





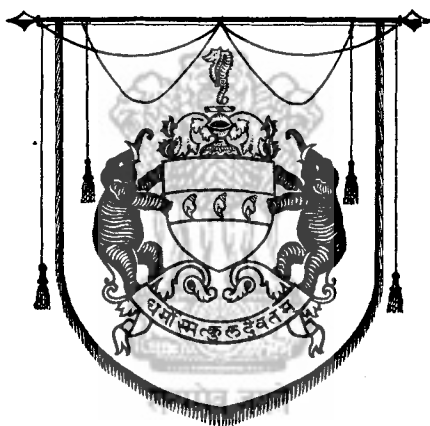


# HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF TRAVANCORE

His Highness Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala RAMA  
VARMA Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja  
Ramaraja Bahadur Shamsher Jang Maharaja of Travancore.



# TRAVANCORE







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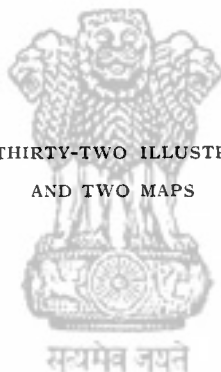
# TRAVANCORE

A GUIDE BOOK  
FOR THE VISITOR

BY

EMILY GILCHRIEST HATCH

WITH THIRTY-TWO ILLUSTRATIONS  
AND TWO MAPS



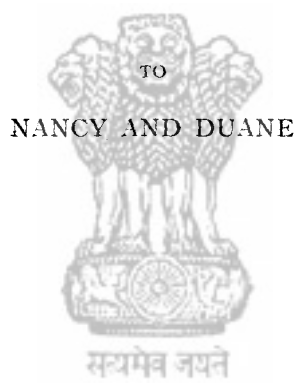
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## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure, for two reasons, to write a foreword to Mrs. Hatch's book. One is that I can testify to the accuracy of the statements in the book and to the zeal and energy shown by Mrs. Hatch in gathering materials. The other reason is that I can assure all visitors to this beautiful land of a hearty welcome.

T. AUSTIN

*Dewan of Travancore*

*Bhaktivilas,  
March 1933*







सत्यमेव जयते



## P R E F A C E

It has been a great experience to write a story of Travancore, so that those numbers of people, in India and outside, who do not know her, may share in some little way the interest and beauty of this State. It has been at times a bewildering experience, for records have been difficult to trace and information often contradictory. Whatever the result may be, I have honestly sought to be accurate. Poring over old records and manuscripts for facts, sitting at the feet of old men and women for legends, stopping by roadsides and outside temple walls for bits of interesting information—this is the way the story has been garnered. This is the reason why an acknowledgment of gratitude must be general, for those who have contributed towards this work have been so many. The thanks given them here are very sincere. Special thanks are due to the Government who have been so kind in their help and counsel.

E. G. H.

*Trivandrum,*  
*June 1933*





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*In the pocket inside the back cover*

1. TOURING MAP OF TRAVANCORE
2. TRIVANDRUM



# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTORY

TRAVANCORE is the garden of India. It is truly a country of hills and dales, as the name Malayalam signifies, and offers on every side the great variety of scenery afforded by the mountains and the sea. The heavy rainfall and warm climate make an abundance of luxuriant growth. The visitor is surrounded by a beauty not found elsewhere in India.

Shut off from the rest of India by the long range of the Western Ghats, Travancore has been able to preserve many old customs and ancient heritages which have been obliterated elsewhere by the on-sweeping civilization. Unlike other parts of India it has been ruled over continuously from the earliest times by Hindu sovereigns.

## EARLY HISTORY

The early history of this western coast of India is obscure, and where conjectures are necessary, scholars usually disagree. Travancore lays claim to great antiquity. Centuries ago it formed a part of the Chera kingdom which comprised the territory now known as Travancore, Cochin, British Malabar and Kanara. The Chola and Pandya kingdoms owned the rest of the country in South India. It is interesting to know that the Travancore royal house traces its lineage to the Chera kings.



The traditional origin of the country is found in the *Brahmanda Purana*. The temple city of Gokurnam—modern Goa—having been submerged by the ocean, the inhabitants went to the great warrior Parasurama, the sixth incarnation of Vishnu, and said: 'Hear the cause of our now coming, O thou who possessest mercy; we who once lived at Gokurnam are now afflicted by the sons of Sagara, who dug a hole and descended to the infernal regions, and were burned with the fire of Kapila's anger. And now all the country where the sons of Sagara dug has become ocean; and because Gokurnam the great temple, has sunk beneath the waves with its sacred waters, we are greatly distressed.' Parasurama prevailed upon the god of the sea, to grant him permission to hurl his battle-axe out into the waters. The axe fell at Cape Comorin, and immediately the waters receded, leaving all the land now known as the West Coast, Kerala or Malabar. Geologists affirm that the coast has been under water, as the various formations now to be found in the sea coast cliffs and beds indicate. Volcanic action may be the prosaic explanation of the sudden reappearance of the land, for such action is not unknown on this coast.

