island in the Indian Archipelago, he says, 'the Indian nuts also grow here, of the size of a man's head, containing an edible substance that is sweet and pleasant to the taste, and white as milk. The cavity of this pulp is filled with a liquor clear as water, cool, and better flavoured and more delicate than wine or any other kind of drink whatever.' Sir John Mandeville also mentions the 'great nut of India,' and another ancient writer has said in a paper read before the Royal Society in 1688: 'The Cocoanut palm is alone sufficient to build, rig, and freight a ship with bread, wine, water, oil, vinegar, sugar and other commodities. I have sailed (he adds) in vessels where the bottom and the whole cargo, hath been from the munificence of this palm tree.' Though there are several varieties enumerated by Rumphius, yet they have all been resolved into three species, of which one only is indigenous in the East, the other two being natives of Brazil. Fortunately so prolific a plant requires little care in its cultivation, and being essentially maritime thrives best in those situations where other trees would perish or decay. In Ceylon, where greater care than elsewhere is bestowed upon its cultivation, it is considered best that they should not be planted too close together. The soil should first be carefully cleared from weeds. The nut should not be carelessly placed in the earth, but in a position favourable for germination, attention to which is somewhat

important to the future perfection of the tree. The nut should be quite ripe before being deposited in the ground, and the hole may be dug with the slightest labour, it being sufficient to cover only two-thirds of the nut. In three or four months, the nut begins to germinate. The usual time for planting on the Western Coast is before the rains, and unless the nut is transplanted no further watering is required in the hot season, the internal moisture of the nut being sufficient for the nourishment of the young plant for nearly a year. After that time, the palm requires watering twice a day until the fourth or fifth year, the roots being carefully heaped with earth to avoid too much exposure to the air. Beyond this no further care is requisite. From the fifth to the eighth year, it begins to bear according to the situation and soil and continues bearing from 70 to 80 years. The tree is in its highest vigour from 25 to 30 years of age and will attain the age of 100 years. In the third year of its growth, the fronds begin to fall, one new frond appearing at the end of every month. These fronds fall more frequently in hot than in rainy weather. Of these there are about 28 more or less in a full-grown tree. On a single tree there are about 12 branches or spadices of nuts, one bearing the dry nuts called *Barutta* or *Cotta-tenga* in Malayalam, another spadix the ripe ones called *Maninga-tenga*. Most of the young fruits fall off, only a few coming to perfection, but as from 10 to 15 nuts on an average are produced on one branch, a single tree may produce from 80 to 100 nuts every year. Of trees requiring so little attention, it may easily be imagined how much value is attached to their possession. In Travancore and on the Malabar Coast, the natives draw their chief subsistence from the produce of this useful palm. The price of a full-grown tree varies from half a Rupee to 5 Rupees according to circumstances.* A yearly tax to the Sirkar is averaged at a few annas, so that the profit derived from a large

*At present the price has run up to Rs. 25 on an average.

plantation is very considerable. It will now be necessary to enumerate the various uses to which the several parts of the tree may be applied and first among them may be mentioned

"*The Oil.* This is procured by first extracting the kernel from its outer integument or shell and boiling it in water. It is then pounded and subjected to strong pressure. This being boiled over a slow fire the oil floats on the surface. This is skimmed off as it rises and again boiled by itself. Fourteen or fifteen nuts will yield about two quarts of oil. A somewhat different practice obtains on the Malabar Coast. The kernel is divided into half pieces which are laid on shelves and underneath is placed a charcoal fire in order to dry them. After two or three days, they are placed on mats and kept in the sun to dry, after which they are put in a press. When the oil is well extracted by this method, a hundred nuts will yield about two gallons and a half of oil. This is the method usually resorted to, when the oil is required for exportation, the former, when merely used for culinary purposes. Of late years the application of steam, especially to a press, for the purpose of procuring the oil has been attended with the greatest advantages. Cocoanut oil in India is used chiefly for culinary purposes, burning in lamps, etc., and in Europe for the manufacture of soap and candles. It has recently been used as a substitute for fish-liver-oil, and is said to be equally efficacious in cases where the latter has been employed. It is curious that when Cocoanut oil is first manufactured, there is no unpleasant smell for the first 30 or 40 hours, but after that it acquires that rancid taste and smell which render it so unpalatable in cookery. The oil becomes solid at about 70°. It is said that its consumption in Europe is likely to decrease, owing partly to the new means of purifying tallow, whereby candles equally good as those made from Cocoanut oil are produced. Great quantities of oil are shipped annually from Ceylon and the

Western Coast, and in extraordinary seasons have realized in England £70 a ton or upwards: the average price is from £ 35 to £ 40 a ton. That which is shipped from Cochin bears generally a higher price than that from Ceylon.

"The average produce of Cocoanuts", says Royle, "in the whole of Malabar is estimated at from 300 to 400 millions annually, which are valued at half a million of Rupees; but in addition to this from 20,000 to 25,000 candies of Copra, or the dried kernels, are exported, valued at 4,00,000 Rupees. The imports into England were upwards of 85,000 cwt. in 1848, and in 1853 had increased to 164,000 cwt., the proportion from India alone being about 85,000 cwt. In the Report of the articles sent to the Madras Exhibition from Travancore it is said, "According to the last Survey in 1837, there were 55,57,401 Cocoanut trees in Travancore which would yield an estimated yearly produce of 14, 20, 70 and 130 Cocoanuts, and since that period the cultivation has been greatly increased. The annual quantity of Cocoanut oil exported from Travancore on an average of the last 5 years amounts to 1,063 candies, besides 20,000 candies of *Copra* and the large number of 4,900,000 Cocoanuts. The estimated number of 6,00,00,000 Cocoanuts and 14,467 candies of oil being annually consumed in the country'. The *Copra* which is the dried kernels as also the *Poonac* is occasionally sent to Europe by itself from Ceylon and Cochin. The *Poonac* is the refuse of the kernel after the oil has expressed. It is very fattening to fowls and cattle, and been forms the best manure to young Cocoanut trees, as it returns to the soil, many of the component parts which the tree has previously extracted for the formation of the fruits. For this reason, it has been found worthwhile to transmit the *Poonac* to those localities, where the Cocoanut tree grows far inland away from the saline soil of the Coast. The Cocoa palm abstracts from the soil chiefly silex and soda, and where these two salts are not in abundance the trees do not thrive.

Common salt applied to the roots will be found very beneficial as a manure to the young trees when cultivated at any distance from the sea.

"*Coir* is the fibrous rind of the nuts, with which the latter are thickly covered. There are several ways of stripping the fibres from the husk. One is by placing a stake or iron spike in the ground and by striking the nut on the point, the fibres are easily separated. The husks are first separated from the nuts, and then placed in salt or brackish water for about 12 or 18 months, they are then scraped and cleaned for use. There exists however no necessity for steeping the husk so long in water, it having been found that a shorter time is sufficient for the purpose. In the Jury Report of the Madras Exhibition, we find, "It has lately been proved that the fibre from the husk of the ripe fruit is greatly improved in quality and appearance, by beating, washing, and soaking and that the old method of steeping in salt water for 18 months or 2 years is quite unnecessary, and that it produces a harsher and dirtier coir. The tannin which this substance contains prevents the fibre from rotting, but most of the coir of commerce is a dirty harsh produce very different from many of the clean and dyed samples exhibited, which are suited to a superior class of manufactures, as fine mats and furniture brushes". (*Reports of the Juries, Madras Exhibition* 1855, p.57.) Coir is applied to many uses, for stuffing couches and pillows, for cordage, saddles, etc. Large quantities are annually shipped to Europe where it is manufactured into brushes, mats, and carpets; and even hats and bonnets, the latter attracted much attention at the great Exhibition in London. The fibre is rather difficult to twist, still it is made into rope s for ordinary purposes in shipping. The character of Coir, says Royle, has long been established in the East, and is now well known in Europe as one of the best materials for cables on account of its strength, lightness and elasticity. These cables are further valuable being durable, particularly when

wetted with salt-water. Numerous instances have been related of ships furnished with cables of this light, buoyant, and elastic material, riding out a storm in security, while stronger made, though less elastic, ropes of other vessels have snapped in two, and even when chain cables have given way. Indeed until chain cables were so largely introduced all the ships navigating the Indian seas were furnished with coir cables. Coir cordage in Dr. Wright's experiments broke at 224 lbs. weight. In 1853 the imports into England from Ceylon and the Malabar Coast alone amounted to 164,176 cwt., and from Cochin alone, of coir, yarn, rope, junk and fibres about 3,000 tons are annually exported.

"The mode of extracting the toddy is the same as that used in other palms (See *Borassus*). Spirit distilled from the toddy is called arrack. Good vinegar is also made from it, particularly at Mahe. One hundred gallons of toddy yield 25 of arrack. To procure the sugar of jaggery, the fresh toddy is boiled down over a slow fire, when the syrup is further evaporated to the brown coarse sugar. This jaggery is mixed with chunam for making a strong cement, enabling it to resist great heat, and to take a fine polish. The toddy is called *Tenna-kulloo* and *Narillie* in Dukhanie. If taken before sunrise it is very refreshing and delicious. The native doctors recommend it in consumption, and it is said that if regularly taken, it is good for delicate persons suffering from habitual constipation.

"The milk of the Cocoanut is said to be a purifier of the blood, and when old, to be slightly aperient. The kernels scraped and rubbed up with water may be used as milk which it much resembles. The *Vytians* prepare plaster from the oil for softening the hair. The water of the nuts is used by the bricklayers in preparing a fine white-wash, also in making the best and purest castor-oil, a certain portion of it being mixed with the

water in which the seeds are boiled. The shell when burnt yields a black paint, which in fine powder and mixed with chunam, is used for colouring walls of houses. The soft downy substance found at the bottom of the fronds is a good styptic for wounds, leech-bites, etc. It is said in *Tamil*, *Tennamarruttoo punju*, and in *Malayalam*, *Tennampooppa*. The web-like substance which surrounds the Cocoa-palm at those parts where the branches expand is called *Panaday* in *Tamil*, *Konjatty* in *Malayalam*, and it is used by the toddy drawers to strain the toddy through. In Ceylon it is manufactured into a coarse kind of cloth for bags, coverings, etc., and from these bags again a coarse kind of paper is made. The Cocoanut cabbage is the terminal bud found at the summit of the tree, but to procure it the tree must be destroyed. It makes an excellent pickle and may also be used as a vegetable.

"In addition to the above uses, the leaves are employed for thatching houses, especially in Malabar, and the stems for rafters of houses, bridges, beams, small boats, and where the wood is thick is even used for picture frames and articles of furniture. It is known in Europe as the Porcupine wood and has a pretty mottled appearance. The nuts dried and polished are made into drinking cups, spoons, baskets, and a variety of fanciful ornaments. The midribs of the leaves are used for paddles. In medicine the roots in decoction mixed with water and dried ginger are given in fevers, and the juice from the tender branches mixed with honey is applied as a cooling application to the eyes. The juice of the flowers mixed with cow's milk is said to be beneficial in gonnorrhoea. A peculiar resin flows from the bark of a brownish colour used in medicine. The natives chew the roots as they do the areca-nut with the betle-leaf. Abundance of potash is yielded by the ashes of the leaves. Cocoanuts are occasionally fixed on stakes in the public roads in India for the purpose of giving light, for which they

are well adapted from their fibrous covering without and oily substance within. Marine soap, or Cocoanut oil soap so useful for washing linen in salt water is made of soda, Cocoanut, lard and water. So great and so varied are the uses of the Cocoa palm, fully calculated to realize the old saying 'Be kind to your trees, and they will be kind to you.'[1]

In Malabar, land is often leased out on improvement tenure and when it has been planted with cocoanut trees and the landlord resumes it, he has to pay the tenant adequate compensation for his labour. Such compensation varied according to the yield of the trees, to the usages of the locality, to the terms of the covenants in the lease, if any. To avoid the arbitrary eviction and payment of landlords on the one hand, and the exhorbitant demands of the tenants on the other, laws are being enacted by Governments, and courts are trying to deal even-handed justice to both parties. But to give some idea of the custom that prevailed before, a few extracts shall here be made from Walker's *Report*:—

1. *Royle*: *fibr*, *Plants*. *Simmonds*. *Ainslie Penny Cycl Rheede*. *Pers. obs.*, *etc.*, pp. 148-153.

The periods or stages of valuation	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
The names and description of the periods	*Kuli Tayi*, a plant inside the hole, ie., it is yet confined to the pit in which it was planted, and does not appear above the surface of the ground	*Aillola Tayi*, a plant with its leaves separating, and beginning to spread out from the pit	*Killi ola modavandallo*, a plant with its branches rising and spreading out from the pit	*Kodam Perinji*, a plant with the stem of the tree equal to the ground	*Ana-adi*, a plant with the stump above the ground 3 or 4 inches, spread open like the mark of an elephant's foot	*Maram Vakshu*, a tree of a span from the ground	*Aollay Kaduthadu*, a tree with the flowers near shooting out	*Aollachadu*, a tree with flowers well-blown
	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.
If the *kudian* returns the *paramba* to the *jenmkar*, he must pay for the trees at the rates in the annexed columns, which is the custom of Malabar, and likewise 20 per cent *arye* on the amount of the whole.	0 0 25	0 0 50	0 0 75	0 1 0	0 1 25	0 1 50	0 1 75	0 2 0
If the *jenmakar* demands the *paramba* from the *kudiyan* he must pay for every plant at the price of the *kollachadu*, and, as before, 20 per cent on the entire sum.	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 2 0	0 2 0

"Should the plantation have arrived at the two last stages (the seventh and eighth), and be on the eve of producing, the jenmkar, cannot demand the paramba, from his kudian, without allowing him to reap the produce of three years, or paying him a sum of money equivalent thereto. Should he dispossess him, and pay him in money, he must, besides the value of the plants, pay 20 per cent on the *arye*, or expense of kuli kanam.

"The cocoa-nut plants are set in pits dug for their reception of one yard in depth, manured with dry dung, salt, and ashes. Where the soil is favourable to them, they will sometimes begin to yield when the body of the tree is little more than a span above the ground. If the soil or other circumstances should be unfavourable, they will not bear until they are five or six feet high. The kudian must plant them at twenty-two feet distance from each other. The kanamkar is obliged to plant at intervals of twenty-four feet.

"1. *Kuli tayi.* Kuli, a pit; tayi, a young plant of any kind; thus named from its situation in the pit.

"2. *Killiola tayi.* Killi; ola, a leaf; tayi, plant; so called from a fancy that the leaves in this state spread outlike the wings of a bird.

"3. *Killi ola modranda tayi.* Killi, a bird; ola, cadjan; modranda, higher or longer; tayi, plant. The same allusion as the foregoing, with an additional epithet expressive of the further growth of the tree.

"4. *Koddam* or *Kodam perinji.* Koddam, a pot; perinji, spread or open, like a pot or cabbage.

"5. *Ana addi Tayi.* Ana, an elephant; addi, a footstep. It is supposed to have the appearance at this time of the print of an elephant's foot.

"6. *Maram vakshu.* Maram, a tree; vakshu, fixed; that it has attained the state of a tree.

"7. *Kollay Kaduthadu.* Kollay, blossom; kaduthadu, near or almost.

"8. *Kollachadu*. Kollacha, bunch; due, ripe"[1].

2. **Pineapple.** This is no native of Malabar. It is the *Aananas* of the Portuguese. It is a native of the hot regions of Mexico and Panama. It has long been domesticated in the East Indies. The Portuguese appear to have introduced it first into Malabar. In the Malayalam language it is called *Poruthichakka* or the 'Portuguese jack fruit'. It is also known as *Kythachakka* or '*Pandanus-jack fruit*', perhaps from its strong external resemblance as regards fruit and leaves to the *Pandanus*. Linschoten says that pine apples used to cost a *pardao* when first introduced into Malabar, but "now there are so many grown in the country that they are very good cheape."[2] The delicious flavour of the fruit is well known. According to Drury, "The plant succeeds well in the open air as far North as 30°, while in the southern parts of the Peninsula, it forms hedges and will grow with little care and in almost any soil. The flavour of the fruit is greatly heightened by cultivation, being somewhat acrid in its wild state * * *. The most important use of the pineapple plant consists in the fine white fibres yielded by the leaves. These have been formed into the most delicate fabrics, as well as fishing lines, ropes, etc. Unlike other fibres, they are not injured by immersion in water—a property much increased by tanning, which process is constantly used by the natives".[3]

3. **Jack fruit.** In Malayalam the fruit is called *Chakka*, while the tree which produces it is called *Pilavu*. There can be no doubt that the Portuguese derived their word *jaca* from the Malayalam *Chakka* and the English 'Jack' owes its derivation to the Portuguese word.

1. P. 18—19 of Major Walker's Report. The price of the above has considerably increased since Major Walker wrote his Report.

2. P. 91.

3. P. 35.

Most of the mediaeval travellers refer to it as abounding in Malabar and some of them give good descriptions of it.

The older authorities mention two varieties of the fruit by the names of *Shaki* and *Barki* or modifications of these, different kinds according to Jordanus; only from different parts of the tree, according to Ibn Batuta. Vincenzo Maria also distinguishes two kinds, one of which he calls *Giacha Barca*, the other *Giacha Papa* or *Girasob*. John de' Marignolli calls the tree *Chake—Baruke*. The *Bloqui* of Jordanus stands for the *Barki* or *Baruki* of the others.

Friar Jordanus, says:—"There are some trees that bear a very big fruit called *chaqui*; and the fruit is of such size that one is enough for about five persons. There is another tree that has a fruit like that just named, and it is called *Bloqui*, quite as big and as sweet, but not of the same species. These fruits never grow upon the twigs, for these are not able to bear their weight, but only from the main branches, and even from the trunk of the tree itself, down to the very roots." [1]

Ibn Batuta says:—"The *Shaki* and *Barki*. This name is given to certain trees which live to a great age. Their leaves are like those of the walnut, and the fruit grows direct out of the stem of the tree. The fruits borne nearest to the ground are the *Barki*; they are sweeter and better flavoured than the *Shaki*," etc. (much to the same effect as before).[2]

John de' Marignolli says:—"There is again another wonderful tree called *Chake-Baruke*, as big as an oak. Its fruit is produced from the trunk, and not from the branches, and is something marvellous to see, being as big as a great lamb, or a child of three years old. It had a hard rind like that of our pine-cones, so that you have to cut it open with a hatchet; inside it has a pulp of surpassing

1. Pp. 13—14.
2. iii. 127; see also IV, 228.

flavour, with the sweetness of honey, and of the best Italian melon; and this also contains some 500 chestnuts of like flavour, which are capital eating when roasted". [1]

Nicolo de Conti says, "There is a tree commonly found, the trunk of which bears a fruit resembling a pine-cone, but so big that a man can hardly lift it; the rind is green and hard, but still yields to the pressure of the finger. Inside there are some 250 or 300 pippins as big as figs, very sweet in taste, and contained in separate membranes. These have each a kernel within of a windy quality, of the consistence and taste of chestnuts, and which are roasted like chestnuts. And when cast among embers (to roast), unless you make a cut in them they will explode and jump out. The outer rind of the fruit is given to cattle. Sometimes the fruit is also found growing from the roots of the tree underground, and these fruits excel the others in flavour, wherefore they are sent as presents to Kings and petty Princes. These (moreover) have no Kernels inside them. The tree itself resembles a large fig-tree, and the leaves are cut into fingers like the hand. The wood resembles box, and so it is esteemed for many uses. The name of the tree is *Cachi*" (*i. e.*, *Cachi* or *Tzacchi*).

"The description of the leaves—"*foliis da modeem palmi intercisis*"—is the only slip in this admirable description. Conti must, in memory, have confounded the jack with its congener the bread-fruit (*Artocarpus incisa* or *incisifolia*). We have translated from Poggio's Latin, as the version by Mr. Winter Jones in *India* in the XVth *Century* is far from accurate." [2]

Rheede in his *Hortus Malabaricus* says:—"Of this tree, however, they reckon more than 30 varieties, distinguished by the quality of their fruit, but all may be reduced to two kinds; the fruit of one kind

1. P. 363.
2. *Hobson—Jobson* p. 337.

distinguished by plump and succulent pulp of delicious honey flavour being the *varaka*; that of the other, filled with softer and more flably pulp of inferior flavour, being the *Tsjakapa*".[1]

The 'Tsjakapa' of Rheede is apparently the equivalent of the Malayalam word *Chakkapazham*, i. e., the ripe jack fruit, a word used to denote the fruit of both kinds of trees. It may however be observed that the fruit of inferior flavour is called *Pazha Chakka* in Malayalam also as *Koozha Chakka*, the first of these perhaps represents Rheede's 'Tsjakapa'.

"The timber of this tree so well known as the jack-wood, is much esteemed for making furniture of all kinds, for which it is well adapted. At first it is somewhat pale but afterwards assumes a darker tinge approaching to mahogany, and, when polished, becomes one of the best fancy woods for tables, chairs, frames, etc. The root of the older trees is dark-coloured, and admirably adapted for picture-frames, and carving-work of all kinds. Like others of the same family, the tree abounds in viscid milky juice. The fruit, which grows to an enormous size, and hangs by a peduncle springing from the trunk, is a favourite article of food among the natives. There are several varieties, but what is called the honey-jack is by far the sweetest and best. The seeds when roasted are also much prized as a diet among the poorer classes. The leaves are given to goats and other cattle, and are said to be very fattening. In Travancore, the jack-tree is a monopoly, and yields an annual tax to the Sircar. The juice which exudes from the trunk, especially if mixed with vinegar, is said to check the progress of glandular swellings, and the young leaves are frequently applied externally in cutaneous affections. A decoction of the roots is given in diarrhoea. The juice of the root mixed with the pulp of the fruit and some sugar is made into a plaster

1. iii—19.

and applied to obstinate herpes. The milky juice of the bark mixed with powdered Sweet Flag root is said to be a good specific in nyctolopia. The jack-tree if planted in stony soil grows short and thick, if in sandy ground, tall and spreading, and if the roots happen to come in contact with water, the tree will not bear fruit. Bird-lime is manufactured from the juice. * * * The situation of the fruit varies with the age of the tree, being first borne on the branches, then on the trunk, and in very old trees on the roots. In Travancore, the mode of propagation is as follows: they put the whole fruit in the ground, and when the seeds germinate and grow up they tie the stems together with straw, and by degrees they form one stem, which will bear fruit in six or seven years. *Mill. Dict. Rees' Cycl. Roxb. Pers. obs. Rheede.*" [1]

1. *Useful Plants of India* by Col. Drury, p. 52–53.

The following table shows the price of the tree at various stages of its growth paid by th landlords to their tenants formerly when they are ejected from their holdings.

The periods or stages of valuation	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth	Sixth	Seventh	Eighth
The names and descriptions of the periods	*Pillavu Tayi*, a small plant. with fifteen or sixteen leaves	*Koda Kal*,[1] a plant with a stem about the thickness of the finger	*Negam Charar*, a plant about the thickness of a person's arm	*Agay Kaduthadu*, a plant the thickness of a person's thigh	*Agay Ittadu*, a plant the thickness of a person's waist	*Kadal Vakshu*, a tree with yellow timber	*Kay Kaduthadu*,[2] a tree almost yielding	*Kachu or Kaychi*, a tree bearing
	Rs. Qs. Rs	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.	Rs. Qs. Rs.
If the *kudian* offers back the *paramba* to the *enmkar*, he must be paid for his labour at the rates of the annexed columns, which is agreeably to the custom of the country, and also 20 per cent arye.	0 0 50	0 1 0	1 0 0	2 0 0	3 0 0	4 0 0	5 0 0	6 0 0
If the *jenmkar* demands the *paramba* from the *kudian*, he must pay him at the rate annexed according to the custom of the country, and 20 per cent arye.	0 1 0	0 2 0	1 2 0	3 0 0	4 0 0	6 0 0	8 0 0	8 0 0

1. *Kota-kal* means the handle of an umbrella. 2. *Kayakku-atuthathu* means almost nearing frution.

"In paramba cultivation, six jack trees are allowed to be planted for every hundred cocoanut trees. Should a kudian plant beyond this proportion, he is not entitled to any kuli kanam, unless the jenmkar should admit the excess into the estimate of cultivation. There is a rule which the kudian is in every case obliged to observe in planting trees, which is, to reserve a spot in the north-east corner of the paramba for the jenmkar's house, and where he must also build his own, should he be allowed to inhabit the paramba. In this case the jenmkar must pay the expense of the house on resuming possession of the paramba, but if the kudian has made any other improvements in that spot, he receives no kuli kanam.

"The extent of the spot reserved in the north east corner for the purpose in question, may be judged from the following example:—If a paramba measures one hundred and twenty koll (yards) in length and breadth, the spot to be kept clear for the house should be twenty yards in breadth, and the same in length.

"1. *Pillava tayi.* Pillava, a jack; tayi, a young tree.

"2. *Koda kal tayi.* Koda, an umbrella; kal, the stick or handle; that the tree in this stage has the appearance of an umbrella, and its stem that of the handle.

"3. *Negam chara tayi.* Negam, the stick used in yoking bullocks in ploughing; charar, a push; alluding to an opinion that the tree in this state is able to resist the pressure of two yoked bullocks.

"4. *Agay Kaduthadu.* Aga, a bud, a germ; cadduthadu[1], almost; a tree almost bearing.

"5. *Agay Ittadu.* Aga, a bud; ittadu, appeared; descriptive of the further growth of the tree.

"6. *Kadai vakchu.* Kadal, strength; vakchu, fixed, set; a tree that has attained its full strength.

"7. *Kai kaduthadu.* Kai, green or young fruit; Kaduthadu, almost.

1. To be correct, it must be *aduthadu*.

"8. *Kachu*, yielding; a tree bearing jacks.

"A jack tree, if properly attended to, will attain its eighth period in twelve years.

"The jenmkar may resume his paramba when the jacks are on the eve of producing, on paying their value and arye" [1].

4. **Mango.** The original of the word is Tamil *Man* + *Kay* = *Man* + fruit, the tree being '*Mamaram*'. In the Malayalam language the fruit is called *Manga* and the tree *mavu*. The English word is derived through the Portuguese who call it by the Malayalam term 'Manga'. The mango fruit has also attracted the attention of the mediaeval travellers who have left descriptions of it more or less apt. It would however be better to turn to Drury's *Useful Plants* to have a correct idea of the tree and its uses.

"The Mango is well known as the most delicious of Indian fruits. It is esteemed very wholesome and when unripe is much used in tarts, preserves, pickles, etc. There are many varieties all more or less having a peculiar turpentine flavour, though the best kinds are generally free from it. The kernels of the nut seemingly contain much nourishment, but are only used in times of scarcity, and famine, when they are boiled and eaten by the poorer classes. In the pulp of the fruit, there is sugar, gum, and citric acid; gallic acid has also been procured from the seed, and also stearic acid. Interesting experiments were made sometime ago, by a French chemist, upon the process of procuring the gallic acid, which he stated might be used in the preparation of ink instead of galls. Whenever the fruit is cut with a knife a blue stain is seen on the blade which is due to the presence of gallic acid. The timber is soft of a dull grey colour, porous, soon decaying if exposed to wet, but useful for common purposes. In large old trees the wood acquires a light chocolate colour towards the centre of the trunk and larger branches

1. Major Walker's *Land Tenures of Malabar*, pp. 20—21.

and is then hard, close grained and somewhat durable. The Mango tree is best propagated by grafting, though it will readily grow from seeds. In the latter case the seed must be sown soon after it is taken from the fruit, but the produce is so inferior, that it is hardly worth the trouble bestowed upon it. The wood burnt with sandal wood, is one of those used by the Hindus, for burning corpses, and is reckoned sacred for this purpose. The natives use the leaves as tooth brushes and the stalks instead of betel, for chewing—powdered and calcined, they employ the latter also to take away warts From wounds in the bark issues a soft reddish brown gum resin, hardening by age and much resembling Bdellium. Burnt in the flame of a candle it emits a smell like that of cashew-nuts when roasting. It softens in the mouth and adheres to the teeth and in taste is somewhat pungent and bitter. It dissolves entirely in spirit and partly so in water. Mixed with lime juice or oil, it is used externally in scabies and cutaneous affections. The bark of the tree is administered in infusion in menorrhagia and leucorrhoea, and the resinous juice mixed with white of egg, and a little opium, is considered a good specific on the Malabar coast for diarrhoea, and dysentery. The tender leaves mixed with the bark of the castor oil plant and cummin seed are used in decoction for coughs, asthma, and affections of the chest. An infusion of the young leaves is likewise prescribed occasionally by native practitioners in bilious affections. *Roxb. Journ. of As. Soc. Ainslie. Rheede Pers. obs., etc*" [1].

5. **Cashew-nut.** It is known in Malayalam as *Kasu* + *anti*, i. e., the nut of cashew. The latter term is said to be the S. American, *acajon*, of which an Indian form, *Kaju*, has been made. It is the fruit of an American tree which must have been introduced into Malabar by the Portuguese. The tree is known in the Malayalam language as *Parankimavu*, i. e., the *Ferenghi* mango tree, Ferenghi being used

1. P. 294.

to denote the Portuguese. The so-called fruit which is known also as *Gomanga* or the mango of Goa pointing to the introduction of it by the Portuguese, is but the fleshy top of the peduncle which bears the nut. We may extract the following account of the tree from Col. Drury's *Useful Plants of India*:

"Indigenous to the West Indies, but now common to Asia, Africa, and America. The fruit is subacid and astringent. The pericarp of the nut contains a black acrid oil, which owing to its caustic properties is often applied to floors or wooden rafters of houses to prevent the attacks of white ants. It requires however to be used cautiously. This oil is called Cardole, and is a powerfully vesicating agent. It is applied to warts, corns, ulcers, etc., but it is said that the vapour of the oil when roasting will produce violent swelling and inflammation. Martius says, 'The sympathetic effect of the nut borne-about the person upon chronic inflammation of the eyes, especially when of a scrofulous nature, is remarkable'. A transparent gum is obtained from the trunk of the tree, useful as a good varnish and making a fair substitute for gum Arabic. It should be collected while the sap is rising. It is particularly useful when the depredations of insects require to be guarded against. For this purpose it is used in South America by the book-binders, who wash their books with a solution of it in order to keep away moths and ants. The Kernels are edible and wholesome, abounding in sweet milky juice, and are used for imparting a flavour to Madeira Wine. Ground up and mixed with cocoa they make a good chocolate. The juice of the fruit expressed and fermented yields a pleasant wine, and distilled, a spirit is drawn from it making good punch. Rheede states that the juice expressed is given in diarrhoea and for the cure of diabetes. A variety of the tree grows in Travancore, and probably elsewhere, the perricarp of whose nuts has no oil, but may be chewed raw with impunity. The astringency of the

fruit juice has been recommended as a good remedy in dropsical habits. The tree flowers twice a year. The juice which flows from an incision in the body of the tree will stain linen so that it cannot be washed out. The bark of the tree is given internally in infusion for syphilitics wellings of the joints. It has been used for tanning in the West Indies. An edible oil equal to olive or almond oil is procured from the nuts, but it is seldom prepared, the kernels being used as a table fruit. The wood is of no value. *Lindley Pereira Don. Rheede Pers. obs.*"[1]

6. **Cinnamon.** In Malayalam it is known as *Karapu* or *Karuvapatta* and it is noteworthy that Ktesias the Knedian (B. C. 400) makes mention of Cinnamon under the name *Karpion* identified by Dr. Caldwell with the Tamil Malayalam word *Karappu*. Yule and Burnel observe that "there can be little doubt that this classical export (referring to the *Malabathrun* of the *Periplus* Pliny, etc.) from India was the dried leaf of various species of *Cinnamon* which leaf was known in Sanskrit as Tamālapaṭra * * * The ancients did no doubt apply the name *Malabathrum* to some other substance, and unguent or solid extract. Rheede, we may notice mentions that in his time in Malabar, oils in high estimation were made from both leaves and root of the wild cinnamon; of that coast and that from the root of the same tree a *camphor* was extracted having several of the properties of real camphor and more fragrance (See a note by one of the present writers in *Cathay* &c., pp. cxlv-xl)." They suggest that "the name Cinnamon is probably confined to the tree of Ceylon. The other *Cinnamon* are properly *Cassia barks*."

According to the *Periplus*, *Malabathrum* was carried from the interior to Mouziris (Cranganore) and Nilkanda (Kallada) for export. "The Cinnamon of Malabar" observes Yule "is what we call Cassia, the

1. P. 33.

canella grossa of Conti, the *canella brava* of the Portuguese. Notices of it will be found in *Rheede* (I. 107) and in *Garcia* (f. 26 *seqq*). The latter says the Ceylon Cinnamon exceeded it in value as 4: 1, Uzzano discriminates *canella* lunga *Salami*, and *Mabari*. The *Salami* I have no doubt, is *Sailani*, Ceylonese; and as we do not hear of any cassia from Mabar, probably the last was *Malabar* cinnamon." [1]

The Laurus Cassia grows in Canara and Malabar. The tree attains a height of 60 feet, has white flowers, and its inner bark produces a spice which though in flavour and taste similar too is coarser than cinnamon. [2]

Ibn Batuta, travelling in the 14th century by the water-way from Calicut to Quilon, notices the exuberant growth of the Cassia all along the line on the sea-coast. "All the trees (we saw) upon the banks of this river (Ibn is referring to the chain of lakes, rivers, and canals between Calicut and Quilon) as well as on the sea-shores, were those of the cinnamon and bakum, which constitute the fuel of the inhabitants and with this we cooked our food."[3] Marco Polo mentions the production of cinnamon in large quantities in his *Account of the Kingdom of Melebar*. [4]

As to the uses of the wild cinnamon, Drury observes that the seeds bruised and mixed with honey or sugar are given to children in dysentery and coughs, and combined with other ingredients in fevers. The leaves have a pleasant aromatic smell when bruised. The natives use the bark as a condiment in their curries. The tree is very common in the jungles on the Western Coasts and Travancore forests. But it is not cultivated to any appreciable extent. Mr. Brown seems to have tried it in North Malabar apparently without success. The

1. Marco Polo Vol. 2, pp. 390-1.
2. *Ancient Commerce of India*. Oppert, p. 38.
3. Lee's Tran: p. 174.
4. Vol. 2, p. 389.

English at Anjengo made an attempt to grow the real cinnamon. Forbes refers to this and points out the difference between the real cinnamon and the wild one. He says:—"*The Cassia* resembles the baytree, of which it is a species: it is called *Cassia lignea*, to distinguish it from the *lawrus-cinnamomum*, or tree cinnamon, to which it is very inferior: the finest Cassia sometimes possesses the peculiar properties of that valuable spice, but is in general of a coarser texture and less delicate flavour. The real cinnamon seems indigenous to Ceylon; there are some trees in the Company's gardens at Anjengo as a curiosity. The leaves of the Cassia are smaller than the laurel, and more pointed: those of cinnamon, still more delicate: the blossoms of both, like the flowers of the *arbutus*, hang in bunches, white and fragrant; the fruit resembles a small acorn: The young leaves and tender shoots are of a bright red, changing to green as they approach maturity: they taste of cinnamon, but the only valuable part of the tree, is the inner bark; which, being separated from the exterior is cut into pieces, and exposed to the sun, when it dries and curls up, and is packed in cases for foreign markets. The tree decaying on its being deprived of its bark, is cut down, and new shoots spring from the root; it is also raised from seed."

7. **Ginger.** Though our author omits to mention ginger [1] which was and still is a valuable article of export from Malabar, Marco Polo refers to its production. Along with pepper and turbit and the "nuts of India," he mentions also ginger as being produced in great quantity.

Ginger, though cultivated all over India, is best that is grown in Malabar, and from the name by which it was known to the Greeks, we may conclude that they procured it almost exclusively from Malabar. The Greeks

1 For the matter of that, he has left out other articles as well. See *Economic Conditions of Southern India*, 2 Vols. by Dr. A. Appadorai, M. A., Ph. D., Madras University Historical Series. Ed.

called it *Zingiber* and Burnell points out that it is derived from the Malayalam "*Inchi+ver*", i. e., *Inchi-root* or green ginger. Speaking of the Kingdom of Coilam (Quilon), Polo says "Good ginger also grows here, and it is known by the same name of *Coilumin* after the country." This is the colombine ginger which appears not unfrequently in medieval writers. The places of supply of ginger were Malabar, Cochin and Travancore.[1]

Yule has the following note on *Turbit*: "*Radex Turpethi* is still known in pharmacy, at least in some parts of the continent and in India, though in England it is obsolete. It is mentioned in the *Pharmacopoeia* of *India* (1868) as derived from *Ipomoea Turpethian*. But it is worthy of note that Ramusio has *cubebs* instead of *turbit*. The former does not seem now to be a product of Western India though Garcia says that a small quantity grew there, and a Dutch report of 1675 in Valentyn also mentions it as an export of Malabar".[2]

Regarding the exports from Malabar, it is worthy of note that, in the detail of 3 cargoes that arrived in Lisbon in September 1504, we find the following proportions: Pepper, 10,000 *cantars*; cinnamon, 500; cloves, 450; Z. Z. (*i. e.*, Zen Zaro, ginger), 130; lac and brazil, 730; camphor. 7; cubebs, 191; mace, $2\frac{1}{2}$; spikenard, 3; lignaloes, $1\frac{1}{3}$; (*Ibid.*)

8. **Coffee.** The English also tried to cultivate coffee. According to Forbes there were some thriving coffee plantations on the Island of Dharmapattanam near Tellicheri. The seed was originally brought from Mocha. It is said that Mr. Swaardekroon, a former Governor of Cochin, who was Governor-General of Batavia, from 1718 to 1725, procured the coffee from Mocha. Paoli mentioned it before 1790, as growing

1. Conti, *India* p. 6; Barbosa, *Account* II p. 92, Elliot, *History* I, p. 6; Jordanus *Wonders*, p. 27.

2. *V. Ceylon* p. 243. *Marco Polo* vol. 2, p. 391.

wild and that it was not cultivated as the natives attended to productions of more utility. Forbes points out that the Malabar coffee was inferior in flavour and refreshment to the Arabian berry. For some time coffee was cultivated to a large extent on the higher ranges in Cochin and Travancore. There were, and there are still many plantations on the Peermade hills in Travancore and on the Nelliampathies in the Cochin State. For a long time coffee cultivation was a paying concern, but of late it has failed considerably and has given place to tea and rubber.

9. **Animal life.** Most of the medieval travellers in Malabar have noticed its animals and birds, but by none so well as by Varthema. Speaking of them he says:—

"I ought not to omit explaining to you the many kinds of animals and birds, which are found in Calicut, and especially about the lions, wild hogs, goats, wolves, kine, buffaloes, goats and elephants (which however are not produced here, but come from other places) great numbers of wild peacocks, and green parrots in immense qualities, also a kind of red parrot. * * * * They sing extremely well. I saw also here another kind of bird, which is called *Sario*. They sing better than the parrots, but are smaller. There are many other kinds of birds here different from ours. I must inform you, that during one hour in the morning and an hour in the evening there is no pleasure in the world equal to that of listening to the song of these birds, so much so that it is like being in paradise, in consequence of there being such a multitude of trees and perpetual verdure, which arises from the circumstance that cold is unknown here, neither is there excessive heat. In this country a great number of apes are produced, one of which is worth four *Casse* and one *Casse* is worth a *quarterino*. They do immense damage to those poor men who make wine. These apes mount on the top of those nuts and drink that same liquor, and then they

overturn the vessel and throw away all the liquor they cannot drink".[1]

Forbes writing in the 18th century says:—"The animals in the southern provinces and mountainous regions of Malabar, are tigers, elephants, buffaloes, hogs, civet-cats, and a variety of monkeys and squirrels; some of the monkeys are large, and covered with black glossy hair, except a very full white beard and mustachios; which give them a venerable and almost human appearance. The wild buffalo is common in many parts of Travancore. I had never before been in a country where these animals were indigenous".[2]

Indeed there are no lions in Malabar now, and so far as can be ascertained there are no native records of any kind to show that the king of beasts had ever condescended to live in the Malabar forests. Writing in the latter half of the 18th century, Fra Bartolomeo says that "the lion is seldom seen in these countries." But long before Varthema we have the testimony of Marco Polo that there were lions in Malabar. Describing the country called Comari (Cape Comorin), the traveller observes: "This is a wild country, and there are beasts of all kinds there, especially monkeys of such peculiar fashion that you would take them for men! There are also *gatpuls* in wonderful diversity, with *bears*, *lions*, and leopards, in abundance.". The *gatpul* has been conjectured to be some kind of ape. Polo speaks of "*lions* black all over, with no mixture of any colour" in the kingdom of Coilam or Quilon, and again speaking of the kingdom of Ely, i. e., Kōlaṭṭiri or North Malabar, he says "there are many *lions*." So that in Polo's time throughout Malabar extending from

1. Pp. 172—173.

2. P. 222.

Fra Bartolomeo gives fuller details in the 9th Chapter of his *Voyage to the East Indies* entitled "Quadrupeds, Birds and Amphibious animals on the Coast of Malabar". P. 210. See also Day's *Land of the Perumal's* Chaps. 12 to 17.

the Kolattiri kingdom in the north to Cape Comorin in the south there were lions. Can it be that there were lions in Malabar once and that they have now become extinct? Black tigers and black leopards are not, however, very rare in Travancore. [1]

Polo's list of beasts of Malabar comprise the following:—Lions, monkeys, *gatpuls*, bears, leopards. The *gatpuls* are "in wonderful diversity while the bears, *lions*, and leopards are in abundance".

Of birds he says "there are parrots of many sorts, for some are as white as snow with red beak and feet, and some are red, and some are blue, forming the most charming sight in the world; there are green ones too. There are also some parrots of exceeding small size, beautiful creatures. They have also very beautiful peacocks, larger than ours, and different; and they have cocks and hens quite different from ours". He adds that "there are wild beasts here and plenty of game, both beast and bird". [2]

10. **Holy animals.** Among animals only the cow and among reptiles only the serpent are actually worshipped. There are of course other animals and reptiles regarded with reverence. Among birds the Brahmani Kite or *Garuda* is worshipped, while there are others such as the peacock and swan which are regarded with reverence. Here we may mention what animals and birds are appropriated as vehicles to the Hindu Gods and goddesses. *Brahma* and his daughter *Saraswati* have the *swan* or *goose*, while *Vishnu* has the *Garuda* or *eagle* or the *Brahmani Kite* which is actually worshipped. Of a pleasant evening or a fine morning it is usual to see people gathering on the seashore or the backwater side, especially on a Sunday to have a sight of the vehicle of Vishnu so that they may worship it. There are however no temples

1. See *Welsh's Mil. Rem.* Vol. 2, p. 102.

2. Vol. 2, pp. 375 to 386.

dedicated to it. *Siva's* vehicle is *Nandi*, a *white bull*. In Siva's temples it is represented, sometimes in stones, of vast dimensions, couchant. See the one at Suchindrum in Travancore. Sometimes it is also cast in brass. Large or small ones will be found always placed in front of the god on the *Mandapam* or the *Velikkappura* facing the fane. It is generally understood to be the personification of divine justice, which moves or conveys the avenging power of the Deity to the deserved punishment of mortals. Manu says:—"The divine form of justice is represented as *vrisha* or a *bull*; and the gods consider him who violates justice as a *vrishala* or one who slays a bull". [1] *Ganesa* or Gaṇapaṭi, the god of prudence and policy and who is invoked at the commencement of every ceremony, rides a *rat* supposed to be a very sagacious animal. The god himself is represented as elephant-headed and is the son of Śiva and Pārvaṭi. *Subramania* or Kārṭikēya, their second son, is mounted on a *peacock*. *Indra* rides the *elephant Ayravatam*, said to be white coloured with four tusks —a symbol of might. *Varuna* the god of the waters bestrides an *alligator*. *Ganga* the goddess of rivers has a *fish*; *Kama* the god of love is carried by a *parrot* and *Agni* god of fire by an *ardent ram*. The female divinities have generally the vehicles of their lords, though *Bhavani* is oftener represented as riding on a *lion* or tiger than on the bull, the vehicle of her lord Siva.

No sanctity is attached to the monkey as such. But Hanūman the monkey god is held in estimation as the faithful servant Rama the hero of the *Ramayana* and an incarnation of Vishnu. In Malabar there is no Malayali temple dedicated to Hanūman but there are images of him in the temples of Rama. At Ernakulam there is a temple dedicated to Hanūman, but it is not a Malayali temple having been founded by a late Maharatta Brahman

1. Ch. 8, Vol. 16.

Diwan of Cochin. The Malayalis however worship in the temple and make offerings to the god.

11. **Cow's tail.** We have already referred to the merit ascribed to the gift of a cow. It is called a *godanam* or *pasudanam*. The gift of even the value of a cow is deemed meritorious. How much more of a milch-cow and its calf. Such gift is called *Pratyaksha pasudanum*, i.e., the gift of a cow which is present. Its horns and hoofs and tail are adorned with gold ornaments. It is made to wear a *yagnopavitam* or sacred thread. The calf is also adorned with similar ornaments. Both wear garlands of flowers on the neck. Many appropriate ceremonies attend the donation finishing with the following prayers. When the gift is made at a *Sradha*, during the recital cf the *mantra*, the acceptor holds the sacred animal by the tail and the donor holds the cord tied round the animal's neck. This is a free rendering of the *mantra*, after the recitation of which the cow is delivered to the donee.

"1. May the goddess, who is the Lakshmi of all beings, and resides among the gods, assume the shape of a milch-cow and procure me comfort.

"2. May the goddess, who is Rudrani in a corporeal form, and who is beloved of Siva, assume the shape of a milch-cow and procure me comfort.

"3. May she, who is Lakshmi reposing on the bosom of Vishnu; she, who is the Lakshmi of the regent of riches, she who is the Lakshmi of Kings, be a boon-granting cow to me.

"4. May she, who is the Lakshmi of Brahma; she, who is Swaha, the wife of fire; she, who is the exerted power of the suh, moon and stars, assume the shape of a milch-cow for my prosperity.

"5. Since thou art Swadha, the food of them who are the chief among the manes of the aucestors, and Swaha, the consuming power of them, who eat solemn sacrifices, therefore, being the cow that expiates every sin, procure me comfort.

"6. I invoke the goddess, who is endowed with the attributes of all the gods who confers all happiness, who bestows abodes in all the worlds, for the sake of all people.

"7. I pray to that auspicious goddess for immortality and happiness."

It will be observed from the above prayers that it is not the cow, as such, that is venerated and invoked but that the prayers are offered to the goddess who is supposed to be represented by the cow. Much as she is venerated and worshipped, there is no temple for her anywhere.

12. **Purifications.** The urine of the cow is held sacred and go to form along with other products of the cow the *panchagavya*, i. e., the five gifts of the cow: milk, curds, butter, urine and dung used for purificatory purposes. For certain caste offences the Nampūṭiris prescribe for food rice boiled in *panchagavyam*.

It is not mere superstitious veneration for the cow that makes the people use the cow-dung for cleaning floors, walls, etc. Neither is it that they believe, as our author conceives, "that the evil spirit cannot make his way over it to do them harm". Medieval travellers have noticed the custom of smearing the floors of houses with cow-dung, at least once a week if not oftener, not only in Malabar, but throughout India. Earthen floors are rubbed with cow-dung mixed up with as much water as will render it easy to spread. It makes the floor clean and is at the same time a disinfectant. The smell quickly goes off, and no floor is so cool and comfortable, nor so obnoxious to fleas and vermin. In former days even the floors of the splendid habitations of Europeans used to be rubbed with cow-dung. A European writer of 50 years of age remarks; "This pleasant and salutary article is falling into disuse with the English, who in their habitations and habits, are departing from the sober dictates of nature, and the obedient usages of the natives". With the Hindus the dictates of religion also call upon them to use cow-dung. It is plastered over the cooking place before the meals are cooked. Before any ceremony is performed the place to be used for the purpose is purified by smearing it with cow-dung. The ashes of cow-dung are also

held to be of a very purifying nature and all classes of people, both men and women, use it every day for marking their foreheads, necks, arms, etc.

13. **Snakes.** Malabar is *par excellence* the land of snakes, the *Ahi Desa* of the Sanskrit writers, identified with the *Aiouram Regio* of Ptolemy by Wilson. From one end of the country to the other, from the plateau of the ghauts on the east to the sea on the west, the land is infested by these venemous reptiles. Not content with loitering about the gardens, they at times enter houses. On the window sill, at the door steps, on the kitchen hearth, under the blanket on your bed—and strange it may seem even in the pocket of your coat—they are seen either slyly moving about or coolly enjoying their coiled repose. They sneak into all imaginable parts of the house and, if accidently trodden on, are sure to bite, and the consequence is dreadful. If left unmolested, they glide by without venturing to attack any one. If they are fed, they get tamed and will return to the same house every day to receive their food, but, if in any way molested, they do not hesitate to turn round and bite the hand that fed them. They are averse to strong scents just as they are amenable to music. Fumes of sulphur will generally cause them to leave a place. So also the smell of any plant emitting a strong disagreeable scent. They shun the smell of asafoetida. The pleasant odour and flavour of the pine-apple is said to attract them.

There are land snakes and water snakes and many varieties of both. Mr. Bourdillon, late of the Travancore Forest Department, has collected 56 species of land snakes to be found in Travancore. He says that there are also 9 species of sea snakes to be found on the coast. Of the latter, 8 are said to be poisonous and may be recognised by their compressed and flattened oar-like tails, the ninth *Chersydrus gramilatus* is to be met with at the mouth of the rivers. It is harmless and may be recognised by

its tail, which is round like that of the land snakes. All these entirely live in water. Of the 56 land snakes 9 only are poisonous. The bite of only four of these is absolutely fatal to man. These are (1) *Nallapampu* the cobra (*Naia tripudians*), (2) *Karinchathi* or *Karinagam*, the Hamadryad (*Nia bungarus*), (3) *Ettativariyan*, the Krait (*Bungarus caruleus*), and (4) *Anali* the Russel's viper (*Vipera russelli*). These are to be met with in the low country. The other five are only to be found on the hills at considerable elevations. Two of them *Callophis nigrescens* and *Callophis bibronii* are handsome snakes; the first is pale reddish brown with 5 black longitudinal bands. It is only to be found on the Kannan Devan Hills in North Travancore; the other is cherry red with black transverse bands above. It is very rare and has only been found elsewhere in the Wynad. The remaining 3, *Ancistrodon hypnale* (Mal. *Kattumanali*), *Trimeresurus anamallensis* (Mal. *Pachchamanali*) and *Trimeresurus Macrolepis* belong to the family of the Pit-vipers, so called from the presence of a deep pit on each side of the snout between the eye and the nostril. Their poison glands are much smaller than those of the Russel viper, and their bite does not produce death in man and large animals. Among the non-poisonous ones, Mr. Bourdillon mentions, besides the above 3, the rat snake *Zamenis Muconis* (Mal. Chēra) the *Lycodon aulicus*, the *Lycodon travancoricus*, (Mal. Puratta). The last 2 are coloured somewhat like the Krait, brown or black with white cross bands, and are often found in houses. There are certain tree snakes of the genus *Dispsas* (Mal. Marappāmbu) one of which is not uncommon in the low country, the *Dipsus trigonata*. It is not to be confounded with Russel's Viper. Both have broad flattened heads and lines more or less of a chain pattern on the back, but the viper (Mal. Viriyanpāmbu) can easily be discriminated by the fact that its body is thick and suddenly tapers off

into a very short tail, whereas the *Dipsas* has a thin body tapering gradually into a long tail.[1]

Fra Bartolomeo mentions the following snakes as found in Malabar in his time:—

1. The Nallapāmba or the beautiful snake. He says that this was the commonest though not the most poisonous snake in Malabar. "It has", says he, "hanging round its neck two pieces of skin, which shine like a pair of spectacles, and which it can extend over its head like a hood or cap. Of this snake there are several varieties. One has a complete cap at both sides of the head, and is called *Padamullavan* (Mal. one that has the hood); another is furnished with the cap only on one side and is called *Ottapadavan* (Mal. one that has only one hood); a third kind has a complete cap but is much smaller than the other two and is the most poisonous of all." This he calls the *Caytolaurungni*. It is also known as *Kytolapampu* and *Kytolamoorkkan*. "When these snakes attack a man, or fight with the Kirei" (mongoose) continues Bartolomeo, "they raise themselves up in a perpendicular direction; turn round on their tail, whistle, move the upper part of their body from side to side, and in that manner endeavour to wound their antagonist. Some of these snakes are from 3 to 4, others from 6 to 8 palms in length." A person bit by it is said to die in 3 or 4 hours : but this depends on the place where the wound has been inflicted, "whether in any of the nobler parts of the body from which the poison is conveyed sooner to the heart. * * * * The natives of Malabar generally employ the *Alpam* (*Bragantia wallichi*) root and pulverised *Amelpori*; they also bind up the wounded part, and cauterise the wound with a red hot iron."

2. The *Vellikettan* or *Vallumi*. This is described as a poisonous snake called by the Europeans the ringed snake as it has several white rings round its body.

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review* vol. 2, p. 292 *et seq.*

"It is, however, only two palms in length, and as thick as the finger, but exceedingly poisonous. People, therefore, cannot be too much on their guard against this animal, for it enters sitting apartments, and creeps not only under tables and chairs, but even under the beds."

3. The *Anali* (Gundert, Viper also *Analipampu*).

4. The *Mandali* is described as the spotted snake. Dr. Gundert describes it as a snake generally coiled up, and refers to various varieties of it. The large kind is not venomous. Those that are dreaded are *Chora* or *Rudhira* or *Rakta Mandali* whose bite produces sweat of blood ; less poisonous are, according to the Verāpuḻay Dictionaries, *Chenathandam*, *Payyani* or *Payyana Mandali*, *Uppu Mandali*, *Thavittu Mandali*, *Mannu Mandali*, *Neer Mandaali* and *Madana Mandali*,

The *Rudhiramandali* is described by Bartolomeo as the most dangerous of all the Malabar serpents. He quotes the following lines of Luccan as describing the dreadful effects of its poison.

"Deeply the fierce *Hoemorrhois* imprest
Her fatal teeth on Tullus' valiant breast:
The noble youth, with virtue's love inspir'd,
Her, in her Cato follow'd and admired ;
Mov'd by his great example, vow'd to share,
With him, each chance of that disastrous war.
And as when mighty Rome's spectators meet
In the full theatre's capacious feat,
At once, secret pipes and channels fed,
Rich tinctures gush from every antique head ;
At once ten thousand saffron currents flow,
And rain their odours on the crowd below;
So the warm blood at once from every part
Ran purple poison down, and drain'd the fainting heart;
Blood falls for tears, and o'er his mournful face
The ruddy drops their tainted in passage trace:
Where'er the liquid juices find a way,

There streams of blood, their crimson rivers stray;
His mouth and gushing nostrils pour a flood.
And even the pores ooze out the trickling blood;
In the red deluge all the parts lie drown'd;
And the whole body seems one bleeding wound."[1]

No remedy has ye t been discovered for the bite of this venomous reptile.

5. *Polavan.* This is a very venomous snake the body of which is covered with tumours and postules. It is found in fresh water. Those who are bit by it sweat blood. It oozes from the body in drops, whereas in the case of those bit by *Rudhiramandali* blood runs from the body as boiling water from a kettle placed over a fire. It is also known as *Nirazhantha.* There are varieties of it called *Ettati Pulavan*, *Payyani Pulavan*, etc.

6. *Karuwaila.* It is a large jungle snake. Bartolomeo describes it as having "on its head 3 knobs or excrescences, which form a comb; and 3 red rings round its neck. It is an ell in length, and of a shining black colour, as far as the eyes, which are of a fiery red and sparkle with savage wildness. It is said that it can kill people merely by its look; and if it be true, it may with propriety be called the Malabar Basalisk. It is found not here but in the Ghauts, from which it never descends unless when swept down by the rains.

7. *Cancutti* is the green whip snake which generally makes a spring at the eyes. It is also called *Pachchila* or *Pachchali pampu* because of its green colour. It seldom attacks men. It is often caught and killed as it is considered a good remedy for headaches, when bound round a person's temples.

8. The *Ettatimurkkan* always contracts itself together and then springs forward 8 paces, hence its being so called in Malayalam.

1. Rowe's Translation, Book IX. V.1366.

10. The *Cerattapamba*, that is the springing snake. It is of a small size, perfectly white; always holds its head erect, and when it moves, forms its body into a bow. Bartolomeo observes that he found these on the mountains of Malayāṭṭur where he says they conceal themselves under the fallen leaves. It is shrewdly suspected by some if these are really snakes.

10. *Tevi* is a small beautiful striped snake of a brownish colour which hurts nobody. It is perfectly innocuous, so much so that there is a Malayar saying *Thevi Katichal Antikette Choru Muttum*, i. e., the bite of *Tevi* will only prevent one taking his supper. It is of common occurrence that when one of these is killed a number of the same species resort to the place and remain in the neighbourhood till their dead companion is removed. Bartolomeo records an instance of it at the Seminary at *Ambazhekattu* in the presence of at least 30 persons. The incident is of frequent occurrence in localities where these snakes are found in large numbers.

11. *Malapambu* or *Perumpampu* is the Rock snake, Python Molurus, Gray. It is found in the Ghauts, is altogether of a dark brown colour, grows to a very large size, from 30 to 40 feet in length, and as thick as a fed ox. It has no teeth; but it devours dogs, deer, cows and other animals, which it seizes by twisting itself round their bodies. It ventures to crush within its coils even the tiger. It is supposed that its fat is a sure remedy for leprosy.

12. The *Irutalakuszali* is a snake with 2 heads. Bartolomeo says that, however incredible it may seem, M. Rosier, the Commandant at Quilon, showed him two snakes of this kind, which he had preserved in a glass jar. He saw one of them in 'the Malayāṭṭur mountains.' He says "it is a palm or a palm and a half in length; has the colour of withered leaves; and does not, like other snakes, creep straight forwards, but always rears one of its heads, and makes an arch with its body when

it moves. Its bite always occasions a tumour filled with venom; but the poison acts very slowly, so that it is seldom or never too late to apply a remedy." Dr. Day points out that "it is a species of *Amphisboena*, which is believed to be able to progress equally well either backwards or forwards, and is generally said to have a head at each end of its body, the appearance and markings about the tail being so very similar to those of the head".

To the above may be added those noticed by Dr. Day and are outside Bartolomeo's list.

The *Coombaree Mookan*. It is described as a long thin snake like a whip. Dr. Day observes that it has obtained its name of branch climbing *moorkhan* "from the belief, that it is the incarnated spirit of a departed enemy, or some demon employed by an enemy for the destruction of an adversary. After having bitten a person it is said to climb into a tree, and creep to the extreme end of a branch, where it most attentively watches the ground on which bodies are burnt. If it perceives an incremation taking place, it is supposed that its malevolence is appeased, as it labours under the belief that its venom has effected the object it had in view. On the other hand, should no smoke arise from the burning place, it is believed that at some future date, it will renew its attempt, on the object of its malevolence." It is a pity that Dr. Day has not vouchsafed to us his authority for this story. He records it perhaps on the principle that any snake story is good to be perpetuated.

Chera. Coryphodon Blumenbachi—It is a common harmless snake of an olive colour. There are also black coloured ones among them. They are frequently seen near moist places, in paddy fields, and often, as the monsoon sets in, by the side of public roads. It grows to a very large size. It hits its captors with its tail, and wounds so inflicted, are said to be very difficult to cure. This is the rat snake.

Apart from attempting to propitiate the serpents as demi-gods, the Malabar people have also tried to find cures for their bite. Malabar snake doctors profess to possess an effective cure for the most virulent of snake poisons. But, in the most serious cases of cobra-bite, there does not appear to be any special medicine used, and it is not physicians generally who treat such cases. The cure is effected by an extraordinary process which has to be characterised as miraculous, if it is true. It consists in extracting the poison by some psychic means, or in the last resort, by getting the snake that inflicted the wound to return and repeat the bite and withdraw the poison. It is not possible for one who has not been an actual eye witness to these cures to vouch for their truth, but it is not all who are privileged or fortunate to be present at cases treated in this manner. There are however a very large number of cases reported and men of the highest intelligence, veracity, integrity and honour can give their testimony on the point. They must either be all deluded or must be intentionally uttering a deliberate falsehood; neither of which is likely. It would be safer therefore to say that one should try to exhaust every means to find out the truth and should assume a neutral attitude before condemning the whole thing as a pure myth or fraud.

In Malabar it is not the ordinary physician that practices the art. *Vishavydiam* or the art of relieving one from the evil effects of poisons is the work of a special class of physicians. There are several works, some in Sanskrit and others in Malayalam, dealing with the subject and the study of them is not open to all. Those who undertake the study have to undergo a course of hard training under the guidance of a *guru* who would impart to the disciple the secrets of his art only on his being well satisfied that the disciple is worthy of the privilege he seeks and he would employ his learning to the benefit of humanity and not for filthy lucre. Seven

or eight treaties bearing on the subject may be mentioned here, viz., *Narayaniyam*, *Uddesam*, *Ulpalam*, *Haramekhala*, *Lakshanamritam*, *Ashtanga-hrydam*, *Kalavanchakam*.

Of these, the Malabar *Vishavaidyans* follow generally the *Narayaniyam* and *Lakshanamritam*, though another treatise called *Jolsnika* has also a fair following. *Narayaniyam* which is in old Malayalam is the most important of the treatises. No counterpart in Sanskrit has hitherto been met with. It sets out with a classification of snakes into four *Varnas* and eight *Vamsas* and thence into a hundred and eight varieties. One or two stanzas may be quoted as specimen:

"*Anantho Gulikaschaiva*
Vasukee Sankhapalakow
Thakshakastha Mahapadma
Padma Karkodaka Sthatha.

Of *Moorkhas* 26—*Moorkhanmar Irupatharu*
Of *Mandalis* 60—*jati Mandali Shoadasam*
Of *Rajilam* 13—*Rajilam Pathimmoonunoau*
Of *Viyanthiran* 21—*Moovazhuntoo Viyanthiran.*"

There are three separate departments of the science of *Vishavaidyam*, viz., (1) that which teaches the means of foreseeing what is coming on, *Dootha Lakshanam*, (2) that which deals with cures for poison by medicines, *Oushadha* and (3) that which deals with the method of curing snake bites, etc., by means of *Mantram* and *Tantram*.

In no case does a Vishavaidyan or snake doctor go to his patient; the patient is always brought to him, and he forecasts by signs which he observes that a case of snake bite is being brought to him. He determines by these signs as well as by an examination of the wound, the nature of the wound inflicted, the class of snake that has bitten the patient, its dimensions, the time that has elapsed since the bite, the condition of the

patient, the possibility and probability of a successful attempt at cure, etc. The day of the week, the hour of the day, the exact point of the compass at which the messenger who precedes the patient stands when he announces that there is a case for the doctor's attention, the direction from which he comes, his age and caste, the exact words in which the announcement is made,—all these and many others afford the *Vishavydian* basis for forecasting the result. He sometimes refuses to respond when his aid is invoked on the ground that it will be of no use, the patient having already died, and this although he has not seen him. A remarkable instance of this is given by Mr. H. M. Brown. He says:—"When I was in Cavvoye (North Malabar) some years ago, an extraordinary case came under my notice, which may be cited here. Towards dusk, one evening two Tiyyas who were within about a hundred yards of my camp, happened to come upon a snake, and both declared they had been bitten. One of them certainly had a wound on his foot, and relatives and friends arriving, he was quickly put on a litter to be taken to a famous physician living in a neighbouring village. His brother ran on ahead to inform the physician of the fact, and to give him time to make the necessary arrangements. On reaching the man's gate, he saw the physician coming towards him. He stopped him, and before a word could be spoken, the physician said:—"You can go back. It is of no use. Your brother has died on the way". This really did happen, for I was interested in the matter and went with the man who was bitten, and heard what the brother reported on returning. I know this little episode will raise a smile in some quarters, but I cannot help it."[1]

Another writer in the same *Journal* speaking of Raja Raja Varma Koil Tampuran of Chemproor, Travancore, an adept in the art of snake bite cure observes. "Cases from far and near are brought to him.

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1, p. 916.

And rare indeed are the cases in which he has not been able to bring about a cure. He has attained to such perfection in his art that he is said to feel a sort of premonition that a case would be brought to him at a particular hour. I have been informed that he sits up of nights betimes in expectation of a call. Very lately there was an instance that came within my personal observation. That was a case from Kumaranalloor, a distance of over thirty miles. The party arrived by canoe at night; and then at the landing-ghaut was our Tampuran's servant in waiting, to direct them to return, as the subject would have died by the way. And true enough, on examination it was found that life had ebbed out."[1] Such premonitions are based on principles set forth in a small treatise in verse called *Dootha Lakshanam*.

There are many instances of this kind vouched for by men of the utmost veracity and respectability. After having determined by means of signs (*Dootha Lakshanam*) the nature of the case, the treatment of the patient is proceeded with. For the purpose of determining the nature and course of treatment necessary in each case, the *Vishavydian* has to find out the class to which the snake that inflicted the wound belongs. His science as we have seen divides the snake-world into four classes and these correspond with the four Hindu castes. The higher the class the lesser the chance of attacking human beings and the greater the difficulty of effecting cures when attacked. In simple cases medicine alone will be sufficient, in more serious ones medicines and *Tantrams* have to be resorted to, and in the most serious cases the cure is effected by *mantram* alone. To invite the snake that inflicted the wound to return and to induce it by force of *mantrams* to repeat the bite and withdraw the poison is the highest and the very last attempt that the *Vishavydian* would venture. It is said that if he succeeds

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. 8, p. 139.

in inducing the snake to withdraw the poison, the victim is saved but it is destruction to the snake which generally dies. After the snake has withdrawn the poison, it generally falls into a stupor and is thrown into a vessel filled with milk and water in which some antidote is dissolved and in the course of a few hours it may recover. *Vishavaidyans* who are able to accomplish this last feat are very scarce now. It is the common belief that the serpents as demi-gods spent their anger on the *Vishavaidyans* for depriving them of their victims and that the *Vishavaidyans* therefore do not prosper. *Vishavaidyans* never accept any remuneration for their work. It is one of the cardinal principles inculcated to them by their *Guru* that they should never practice the art for 'filthy lucre'. They are solemnly enjoined to work gratis for the cause of humanity. Hence those who study the science and practice the art are few, very few indeed.

In the purely *mantric* process, which is also known as Dhyāna, the *Vishavaidyan* does not require even the presence of the patient. He only wants to know the particulars of the name, age and star of nativity of the subject. He lights a lamp and begins to chew betel and recite his *mantras*, when little by little the poison declines. The treatise referred to above Kālavanchakam—literally cheating death—is based on Dhyāna exclusively. Of *mantrams* the *Garuda Thrayakshara* and *Panchakshara* are the most important.

The *Tantra* process is equally interesting. *Tantra* means 'making displays with the hand and other organs' A plantain sheath or other substitute is cut to the probable length and figure of the snake, laid on the wound, and stabbed or cut up according to "the taste and fancy of the Bhishak" (Doctor). It is alleged that the snake which actually bit the subject would have felt the stabs, and that, on proper search, it might be found with the identical marks on its body.

Often-times, a cock or a hen is brought and the tip of its anus placed in contact with the wound. Sometimes the fowl is pricked about the leg, a little blood drawn, and the pricked part placed in contact with the snake-bitten wound. Of course the "all-essential" *mantras* are not omitted. The fowl, it is said, draws the poison to itself and the man recovers.[1]

Now to come to medicines: The following are a few prescriptions selected out of a large number said to be useful in all cases of snake poisons. But it is always safe to go to a doctor when one is available.

(1) Take equal quantities of the leaf, flower, and root of *Doemia extensa* (vēliparaṭṭi—Mal.), grind them well in cow's milk and take it. It is an effective cure for the poison of all snakes.

(2) Grind the root of *Indigofera tinctoria* (Amari —Mal.) and mix it with either cow's milk or the clear water (Kāti—Mal.) in which rice has been washed and kept till it ferments, take it within and apply the same to the wound.

(3) Grind *Cheru Cheera* (Mal.) and the root of *Indigofera tinctoria* (Amari—Mal.) in equal quantities and use as above.

(4) Grind together equal quantities of *Physalis flexuosa* (Amukiram—Mal.), turmeric (Mañjal—Mal.), the bark of *curcuma xanthorrehza* (Maramañjaṭṭoli—Mal.), and *Cheru Cheera* (Mal.) dissolve the same either in cow's milk or in pure water and take it within.

(5) Grind together pepper, long pepper (Tippali—Mal.), asafoetida (Kāyam—Mal.) in the juice of the Tumpa (Mal.) plant, *Phlomis* or *Leucas Indica* and apply the same to the eyes and through the nostrils.

(6) Grind together *Acorus calamus* (Vayampu-Mal.), *Indigofera tinctoria*, dried ginger (Chukku—Mal.), Pepper (kuru-mulaku- Mal.) long pepper, sandal wood Chandanam—Mal.) in equal quantities in the juice of the

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. 8, p. 141.

root of the Kaḍali (Mal.) *Musa sapientum*. Take it within, also apply it to the wound.

(7) Take in your hands a few leaves of *Helicteres Isora* (Eāswara mulla—Mal.) and some asafoetida and bruise them together well and with the palms stop for a while the mouth and the nostrils of the patient. If this is repeated three times, the severest of snake poisons even will be cured.

(8) Take a few leaves of *Calatropis gigantia* (Erikku—Mal.) and an equal weight of either asafoetida or rocksalt (Inthuppu—Mal.), dissolve them well in the patient's urine. This should be taken within and applied to the wound.

(9) Grind some fruits of *Strychnos Potatorum* (Ṭettāmparal—Mal.), mix it with water, dip in it a clean piece of white cloth, then dry the cloth; do this ten times successively, then put the piece of cloth in some gingely oil and squeeze it well in the oil. The oil may be poured into nostrils of the patient who will soon revive from the swoon caused by the poison.

(10) Grind some *Acorus Calamus*, asafoetida and well cleaned pepper in the juice of the betel leaf and pour it into the nostrils and apply the same to the eyes.

(11) Take a few ripe leaves of *Calatropis gigantea* and some asafoetida, bruise them well together and take the juice and pour it into the nostrils of the patient. This is said to be a nostrum which should always be kept a profound secret.

(12) Pluck the root that goes northwards of *Tabernoemontana coronaria* (Naṇṭiārvattam—Mal.) at the three stages of an eclipse, at its commencement, in the middle and in the end. Keep them separate, ground into the form of pills. When the patient takes the first pill formed of the root plucked at the commencement, the effects of the poison will begin to increase; the second will cause stupor and the third pill

will destroy the poison and cure the patient. The *Guru*, preceptor, would enjoin on his disciple never to make use of the first pill.

(13) In the same way pluck the five parts of *Mimosa Siresha* (Nenmēni vāka-Mal.), without the contact of iron, i e, leaves, bark, flowers, fruits and roots, on the fifth day of the black or waning moon. Take equal quantities of these; grind them either in cow's or goat's urine for three successive days, form them into pills of the size of *zizyphus jujuba* (Elanthi—Mal.) fruits and dry them in the shade. These pills may be taken inside, applied to the wound and also used for application in the eyes and through the nostrils.

(14) Grind together equal quantities of *Acorus calamus*, asafoetida; *Allium Sativum*. (Vĕllulli—Mal.) with the outer rind peeled of, dried ginger, pepper and long pepper in water in which rice has been washed and kept till it ferments, form it into pills and dry them in the shade. This is an effective cure for all sorts of poisons.

(15) Grind together equal quantities of mercury and the seeds of (*Neervalam* -Mal.)—*Croton tiglium* in the juice of the bitter gourd (*Peychura*.—Mal.) form it into pills and dry them in the shade. These pills are a sure remedy for all poisons.

(16) Take in equal quantities bezoar—*Torenia cordifolia* (Gōrōchanam—Mal.), rock salt-pepper, long pepper, borax, Nirvesi (Mal.), *Physalis flexuosa*, asafoetida, the bark of *Curcuma xanthorrahza*, dried ginger, *Acorus*, *Calamus*, *Pinus longifolia*, mercury, *Garudapacha* (Mal) sandal, the root of the *Karlayam* (Mal.), *Nila garudapacha* (Mal.), gallnut, pepper, the blade of the *Agrostis lincaris* (Karuka-Mal), the root of the *Perinkurumpa* (Mal.); grind these well for three days in lime juice, form it into pills of the size of the seed of the *Abrus preatorius* (Kunnikuru—Mal.), dry them in the shade. This pill is known as *Taruna Bhaskaram*, an effective remedy in all cases of poison.

As to the method of using some of these medicines, as already observed, they are poured into the nostrils and blown in. In exceptional cases, it is said an incision is made in the head, a globule of medicine inserted and the incision closed up. A coarse saucer is next placed over the covered-up wound, and a stream of scalding medicated oil poured in till the subject sweats in every pore and recovers (or succumbes which perhaps is most likely). A piece of burning charcoal was sometimes placed on the head of the subject. Instances of the bitten part, if a finger or toe, being burnt up is quite an ordinary occurrence. Suffocation too was practised as a cure, the subject being held under water. Some of these methods cannot now be pursued as the *Vishavaidyan* is likely to be caught in the meshes of the Criminal law.

We may now turn to another class of medicines, viz.. those which secure immunity from snake bite.

(1) Take the gum of the fruit of *strychnos. N. V.* by squeezing it, dry it in the sun for seven days. Add half in weight of this to equal quantities of *Acorus Calamus*, good asafoetida, the root of *methonica superba* (mēthōṅṅi—Mal.), powder them all for 3 days, take a fourth of the powder, add to it *Somanadi Kayam* (Mal.), a kind of asafoetida, grind it for three days in the milk of *Euphorbia antiquorum* and preserve it in a cocoanut shell. If you smear both your hands with this powder, you can safely catch any snake with your hands; it will not bite. This may also be used for application through the nostrils and to the wound inflicted by the snake.

(2) Grind well in water in which rice has been washed and left to ferment, equal quantities of the bark on the root of *Hyperanthera Moringa*, *Acorus Calamus Somanadi Kayam* (Mal.), dried ginger, pepper, long pepper, the root of *Indegofera tinctoria*. Smear your hands with this compound and you can safely catch any snake, it will not bite. This may be used for external

application and for fumigation. It may also be taken inside.

(3) Grind well the root of *Karlayam* (Mal.) which has sprouted from the foot or stump of *strychnos N. V.* and which grows winding round that tree and smear your hands with it and you can catch with perfect safety any snake; it will not open its mouth or bite.

(4) No snake will bite a man while chewing equal quantities of dried ginger, pepper, long pepper, and the root of *Karlayam* (Mal.). Even if it bites, its poison will not have any evil effect.

(5) If you hold in your hand the kernal of the seed of *strychnos N. V.*, that has sprouted at its foot and stands drooping, with the sprout removed, you can catch any snake with that hand with perfect safety. If one wears this enclosed in a ring or bracelet, it will secure immunity from snake-bite. It may also be applied to a wound inflicted by a snake.

(6) If you pluck the root of the best pepper-vine (*Karuvalli*-Mal.) that grows in a place that has in no way any contact with water, and show it to a snake, it will run away. If you place it at the mouth of a snake hole, the snake will not enter it. If the snake is inside the hole and you thrust the root into it, the snake will die. The root may be used for external application and may also be taken inside.

(7) Pluck the root of *Euphorbia antiquorum* that goes northwards, on a Sunday in the month of Karkadagam (July—August), no iron touching it, enclose it in a ring or (Elass-Mal.) waist ornament, and wear it on your person, and you secure immunity from snake-bite.

(8) If you wear on your finger a ring enclosing the root of *Malayamukki* (Mal.) plucked, with no iron touching it, no snake will bite you even if you tread on it.

(9) If you sprinkle a mixture of cardamoms well

ground in water, in which rice is washed and left to ferment, snakes will leave the place.

(10) If you fumigate a snake infested place with *Allium sativum* chillies, asafoetida and the leaves of the orange tree, the snakes will leave the place at once

14. **Serpents esteemed sacred.** Malabar is the stronghold of serpent worship. Though the serpent cult is part of modern Hindu religion, nowhere is serpent worship practised to such a pronounced extent as in Malabar unless it be in parts of Northern India.[1]

1. The following references to Nagas, the progenitors of Nayars, & to the naga-worship (the worship of the serpents) will be found useful for further research. (*Report of the Jenmi-Kudiyan Committee* of Travancore, pp. 21—27; *Aryamanjusrimulakalpa*, *An Imperial History of India* by Mr. K. P. Jayaswal pp. 26—7; p. 32; p. 47; pp.76—7; *Bharatam*, I—43; XVIII—5; VIII—44—2066; *Vishnu Purana*, IV, 6—12; *Markandeya* 121—131; *Harivamsa*, 191—2; *Mahavamsa*, ch. 1, p. 5; Tennent's *History of Ceylon*, Vol. 1. p. 331. The *Brahui Language* by Sir Denis Bray, pp. 1, 7, 15, 16, 17.) The Nagas one finds all over the habitable globe in ancient times. Basgue and Brahui races are off-shoots of the Naga stock. They, the Nagas, were in India long prior to the *Ramayana* period. After the Mahabharata War, the Nagas grew more powerful than before, and established themselves in Takshasila. Parikshit was killed by the Nagas. After the fight with the Heyhayas near the Narmada, one set went to Assam, and the other came to Kerala. Parasurama in his fight with the Kshetriyas was helped by the Nagas, though his first colonists were repulsed from Kerala by the Nagas. *Mahavamsa* says that several parts of the South India were under the Nagas.

On a careful perusal of the works noted above, one can see that the solar and the lunar races were related to the Nagas. 'The Yadavas and the Pauravas (including Pandavas and Kouravas) were descended from Yayati, son of Nahusha, son of Kadru, the serpent-mother.' 'Aryaka, the Naga chief, was the grand-father of Sura, father of Vasudeva (father of Krishna) and of Kunti.' Ravana was a Naga Raja, and Indrajit, his son, had the device of a golden serpent on his banner like Duryodhana. Indra's charioteer, Malathi, had his daughter, Gunakesi, married to Naga Sumukha. Agastya, the Tamil Saint, is a grandson of Brahma,

There may not be in Malabar as many temples as in other parts of India dedicated to the serpent, but in no part of India will be seen people who, in the words of our author, "keep a bit of their gardens partitioned off in honour of them, and for the chance of their arrival." "A good snake shrine" writes Mr. J. D. Rees in the *Ninteenth Century and after* for 1904 "is as much an attraction in the case of a house on the Malabar Coast as a garden is in the case of a villa at Hampstead or Harrow." And why? Because every Malabar household feels the necessity of obeying the unalterable injunction of Kerala's hero-saint, Paraśu Rāma, to propitiate the serpents. The tradition is thus related in the *Keralolpathi*. After the peopling of Malabar by Paraśu Rāma, the first colonists abandoned it and ran back to their own country, because of the incessant attacks of the *Nagas* (serpents), denizens of the lower regions known in popular language as *Naga-lokam* or Pāṭāḷam, who had taken possession of Kēraḷa and settled there. The colonists, being induced to return after some time, were resisted by the Nāga occupants, whereupon a fierce fight ensued between them. Parasu Rama intervened and arbitrated between his own people and the Nāga usurpers and compromised their disputes by ordering that the Nāgās should be given one corner of every occupied compound and that they should be propitiated by the performance of annual ceremonies. From that day

a son Pulastya, a brother of Visravas and an uncle of Ravana and Kubera. 'The Azi and the sons of Danu of the Zend Avesta were tribally identical with the Nagas and they were variously known as Asuras, Dasyas, Daityas and Serpas in the Rig Veda.'

The Naga-kanyakas were famed for their beauty. The praise of Kalidasa of the Kerala ladies shows that these kept up the old tradition. Even in the present day, poets and even politicians of other parts of India and tourists from outside are not wanting to speak in superlative terms of the charms of Malabar maidens. Ed.

forwards every householder in Malabar sets apart a bit of ground in the south-west corner of every Tarwad garden which is turned into a grove known as *Sarpa Kavoo* or the serpent grove. These present the appearance of miniature reserved forests where the underwood trees and creepers left untouched by the knife grow luxuriently. It is almost circular in form and is often surrounded by a low wall to prevent cattle or children from trespassing into it. Sometimes a pool of water is also attached to it. In the middle of this shrine, a stone basement called *Chitrakoodam* is built, on which are planted several representations of the serpent, cut in granite stones. A passage is opened to the seat of these images from the outside and great care is taken that the grove is not desecrated by the touch or even the approach of a low caste man. Once at least every year offerings are made of *Noorum Palum*, i. e., dough and milk, of cooked rice, lights and songs, etc. the Nampūṭirīs presiding as priests. This annual propitiation of the serpents is considered essential for the well-being and prosperity of the house-holder. In olden days deeds that transferred land from one individual to another used to make specific mention of the family serpents.

There are also temples where the serpent is the object of public worship. Perhaps the most important of these is the one at Nagercoil, i. e., 'the Temple of the Serpent', in South Travancore. In almost every temple there are images of serpents cut in granite planted either within the inner precincts or under the sacred banyan tree in front of the temple. There is a notable serpent grove at Maṇṇārśāla in Travancore where the serpent is worshipped with considerable ceremony.

Sterility in women, eye diseases, leprosy and other cutaneous ailments are attributed to the anger of the serpents. The killing of one of these reptiles especially the most venemous one, the cobra, is supposed to bring

leprosy and it need not be that the patient himself had killed one. It is enough if any one in the family in this generation or even in previous ones had committed this great sin. Similarly, if, by accident or otherwise, serpents are killed or injured, the family of the delinquent is doomed to suffer one of the ills already referred to, viz., sterility in women, eye diseases and leprosy or other cutaneous ailments. For relief, the serpents have to be propitiated by ceremonies. A *Nagapratishta*, i.e., the installation of the image of the serpent and the making of provision for annual ceremonies in connection with the worship of it, especially at Rāmēśwaram, is supposed to be an unerring cure for sterility in women.

When a member of the house-hold is afflicted with the ailments above-mentioned, the nearest astrologer is consulted who loses no time in finding out that either the patient or any other member of the family, whether in the present life or in the previous one, had incurred the displeasure of the serpents and that to effect a cure the serpents have to be propitiated by the performance of *Sarpabali*, *Noorum Palum* or *Pampum Tullal*. Of these the commonest is *Noorum Palum*. The day chosen is generally the *Aiylyam* or *Pooyam* asterism of the months of Thulam and Vrischikam. A large square is formed within which are drawn 64, 32 or 22 smaller squares. These are coloured differently by different powders being spread over. Over the central ones, paddy, raw rice, etc., are placed, and flour and milk served at the top. *Mantras* are then recited and the ceremony concluded with the flower stalks of the areca palm being broken up and sprinkled over the whole. The ceremony takes place in the *Sarpakavoos* or groves already described. Before the ceremony is performed, the *Kavoos* are purified by the sprinkling of *Punnyaham* or holy water and the grove is decorated with flowers of the areca and cocoanut palms as also with the tender leaves of the latter.

The *Sarpabali* is but the *Noorum Palum* performed on a grander scale at night.

The *Pampum Tullal* or *Sarpa Pattu* is the grandest of all. The description of this ceremony by Mr. Gopala Panikkar is full and interesting and may be quoted here.

"Periodical ceremonies called *Pambanthullel* are performed to propitiate them. These are resorted to only on special occasions for the purpose of averting serious visitations from the family. The ceremony is a long complicated process. Any individual drawn from among the Nairs themselves are capable of acting the part of priests on these occasions. A day is fixed for the opening of the ceremony; and a particular plot of ground in the house-yard is cleansed and preserved for the performance of the poojahs incidental to the ceremony. Then on the spot certain square figures are drawn, one inside another, and these are tastefully diversified by the interpolation of circular figures and others inside and about them, based on geometrical principles. A peculiar symmetry is observed in the matter of these figures. The figures used in the drawings are usually of various colours, red, white, black and others. Ordinary rice-flour, then again such flour mixed with a combination of chunnam and turmeric powder, thereby making the flour pure red, and burnt paddy husk are chiefly employed. Then a number of other accessories are also required for the ceremony, in the shape of lamps, cocoanuts, eatables of various sorts prepared from paddy and rice and some other cooked things, such as rice, bread made of rice, and others. These are properly arranged in the place and poojah is offered by the priest with the slow recitation of *mantrams*, and some holy songs or ballads in memory of these gods. Then a number of Nair women, with perfect purity and cleanliness of persons are seated close to each other in a row or two. These women are to preserve sanctity and purity of their

persons by a total abstinence from animal food, intoxicants and anything else of an exciting nature for a prescribed period of time; and it is only after the lapse of this period that they become worthy of being admitted to this ceremony. Thus having purged their bodies of all worldliness they are taken into the ceremony and are seated as described before. Now by means of the *mantrams* and poojah the serpent-gods are propitiated and in consequence they manifest themselves in the bodies of these female representatives of theirs. The entrance of the gods into their bodies is characterised by a fearful concussion of their whole frame, gradually developing into a ceaseless shaking, particularly the upper parts. A few minutes afterwards, they begin to speak one by one and their speeches are regarded as expressions of the god's will. Sometimes the gods appear in the bodies of all these females and sometimes only in those of a select few or none at all. The refusal of the gods to enter into such persons is symbolical of some want of cleanliness and purity in them; which contingency is looked upon as a source of anxiety to the individual. It may also suggest the displeasure of these gods towards the family in respect of which the ceremony is performed. In either case, such refusal on the part of the gods is an index of their ill-will or dissatisfaction. In cases where the gods refuse to appear in any one of these seated for the purpose, the ceremony is prolonged until the gods are so properly propitiated as to constrain them to manifest themselves. Then after the lapse of the number of days fixed for the ceremony and after the will of the serpent-gods is duly expressed, the ceremonies close" [1].

In some places the services of a *Pullavan* who as we have seen claims to be descended from a snake deity are sought to officiate as priest at these ceremonies. On the day appointed, he draws the figure of a snake coiled in a particular form on the floor, instead of the

1. *Malabar and its Folk*, pp. 146 to 148.

squares of the Nayar priests. The snake is represented in rice flour and the spaces between the coils are filled in with burnt rice husk, turmeric powder, powdered green leaves, etc. It is said that five colours are essential to correspond with the colours which are visible on the neck of the serpent. A female member of the afflicted family, who has fasted during the day, bathes, and sits on the floor at the head of the snake. Her hair lie about dishevelled, and she holds in her hands a bunch of cocoanut flowers. The *Pullavan* plays on his *Pullava Kudam*, an earthen-pot drum, while a *Pullava* woman keeps time with the music by striking a metal vessel. Both the man and woman at the same time sing songs in honour of the serpent deity. Gradually the woman seated at the head of the figure of the snake becomes possessed, and begins to quiver, while waving her dishevelled locks. Moving backwards and forwards, she rubs away the figure of the snake with the cocoanut flowers, and rising up, bathes once more. It may be necessary to rub away the figure of the snake as many as a hundred times, in which case the ceremony is prolonged over several weeks. Each time that the snake design is destroyed, one or two men, with torches in their hands, perform a dance, keeping steps to the *Pullavan's* music. The snake deity will, it is believed, not manifest himself if any of the persons or articles required for the ceremony are impure, e. g., if the pot-drum has been polluted by the touch of a menstruating woman. [1]

It may be added here that at certain stated seasons *Pullava* females go from house to house singing ballads in honour of the serpent deity keeping time by beating on their *Pullava Kudams*. These are earthen-pots whose mouths are covered up by means of a small circular piece of thin leather which is fastened on to the vessel with strings tightly tied round its neck. Another string is adjusted to the leather cover which when played

2. *Ethnographic Notes*. Thurston pp. 290 to 291.

on by means of the fingers produce a hoarse note which is said to please the ears of the snake deity, appease its anger and lull it into sleep. The Pulḷava woman gets her customary dues and the house-hold repose under the belief that its serpent gods have been propitiated for the time being.

The high priest ot serpent worship in all Malabār is the Pāmpummēkkāt Nampūṭiri in the Cochin State. The Nambyādi of Maṇṇarsāla in Travancore and Pādirakunnaṭṭh Nampūṭiri in British Malabar are priests of lesser note. The first of them is the special priest at certain sacrifices offered to the serpents, and he alone can remove a serpent grove from one spot to another. If a grove is too near a house or is inconveniently situated, the high priest is got down and he after certain costly ceremonies removes the *Kavu* to the desired distance by plucking a twig from the grove and planting it at the new site. After this the old one is cut down and cleared and the new one carefully reared. The family of the Pāmpummēkkāt Nampūṭiri exercise singular and seemingly effective control over serpents in general. The power is said to be a special gift handed from father to son. The ladies married into the family are initiated into the mystery, every bit of ground in the Nampūṭiri's house is infested by snakes and the house itself is said to be full of cobras. Inside the house is a mound full of these reptiles. The inmates cannot move about without treading on one of them, but the snakes are so obedient that they slowly glide by without in any way molesting them. The magic influence that they exercise over these animals is such that they dare not and will not bite the inmates of the *Illam*. The serpents are at their beck and call and render unquestioning obedience to their commands. They are said to guard the *Illam* and its treasures and no one dare enter the house with any evil intention lest he falls a victim to these venemous reptiles. The Nampūṭirīs also claim to possess the power

of curing the effects of snake poison. The very house name of the Nampūṭīri indicates the profession of the family. It means the snake infested jungle. (Pāmpummēkkātu)

The Nambyādi of Maṇṇarśāla belongs to an inferior order of Brahmins known as *Elyadus*, priests who officiate at the *sraddhas* of Nayars. *Mannarsala*, (*man-Aari-sala*), means "the place where the earth was cooled", and tradition says that this spot was miraculously cooled down by the gods at the prayer of the serpents who fled in confusion when Arjuna set fire to the Khāṇḍava forest, an episode in the great Epic of the *Mahabharata*. The family of the Nambyādi declares that an ancestress of theirs had a vision in which the Nāga Rāja appeared before her and requested her to dedicate the piece of ground thus spared which had belonged to her family for the abode of the serpents. She did accordingly. A temple was built and a grove reared. The Nāga Rāja was very much pleased and ever after became her family deity. In virtue of the founding of the worship, the female members of the family enjoy exceptional privileges which are even now exercised by them. Thus, during the eleven months of the year, the month of Vrischigam excepted, the female members alone can perform the mid-day service in the temple. Out of the 13 Pūyam asterisms of the year, 9 Pūyam days are exclusively set apart for the female members to perform services. This it may be remarked is perhaps the only instance in which females are allowed to do pūja in a temple in Malabār. The tradition goes on to relate that the serpents who were spared from the fire at *Khandava-dahanam* and who were afforded an asylum at Maṇṇarsāla were the progeny of a lady of the *Vettikulam Illam* who being married to a male member of the *Mannarsala Illam* brought with her as her dowry the stone image of the Nāga Rāja, her house being too poor to give her anything better. The girl was counselled by her parents to take care of the image and to regularly worship it

with devotion. Subsequently, it is said, she became a mother and brought forth a boy and a snake, whereupon the latter was located in the underground cellar of the house and brought up there. Henceforward the *Illam* prospered. This woman and the snake are believed to be the cause of the affluence of the family, and to this day to the names of the male members of the house are prefixed by way of distiction, the names of the serpent god and that of the female. Mr. V. Nagam Aya tells us that his informant who gave him the account and who was at the time the head of the family was called *Vasuki Sridevi Krishnan*; *Vasuki*, name of the serpent, *Sreedevi*, the name of the woman, and *Krishnan*, the name of the individual. The serpent located in the cellar is said to guard the family treasure which is supposed to be immense. The cellar is held very sacred and no one has access to it except the senior lady of the house. She has to live a monastic austere life on attaining seniority, even though her husband is living. On the occurrence of this event, the lady's husband marries another wife. The senior lady takes her bed every night over this cellar. The wealth underneath is theirs no doubt, but they dare not touch it without the sanction of the Nāga Rāja, who gives his consent as occasion arises in a vision to the senior lady. Several curious rites are still performed in this cellar. The day next after the *Siva Ratri*, *Noorum Palum* is offered. Flour and milk are served in a vessel accompanied by the recitation of mystic *mantras*, a lamp is lighted and a palmyra leaf umbrella is placed as a cover. The door is then shut and not opened for 4 days. It is said that on reopening the light will be found still burning while the milk and flour have been consumed. The daily routine of ceremonies performed in the temple are thus described by Mr. V. Nagam Aya:—

"In this spot are stone idols put up for the king and queen of snakes, known as Nāgarāja and

Nāgayekshi, and for various members of the family which, according to my informant, number about 3,000. There are as many stone images in this grove now. In the cellar of the house, as well as in the grove where the stone images are placed, a solution of *noorum palum* is offered once a year, that is, on the day following the Śivarāṭri in the month of Māsi. The same kind of offering is made to the *Chittrakodam* also. About 12¼ Edangalies of dough and milk are mixed together and kept in the cellar. Thereafter the door of the cellar is shut for three days, and lest anybody pry into what passes with the cellar, the women of the household cover the crevices and holes of the door by the big cadjan umbrellas of the female inmates of the *Illam*. On the third day the door is opened, and whatever remains in the vessel of the dough and milk placed there is thrown into a tank as unfit for human use. The mixing up of *noorum palum* and the performing of the pūjas are done by the eldest female member of the *Illam*. The *noorum palum* is made of rice-flour, saffron powder, cow's milk, water of the tender cocoanut, fruit of the Kadali plantain, and ghee. In the Nālukettu of the house, offerings of *noorum palum* and cooked rice, as well as *kuruthi* (a red liquid composed of flour, saffron and chuṇām), take place every Āyilyam (star) day. Every morning the king and queen of serpents are washed, and an offering of fruit and milk is made to them; in the noon offerings of Vellanivēdyam (cooked rice) and afterwards of fried grain (Malar) follow. During the month of Kārṭika, a special pūja called navakom and offering of *noorum palum* are daily observed. On the Śivarāṭri day, in the month of Māsi, the customary five pūjas and *navakom* are performed, and in the evening of the same day sacrificial offerings to the serpents and *kuruthi*, as stated above, are made, and, at the conclusion of the day's pūjas the idols are taken in procession round the temple. On Āyilyam (star) days, in

the months of Puraṭṭasi and Alpasi, all the serpent idols in the grove and the temples therein are taken in procession to the *Illam*, and offerings of *noorum palum*, *kuruti* and cooked rice are made there in propitiation of the serpent gods. The person who carries the idol of the Nāgarāja is the eldest female member of the *Illam*, and the procession is conducted with great pomp and rejoicings. According to my informant the eldest female member of the house, though married, is expected to lead a celibate life when she becomes the oldest female in the family. During the festive days at Maṇṇarsāla, about 5000 people assemble to worship and propitiate the serpent gods, and their offerings include gold and silver coins, and gold, silver, copper or stone effigies of snakes, grains of all kinds, pepper, salt, saffron, tender cocoanuts, bunches of Kaḍali plantain, melons, oil, ghee, sandalwood, silk and other things. On the day previous to the Āyilyam ceremonial, about two or three thousand Brahmans are fed. The annual expense of this institution and worship at Maṇṇārśāla is estimated at about two thousand rupees. The kāvu has its own paddy fields and gardens, from the revenues of which it is maintained. All the land about it, measuring a mile square, is said to belong to it. This would be enormous property, as the taluk where this kāvu is situated is one of the richest in Travancore. A trifle is given by the Sirkar every year. If more funds are required, the Nambyādi is expected to meet them from his own private income. The grove and its temples cover an immense oblong space measuring about 16 acres in extent. The inmates of the *Illam* are the pūjaries of the gods of this grove. It is believed that whenever the pūja is not performed with the strictest personal purity or care to small details, the serpent god get offended, which feeling is exhibited by the largest cobras coming out of the grove. It should be remembered that, as a rule, the serpents are not seen out of their holes, though hundreds of them are known to exist in these large groves."[1]

1. *Travancore Census Report* for 1891, Vol. 1, pp. 356 *et seq.*

The members of the Nambyāṭi's family like those of the Pāmpummēkkāt *Illam* have no fear of snakes. Mr. S. Krishna Ayyar who gives an interesting account of Maṇṇārśāla and the worship carried on there observes:—

"The members of the Nambyāṭi's household have not the least fear of snakes. They even court the presence of the snakes within their *Illam*. There is a general impression that, if a snake stays a night within a house, it would bring luck to the occupants. So callous have the Nambyāṭīs grown that they are said not to feel any concern even if a snake tumble on their bed of a night. The present senior lady (it is said) rears a few pets which would fondly trail over her hands and feet. She addresses them "children" and pats them on the head to still their frolics. I have myself seen a Nambyāṭi endearingly stroke the back of a golden-brown serpent, that was slowly gliding over the granite steps leading down to a tank in the middle of the forest. She assured us that any Brahmin who lived a pure life might touch the serpents without fear. Accordingly, a Brahmin present, reputed very holy, took courage and stroked its back gently. The serpent did not seem the least bit affronted, and did not even raise its head at the presumptuous touch of a stranger. Around this tank, a serpent or two might be seen gliding along at any time. The water of this tank is always insufferably cold, and is reputed to be an antidote to poison."[1]

Mr. Krishna Ayyar gives us an account of the grand festival of *Sarpapattoo* performed once in 12 years at Maṇṇārśāla for the propitiation of the general body of serpents. "The grandest of these ceremonies is what is known as a Sarpapāttoo, literally serpent music. This has to be performed once in twelve years, and is intended for the propitiation of the general body of serpents. But being rather expensive and difficult to arrange, it is performed only on rare occasions at

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. 2, p. 169.

Maṇṇārśāla. There was a Sarpapattoo in 1073 M. E. The one preceding it was in 1032, and the one next prior to it in 990. It lasts twenty-seven days, and costs over Rs. 3,000. Nine virgins are selected for performing the services. If all the nine are not available from the Nambyāṭi's family, representatives from a few Nayar families of the same *kara* are admitted; but these latter have to qualify themselves by a preliminary period of fasting. Some of the incidents of a *Noorum palum* have to be performed by them. But their chief business seems to be the Ṭuḷḷal or the frantic dance. From the moment they begin the dance till they cease, attendants have to be ready with areca flower stalks, as many as are called for, with which they jump and whirl about in a frenzy, wriggling and twisting themselves like real serpents. As many as ten or twenty thousand stalks may be used up in a single day. All the neighbouring Taluks are laid under contribution. Every virgin has her special attendants, lamp-bearers, etc. Sometimes they dance off in different directions, entering the thickest part of the jungles and returning without a scratch, though the jungles are everywhere full of the thorny cane. The attendants are not, however, so invulnerable. Wonderful stories are told of the miracles performed by these virgins during the dance. All, however, end in some unwarranted act being punished by the presence of a snake in some unlooked-for place. And it is a wonder, seeing that the grooves teem with snakes, that there is never a casuality. It may be a grave question as to how anybody in this age of boilers and explosives Acts, and shooting and dog licenses can be allowed to keep a preserve of animals, the most dangerous to human life. The necessity for proscription has not arisen at Maṇṇārśāla, as much probably from the inoffensive disposition of the Nambyāṭi's serpents as from their reputed sanctity. There seems to be a theory, indistinctly set forth, that about fifty per cent of the variety of snakes found in India are non-poisonous. If this

is true, and the tenants of the Maṇṇaraṣāla groves belong to the non-poisonous species, the whole business becomes explicable."[1]

Next to Maṇṇaraṣāla the important snake shrine at the house of the Nampūtiri of Pāṭirakunnaṭṭh Illam claims our attention. The whole place looks like a snake asylum. In the front verandah are a series of snake holes, which communicate with ant-hills inside the house. The Nampūtiri's source of income is derived from the shrine to which visitors from all parts of the district resort bringing with them rich offerings for the snakes. The worship here does not differ much in form from what is found elsewhere though it is of less grandeur.

The killing of the cobra is considered a most heinous sin. If a snake is found inside the house or in its neighbourhood, it is carefully managed to get into an earthenware pot which is covered over with a cocoanut shell and taken to a secluded spot where the snake is quietly let out and the pot destroyed. When a snake is found dead, if it belongs to one of the hooded species, pious Malayāḷīs see it burnt with full solemnities as at the cremation of high caste Hindus. The carcase is covered up with silk and burnt with sandalwood fuel. When the flame rises, incense and myrrh are added to it. A Brahman is hired to observe pollution for 10 days and elaborate funeral oblations are offered to the dead snake. Of course all these mummeries are fast ebbing away under the stress of the advance of liberal education.

The serpent worship of Malabār has attracted the attention of early European travellers and writers Varthema, speaking of the serpents found at Calicut, observes:—

"And you must know that when the King of Calicut learns where the nest of any of these brutal animals is, he has made over it a little house, on

1. *Malabar Quarterly Review*, Vol. 2, pp. 171—172.

account of the water. And if any person should kill one of these animals, the king would immediately put him to death. In like manner, if any one kill a cow, he would also put that person to death. They say that these serpents are spirits of God and that, if they were not his spirits, God would not have given them such a power, that biting a person a little he would immediately fall dead. And it is from this circumstance that there are such numbers of these animals who know the Pagans and do not avoid them * * and when the said Pagans go on a journey, if they meet any of these animals they receive it as a good augury." Faria also observes:—"They adore and sacrifice to venomous snakes, that they may not hurt with their poison."

It may not be out of place to mention that the Malayalīs like other Hindus believe that eclipses are caused by the attempt of *Rahu*, a huge serpent, to devour the sun or the moon as the case may be. The eclipse is said to be over when the monster spits out its victim. Under this idea they observe pollution for the period during which the eclipse lasts, abstaining from food and drink. After the eclipse, they bathe and resume their general work. If the eclipse falls on the star on which any one is born, he makes donations of money along with figures of the serpent, sun or moon made of gold or silver to Brahmins. Sometimes cucumbers, gingelly-seed, etc., accompany the gift. The Malayalīs observe this in general with other Hindus.

Another popular superstition regarding serpents may also be noticed. It is thought that there exists a most precious stone of great lustre and beauty in the bosom of the earth called *Manikkakallu*. It is supposed to be the product of the endeavours of certain serpents which have been blowing continuously for ages on the gold that is believed to be imbedded underneath the earth. It is also said that the moment the gold is transformed into this precious stone, the blowers are also transformed into winged serpents. They fly up in the

air with the resplendent stone and may perchance drop it on the ground. If any finds it, his fortune is made, but the serpent—it will never forget or forgive—such are the beliefs of the untutored.

The origin and development of the serpent cult in Malabar is of special interest not only from a religious but also from a historic and ethnic point of view. While some associate serpent worship with the adoration of the Phallic emblem, others think that it had its origin in sun worship. In almost every country there is some tradition, if not actual practice of serpent worship. It may be traced from the low level of the culture of the Red Indian to the higher plane of Hindu civilization. We can trace the belief of the supernatural character of the serpent among the ancient Chaldeans, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Hebrews, Persians, even amongst the early Christians.

Even after the introduction of Christianity, traces of sun and serpent worship remained in Syria and other parts of Western Asia. The Gnostics not simply adopted a curious blending of this ancient form of religion with their ritual, some of them actually worshipped the serpent[1]. The Manicheans held the serpent to be a beneficent agent[2]. Major Oldham thinks that the legend of St. George and the Dragon, although it assumed its present shape in Christian times, was probably founded upon an older story[3].

The Red Indians built temples to the serpents. Other tribes on the continent of America traced their descent from a serpent ancestor.

It has been said that "the serpent has been selected of all animals as the distinctive type or emblem of wisdom. Its silent, gliding motion, its habit of making its haunts near human households, like an animal easily domesticated, and yet retaining its native fierceness, the

1. *Mosheim, Inst. Eccles. Hist.* V. 81.
2. *Ibid.* 109.
3. *The Sun and the Serpent* p. 195.

remarkable effects of snake bite where death almost immediately follows, and yet without dismemberment, with little or no loss of blood and with hardly any perceptible mark of a wound making it appear as if the soul of the dead man had been drawn out by the serpent and dwelt in it; all these are phenomena calculated to impress the mind most forcibly". Froude says "The snake throughout the East is the symbol of knowledge and immortality. The serpent with his tail in his mouth (an ancient Persian symbol) represents the circle of eternity. The serpent, in annually shedding its skin, was supposed to renew its life for ever. This casting off of the slough is regarded as an emblem of resurrection and immortality". Here then we have a clear indication as to why so many races in the early stages of their civilization came to regard the serpent as supernatural. It is worthy of note that, while many religionists worshipped the animal as endowed with divine attributes, Christian tradition pointed to the arch enemy of God and man as being represented by that crawling reptile. In the form of the "infernal Serpent" did Satan tempt "The Mother of Mankind" to eat off the fruit of the forbidden tree "whose mortal taste, brought death into the world and all our woe." Thus did the Evil one cause "man's first disobedience" and its fatal consequence. Christian tradition also pointed to a time when a man should arise who would bruise the serpent's head. As the Evil Angel, Satan tempted "the third part of heaven's host," and as a punishment he was cast into the the region of eternal fire. With this may be compared the Hindu tradition of the destruction of Kalika the great serpent King by Krishna. Paintings of the combat between the two show Krishna as bruising the head of the serpent by treading upon it, even dancing upon its hood.

Snakes and serpents have a conspicuous niche in the Hindu Pantheon. Vishṇu reposes on the serpent

Śēṣha, the one with a thousand heads and a thousand tongues. Śiva wears the serpent round his neck as an ornament. Both gods delight in their company. The Kriṣhṇa temple at Ambalapuĭa is as much the abode of snakes of the hooded species as the Śiva temple at Vykom, both in the Travancore State. With the Hindus the fifth day of the bright half of the month Śrāvaṇa, called *Nagapanchami* is "Sacred to the demi-gods in the form of serpents who are enumerated in the *Padma* and *Garuda Puranas*." The story of *Kadru* and *Vinata* and their progeny as related in *Mahabharata* shows with what superstitious regard the serpent race was looked upon by the early Aryans. [1]

The veneration for the serpent is intimately connected with the worship of the sun, says Major Oldham, and is thus closely related to the orthodox Hindu religion. He considers that the hooded serpent was a totem of the people who claimed descent from the sun and that the Nāga demi-gods who are described in Brahmanical writings as "The Celestial serpents belonging to Sūrya (the sun-god) were deified chiefs of solar race". He points out that the Asurās and Serpās of the Rig Vēda, the Asurās and Nāgās of Manu and the *Mahabharata* and the Asurās and demons of the Brahmins, all represented hostile tribes, who opposed the Aryan invasion. These Asurās, Dasyus, or Nāgās, with whom the Aryans came in contact on approaching the borders of India, were no savage aboriginal tribes but a civilised people who had cities and castles built of stone. One of their great cities was *Patala* the capital of the territory which bore the same name, and which appears to have been included in the dominions of *Vritra* the great *Ahi*. The Asurās are identified with the Dravidians some of whom had made early settlements in the south of India. The earliest civilization of southern India is generally ascribed to the Dravidians,

1. The recent excavations at Sanchi reveal elaborate representations of serpent worship on the gates of the Buddhist Tope there.

and most authorities consider that the Dravidians came from northern India. It has been supposed that they were displaced by the invading Aryans. Dr. Caldwell, a very eminent authority asks "Were the Dravidians identical with the Dasyus, by whom the progress of the Aryans was disputed, and who were finally subdued and incorporated with the Aryan race, as their serfs and dependents?" "Here as elsewhere", observes Major Oldham, "it is assumed that the Aryas were conquerors, who reduced the Asurās to slavery. It has already been shown, however in these pages, that this was not the case. We have seen that there was a fusion of the two peoples. We have also seen that, whatever may have been the fate of the aborginies, the Asurās were not subdued by the Aryans, and never became their serfs or dependents, but were gradually converted to Aryan usages". He goes on to point out what Dr. Caldwell himself says: "Neither the subjugation of the Dravidians by the Aryans, nor the expulsion from northern India of the southern Dravidians by the Aryans, is recognised by any Sanskrit authority or any Dravidian tradition" [1]. However the northern Dravidians had in very early times established colonies in the south. A legend of the *Mahabharata* relates how Kaḍru, mother of the serpents, compelled Garuḍa to convey her sons across the sea "to a beautiful country, in a distant region, which was inhabited by Nagās". After encountering a violent storm and great heat, the sons of Kaḍru were landed in the country of Ramaṇika, on the Malabar Coast [2]. Here we may remember that Malabar is styled by Sanskrit writers *Ahi Desa*, the territory of the serpents (Nagās or Asurās in all probability) and in the Rig Veḍa the term *Ahi* or serpent is applied to the Asurās or Dasyus.

The Dravidian colonies, some of which may have been established before the Aryas entered India, appear

1. Pp. 148—9.
2. Oldham, pp. 60—1.

to have been founded by expeditions sent, some by sea, from *Patala* and other ports and some by land.

Ancient legends refer to conflicts between the Hindu colonists of later times, said to have been led by Paraśu Rama and the Nāgās from Pāṭāla, whom they found in possession of the country. The *Keralolpathi* says that the first Brahmin colonists of Paraśu Rama did not remain, because they were not able to bear the incessant attacks of the serpents which infested the country. It adds that Kerala was for some time under the undisturbed control of *Nagathanmar*, serpents. Paraśu Rama, incarnation of Viṣhṇu as he is asserted to be, was unable to subdue the Nāgās; he is said to have made a compromise by allotting a portion of the Brahmin's estate or *Brahmaswam* to the Nāgās, ordering the Brahmins to regard them as their *Sthaladaivam* or *Bharadevata*, i. e., tutilary or patron deities. The Brahmins were also ordered to propitiate them by offering *Bali* (sacrifices) and *Pujas* (offerings). And it is added that the serpents were pacified by this. Who can doubt that this legend refers to the actual conflict that took place at one time between the Dravidian Nāga settlers from *Patala* and their Aryan rivals?

Major Oldham refers to Inscriptions of the 10th and 11th centuries which show that several of the chiefs of south-western India claimed to have been born of the race of the Nāgās; to have held the *Naga dhwaja* or serpent banner; and to have had the hereditary title of "Supreme lord of Bhōgavaṭi". They thus claimed direct descent from the Nāgarājās of Pāṭāla. A part of the country of Canara was called in inscriptions Nāgarkhanda, or the territory of the Nāga people.[1]

We know that the worship of the hooded serpent, the *Nalla Pampu* or good snake, is as prevalent in the south as among the Dravidian races in the north. The offerings made to living serpents as well as to their sculptured representatives consist of milk, flour, fruit

3. Pp. 149—50.

and grain, which are not the usual food of snakes but are the food of men. Flowers and lights are also offered as to ancestors. We find too that should a Cobra be killed, it is burned as if it were a human body. It is said that the serpents who dislodged the early Brahmin colonists in Malabar had human faces. We have seen that the serpents in Malabar are worshipped in *Kavoos* or groves, and it is just so in many of the Punjab villages. There too the groves are left untouched by axe or spade. It is significant that the name of the serpent prefixed to the name of the Maṇṇārśāla Nambiadi is that of *Vasuki*, the name of the Nāga Raja of Pāṭāla and the deified hero of the Nāga people in northern India. In Malabar the region of the Nāgās, who contested the right to hold the land with the Aryans, was known as *Nagalokam* or *Patalam*. The language used in the services at the unorthodox shrines is the local Dravidian dialect, while in the Brahmanical temples the worship of the orthodox deities is conducted in Sanskrit.

The Dravidian people of south India have been divided, from ancient times, into *Cheras*, *Cholas* and *Pandyas*. Chēra, or Śēra (in old Tamil Sarai) is the Dravidian equivalent of Nāga; Chēra-Mandala, therefore, has the same meaning as Nāga Mandala, Nāga dwīpa Nāga Lōka or the Nāga country. This seems to point distinctly to the Asura origin of the Dravidians of the south. But in addition to this, there still exists, widely spread over the Ganges valley, a people who call themselves Chērus or Seoris, and who claim descent from the serpent gods. The Chērus are of very ancient race; they are believed to have once held a great portion of the valley of the Ganges which was occupied in very early times by Nāga tribes. There can be little doubt that these people are the kinsmen of the Dravidian Chēras. These have some peculiar customs, amongst them which seem to connect them with the Nēwārs of Nepal, and the Nēwārs have many customs in common with the Dravidian Nāyars of Malabar. Property amongst the Nēwārs

descended in the female line, their sister's sons and not the issue of their own loins being their heirs. This is still the Malabar Law of inheritance. Other affinities and likenesses between the Nēwārs and the Nāyars such as similarity in marital relations, in architecture and in name have already been referred to before.

Major Oldham refers to an inscription discovered by Col. Tod at Kanswah near the river Chambal in which, a Raja, called Salimdra "of the race of Sarya, a tribe renowned amongst the tribes of the mighty", is said to be ruler of Takhya.[1] He then identifies the Takhya of the above inscription with the kingdom of the Punjab of the same name visited by Hiouen Tsiang and observes that the Nāga people of Takhya were known also by the name of Sarya. A tract of country called Saraj, or Seoraj where the Nāga demi-gods are the chief deities worshipped, situated in the outer Himalaya between the Sutlej and the Beas valleys, is also mentioned. There is yet another Seoraj in the upper Chenab valley and this too is occupied by a Nāga worshipping people. The name Seoraj or, Saraj appears to be the same as the Sarya of Col. Tod's inscription. Major Oldham argues that this "is the alternative name of the Cherus of the Ganges valley. It also seems to be identical with Sarai, which, as we have already seen, is the old Tamil name for the Chera or Nāga. Apparently therefore, the Saryas of Takhya, the Saraj, people of the Sutlej valley, the Seoris or Cherus of the valley of the Ganges, and the Cheras, Seras, or Keralas of Southern India, are but different branches of the same Naga-worshipping people".[2] We have the authority of Dr. Caldwell that "the name Chēra and Kēralа were originally one and the same, and it is certain that they are always regarded as synonymous in Native Tamil and Malayalam lists", and Rev. Mr. Foulkes observes that "Chera and Kerala denote the same country, the term Kerala being that the

1. Page 158.
2. P. 159.

Canarese dialectical form of the word Chera." Dr. Gundert defines the word Kēralam as "Chēram, the country between Gokarnam and Kumari." (Mal. Dict.). Major Oldham also refers to the similarity in name between the Kiras of the Himalayas where the term Kira means a serpent and the Kiras, Cheras, or Keralas of the south, and while guarding himself against the tendency to jump at conclusions from such delusive coincidences observes:—"Similarity of name is not always to be trusted, but here we have something more. These people whose designation is apparently the same, are all of Solen race; they all venerate the hooded serpent and they all worship, as ancestors, the Naga demi-gods." [1]

Major Oldham then examines the evidence afforded by language and finally comes to the conclusion, "that the Dravidians of the south of India were of the same stock as the Asurās or Nāgās of the north." It may also be noted in this connection that a Scythian origin of the Nayars has been recently advanced. [2] It is suggested that the modern Nayars are the representatives, if not the descendants, of the original Nāga settlers and that the word Ñāyar is but another form of Ñāgar, the plural of the word *Naga*. It has also been suggested that both the Brahmans and Nayars of Malabar, are of homogeneous descent and that they are of a primeval Turanian race. [3] If there is anything in these suggestions, the prevalence of serpent worship in Malabar is easily accounted for.

Dr. Caldwell observes, "Seeing the northern vernaculars possess with the words of the Sanskrit a grammatical structure, which in the main appears to be Scythian, it seems more correct to represent those languages as having a Scythian basis with a large and

1. P. 160.
2. *Mal. Qua. Rev.* Vol. I p. 20 *et seq.*
3. *Native Life in Travancore* pp. 17—8.

almost overwhelming Sanskrit addition, than as having a Sanskrit basis with a small admixture of a Scythian element." [1]

The earlier Asura or Nāga colonies to south India must have left the north long before the fusion of the Asuras with the Aryans with the result that the Dravidian languages of Southern India retain a more intimate connection with the Scythian or Turanian tongues than the northern vernaculars. Since the peaceful penetration of Southern India by the Aryans, the one prominent feature we notice is the sustained endeavour made to enrich the Dravidian vernaculars with Sanskrit grammatical forms and words, and at this moment it is the pride of the Malayalam language to claim a large admixture of Sanskrit than in any other Dravidian language of Southern India.

Of the many stories related by early travellers regarding the serpents of Malabar, the following by Nicolo Conti is remarkable for its extraordinary nature. "This region" says Nicolo "also produces other serpents of a remarkable form, one cubit in length and winged like bats. They have 7 heads arranged along the body, and live in trees. They are extremely rapid in fight, and most venomous of all, destroying men by their breath alone." [2]

15. **Crocodiles.** Yule and Burnell observe that the word 'crocodile' is seldom used by the Anglo-Indians in India, "alligator" being the term almost invariably employed. Forbe's description of the animals that infest the Travancore rivers and lakes is typical of the Malabar crocodiles. He says:—"The eastern districts of Travancore, intersected by lakes and rivers, abound with amphibious animals, especially alligators and seals. There seems to be no essential difference between the alligator of India, and the Egyptian crocodiles; *lacerta*

1. *Gram*: *Drav*: *Lang*: *Intro*; p. 58.
2. Major's *India in the 15th Century*, p 18.

alligator, and *lacertus crocodilus*. Naturalists seem to confine the alligator to South America, the crocodile to Asia and Africa; but in India the lacerta crocodile, generally called the alligator, is from 5 to 20 feet long, shaped like the genus to which it belongs: the back is covered with impenetrable scales; the legs short, with 5 spreading toes on the fore foot, and 4 in a straight line on the hinder, armed with claws; the alligator moves slowly, its whole formation being calculated for strength, the backbone firmly jointed and the tail a most formidable weapon: in the river it eagerly springs on the wretch unfortunately bathing within its reach, and either knocks him down with his tail or opens a wide mouth for his destruction, armed with numerous sharp teeth of various length; by which like the shark, he sometimes severs the human body at a single bite. The animals of the Nile and the Ganges although wonderful, are not fabulous. The upper jaw only of the alligator was thought to be movable; that is now completely disproved; the eyes are of a dull green, with a brilliant pupil, covered by a transparent pellicle, movable as in birds: from the heads of those of large size musk is frequently extracted.

"The alligator sometimes basks in the sunshine on the banks of the river, but oftener floats on its surface; there, concealing his head and feet, he appears like the rough trunk of a tree, both in shape and colour; by this deception, dogs and other animals fearlessly approach, and are suddenly plunged to the bottom by the insiduous foe, even the royal tiger becomes his prey, quitting the cover to drink at the river; the wily alligator, concealed under water, steals along the bank, and suddenly emerging, furiously attacks the tiger, who never declines the combat: the alligator generally loses his eyes, and receives dreadful wounds on the head, but at length plunges his adversary into an unnatural element, and there devours him."

"The astonishing strength and size of the alligator and crocodile render them very terrible; the small ones live chiefly on fish; and far from attacking the human species, dive instantly on their appearance. The female sometimes lays 3 or 400 eggs, which she covers with sand to be vivified by the sun; in about a month the brood break the shell and instinctively take to the water." [1]

* * *

16. **A certain species of kite.**—This is apparently the Brahmani kite. Friar Jordanus describes it as "having a white head and belly, but all red above, which boldly snatches fish out of the hands of fishermen and other people and indeed (these birds) go on just like dogs." And Dr. Fryer points out that" ..... 'tis Sacrilege with them (the Hindus) to kill a cow or a calf; but highly piacular to shoot a kite *dedicated to the* Brahmans for which money will hardly pacify."

17. **Fire-flies.** These insects are very numerous in Malabar especially on the backwater-sides and in marshy places where there is rank vegetation. The splendour of the light emitted by them has excited the wonder of many. So also the rhythmical or synchronous flashing of the fire-flies when visible in great numbers. Bishop Heber gives a glowing description of the sight in the following lines:—

"Yet mark! as fade the upper skies,
Each thicket opens ten thousand eyes.
Before, behind us, and above,
The *fire-fly* lights his lamp of love,
Retreating, chasing, sinking, soaring,
The darkness of the copse exploring." [2]

1. Pp. 224—226.
2. Ed. of 1844-i—258.

Supplementary Note—Malayalam Language and Literature.

THE COUNTRY WHERE MALAYALAM IS SPOKEN.

Malayāḷam is the language of the south-west districts of the Madras Presidency. It is the third most important language of the Presidency, the first and the second being Tamil and Telugu respectively. It is spoken in Malabar, Cochin and Travancore. It is the mother-tongue of 9,137,615 persons. Malabar, Cochin and Travancore, taken as a whole, are bounded on the north by South Canara, on the east by the far-famed Malaya range of mountains, on the south by the Indian Ocean, and on the west by the Arabian Sea.

Properly speaking, Malabar is the name of a small district of which Calicut is the capital. But the term is now and then loosely applied to that tract of land which, besides the above, includes Cochin and Travancore also. The natives love to call it Kēraḷam and Malayāḷam. These names are well suited to it, the former (Kēram=coccanut) 'on account of the dense forest of cocoanut palms which constitute the wealth of the country', and the latter (Mala=hill and āḷam=dale) from the undulating nature of its surface. Other deviations are possible and are given for these place-names. But there is no need to delay over them here.

"The low belt which borders on the sea and the backwaters is by nature flat and swampy, but has in the course of ages become rich with the works of man, and the landscape shaded and fanned by 'the feathery palm' presents a chequered scene of light and shade. As we leave the seaboard, an undulating country, diversified with grassy flats, naked hills and wooded terraces, intersected by numerous torrents and rapids dashing down from cliff to valley, and profusely dotted with simple homesteads, orchards and cultivated fields, rolls up to

the foot of the western ghats, where the landscape, now become nobler and more intensified in grandeur, merges itself in wide forests of continuous shade, leaving 'a woody theatre of stateliest view' amidst 'a variegated maze of mount and glen.' ".

Geology supports the tradition which asserts that the Kerala country was raised out of the sea; but the ancients have dressed the tradition in the garb of Paraśurāma. It is possible that the great pioneer Paraśurāma led the first Aryan settlers into Kēraḷam, which, long before their advent, had evolved a culture unique in its own way.

The Aryans must have found the country divided into villages or ṭaras. Each village was self-contained and consisted of houses situated in detached gardens. 'These villages had their own organisation for agrarian, social, civil and administrative purposes. They were in fact miniature republics so far as their civil life was concerned. It was the Ñāṭṭār (people of the country) who administered the country with the help of the Kūṭṭam, the National Assembly. For political purposes, the country was divided into Ḍēśams and Ñāḍḍūs under Ḍēśavāïies and Ñāḍuvāïies, while, for military training, it came to be divided into 18 samghams. Each of these had six systems of training. The Kaḷaries or the fencing-schools were held in the vicinity of a Kāvu. That is how we find reference in hymns and old records to 108 kalaries and the same number of Ḍurgāḷayās in Kērala.

At one period in the political evolution of the country, the groups of villages called Ñāds were placed under chieftains known as Ṭaḷiyāṭiries nominated for three years by special electors. There were eighteen and a half Ṭaḷies in Kēraḷa, a *taḷi* being the area covered by the jurisdiction of a chieftain. The dissensions among the Ṭaḷiyāṭiries and the unrest among the people due to the bad rule of these led them to appeal to powerful, neighbouring rulers for help. This is how the Perumals, Viceroys chosen from the royal houses

of Chēra, Chōla and Pāndya came to rule over Kērala. Some of them did not rule out their term of 12 years, as a few died premature deaths, while others were replaced for their misrule. The dates of the Perumal period have not yet been definitely determined. Some give the kali, bhūman bhūpōyam prāpa (A. D. 216) as the date of its commencement, while others state that the cryptogram ḍuḍurdharam (B. C. 113) is the correct year.

The capital of the Perumals was Ṭiruvanchikuḷam near Cranganur in the vicinity of the port of Muziris which Pliny calls *primum emporium Indiae*. The Egyptians, the Phoenicians, the Greeks and the Romans came to this port for commercial purposes. The Jews, the Muslims and the Christians claim Cranganur as their first settlement. There was a great university at Maṭilakam, near Cranganur, where the Viḍvalsabha, the assembly of the wise, directed the studies of the university and enacted laws for the country. It was presided over by Iḷankoadigal, the author of *Silappadhikaram*, and the son of Bāṇa Varman Netumchēraṇāṭan, who is said to have ruled Kērala from A. C. 115 to 129 A. C. It was Iḷankoadigal's friend, Chittalay Chāṭṭanār, that wrote *Manimekhala*. These and the *Patittippattu* by another Kērala Kavi were all published from Ṭiruvanchikuḷam.

Bhaskara Ravi Varma was the last of the Perumals; he turned out to be so popular and his rule so wise and just that he was permitted to rule the country for 37 years. Urudhīsamāśraya (342 A. D.), Chēramāndēśamprāpa (A. D. 343), Ṣhōdaśāmgam surājyam (A. D. 385) are some of the kalis associated with his name. The Malayalam kingdom was, for various reasons, partitioned, so some say, by him among his friends and relatives. Malabar, Cochin and Travancore arose out of the dismemberment of that ancient Malayaam kingdom

From very early times, some of the produces peculiar to the Malabar Coast were known to several of the nations of Asia and Europe, and were the objects of maritime enterprise and commerce throughout the succeeding centuries. "The Phoenicians by way of the Persian Gulf and, subsequently, by way of the Red Sea; the Jews under David and Solomon; the Greeks under Alexander the Great; the Syrians under the Seleucidae; the Egyptians under the Ptolemies; the Romans under the Emperors; the Arabians after the conquest of Egypt and Persia; the Italians; the Portuguese; the Dutch; the French"—each nation had its share in the trade with the Kerala country. And it is no secret that for the last two centuries, the English have been carrying on a brisk trade with the ancient 'land of pepper.'

From its commercial prosperity, it should not be supposed that the Malayalam territory had all along enjoyed peace. For, there are reliable records to show that, for some centuries before it came under the English sway, the country was the scene of battles, internal feuds and foreign invasions, a fact which clearly explains the slow progress of the Malayalam literature in those days and its rapaid growth within the last hundred years.

Between the years 1792 and 1795 A. D., Malabar, Cochin and Travancore came under the supremacy of the British. With this supremacy came schools and books and all the paraphernalia of modern civilization, and people began to take an interest in the language, arts and industries of their ancestors. The Malayāḷis took to the new system of instruction with great avidity. The result has been very remarkable. In the words of one of the Imperial Census Reports, "In education, the rate of improvement is highest in Malabar. Both Cochin and Travancore have a larger degree of education than the Madras Presidency as a whole, larger too than the adjoining district of Malabar, though this

is true only of male education, so far as Travancore is concerned. The people of Cochin, both males and females, are more educated than the inhabitants of any other district except Madras." It is therefore not very strange that the Malayāḷīs are now taking a lively interest in the development of their language and literature.

MALAYALAM LANGUAGE.

Malayāḷam is one of the Dravidian languages. Dravidian is from Dravida, the adjectival form of Drāviḍa. This term is a 'generic appellation of the south India peoples and their languages.' The Dravidian cultivated languages are—

1. Tamil
2. Telugu
3. Malayāḷam
4. Cānarēse.
5. Tuḷu.
6. Kodagu.

From the scanty materials that we possess, it is not easy to trace exactly the origin of the Malayalam language. The opinion of some great philogists seems to be that there must originally have been some dialect spoken by the tribes of Malabar. According to Mr. P. T. Sreenivasa Iyengar, the languages spoken in India in olden days were all dialects of proto-Tamil, while Dr. Maclean, though he does not go so far, still holds that there is little doubt that the Dravidian languages are comparatively older in point of time than Sanskrit. Dr. Gundert says that Tamil and Malayalam differed as dialects of the same member of the Dravidian family. The late Chattambi Swāmi whose encyclopaedic knowledge was the wonder and despair of his erudite contemporaries, held that Sanskrit, Samskṛṭam, is refined Tamil, or, to be more accurate, proto-Tamil. In *Lilatilakam*, a very old work on Malayalam grammar, it is shown that Maṇipravāḷam is a combination of Malayalam and Sanskrit. തമിഴാകും സംസ്കൃതയോഗേ മണിപ്രവാളം. The work then says that Tamil there means Malayalam. Tamil was a generic term for all Dravida languages in remote times.

Kuḷīkkātt Bhaṭṭaṭiri, a dependent of Ravi Varma, who was known as Dakshiṇa Bhōja, is the author of *Lilatilakam*. He was a contemporary of the author of *Unninili-sandesam*. Mr. Āṟṟūr K. Pishāroti in his *Critical Survey of the Malayalam Language and Literature* shows how the term Tamil became Damila, Damida, Dramida and finally Dravida. The late A. R. Rajaraja Varma, the author of *Kerala-Paniniyam*, says in that classical work that the literary Tamil was called Chentamil, while the popular, spoken Tamil was called Kotumtamil. There were different varieties of this, one of which, Karintamil, grew to become Malayalam. Very few means are there to trace the growth of this dialect to its modern form. Separated from the old stock and its other branches by the ghauts, this variety underwent gradual changes. Sanskrit has affected the grammar and vocabulary to a great extent. It was very much influenced by Tamil, and, to a less extent, by Tulu, Canarese and Telugu. "The resultant of these forces acting upon the original dialect of Malabar is the present Malayalam Language. Terms connected with the Mahomedan religion, government and commerce have found their way into Malayalam from Arabic, Persian and Hindustani; while Hebrew, Syriac, Greek and Latin have contributed terms connected with Christianity. A few words current in the language are derived from Portuguese, Dutch and French. English tends to influence its idioms, gives birth to new terms of expression and thus moulds the public thought into different forms."

"In the Dravidian languages all names denoting inanimate substances and irrational beings are of the neuter gender. The distinction of male and female appears only in the pronouns of the third person, in adjectives formed by suffixing the pronominal terminations, and in the third person of the verb. In all other cases the distinction of gender is marked by separate words signifying male and female. Dravidian

nouns are inflected by means of suffixed post-positions and separable particles. Dravidian neuter nouns are rarely pluralised. Dravidian adjectives are incapable of declension. A peculiarity of the Dravidian dialects is the existence of two pronouns of the first person plural, one inclusive and other exclusive of the person addressed. The Dravidian languages have no passive voice. The Dravidian verbal system possesses a negative as well as affirmative voice. It is a marked peculiarity of the Dravidian languages that they make use of relative participial nouns instead of phrases introduced by relative pronouns." The chief difference between Malayalam and the other Dravidian tongues is that in the former the verb has gradually got itself divested of all distinctions as to gender, number and person.

DIFFERENT EPOCHS.

A well-known writer on Malayalam Literature divides the growth of Malayalam into four epochs:—

I. KARINTAMIL.

3100 B. C.—100 B. C.

From the songs, religious and other, composed by Kulaśēkhara Āḷvar, Pākkanār and others, we get an insight into the language of this period. There is a strong admixture of Tamil in it. Sanskrit had not then begun to influence it.

II. OLD MALAYALAM

100 B. C.—325 A. D.

We find innumerable Sanskrit words in the language by the close of the period. There were personal terminations for verbs, and these were conjugated for gender and number. But it is very doubtful whether this was true in the case of the spoken language. From the copper-plate deeds of this period and from the records of daily events that used to be kept in certain ruling families at this period, we see what progress the language had made by this time.

It is only from this time onwards that we see compositions in prose.

III. MIDDLE MALAYALAM.

325 A. D.—1425 A. D.

The traces of the adjuncts of verbs had disappeared by this time. The Jains seem to have encouraged the study of the language. From the court chronicles referred to above, from *Ramacharitam* and from Kaṇṇaśśa Paṇiker's *Ramayanam*, we get a clear idea of the language of the period.

IV. MODERN MALAYALAM.

1425 A. D.

By this time, Malayalam got itself entirely divorced from Tamil, and we find modern Malayāḷam in all its distinctness. This period may profitably be divided into two parts, the first ending about 1795 A. D., the year in which the English got complete possession of the Kerala country, the other commencing from that year.

The coolness with which these four main periods are marked off with their corresponding dates is really astonishing. The duration of the first epoch seems to be fabulous, while I shall be the last to accept the designation of Karintamil, if by that it is presumed that Malayalam had its origin from Tamil.

The styles of writing that were in vogue and of which we have any knowledge were the Kōleḻuṭṭu and the Vaṭṭeḻuṭṭu scripts. The present is called Malayalam *grantha* characters.

Kerala Pāṇini has suggested another division:—

Early Malayalam- 1 to 500 M. E. (825 A. D.—1325 A. D.)

Middle Malayalam 500 to 800

Modern Malayalam 800 and onwards.

A recent historian of Malayalam Poetical Literature has adopted this division and has clubbed together certain outstanding works under these heads.

Early Malayalam—*Ramacharitam*; *Unninili-Sandesam*.

Middle Malayalam—*Champus*; *Chandrolsavam*; *Ramakatha*; *Niranam works*; *Krishnagatha*.

Modern Malayalam—Works of Ṭuñchan, Kuñchan and Pūnṭānam; those of Kōṭṭayam Kēraḷa Varma, of Pūmṭōṭṭam, and Chēlapparambu; those of Rāmapurath Vārier and Uṇṇāyi Vārier; *Krishnattam*; *Kathakalies* of Koṭṭarakkara and Kōṭṭayam Ṭampurāns, and those of Irayi Varman Ṭampi.

To these he also adds another division which he calls New Malayalam, under which he puts the works of modern poets headed by Valiya Kōil Ṭampurān and Koṭungallūr Ṭampurans. To most of these I shall have to refer in their appropriate places in this brief sketch.

MALAYALIS WHO HAVE WRITTEN WORKS IN SANSKRIT.

No sketch of Malayalam Literature can be complete which does not make mention of Malayalīs who have won renown by their works in Sanskrit. I shall therefore take a rapid survey of them. I can find space only for a few among a host of very important names. Kēraḷa claims among her sons, Vararuchi, the great progenitor of astronomical science in Malayalam, and Bharṭṛhari, the renowned author of the three Śaṭakams. The early literary history of the Malayalam language contains so many stories about their doings in the land that it would be impossible for any one to believe that they were not Malayalīs. The great theologian and philosopher, Śankarāchārya, was born at Kālaṭi, on the banks of the Chūrṇi up the Alwaye river, which in his time belonged to Cochin. His

commentaries on the Upanishads, the Vēḍanṭa Sūtras, and the Bhagavaṭ Gīṭa are well-known to the world. No Indian need be told that his system of Advaiṭa Philosophy is one of the grandest products of the human genius. The great vēdānṭa and mīmāmsa scholar Prabhākara too was a Malayali. He belonged to the Vēṅṅanāṭ grāmom, reputed for its scholars and praised for that in *Suka Sandesam*. His Kaumārila-maṭam got a firm foothold in Kerala through the sponsorship of it of Payyūr Bhaṭṭaṭiries. He had as one of his disciples a person from Veḷḷāngallūr in the Mukundapuram Tālūk of Cochin, who speaks of his master, in his *Manameyodayam*, a mīmāmsa work, as a master in both the mīmāmsas. He is also the author of *Govindacharitam Kavyam*, and of the commentaries to *Raghuvamsam* called Padārṭhadīpika, to *Kumara-sambhavam* called Vivaraṇam and to *Uttararama-charitam* called Bhāvārṭṭadīpika.

Kulaśēkhara Ālwar, the author of *Mukundamala* and of the dramas of *Tapatisamvaranam* and *Danamjayam* was a patron of letters. Thōlan has written *Mahodaya-puracharitam*, a mahākāvya in praise of the Kulaśēkhara royal house. He is also the author of a Malayalam work on dramaturgy called *Attaprakaram* and of several humorous verses to be used at Kūtiyāṭṭam and Samkhak-kaḷi. The diction of *Attaprakaram* is imitated in *Unnunili Sandesam* and by Champu writers. Katha-kaḷi also helped to popularise it.

The drama *Ascharya-Chudamani* by Sakṭibhadra, a disciple of Śrī Śankara, has received the blessing of that sage, while the *Krishnavijayam Kavyam* of Sankarakavi has been the object of unmeasured praise of Uḍḍanḍa Śāśṭri. Raman Nambiyār of Vettaṭṭuṅāḍ was a great favourite of Marṭṭanda Varma of Vēṇāḍ and of Dēvaṅārayaṇan of Ambalappuḷa. He wrote two mahākāvyas. His *Rasakrida* and *Vruttavarttikam* are highly spoken of by scholars. *Krishnavilasam* by Sukumāra kavi and *Balabharatam* by Agastya kavi bid

fair to compete with Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam*, and *Raghuvamsam* respectively. *Yudhistiravijayam*, (a yamaka kavya) a *Kavya* of a peculiar structure, is the work of Vāsudēva Bhattaṭiri. He was the son of Ravi Nampūṭiri, a friend of Kulaśēkhara Ālwār and the annotator of the two dramas of that king Vāsudēva was, like Śankarāchārya, a Namputiri which means a Malayāḷi Vedic Brahman. The *Kavyamala* editors have done an injustice to Malabar by ascribing the authorship of this poem to a native of Kashmere. *Vasudevavijayam* by one Vasudevan Namputiri is a *Prakriya-kavya*, in imitation of the *Batti-kavya*, as a continuation of which Mēppaṭṭur Narayana Bhattatiri wrote his *Dhatu-kavya*. Karingampiḷḷi Namputiri, the author of *Suka-sandesam*, lived about A. D. 1480. *Suka-sandesam* is after the model of *Megha-sandesam*. He gives us vivid sketches of many parts of Malabar which are dear to every Malayali. A hundred years thence, lived Meppathur Narayana Bhattatiri, a poet, grammarian and scholar of unquestioned ability. He is the author of *Narayaneeyam*, which treats of the life and teachings of Śri Krishṇa and is, more or less, an abridgement of *Bhagavatham Dasamam*. It was finished in 1558. From its pathos, and the sublimity of its religious sentiment, from its pure diction and fine melody and the display of Sanskrit scholarship, it is placed in the front rank among the classics of Sanskrit literature. Sense and sound seem to be wedded in this poem of undying fame. His grammatical work, *Prakriya Sarvaswam*, is much more lucid than Battōgi Dīkshiṭar's *Sidhanta Kaumudi*.

His illom was near the Chandanakāvu in Vettaṭṭunād. His father, Māṭṛḍaṭṭan Bhattaṭiri was a Vedic scholar and was learned in both the mimamsas. His mother was a sister of the seven Payyūr Bhattaṭiris, about the eldest of whom it was that Uddanda Sastri praised in these terms:

ദാനേച കല്പവൃക്ഷം സൎവ്വജനത്വേച ചന്ദ്രഖണ്ഡധരം
പൈയൂരാഢ്യ! മഹൎഷേ! കവിതാമാൎഗേ ചകാളിദാസാത്വാം.

He is thus a nephew of the Payyur Bhattatiris whose wide, varied and profound scholarship and generous hospitality are referred by Sastri in his *Kokila-sandesam*. Sastri's *Mallika-marutam* contains an appreciation from Parameswaran Bhattatiri, one of the brothers who has written an annotation to *Jaimini-Mimamasa*; while another is the author of *Grdhra-sandesam*, where Tṛkkandiyūr Achyuta Pisharoti, the author of *Pravesika* and *Bhugoladipika*, is extolled. Narayana Bhattatiri learned grammar under this Achyuta Pisharoti and Jyōtisham under Talakkulaṭṭ Bhattatiri, the author of *Dasadhyayi* and *Muhurta-padvi*.

Narayana Bhattatiri married from Trkkandiyur Pisharoti's house. Bhattatiri was a friend of Vīrakērala Varma of Cochin as evidenced by his *Matamaharajya-prasasthi*, and of Chempakaśśēri Dēvanārayaṇa at whose instance he wrote *Dhatu Kavya* and *Prakriyasarva-swam*. At the court of the latter he had as his cosadasya Mūkōt Nīlakaṇṭan Nampūṭiri, the author of *Naraya-neeyam* and *Chellur-Nathodyam* champus. *Niranunasika-prabhandam* was written at the request of Iravi Chākyār. *Prakriyasarvasvam* is, so to say, a miraculous work; for it was composed in two months. The difficulty and importance of the work may be gathered from the fact that no less a scholar than the late Valiya Koil Tham-puran thought it worth his while to write a second commentary for it, although another one by Tṛkandi-yūr Govinda Pisharoti, a disciple of Ramapāṇivāḍar and Manōrama Thampurātti already existed.

To go back to the ancients once again, there is Vilvamangalath Swāmiyār, the famous author of *Krishnakarnamrutham*. He has written a kāvyam of singular interest. It is in prākṛtam, and every ślōkam serves as an example of a separate rule on the gram-mar of that dialect. From this any one conversant with that dialect will have an idea of the brain power of that great ascetic. He has also to his credit a com-mentary to *Kenopanishad*, and one to the grammatica work *Daiva*, called *Purushakaram*. *Dipaprabha* rivals

Purushakaram. That is the work of one Narayana, a native of Vēṅṅaṅatu. Of the learning and scholarship found in this grāmam near Ernakulam, *Sukasandesam* praises in no stinted terms. He has also written commentaries to Paṭañjali's *Mahabhashya* and to *Kaiyatan's Pradipam*. A member of Kāśi Illom in Ramanallūr in north Travancore, a great grammarian himself, has written two commentaries in verse to Pāṇini's Sūṭras *Amodam* is also a poetical commentary to Bana's *Kadambari* by one Ashtamūrṭṭi, evidently a Namputiri, who lived near to and to the east of Tṛkkaṇāmaṭilakam. When Ḍaṇḍi, grandson of Bhāravi, was living at Kāṇchīpuram as the chief court poet of the Pallava ruler Simha Vishnu, he was invited by Laḷiṭālayan, a master of Śilpaśāśṭra, to visit Mahābalipuram where, the architect seems to have told Dandi, the latter could meet great souls like Māṭṛḍaṭṭa and others from Kerala whose company would be sources of honour and of pleasure to the poet.

Mention must be made of the names of Kākkaśśēri Battathiri, the author of *Vasumati-mitram*, Manavikrama the Strong, and Rama Varmah the Learned of Kodungallur, and a host of others, great intellectual giants, who were at once the delight and despair of many an erudite scholar from other parts of India. One is tempted to linger over the names of Manavēḍan Raja who composed the *Manaveda Champu* which treats of the stories of Mahabharata not treated in *Bharata Chambu* by Anandakavi, of Maḷamangalam Nampūṭiri, the author of the famous Bhāṇam called after his name, and of Pāṇivāḍan, the author of the *Raghaviya kavya* and of *Sitaraghavanatakam*, and of *Vitanidra*, a Bhāṇam, with Mahōḍayapuram as its scene of action. They were masters of the Sanskrit tongue and owed their predominance to the towering intellectual powers which they possessed. Arūr Bhattaṭiri produced *Uttara Naishadham*, a fitting complement to the work of Sri Harsha. H. H. Rama Varma,

a Maharaja of Travancore, wrote an excellent didactic poem called *Bhakthi Manjari* and also innumerable musical compositions known as Kīrṭṭanams. K. Rama Varier may be appropriately styled the Mallinātha of modern times. On various difficult works he has written commentaries. There is no subject that is foreign to him, and every subject he has treated about, he has treated in a masterly fashion. *Visakha Vijayam*, *Kamsavadha Champu*, *Pranama Satakam* and *Tulabhara Satakam* of H. H. Kerala Varma, the late Valiya Koil Thampuran of Travancore, show how elastic Sanskrit language becomes when wielded by a master-hand. They are remarkable for the felicity of their diction, the richness of their varied imagery, the skill and art displayed in the several figures of speech and for the vast sweep of his powers as a poet. From *Angala Samragyam*, one can confidently assert that his nephew and pupil, Mr. A. R. Raja Raja Varma comes as a good second to his uncle. Kochuṇṇi Thampurān of Kodungallur has easily won the name of a first-class Sanskrit poet. His *Vipra Sandeam* and his *Bhanam* have cheered not a few of the erudite scholars and critics of several parts of India. Punnaśśēri Nambi Ṅīlacaṇṭha Śarma edited a Sanskrit Journal which reflected great credit on his Sanskrit scholarship and philanthropy, and the Sanskrit College he has started at Pattāmbi will be for ever a monument to his wide and varied erudition more enduring than any storied urn or animated bust. Another who has won renown is Pūrṇasarasvaṭi whose annotations of *Meghasandesam* and *Malati-madhavam* are considered works of unusual merit.

Towards the growth of Jyōṭisha, Kerala has contributed not a little. There used to be a Paṇḍitasaḍas during the time of the Māmāmkam which was held once in twelve years on the banks of the Bharaṭappuḷa near the Ṭirunāvāya temple, to renew kāṇam deeds, and to select a ruler. Among the subjects that were taken up

for consideration by the assembly of the pandits, one would be the science of Jyōṭisha, with a view to make corrections and deviations to suit local conditions.

The *Balasankaran* of Maïamangalom and the *Tantrasamgraham* and *Aryabhatiyabhashyam* of Ṅīlacaṇṭha Sōmayāgi are worthy of mention. It is of this Nilacanthan that Ṭuñchath Eḷuthaśśan speaks as his guru in his works. He was a native of Ṭṛikantiyūr and a dependant of the Āḷuvāñchēri Mana.

In other departments too of Sanskrit learning, Malabar has never been behind other parts of India. In Silpiśāśṭra, it followed the mayamaṭam. Uḷḷiyannūr Perumṭachhan is a host in himself. *Tantrasamuchhayam* of Chēṅṅas Namputiri is a classic connected with matters relating to temples. Vivaraṇam and Vimarśini are two of its well-known commentaries. Kerala has made solid contributions to the science and practice of Ṭachu Śāśtra. Ancient temples and particularly certain Kūṭṭampalams (theatres) exist as finished products of indigenous sculpture and architecture.

The system of Āyurvēda as practised in Malabar bears the impress of the country. Its growth there stands unrivalled. In *Dhara* and *Pilichil* and massage, in bone-setting and the treatment of cuts and dislocations, the Kerala system is seldom excelled. It has also specialised in the treatment of elephants and poison cases. In specialisation, one finds intensive earnestness in Astronomy and Astrology and Ayūrveda. In what other country have you heard of Ashtavaidyans, members of eight famous, hereditary families of physicians who are ever ready to attend on the needy sick and give them their skilled services not for fame nor for money but out of the love for humanity?

A commentary in Malayalam for Kautilya's *Arthasastra* by a Vanchi Raja, *Arthasastrabhashyavakya* is about 1000 years old. The late Ganapati Sastri based his Sanskrit commentary on this work. *Uttejini*, a

commentary to *Kavyaprakasini*, *Manidarpanam*, *Bala-rambharatam*, and *Kanadasidhantachandrika* are all works by Malayalis.

Before bringing this subject to a close, it will not be out of place to refer to the high standard of proficiency in Sanskrit attained by many of the members of the ruling, and several of the other aristocratic families in Malabar. This used to be so from very ancient days.

Those palaces and families were centres of Sanskrit learning. There students were fed and taught kāvyam, alamkāram and Śāstram free. Trikkanamatilakam, Kāṇṭalūr Śāla, Śrīmūlavāsam and Ṭṛchharaṇaṭṭmala, and several mutts were famous for the provision they had for the higher studies on those subjects. Until very recently, Kodungallur Rajas' family contained experts who could and did teach different subjects to aspirants for proficiency in learning. The Sanskrit Colleges at Trivandrum and Tṛppūṇiṭṭura, at Pāttambi and Annakara show that the love for higher studies in Sanskrit is still strong in Kerala. Several Rulers of Travancore and of Cochin were scholars and patrons of learning. A few of them wrote works of great merit. The interest the Rulers of these States take in the Sanskrit Colleges, and in the work of the Malayalam Improvement Committee in Cochin and of the Committees to publish Sanskrit and Malayalam works in Travancore evince their interest in the maintenance of ancient culture and the development of Sanskrit and Malayalam literatures.

MALAYALAM LITERATURE.

Early Malayalam to 500 M. E.

The innumeral folk songs that have come down to us make it clear that the Malayali nation began to lisp in numbers at this early period. From these and from certain religious songs, such as *Sastham Pattu*, *Bhadra Kali Pattu*, which to this day pious souls chant to propitiate their favourite gods and goddesses one can get

an idea of the language of this period. The one noteworthy work of this time is *Ramacharitam*, said to be the work of a Raja of Travancore. He composed it, it is said, as a *patappattu*, a martial song, to be sung by soldiers when they went out for battle. There is only thus the *Yuddha-khandam* in it. What original he followed for his rendering, it is difficult to surmise. The admixture of Tamil in the language used in it is so pronounced that certain Tamil scholars class it as a Tamil work. This it is not. That Tamil lent its colour to the language of that period is seen from *Unninilisandesam*, an admittedly Malayalam classic. That is a remarkable poem. Materials for history, geography and social life of that period can be gleaned from it. Its texture, its ideas and imagery are themes for admiration among modern poets and scholars, while among these the authorship and the identity of the messenger are still contentious matters.

It is a matter for congratulation to the Malayalīs that prose literature also was cultivated in this period; for prose is an essential factor in the progress of civilization. The copper-plate grants of Vīrarāghava Chakravarṭi show where Malayalam prose stood in those days.

MIDDLE MALAYALAM
500—800 M. E.

Many songs were composed during this period for the people to sing when they sowed and reaped and when they engaged themselves in work and worship. Some of them are popular even in these days. Here in Kerala too as elsewhere the people had their feasts of music and dance: the songs that welcome the birth of a child, those to rock the cradle; the bridal songs; 'the ballads to chronicle the deeds of their heroes; their chorus-songs for their golden harvests; their solos for the lovers to sing; the mystic hymns of the rustic saints.' These show the heart-beats of the village life and culture. Some of these songs are very popular even now as *Kaikottikkalippattus*; so also are certain ballads called

Vadakkanpattus. Of these the most popular are *Thachcholippattus*. These narrate the gallant exploits of Mēppayil Kuñhi Oṭēnan, a valiant Nayar of Ṭachchōḷi, a village in the Kurumbranad Taluk in North Malabar. These display the life of the Malayalīs of those days in a realistic manner, of their rough and ready ways, and of their bold and straight dealings, and also clearly indicate the stage in the development of the language. One notes a great advance in these from the days of *Ramacharitam*, and *Ramakatha* and *Mavaratam pattus*.

Pāttu means a song in Dravidian metre; or, as *Lilathilaka* puts it, ദ്രവിഡസംഘാതാക്ഷരനിബദ്ധമേതുകാമോനവൃത്തവിശേഷയുക്തം പാട്ട്. It has several varieties: *Krishippattu*, *Kalameluttupattu*, *Velanpattu*, *Pananpattu*, *Ṭantunippattu*, *Bhadrakalippattu*, *Brahmanippattu*, *Sastrakkalippattu*, *Sasthampattu*, *Purappattu*, *Onappattu*, *Tiruvatirappattu*, *Vanchippattu*, and number of other varieties.

Many pāttus (songs) are devotional or had their origin in connection with ceremonies performed in temples. The Kerala Temples always stood not only for the cultivation of the spiritual life but also and more 'for the administration of charity, the dissemination of education, the encouragement of fine arts and the employment of a great number of people'. Some of them show "the wonderful development that the country has reached in architecture, sculpture and iconology. The paintings on the walls and panelled ceilings are marvels of art. Temples are also centres of festive gatherings. During the time of these festivals, there will be processions, dancing and drumming, music and piping, drama, *Kuttu* and *Patakam* and sports of various sorts... The songs that accompany the sports and dances, the dramatic literature and the hymnology which are the outcome of these temples are of a high order. Many of these are rightly ranked as classics." The perfection of the drumming, dancing and the music of Kerala have reached a stage which is beyond the pale of controversy.

The poems of Ṉiraṇaṭṭu Paṇikkars are compositions of no mean merit. Their *Ramayanam*, *Bharatam* and *Bhagavatgita* appeal to the ear and to the mind.

The history of the Malayalam language, observes a writer, 'commences, if inscriptions on copper and stone are omitted, with the *Ramacharitam*, the oldest Malayalam poem extant. Composed as it was before the Sanskrit alphabet (*Malayala grantha* characters) came into existence, it is deserving of notice, as it exhibits the earliest phase of the alphabet, probably very many centuries before the Portuguese'.

Cheruśśēri Nampūṭiri, the morning star of Malayalam song, lived in this epoch. It was a fortunate day for Keralam when one of the Namputiries, a class of people who then professed to dislike the Malayalam tongue, began to compose in that language. But this is the least important recommendation for *Krishna gatha* for our acceptance. For, the work, considered even on other grounds, has scarcely been surpassed by similar writings of subsequent days. It has raised the status of the Malayalam language. The poet had a keen eye for beauty and knew how to express it in words that catch the fancy and touch the heart of man. It is a monumental piece of work and has rightly raised its author to that 'kingly breed who starry diadems attain'.

It was Cherusseri who first showed that, if he is so minded, a great poet can practise his art in Malayalam without a large admixture of Sanskrit words. He was followed by Punam, Pūmṭānam and Chēlapparambu and latterly by the Venmaṇis and the two great Cranganore poets.

It should have been stated before this that almost all the poetical pieces of Malayalam are written in what is called Maṇipravāḷam which means a string of gems and corals. It receives its name from being composed in a mixture of Malayalam and Sanskrit words. The addition, here and there, of common Sanskrit words

only gives grace and majesty to Malayalam which otherwise would be bald. It is, therefore, to be understood that there is nothing of the Babylonish dialect about *manipravalam*. The metres of the Malayalam ślōkams are the same as those of the Sanskrit ones; and those that are peculiar to the language, as in the case of the famous works of Ṭunjan and Kunjan, are known and distinguished by their *matras*, the time required to utter them.

Cherusseri wrote his *gatha* in simple, graceful Malayalam so as to be appreciated not by the learned alone but to be easily understood by the masses as well. It is significant that, about the same time, a class of works, called Champus, came into existence which could be understood and appreciated by the learned only. *Gadyapadyamayam Kavyam* is *champu*—that is the definition; but even the *gadya* (prose) has an affinity to *padya* (poetry). The language employed is maṇipravālam; the poets love to speak of it as മധുരമധുര ഭാഷാസംസ്കൃതാന്യോന്യസമ്മേളനസുരഭിലകാവ്യ; but in certain places it will be pure Sanskrit, while in rare instances, it will be pure Malayalam. Prākṛṭ of both one can meet with in these works. The authors freely use ideas and language of old poets. After the *Bhoja* (*Ramayana*) *Champu* and Ananda Bhatta's *Bharata Champu*, Malayalis have written Sanskrit Champus, like *Rajasuyam*, *Kiratam* and *Niranunasikam* of Meppattur Bhattathiri. The first two, *Ramayana Champu and Bharata Champu*, have been rendered into Malayalam by Krishna Variar and the *nirnunasikam* by Vaikkara Mussad. But the number of *manipravala Champus* is legion. *Ramayana Champu*, *Bharata Champu*, *Cheelurnathodayam* of Punam Namputiri and *the Bhashanaishada Champu*, and *Rajaratnavaliyam* of Maïamangalam (Mahishamangalam) are worthy to be mentioned here. The authors of these were gifted poets and had an amazing power of expression. Among the moderns who have successfully attempted

this sort of composition are the late Ravi Varma, the author of *Ushakalyanam*, Rao Sahib Ullur Parameswara Iyer, M. A., B. L., who wrote *Sujatodvaham* and Mr. P. Sankaran Nambiyar, M. A., who is responsible for *Palazhimadhanam*. One main reason for the large output of *Champu prabamthas* is that these were and still are used by Chakyars for their *Kuttu*.

Chandrolsavam is a remarkable product of the *Champu* period. It is not a *champu*, but its language is very like that used in *champus*. As a work of art it stands in the front line. It narrates the incidents of a village festival. Some take it as a work that depicts the rural life of the day in a northern district of the State of Cochin. There may be some substance in the contention. But the statement does not represent the whole truth. For it will be clear from the poem that the gifted poet has drawn largely on his imagination for the development of the appropriate *rasas*.

Certain Namputiries who had, in ancient times suffered social degradation, formed themselves into a separate caste called Chākkiyars. Their duty was to tell Pauranic stories in an impressive way to the people who assembled to hear them. "They recite sacred legends before large audiences; they amuse and entertain their hearers by their wit, or move them to laughter or to tears by their eloquence; and they thus teach the public in the traditions of the past, and preserve from age to age the literary heritage of the nation". In doing so, they are permitted to make the defects and bad traits of the community the butt of their sarcasm and satire which often times operate as a healthy corrective. Their women, Nangyars, sit by their side and beat two metal gongs, while the Nambiyar help them in the play by beating a big drum.

MODERN MALAYALAM.

800 M. E.

The one name that shines forth with exceptional splendour in the literary firmament of Keralam is that

of Ṭunchathu Rāmānujan Eḻuthachchan, a man of the Nayar caste. "The Nambutiri Brahmans envied his genius and learning and are said to have seduced him by the arts of sorcery into the habit of inebriety, wishing to overshadow the mental powers which they feared. The poet, however triumphed over the habit, though he could not abandon it, and in revenge against those whom he considered to be the cause of his debasement, opposed himself openly to the prejudices and intolerance of the Brahmans. The mode of vengeance which he chose was the exaltation of the Malayalam tongue, declaring it as his intention to raise it to an equality with the sacred language of the God and the Rishis. In the prosecution of this purpose he enriched the Malayalam language with the translations of *Ramayanam*, *Mahabharatam* and *Bhagavatam*". These are called Kiḷi-pāttus (parrot-songs) of Eḻuthachchan, who was the first to introduce this sort of composition into the Malayalam language. They receive this name from the introductory invocation to the bird of the Goddess of Learning which these works contain. Other causes also one can easily be given for the name. Of him and his works, we can only speak with reverential admiration. His works are even now considered models for imitation. Not a page is there in his works which does not contain passages glowing with religious eloquence or gleaming with wordly wisdom which lend itself at once to citation and repetition. He was an intensely religious man, and his prayers to and praises of the supreme God in which his work abound have never failed to raise the sympathetic thrill of religious enthusiasm in the mind of him who reads or sings them. He has spent the rare gifts of a genius in his strenuous service to elevate his language, to proclaim to us in new words, 'the mighty hopes that make us men'; and, therefore, it is not too much to say that his name shall be 'an echo and a light unto eternity'.

He has written many works besides the three already referred to. He also adopted Aryan script in

the place of Vatteḷuṭṭu. He had many disciples who too have composed numerous works, some of which are of lasting merit. His first and last disciples were Karunakaran Eḷuṭṭaśśan, the author of *Bramhāndapuram* and *Vetalacharitam* and Sūryanārāyaṇan Eḷuṭṭaśśan, the author of *Parvativayamvaram*. In this connexion reference must be made to the name of Eḷuvaṭṭu Nāṇukkutti Menon of Chittur (b. 1835 A. D.) who, by his translation of *Ekadesam*, has shown how much he has caught of the literary spirit and religious fervour of his great forerunner Eluthachchan. *Nachiketucharitam* of Kōttūr Uṇṇiṭṭan requires a reference here. Uṇṇāyi Vārier's *Girijakalyanam* too is a good kilippāṭṭu. Kerala Varma Raja of north Kottayam is the author of *Ramayanam* and *Vairagyachandrodayam*. *Ramayanam* is a free rendering of the immortal work of Valmiki. The brother of this Raja was also a gifted member of the literary hierarchy. He was the originator of *Ramanattam*, popularly known as *Kathakalies*. Some portions of these are incomparable for their sublimity. He was a great poet and grammarian.

Kathakali or the Malayalam Drama is one of the most intensely national departments of our literature. This branch may be the result of the natural development of *Purakkalli, Mohiniyattam, Ashtapadiyattam and Kutiyattam*. These dramas are written in mixed verse and prose; I shall not say pure prose, for its ticket of entry into sober prose is very questionable. The episodes of *Ramayanam* and *Mahabharatam* form the subjects for these dramas. The verses simply connect the incidents of the story, while the prose portions represent the dialogues of the characters of the play. The actors, representing the several personages, generally paint their faces and dress in a peculiar fashion.

They, by means of appropriate (*mudras*) gestures, convey to the audience the meaning of the prose portions when they are sung to the accompaniment of the beating of drums and other instruments. No doubt

some of these pieces when sung by clever singers without the accompaniment of the discordant sounds of drums and metal gongs, bring with them such charm and inexpressible delight to the hearer as may

Dissolve one into ecstasies
Or bring all Heaven before one's eyes.

In the *Kathakali* and the *Kutiyattam*, acting has reached its acme of perfection. It is time that the Kathakali is made more popular and understandable by the masses than now, and acceptable even to those carping but cultured critics who consider the performance 'a compound of noise and nuisance only tolerable if not too loud'.

There is so much misconception about this art of Kathakali that it will be worth the trouble to extract here what an English lady and a well-known Indian Weekly have to say on this subject. Miss Alice Bonner writes[1]: "In Kathakali, legend and mythology come actually to life... It has preserved, alone among the arts of India, the fulness, the vitality, and the passion of life, to which ancient poetry, paintings and sculptures bear testimony... It is a dance-play, a kind of pantomime in which the actors represent the stories by means of gestures, facial expressions and dance-movements, interpreted by songs and attuned to the rhythm of drums, cymbal and gongs... There are no stage-settings to depict the situation... By the eloquence of his hand-gestures, his body movement and facial expressions, he has to convey to his audience not only the mood and the action of the play, but also the situation in which it takes place... Kathakali has been found to be a living demonstration of all the principles laid down in *Bharat Natya Sastra*... From the composition of the drama to the dress, the steps, the 'Mudras' and the smallest quiver of an eye, everything is governed by hard and fast rules." *The Illustrated Weekly of India*[2] has a very informing article by one who also

1. The *Hindustan Times* April 1, 1936.
2. Of 28th June 1936.

seems to have mastered the subject in all its aspects. "Kathakali is the growth of ages. The primitive, classical, medieval and modern strands that adorn its rich fabric tell the evolution of Natya Sastra. The Kerala Theatre is a combination of Kuttu, Krishnanattam, Mudiyettam, Mohiniyattam and Tullal. A combination of facial expressions, hand gestures and dancing renders the language of the tongue useless. The mudras project the idea, the bhavas enliven it. Every limb and muscle of the artist has its appropriate and significant movement... This descriptive and realistic method renders the comprehension of gesture symbols easy, while the text of the drama sung by the musicians assist intelligent appreciation. No scenic settings are provided. The actors must conjure up before the audience all the scenic effects required.... Suppose it is the story of Kuchela. Let us think of one scene. Kuchela, the poor Brahmin, a devotee and classmate of Sri Krishna, sets out at dawn to Dwaraka to meet the Lord. In the morning, he performs his ablutions. Step by step he gets into the water of the tank, splashes it with his palm; bathes, puts on holy ashes and performs his prayers. Then he ascends and starts on his journey. All this is enacted on a bare piece of ground, a few feet away from the squatting audience. Not one of them realises it all an illusion and acting till the actor leaves the stage".

The poet who invented this sort of composition was a Rajah of Kottārakara family. The subjects of his dramas are the episodes of *Ramayanam*. There is a tradition connected with the origin of *Kathakali*. The then Zamorin of Calicut, for some reason or other, refused to send his troupe of artists to the southern parts to enact *Krishnanattam*. The inventor of *Kathakali* produced his first work to make light of the decision of his northern compeer, and called it *Ramanattam* in contradistinction to *Krishnanattam*, the subject of his pieces being taken from *Ramayanam*.

But the Kathakali works that still captivate the minds of the educated people and capture the hearts of even the illiterate are the *Nalacharitam* of Uṇṇāyi Vārier (b. 1740), the *Uttarasvayambaram*, the *Kichakavadhom* and the *Dekshayagam* of Iravivarman Tampi (b. 1783 A. D.); the *Bakavadhom*, the *Kalyanasaugandhikam* and the *Krimiravadham* of Kōttayaṭṭu Tampuran, the *Rajasuyam* of Kārtika Ṭirunal Mahārāja (1724-98 A. D.). The *Narakasuravadham* and the *Ambarishacharitam* of Aśvaṭi Tirunal Mahārāja (1756-88 A. D.) and the *Ravanavijayam* of Viḍvān Kōil Tampuran (b. 1812) also still hold the stage. It is needless to name all, and profitless too. But it may be of interest to note that, while some are fit to be staged, others are fit to be sung, and yet a third set is good for both. Tampi's works eminently fit in with this third class. His *Taratt*, in language and sentiment, stands as the first lullaby in the language.

Besides *Kilippattu* and *Kathakali*, there is another department of Malayalam Literature which is also entirely indigenous to Kerala; and that is the *Tullal*. Its origin is amusing. A certain Chākyār made a Nampiyār the object of much clumsy ridicule for not doing his duty properly. The latter retorted upon the Chākyār in a singular way. The next day, just when he began his performance, the Nampiyār, in an adjoining place, produced another piece which attracted such a large crowd that the Chākyār was left alone. The Nampiyar was no other than Kalakkath Kunjan Nampiyār, and the work that he porformed was a *Tullal*. Indignation maketh verse it is said; and the proverb has come to be true.

Mr. V. M. Kuttikrishna Menon has given in his *Kerala Natana Kala* another version of the origin of *Tullals*. That seems to be more plausible than the one given above. Kunjan Nambiyār was a dependent of the Ambalappuḻa Raja's family, and lived there for some time. In the invocatory verses in certain of his works,

Nampiyār refers to the deity of the Ṭakiḷiyil temple which is about two miles from Ambalappuḷa. In that temple, for 12 days from the 1st of Medam every year, there is a festival called Paṭayaṇi, at which the villagers divide themselves into parties that will compete with each other in military formations, in mock fights and in burlesque and buffoonery. Māṭṭūr Paṇikkar, the Prime Minister of Ambalappuḷa Raja, got Nampiyār to compose many *Tullals* for the artists and combatants to sing on that occasion. These lines,

ഭടജനങ്ങടെ നടുവിലുള്ളൊരു പടയണിക്കിഹ ചൊല്ലുവാൻ
വടിവിയന്നൊരു ചാരുകേരളഭാഷതന്നെ ചിതം വരു

in the *Sabhapravesam Tullal* give colour to the theory.

"*Tullals*, literally dances, are sung to the accompaniment of music, pantomime and dancing. There are three classes of *Tullals*: *Oattan*, *Seethankan and Parayan*; but as the poems of the first class predominate, the poems of other classes are also termed *Oattans*. They are based mostly on the episodes of *Bharatam* and *Ramayanam*. *Oattan Tullal*, as the name indicates (*Oattan*-running), consists of a variety of rapid metres well-suited for amusing narratives. The pure *Oattan* is more vigorous than *Seethankan*, while the *Parayan* is the best suited for pathetic style. *Nalacharitam and Kiratam* are instances of the first class, *Kalyana Saugandhikam* is an example of the second set, while *Gajendramoksham* and *Sabhapravesam* form instances of this sort of Tullals." All these *Tullals* are the works of the Nampiyār who invented this sort of composition. Besides fifty or sixty *Tullals*, he has composed nine Malayalam dramas, *Panchatantram*, *Sri Krishna Charitam*, *Pathinnalu Vritham*, parrot-songs and poems in different kinds of metres.

From the wide extent of his literary activity, it should not be supposed that his works have suffered in quality. Kunjan Nampiyār is second only to Ṭunjath Eḷuṭṭachan. Those who have not read the works of these authors and carefully collated the rules which they have laid down in their compositions are considered

to be incompetent to speak with any authority on Malayalam Literature. Cochinites can legitimately feel proud that the birth-places of these in their days belonged to Cochin. About 940 M. E. Kiḷḷikurissi temple which Nampiyār praises in his works was renovated by the then Raja of Cochin.

Patricians and plebians alike joined to do honour to Kunjan Nampiyār. He was under the special patronage of the Maharajah who began to adorn the throne of Travancore in the year A. D. 1758, and who, besides being a man of letters, greatly encouraged literary men of all parts of Malabar.

There is a strong individuality about his works. From any collection of quotations, his lines could be easily picked out. The cadences of the verses are perfect. His verses flow with a grace and elegance that are charming indeed; now and then, they are spirited; at other times they rise to an indignant and dignified eloquence; here and there, are passages of keen sarcasm. His works are strewn with jewels that will sparkle for ever.

He was the censor of the age; he had a profound scorn for humbug and sham; and against all such things he has directed his acid epigrams. His allusive satire on popular morals and manners must have had its biting effect on the people beyond the power of rod or sermon. He loved Malayalis and, therefore, wished to direct them in the way that they should go. Kunjan Nampiyār was nothing if not humorous. His humour, warm and all-embracing, 'bathed his ideas in a genial and abiding light'.

Two others of Nampiyār's family have contributed works to our literature. Rāghavan Nampiyār is the author of *Sakuntalam Kathakali*, and Damodaran Nampiyār composed *Ekadesimahatmyam* and *Vilvapuranam Kilippattus*.

During this golden age of our national literature, there were others who worked to give a lead and to add to the output. Of many of these, only a few

slokams remain to remind us of their having lived and to make us regret that there are not more of that sort. Pūmṭōttam and Chēlapparambu, Etapattikād and Machchātt Elayaṭu and Kōttūr Uṇṇiṭṭān belong to this class. Many assert that the *Tullal Kalakeyavadham*, is a work of the first. Pūnṭānam and Rāmapāṇivādan have left much that have enriched our language. The *Bhashakarnamrtam*, *Njanappana* and *Santanagopalam Pana* of the former are popular even to-day; and that fact speaks volumes in their favour. He was a true *bhakta*, a pure devotee whose *Karnamrtam* will not fail to touch a sympathetic chord even in those among the moderns who consider they can change their creed as their dress. While Pūnṭānam was a devotee of Sri Krishna, Rāmapāṇivāḍa was an adherent of Sri Rama. He has composed many hymns about that Deity. His other important works are *Raghaviyam*, *Vishnuvilasam* and *Sitaraghavam* in Sanskrit, and *Vishnugita* and *Panchatantram* in Malayalam. Though Rāmapuraṭṭu Vārier has not left much, his *Kuchelagopalam* boat-song was considered a marvel even by his contemporaries.

OUR OWN TIMES.

In writing of the very modern epoch, it is not my intention to refer to the names of the several writers: they and their works are legion. In the case of living writers, I am alive to the perils of selection and exclusion, and to the difficulty of giving estimates of works yet unfinished. One discerning writer has said that to step into the field of the moderns is to step into a battle-field. I do not go so far. But, anyway, I shall be on my guard. I shall only attempt to point out a few of the manifold forces that have been at work since the advent of the English rule to improve and to develop the Malayalam language; and, while doing so, I may, now and then, say a word or two of those who have been foremost in originating or directing such forces for the good of Malabar. To attempt anything more than this would be impossible.

The year 1795 saw the establishment of the English supremacy in Malabar. With the commencement of the rule of this civilized nation, the Malayalis began to enjoy, with but few exceptions, uninterrupted peace and prosperity. It is not, therefore, strange that we see a vigorous impetus given, at this period, to the growth of the Malayalam Literature.

The Christian missionaries were the first to enter the field, and their schools and printing presses have contributed not a little to the development of the language and the literature of Keralam. The first printing press in India was established on the Malabar Coast by Christian missionaries. The dictionaries and grammars which they have made to aid those engaged in studying this language, display an amount of labour, research and erudition that is simply marvellous. And even where they have gone wrong, they have done so not because they lacked care or diligence, but because they have not been able to rightly interpret the spirit of the language. In this connection, the late Rev. Gundhert's name comes prominently to my mind. Whatever may be the defects of his *Malayalam Grammar*, it is a veritable storehouse of information; while his dictionary of the Malayalam language is a monument of his intelligence and perseverance. It is no matter for surprise that the Malayalis venerate the name of the man who spent the best years of a long and laborious life to discover and develop the resources of their mother-tongue. Malayali scholars like Pāchu Mūṭṭaṭu and Kōvuṇṇi Nedungāḍi have imitated his example and have produced each a capital work on the grammar of the Malayalam language. The work of the latter is in verse and covers a large field. It is a wonderful work, his *Kerala Kaumudi.* But the best of the existing work on the subject is *Kerala Paniṇeeyam* by the late A. R. Rajaraja Varma. He was a great Sanskrit scholar, a sound logician, and a profound glottologist and his book, 'in spite of its errors both of omission and commission, generally satisfies

the criterion of a good scientific grammar.' His *Sabdasodhini*, *Sahitya-sahyam*, *Vrtta-manjarii* and *Bhashabhushanam* are other works of great merit intended to develop the language and literature of Malayalam. He has also enriched the literature by his translations of *Meghdutu*, *Kumarasambhavam*, *Sakuntalam*, *Malaviganimitram* and *Charudatta*. His commentary to *Nalacharitam Kathakali* and to his uncle's rendering of *Sakuntalam* are models in that line. Before I leave this subject, I think it proper to mention the name of Govinda Pillai, the author of the *History of Malayalam Literature*. The amount of patience and perseverance he has shown in collecting and arranging the materials comprised in his work is marvellous, remembering that people in these parts, like the proverbial dog in the manger, refuse to give up any manuscript in their possession. Mr. P. Sankaran Nambiyar, Mr. R. Narayana Panikkar, and Vidwān T. M. Chummar are others who have written works on this same subject.

The inauguration of a system of University education, such as at present obtains in this Presidency has led to important results. In the curriculum of studies for the different examinations, the University has given a high place to the several vernaculars of the Presidency. Thus the Malayalis who are trained in English schools not only imbibe western modes of thought but are also intelligently instructed in the Malayalam language. These Malayalis, in their turn, begin to publish old and useful books, to produce new ones and to translate into Malayalam the important works of English master-minds, as also to disseminate the seeds of education throughout the length and breadth of the country. Women also have begun, as of old, to occupy their proper place in society. In every nook and corner of Keralam, one meets with schools and even colleges for girls. Many young ladies of respectable families possess every desirable accomplishment. There are many ladies in Malabar who are celebrated for their Sanskrit scholarship or for their systematic knowledge

of the science of music. "Nor are feminine authors wanting in the country. The names of Manorama Tampuratti, Kutti Kunhi Tamkachchi and Ikkavu Amma are only a few out of hundreds of talented authoresses still unknown to fame".

Ikkavu Amma's *Subhadrarjunam* is the first dramatic work by a Malayali lady. Even apart from this fact, it is worthy of a high place among dramatic works. It has went through several editions already. Ṭaravath Ammāḷu Amma and Śrīmathi T. B. Kalyani Amma and Srimathi T. C. Kalyani Amma are other lady writers who have enriched Malayalam literature in no small measure. What is more, their racy style has such a grace and charm about it that it has served as models for others. *Bhakta-mala*, *Budha-charitam*, are a few of the great works of Ammalu Amma. *Vyalvatta-smaranakal* of Srimathi T. B. Kalyani Amma is a very popular work. *Amma Rani*, *Visha-Vrksham* and *Krishnakanta's Will* of Srimathi T. C. Kalyani Amma are well-known in Kerala.

Princes have not been slow to recognise the altered conditions of the times. The names of Rama Varma Maharajah and his brother will be honoured by posterity as the patrons of Malayalam Literature at the time of its revival. The name of the latter has already been immortalized in *Visagha Vijayam*, a *Kavyam* in Sanskrit by His Highness the late Kerala Varma, Valia Koil Tampuran of Travancore.

This Koil Tampuran was the first to translate a Sanskrit dramatic work into Malayalam. His translation of *Sakuntalam* is not free from a few faults, and no one was readier to own them than the translator himself. It is, however, a true and dignified rendering of the original. Its popularity is unquestioned; it has reached its fourth edition, an honour paid only to one or two recent works in Malayalam. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect of this work as a guide and as a timulant. Since 1881, the year in which

Bhasha-Sakunthalam was published, up to the present, no less than four score dramas have seen the light of day.

During his life-time, his nephew and pupil, A. R. Rajaraja Varma published a Malayalam rendering of *Sakunthalam*. After him, recently, two other translations by Messrs. A. Krishna Pisharoti and Vaḷḷathōle Narayana Menon have been published. Will these displace the time-honoured version of Valia Kōil Ṭampuran? Let Time decide that question.

Another work of his, *Mayura Sandesam*, by the beauty of its sentiments, the melody of its verse and the intensity of feeling to which it gives expression, has reached the high-water mark of Malayalam poetry. It is after the *Cloud-Messenger* of Kalidasa. But Valia Koil Tampuran has one distinct advantage over the bard of Ujjayini. In *Megha Dutha*, Kalidas only shaped what his imagination bodied forth; while the thoughts of the *Peacock-Messenger* are those that have passed through the cruicible of our poet's experience. Even in the case of this poem, as in the case of the former work of his, critics were not wanting who think that the language of the poem is a great deal too Sanskritic. Sanskrit or not Sanskrit, 'it is poetry and magnificent poetry from the first line to the last—poetry, such as there is not, perhaps, more than a small volume-full in all languages.' *Amarukasatakam*, *Anyapadesa-satakam*, *Hanumadulbhavam* are some of his other poetical works in Malayalam. Besides *Visaghavijayam kavyam*, he has written several other works in Sanskrit too.

As President of the Vernacular Text-book Committee of Travancore, he did yeomen service to the cause of Malayalam prose literature. His *Akbar*, one of the best prose works in Malayalam, is published under the auspices of this Committee. He was also President of the *Bhasha Poshini Sabha*, a society whose avowed object was the encouragement and development of the language and literature of Malabar.

He is to a certain extent instrumental in giving a healthy tone to prose literature, and writers are beginning to understand the imperative necessity that there is for prose compositions as well to follow certain definite rules.

His unique devotion to literature was recognised by Her Majesty's Government, by the local University and by learned Societies in England. He was a liberal patron of literature and art, and was revered by his contemporaries.

The work of translation started by Koil Tampuran was taken up by Chāṭṭukkutty Maṇṇātiyār, Kuñhi Kudtan Tampuran, Kochuṇṇi Tampurān, Vaḷḷathōle, Kundūr Narayana Menon, Kottāraṭṭil Śankuṇṇi and others. Mannātiyār was a veteran in the art of translation, and his *Uthara-Rama-Charitam* as well as his *Janakiparinayam* and *Halasyam* display the rare abilities he possessed as a translator and poet. Kuñhikudtan Ṭampurān was a voluminous writer. No less than eight dramas, not to speak of several other works, are to be put down to his credit. There was an ease and facility about his making verses which was phenomenal. He translated the whole of *Mahabaratam* in a phenomenally short time. He was called Kerala Vyāsan after that. His renderings of the *Suka-Kokila Sandesams* are beautiful, while his *Keralam* is valuable from the standpoint of history as well.

The ease he possessed in making verses has, to a slight extent, brought with it a corresponding degree of carelessness. But it must be said to his credit that he was one who was ever ready to further the cause of literature. He was a good Sanskrit scholar. His best work is his Malayalam rendering of *Ascharya Chudamani*. Though ignorant of English, he has, with the help of a friend of his, done *Hamlet* into Malayalam. Mr. Śankuṇṇi is, no doubt, incapable of soaring to the heights of Kuñhi Kudtan Tampuran. But he is more careful, more methodical in his work than his friend.

His translation of *Vikrama* and *Urvasi* is a good piece of work, better than the rendering of the same by Kunhi Kudtan Tampuran. His translations of *Adhyatma-Ramayanam* and *Malati-Madhvam* are much appreciated by the scholars. But his most popular work is an original drama called *Kuchela Gopalam*. The periodicals of the present day are also greatly indebted to Mr. Sankunni. Some of his contributions to them have been collected in seven or eight volumes under the name of *Aithihyamala*. The easy, graceful style of prose he has adopted and the variety of interesting topics dealt with by him have made the volumes very popular among the young and the old alike.

Kochuṇṇi Ṭampurān of Kodungallūr was one of the best poets of his day. His vast and varied learning, his retentive memory, his poetic talent and his cultured tastes are even to this day topics of constant conversation among those who knew this prince. His *Kalyani* is the first original dramatic composition in Malayalam. It portrays the Malayali society of the present day and indicates the spirit of the times. He is the author of some other dramas and several works both in Sanskrit and Malayalam. His *Viprasandesam*, *Kollam* and *Bhadrolppathi* may here be referred to as examples of his works. He has also rendered *Bhagavatam* into Malayalam in the *gatha* metre. *Gosrisaditya-Charitam* and *Vanchisavamsam* are two *Mahakavyas* by him. Every Malayali will gratefully acknowledge that he was one of those few who by precept and example have improved the tone of the Malayalam poetical literature of the day. He was great in other walks of life as well.

Venmaṇi Nampūripāds, father and son, and Ravi Varma Raja belonged in their time to the band of great poets referred to above. It is impossible for any Malayali to speak of them without rapture. Some of their *slokams*, the most captivitating productions of Malayalam poetry, have shown the capabilities of Malayalam. Nay more; they have fully emphasised the truth of the

saying *Poeta nascitur non fit*, and have won for them, a sovereign station in the history of Malayalam Literature. The works of Venmanis have been collected and edited in three volumes by Mr. C. Achyuta Menon and myself. *Ushakalyanam*, *Champu*, *Devisatakam*, and *Kavisabharanjanam* drama of Ravi Varma are also in print. Before I close this part of the sketch, I wish to refer to the names of K. C. Kēśava Pillai, Kaviyūr Raman Nambiyar, Śivōḷḷi and Oravankara Nampūṭiri, and N. Rama Kurup. The works of Kesava Pillai show that he was a scholar and born poet. His drama *Raghava Madhavam* and his *Mahakavya*, *Keaviyam*, are meritorious works, while his *Bhasha Narayaneeyam* was considered a marvel from the pen of a young poet as he then was. His *Kerala Varmah Vilasam*, a *Kavyam* on the life of the author of *Mayura Sandesam*, reflects great credit on his Sanskrit scholarship. Kaviyur Raman Nampiyar was a very bright, promising young poet. But cruel fate did not permit him to live long. He has done *Malamangala Bhanam*, *Subhadradhananjayam* and *Sri Krishna Vilasam* into Malayalam. These fruits of his, though 'gathered ere their prime' were not wanting in 'the quickness and sweetness which come of years.'

Chiṟṟūr Varavūr Śāmu Mēnōn, a good poet, belonged to the land of Eḻuṭṭachchan. His *Yogavasishtam*, *Devi Bhagavatam* and *Tripurarahasyam*, *Albhutharamayanam* have become popular works in Malabar. The works of Sivolli and Oravankara Namputiris have fortunately been collected and published by their grateful and discerning relatives. Though by nature unobtrusive, their works have contributed in no small degree to direct the course of Malayalam literature. Sivolli's *Datyuha Sandesam* it was that put a stop to the production of trashy *Sandesams*. They were scholars. The works of K. C. Narayanan Nambiyar, V. C. Balakrishna Panikkar, K. Kesavan Nayar and others must be classed as fine poetry, such as of those of born poets.

When Rama Kurup wrote his *Chakee Chankaram*, there were coming into print so many dramas and poems which were drivel and unmitigated trash, not worth the paper and ink spent on them. But the satirical hits and withering sarcasm of Rama Kurup's burlesque put an end to that 'hopeless bog of poesiless verse'.

C. Anthappayi, a writer of some eminence and the author of *Sanmarga-prakasika* and *Dharmopadesika*, also contributed his vitriolic redicule to parch up these poesiless swampes.

It will be interesting and perhaps profitable as well to take a brief but a general survey of the several departments of the Malayalam literature of recent times instead of making references to individual writers and their works. From this we shall also be able to discover in some measure the general tendencies of the age.

At one time it was thought that the art of *Kathakali* was languishing and that it might disappear from the stage. But the *Kalamandalam* started by Vallaṭṭōle resuscitated it in a remarkable manner, and well-known artists are coming from distant lands to learn at his Institute the technique of this wonderful art. Vallathole has put his whole part in the scheme, and he is a name to be reckoned with. He is a great poet. He has rendered Valmiki's *Ramayanam* into Malayalam, besides several of the plays of Bhasa. He has composed a *Mahakavyam* called *Chitrayogam*. Some of his small poetical pieces are gems that are likely to sparkle for ever on the forefinger of time. The late Ruler of Cochin whose lamented demise took place at Madras conferred on him the title of Kavisārvabhauman. He has written a *Kathakali* work. Other moderns too, like Kesava Pillai, Padmanabha Kurup, Padmanabha Panikkar and Mr. T. C. Achyuta Menon, have produced *Kathakali* compositions.

Kilippattus too have not suffered much under adverse mystic winds. *Kalkipuranam* and *Skandapuranam* have been rendered as *Kilippattus* by

Mr. Otuvil Sankarankutti Menon, that gifted blind bard of Ṭalappalli. His is an epic of endeavour and conquest over great obstacles. He is a brother of Otuvil Kunhi Krishna Menon whose *Kavimrgavali* created quite an unprecedented stir in the world of Malabar poets. There is an ease and grace in his poems which do not fail to charm those who read or hear them. The *Ramasvamedham* of Kāṭṭuḷḷil Achyuta Menon and the *Kilippattus* of Varavūr Śāmu Menon will not suffer in comparison with the great models of old days. The *Bhasha Puranams* of Vallathole and Vāsudēvan Mūssad also have successfully adopted the *Kilippattu* style.

There is a craze for Dravidian metres and a corresponding hostile attitude against rhyme and Sanskrit metres among a certain section of the Malayalam poets. This mentality among a few moderns is to be highly regretted, for a little thinking will show that there is no real substance, much less sufficient reason behind it. It is a matter for gratification that the contagion is not spreading and the output is not affected.

Of the famous works of Kalidasa, Bhavabhuti, Sri Harsha, Bhasa, and Sudraka we have fine Malayalam renderings, and some of these are by those who have leanings for the Dravidian metres. Some Shakespearian dramas are also done into Malayalam. Mākōṭṭu Krishna Menon stood for Sanskrit culture. His renderings of *Chandakausikam* and *Lalitopakhyanam* deserve mention. C. Govindan Elayadam was an ideal Pandit of the old type who loved his pupils and was revered by them. He has invested his translations of *Tempest* and *Chandrahasa* with a simplicity and charm all his own. Kuṇḍūr Narayana Menon, was a compeer of Kodungallur Tampurans, Natuvom and Venmani Mahan. He has worked hard for the development of the Malayalam literature. His translations of *Malavikagnimitram*, *Meghadutu* and *Kumarasambhavam* are familiar to students of Malayalam. The artless piety and the simple diction of Natuvath Achchan's *Bhagavatdutu* have appealed to the masses to a very great degree.

Of *Mahakavyas* of the Sanskrit classic type we have a fair number. *Ramachandravilasam* of Padmanabha Kurup, *Kesaviyam* of Kesava Pillai, *Vanchisavamsam* and *Gosrisadityacharitam* and *Pandavodayam* of Kochunni Tampuran, *Rugmangadacharitam* of Pantalath Kerala Varma Tampuran, *Umakeralam* of Rao Sahib Ullūr Parameswara Ayyar, *Chitrayogam* of Vallathole, *Sri Yesuvijayam* of K. Cheriyan Mappilay and *Raghuviravijayam* and *Raghvabhudayam* of Mr. Vatakkankur Raja Raja Varma will arrest the attention of any scholar. Ullur is admittedly a profound scholar and a great poet. What is more: he works by day and by night to enrich the Malayalam language and its literature, in both of which he is acknowledged to be an authority. Mr. P. K. Narayana Pillai is also great as a scholar and poet, but his strenuous life as a lawyer and politician has left him little leisure to bring forth as many works as his friend. His *Prasangatarangani* and *Prayogadipika* sufficiently indicate his scholarship and his fine critical taste for literature. Vatakkankur Raja Raja Varma has, besides his two *Kavyas*, written a work called *Sahitisarvasvam*, a very useful book for advanced students. His *Sahitya Manjari* contains a collection of his valuable essays on literary subjects. His style is free from verbal jugglery and enigmatic conceits. He is a good scholar and a fine poet. He is above all an enthusiast in the cause of the ordered progress of his mother-tongue. Kumāran Āśān has composed a number of fine poems on a variety of subjects. His *Fallen Flower*, *Nalini*, *Lila*, *Duravastha* and *Chandala Bhikshuki* are noteworthy for their style and suggestiveness. He was one of those honoured during the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to Madras. Mr. Etamarath Victor's *Palaya Pana* and *Garland of Hymns* contain many elevating devotional songs. Mr. A. D. Hari Sarma, though a member of the Gauda-Saraswath community, is a fine student of Sanskrit and Malayalam, a fact that is amply borne out by his several

prose and poetical works. But the one remarkable fact is the advent of Pandit K. P. Karuppan into the literary firmament of Malabar. He entered it with his *Balakalesam*, which securred the first prize in a competition instituted by a generous donor for the best drama fit to be staged at the completion of the sixtieth year of the penultimate Ruler of Cochin. I shall here transcribe a few lines from a Preface I wrote to that work at the time of its first publication in 1913. "Mr. Karuppan is a Valan, a boatman, by caste —a fact he is happily not ashamed of. But, if you expect to see in him an illiterate man tanned by the Indian sun, with a dirty bit of cloth round his head, armed with a paddle and seated at the helm of a country dug-out, you will be greatly disappointed. He is a fair young man, and dresses as decently as the reader himself. He is a good Sanskrit scholar and a poet of no mean order, and he deservedly occupies to-day the proud position of the Sanskrit Pandit of the Ernakulam Sirkar Girls' School. I should not be understood to have decried the calling of Mr. Karuppan's castemen. Certainly not; for his is as honourable, useful, and exciting a profession as that of any other community."

Balakalesam did not escape criticism and that of a virulent type. But the malicious attacks of a carping critic only produced, as its after-effect, a clearer sky for Mr. Karuppan, and he rose in his official position and in the sympathetic estimation of the disinterested educated public of Malabar. The late Ruler of Cochin honoured him with the title of *Kavitilakan* and the University once appointed him as the Chairman of the Board of Examiners for its Oriental Titles Examination. Honours have not inflated his head nor made him proud. His rendering of *Bhaimiparinayam* and his *Lalitopaharam* and the numerous poems and musical dramas he has composed for School Day celebrations mark him out as one of the best poets of modern times. Speaking of musical dramas, the *Sadaramam* of Kesava Pillai and the *Sangitanaishadham* of Mr. T. C. Achyuta

Menon deserve special reference. Even illiterate coolies go about with snatches of songs from them in their mouths, so catching has been their melody. The number of clever poets and of prose-writers, males and females, who have risen and of others who are rising is legion. It is not possible in this short sketch to find space for them all. Using a lawyer's phrase, I can only submit that the names given are illustrative and not exhaustive. However, the name of Mr. G. Sankara Kurup merits mention here not alone as the author of several poems but also as a clamant advocate of mystic poetry.

Another department of literature that is being cultivated is prose fiction. T. M. Appu Nedungadi's *Kundalatha* led the way. In form and finish it has reached a high level. But the novel that first attracted thousands of readers was Chandu Menon's *Indulekha*. It is a society novel and treats of the upper ten, their fashions and frivolities. There is a firmness in his handling his story. His racy diction and his graceful humour mark him out as the Thackery of Malayalam literature. He has in his novel hit off certain characters with wonderful accuracy, and his Sūri Nambūri, Vythie Patter, Panchu Menon and others will live as long as our literature lasts to enliven passing hours.

Marthanda Varma of C. V. Raman Pillai, has revivified a forgotten chapter of Travancore history. It enchains the attention of the reader from the first line to the last. There is life in his story, his persons and his dialogues. His characters have the variety, as they have the truth of history. It is one of the most brilliant things of its kind and will hold its own with any historical novel of any other country. He is also the author of several farces. Many novels have come to light in these years; originals and translations. Among these originals, the most recent is *Sakuntala Devi*, a two-volumed novel by Śrīmaṭi Dēvaki Amma, a granddaughter of Chandu Menon, of which her forebear

would have felt proud if he were alive to-day. Among translations, those of Śrīmaṭi T. C. Kalyāṇi Amma deserve a reference here. For her literary works she was given the title of Sāhiṭya Sakhi by the late Ruler of Cochin. A. Narayana Puduval and Mr. E. V. Krishna Pillai are well known as tellers of short stories.

History, biography, science, and critical studies are successfully trying to have their voices heard in Keralam. Malayalam can now boast of a few books on the first three subjects; while the beginnings of the last can be met with in the decent periodicals of the day.

To the making of the *History of Cochin* by the late K. P. Padmanabha Menon much patient research work has gone. Lives of many of the Malabar Men of Letters have been published recently. Though they lack the form and the finish of similar series in English, yet it has to be said to their credit that they have made a fair start. Except a few works by Christian Missionaries, which, from their quaint phraseology, are of little or no practical value at the present day, Dr. Krishnan Pandalay's translation of Sir H. Roscoe's Primer on Chemistry may be said to be an epoch-marking book. Others have followed him, notably Mr. M. Udaya Varma Raja with his *Introductory Primer* and Mr. M. Rajaraja Varma, with a primer on *Physical Geography*. The latter has written several other useful works on scientific and historical subjects. The want of a standard glossary of scientific terms stands in the way of the writing of useful manuals on scientific topics.

Many works in the range of Malayalam literature, notably the great epics, contain gems of philosophical thought, pure and serene. The several Malayalam renderings of the great Puranas, the brochure on *Advaita Philosophy* from the pen of H. H. Kerala Varma, the late learned Elaya Raja of Cochin, and the translations of the *Bhagavat Gita* by A. Govinda Pillai, Damodaran Kartha and T. V. Ananthan Nayar, will, I dare say, give a proper setting to the above so as to enhance their value and to induce Malayalees to venture to still higher

levels in the search after the purest and the most precious jewel of all. The scholarly commentaries of the Bhagavat Gita in Malayalam by K. M. and Dr. L. A. Ravi Varma and also those of some of the Upanishads by the latter will contribute greatly to popularise the Advaita Philosophy among the educated Malayalees.

I would fail in a pleasing duty were I to omit the names of those who play the not very ambitious but by no means insignificant role of text-book writers. A. R. Rajaraja Varma, Kuppakātt Narayana Menon, M. Krishnan, Joseph Muliyil, Mr. Krishnan Thampi, and others have written several useful books in Malayalam which are being taught in several schools in Malabar.

It is becoming the fashion of the day for officials and professors to air their self-importance by declaring that they are literally chained to their official duties and that they get little or no time to engage themselves in literary or scientific pursuits. Every one who has read anything of the life and work of the great politicians and professors of England and of other countries will know what idle talk this is. Even here, there are examples of those like A. R. Rajaraja Varma, A. Govinda Pillai, Mr. M. Rajaraja Varma, Mr. C. Achyuta Menon, Kundur Narayana Menon, Ullur, Pailo Paul, Mr. Krishnan Thampi, Mr. L. V. Ramaswami Ayyar and others to falsify this newlangled notion. Among these, the names of Mr. M. Rajaraja Varma, Professor Krishnan Thampi and Mr. L. V. Ramaswami Ayyar deserve special mention. They work not for fame, nor for money, but for the sole purpose of enriching Malayalam literature. Besides the renderings of *In Memorian* and of Goldsmith's *Hermit*, and a commentary to Koil Thampuran's *Anyapadesam* and Rajaraja Varma's *Meghadata*, the first has published several works in prose. Professor Thampi is the author of several works in Sanskrit and in Malayalam, and is always trying to introduce new forms of poetical literature into Malayalam. Mr. L. V. Ramaswami Ayyar is a linguist who, by his

researches on the morphology of the Malayalam Language, has gained an international reputation.

PERIODICAL LITERATURE.

Newspapers and Magazines have breathed fresh life into the literature of the land. They have introduced a large race of literary men to the public. By their well-timed and judicious criticism, they have arrested the growth of poisonous and ephemeral literature and facilitated the production of much of what is healthy and vigorous.

Many of the papers and magazines are conducted with honesty, devotion and ability, while a few exist more to parade the passions and prejudices of ill-advised partisans and to gain notoriety by constant appearance in law-courts than for the political, social or literary advancement of the country. It is indeed a matter for regret that journals of this class are on the increase which, no doubt, points to the prurient taste of a certain section of the reading public that stands very much in need of some drastic remedy. There are a number of daily and weekly newspapers conducted in Malayalam.

When speaking of newspapers, the one name that suggests itself to my mind is that of Kunhi Raman Nayanār. He was the best Malayalam newspaper correspondent of his day. His chaste diction and his humour invest his writings with an indefinable charm. If only he had worked he could have easily gained an undying name in the journalistic history of his country. He started *Kerala Sanchari*, a weekly. He used to style himself as Kesari. Some of his writings have been gathered together in the form of a book. Another able journalist was Ramakrishna Pillai. His wife Srīmaṭy T. B. Kalyāṇi Amma, who wields a facile pen, has written about her husband in her Reminiscences called *Vyazhavatta Smaranakal*.

The first Malayalam Magazine was *Vidya Vilasini*. It made its name as the medium of publication of *Bhasha Sakunthalam*. It closed its career after a

fitful life of a few years. Then came *Vidya Vinodini*, under Mr. C. Achyuta Menon. It soon became a power in the land. To gain a public audience even great poets availed themselves of *Vidya Vinodini*, while young writers of talent and genius served their apprenticeship under Mr. Menon. Mr. Achyuta Menon is a great writer indeed. Wit and beauty, reason and grace, all are sweetly blended in his inimitable articles. His reviews of several works are real gems of prose.

Vidya Vinodini also had its day and ceased to be. Its place was filled up for a time by *Rasika Ranjini*, a monthly that was owned and conducted by H. H. Rama Varma, Appan Tampuran of Cochin. It speaks volumes in favour of this prince that he, despising a life of learned leisure, should love to live laborious days for the benefit of his country and its literature. 'To write perfect prose' it has been rightly put 'is as difficult as to lead a perfect life.' His Highness is showing how to do both. His *Bhaskara Menon* and *Bhutarayan* are very good novels. His stray writings to journals are collected in four or five volumes called *Mangalamala*.

Bhasha Poshini is the name of the monthly conducted by the society of the same name. The late Varughese Mappillai, its first editor, was a man with a many-sided activity. He was a poet and the Secretary to an educational institution and to several societies and trading concerns. His capacity for taking pains was so wonderful that nothing produced by him or placed under him suffered for want of attention. His *Abraya Kutti* is a meritorious work. His contributions to periodical literature are marked by vigour and breadth of view. He was the life and soul of the *Bhasha Poshini Sabha*. In fine, he was a man with a heart to do good to his fellowmen; and after his lights and might he did it admirably well. Mr. M. Kumaran is the master of a melodious prose style effective to express every shade of feeling and of fine thoughts.

Kavanodayam, a journal published by the late Udaya Varma Raja of Kadathanad, was mainly devoted

to the publication of poetical compositions. Udaya Varma (b. 1867 A. D.) maintained the high traditions of his ancient family. Himself a literary man he neve failed to encourage men of letters.

There is an idea among certain persons in Cochin and Travancore that the output of literary works in British Malabar has not been commensurate with its extent and importance. This is an appropriate place I trust to enter my caveat against that wrong notion. The palaces of Kōlaṭṭiri, Kōttayam, Kōlikōte, Kōttakkal, Chirakal and Kōlathuñāḍ Rajas were centres of learning in ancient days, and sources of generous patronage to literature. Sukumara Kavi, the author of *Sri Krishna Vilasam* was a Malayali from North Malabar. *Krishnattam* and *Purva Bharatha Champu* are the works of Manavedan Raja (1125 A.D.) of Calicut. And what of *Ramanattam*, popularly known as *Kathakali*? Veerakerala Varma (1665—1743) the originator of that, and the author of eight dramatic pieces, was a Northerner; so too was his brother, Kerala Varma, the author of *Bhasha Valmiki Ramayanam* and of *Vairagya Chandrodayam*. He helped Travancore during the Mogul invasion (1680—3). Cheruśśēri and Pūmṭanam, and Śankara Wārriar, who composed the *Sri Krishna Vijayam* in Sanskrit and *Pancharatnam* in Malayalam, were all from British Malabar. Mēppaṭṭur Bhattaṭiri was a Northerner. Besides his famous Sanskrit works, he has written in Malayalam *Advaita Satakam*, *Chandrika Maholsavam*, *Kuttappathakam* and a number of *Champu-prabandhams*. So also Kallekulamgara Raghava Pisharoti, the author of *Vetala Charitam*, *Panchatantram* and *Setumahatmyam*, hails from British Malabar. Kōlaṭṭiri Swarūpom had *Yogams* and *Sadassukal* for the encouragement of poets and the development of literature. Ravi Varma of Kolattiri composed *Udaya Varma Charitam*, and Rama Varma made *Bharata Samgraham*, and Kataṭṭanāt Appan Tampuran wrote *Sadratnamala*. *Kuchela Vrttam* of Kōttūr Nambiyār, *Gautama Charitam* of Olayattu

Sankara Poduval, *Harischandra Charitam Tullal* of Kunhi Bappu, and *Nalacharitam Manipravalam* of Mātāyi Māmman Gurukkal are well-known works. Vedic hymns were for the first time rendered into Malayalam by a Namputiri in Talipparambu, and the first translation of *Bhagavat Gita* was by Kunhappu Gurukkal, and of *Koran* by Māyankutti Haji. It was a Namputiri from Etakkāt that wrote *Prasnamargam*; *Bhaskaram*, a Malayalam commentary to *Ashtangahrdayam* is by Uppōte Kaṇṇan; and about 200 years ago Kerala Varma of Chirakkal Kovilakam wrote an annotation to *Ekadesam*. Punnaśśēri Nampi, Sheshagiri Prabhu, Muliyil Krishnan, V. C. Balakrishna Panikker, K. C. Narayanan Nampiyar, Kuttyappan Nampiyar, Mr. Unnikrishnan Nayar, Mr. Kuttamaṭṭ Kunhikrishna Kurup, Mr. Balakrishnan Nayar, Mr. P. S. Warriar, Mr. P. K. Warriar—each of them can be considered a host in himself. I can multiply instances. But I believe I have said enough to show that the contention is not just.

What Udaya Varma and his *Kavanodayam* did for Malayalam Literature will ever be recorded in its glorious history. He was assisted by Krishna Warriar, whose scholarship and poetical talents are seen in his *Bhasha Ramayana Champu*. The Raja is the author of *Rasikabhushanam*, *Priyadarsika* and *Kavitabharanam*.

Vyavahara Chinthamani, a monthly devoted to law, and *Dhanvanthari*, one devoted to medicine, did very useful work. Another magazine that once came into prominence was *Sarada*. It was edited by three Nayar ladies and was intended for the instruction and amusement of the ladies of Malabar.

Lekshmibhai, another monthly that served the same purpose, has long been in the journalistic field. A few years ago, it celebrated its Silver Jubilee. To have lived to do it is itself a creditable feat. But when one remembers of the silent but solid service it has been doing for the popular education of the ladies of Malabar, one cannot but give it its meed of praise with a

grateful heart. *Keralan*, that was edited by Mr. Attur Krishna Pisharoti, was a high-class magazine devoted to scholarly articles. It was in that that Mr. Raman Nambiyassan's brilliant romance *Keralesvaran* was first published. Mr. Krishna Pisharoti is an erudite scholar, and he has done a yeoman's service to Malayalam Literature by his scholarly editions of *Lilatilakam* and *Unninili Sandesam* and by his rendering of *Sakumthalam*. His articles on the Bhasa question, his booklets on the early history of Keralam and on the history of Malayalam Literature are all marked for their scholarship and research work. Of the new ventures, the *All-Kerala Parishat Magazine* under the editorship of Ulloor, and *Sahrdaya* under the guidance of Professor V. Krishnan Tampi are expected to do substantial work in consolidation and research work and in the moulding of the future growth of our language and literature The former is the organ of the *Samastha Kerala Sahitya Parishat*, a learned body which has secured the patronage of the Rulers of Cochin and Travancore.

Under the head of newspapers, there are at present several dailies and weeklies that are doing good work to promote the cause of the Malayalam language and literature. I should also here record the great service that has all along been rendered by respectable printing and book-selling firms to the growth of Malayalam literature.

MALAYALEES WHO HAVE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH.

To give at least an apparent completeness to this sketch, I think it is necessary to take a cursory view of the work done in English by the natives of this country. For 'the work of administration and of the Courts of Justice is more or less carried on in English, higher education is imparted in English, and English is the one language in which the people of the different provinces in India could at present communicate with one another'. But it does not fall within the purview of this sketch to speak of those Malayalees who have won

a name as statesmen, as administrators, judges, lawyers, public speakers or educationists. I shall refer only to a few of those who have won fame by their published works.

P. Sankunni Menon's *History of Travancore* is a valuable work. But with much that is good one finds in it much of what is bad also. The writings of his son, K. P. Padmanabha Menon, are, however, free from this defect. His *History of Kerala* in four large volumes is marked by historical accuracy and by the logical rigour in its treatment, and is the outcome of a life-long study and of patient and persevering investigation. Seshagiri Prabhu, Balakrishnan Nayar, Mr. T. K. Gopala Panikkar and Mr. Rama Pishāroti and Mr. Balakrishna Wārriar, like the late Menon, have worked at the rich, unexplored mines of the antiquities of Keralam. Prabhu was an enthusiast in his work and was, besides, a profound Sanskrit scholar. Many of the Census Reports of Cochin and Travancore are veritable storehouses of information concerning those States. They are very readable volumes and reflect great credit on the historical researches and literary ability of Mr. C. Achyuta Menon, M. Sankara Menon, N. Nagamiah and Drs. Subrahmania Ayyar and Kunjan Pillai. So too the Report of the *Jenmi-Kutiyan* Committee written by the late Judge Raman Thampi. But foremost among this band of workers stood the late Professor Sundaram Pillai. His *Sovereigns of Venad* is a substantial piece of work which would do credit to any antiquarian of any land. His services to the cause of historical literature deserve to be remembered with gratitude.

Nor are poets wanting in Malabar. *Firebrand*, evidently a political drama, shows that its author, T. Govinda Menon, was conversant with the subtleties of English prosody and that his mind was saturated with the best works of Shakespeare.

It is a matter for congratulation that at one time two of the four dailies of Madras were edited by

Malayalees. The late G. Parameswaran Pillai, who ably edited the *Madras Standara*, has also written two books, *Representative Men of India* and *London and Paris* which have won for him a European reputation. He was a self-made man. In spite of his poverty, G. P. Pillai worked himself up to the pinnacle of fame. The story of his life is worthy of being written, because of the lessons of patience and perseverence which it teaches to his countrymen, because of the originality of his thought and effort and because his life exemplifies in an emphatic way that real worth will rise though by poverty depressed. C. Karunakara Menon was for a long time the Editor of the *Hindu*. The ability and earnestness he brought to bear on his work gained for his paper a wide circle of readers. K. Menon edited *The Madras Review* also. This review as well as the *Madras Law Journal* were originally started by the late Sir Sankaran Nayar who rose to be the Advocate-General of Madras, a High Court Judge and a member of H. E. the Viceroy's Executive Council. His writings and speeches were marked by sound common sense and manly vigour. *The Malabar Quarterly Review* of C. V. Subramania Ayyar devoted itself to the discussion of topics relating to Malabar and was a first class magazine.

I shall now close this somewhat desultory paper. I have spoken of the dim beginnings of Malayalam Literature, of the clouds that overcast it for a time and of the effulgence of brilliant constellations that followed the darkness. The future is with us. By arduous work and with patriotic zeal, it rests with the sons of Malabar to hasten the advent of a glorious future. We may in the meantime console ourselves with the encouraging thought that we are in the dawn of a great era and in that dawn to be alive is very heaven.*

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