The name Travancore is an anglicized form of Sri-Vazhum-Kodu, which developed through Thiruvithankodu to Travancore, and means 'the abode of prosperity', or 'a place where the Goddess of Prosperity dwells'. Originally it was a feudatory State or principality comprising the present territory just north of Trivandrum to about thirty-five miles south, with its capital at Padmanabhapuram. The rest of the State was divided into eight principalities ruled



over by independent chiefs. Gradually these principalities were conquered by the Thiruvithankodu Rajas and finally consolidated into one State by Raja Martanda Varma who reigned A.D. 1729-58.

#### TRAVANCORE'S ISOLATION AND CONTACTS

Until comparatively recent years, Travancore was well shut off from easy communication with other parts of India by the impenetrable jungle-covered Western Ghats which extend the full length of the State. There were sixteen mountain passes, but few of them are used now. The journey over the mountains must have been very difficult and dangerous. The mountains which isolated the country also saved it from being conquered by other peoples and thus made possible the continuity of Hindu culture which is found here.

Although land communication and commerce were of little importance to the West Coast country, the sea coast harbours were frequented by ships from many countries and the trade carried on was of great value. The earliest traders were the Phœnicians who came in search of ivory, sandalwood and spices. It was about 1000 B.C. that the ships sent by King Solomon reached Tarshish and Ophir. Historians have suggested Ophir might be the little sea coast village of Puvar south of Trivandrum. From accounts given by Megasthenes (306-289 B.C.), the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta, in the *Periplus Maris Erythroci* (1st century A.D.) and in Pliny (A.D. 23-79) it can be established definitely that Greece and Rome carried on extensive commerce with the West Coast people.



When Rome became mistress of the world, trade between Rome and Malabar increased. Roman embassies visited the courts in Southern India. The abundance of Roman coins found in India testifies to the extent of trade between the two countries. It is interesting to note that the coins found in Malabar bear an older date than coins found in Coimbatore and Mysore districts. Trade with China centred mostly at Quilon and Cochin; Persian and Arabian ships frequented the ports up and down the coast. The letters left by Cosmos Indicopleustes, Vasco da Gama and Marco Polo give us authentic information as to the trade of the country and its peoples. Later came the Danish, Portuguese and Dutch, and last of all the English.

For all the contact which the Travancoreans held with other nations, their manners and customs were little affected by it. The religion of the country remained primarily Hindu, although the advent of Christianity during the first centuries of the Christian era has developed Christianity numerically more on this coast than in any other part of India. Further interesting historical accounts will be given, and the manners and customs of the peoples described, as we make our tours through the State.

#### AN INDIAN STATE

Although Travancore is smaller in area than many other Indian States, yet, in the matter of population, 5,095,973, she is exceeded only by Hyderabad and Mysore, 14,436,148 and 6,557,302, and in the matter of revenue, she ranks as the fourth State in India and this too is only by reason of the low pitch of taxation.



If taxation were on the same level as elsewhere, the revenues of the State would be practically equal to those of Mysore. The density of population in Travancore is 668 persons per square mile. The density of population in cultivable areas is 1,072 and in cultivated lands 1,482. Of other Indian States only Cochin has a higher total area density—814 persons per square mile. The density for cultivable land and cultivated land in Cochin is 1,502 and 1,575 respectively.

One of the most interesting customs which has existed through the centuries to the present is the matriarchal system of inheritance. The sons of a ruling Maharaja do not inherit the throne from their father. The heir to the throne is the eldest son of the ruler's sister.<sup>1</sup>

Travancore has never been conquered by any foreign power.

On 3 April 1769, a 'treaty of perpetual friendship and peace' was concluded between the East India Company and Haider Ali of Mysore. In Article 1 of that treaty it is laid down that 'peace and friendship shall take place between the contracting parties (particularly including therein the Raja of Tanjore, the *Malabar Raja* and Mana Row who are friends and allies to the Carnatic Payen Ghaut)'.<sup>1</sup>

Contrary to this treaty, Haider invaded Malabar in 1776. The Dutch Governor of Malabar proposed an alliance with Travancore but the Raja of Travancore declined it on the ground that he was bound by the terms of alliance entered into by him with the East

<sup>1</sup> See p. 49, *tarawad* family system.



India Company. The Raja was requested by the Madras Government to co-operate with the Company's army, and agreeably to the request, regiments of Travancore cavalry and infantry fought side by side with British Indian regiments against Haider in such places as Calicut and Tinnevely. Colonel Humberstone, referring to the services rendered by those troops observed, 'I am well informed how steady and sincere an ally Your Majesty has ever been to the English nation', and Colonel Fullerton, commanding the Southern army wrote, 'I will relate to the Governor-in-Council the great friendship you have shown and the services you have rendered to the English interests in general and to the army that I commanded in particular'.

In the treaty of Mangalore entered into between the East India Company and Tippoo Sultan in 1784 at the end of the Second Mysore War, it was once again specifically laid down that 'peace and friendship shall similarly take place between the said Company and the Nabob Tippoo Sultan Bahadur and their friends and allies; particularly including therein the Rajas of Tanjore and Travancore, who are friends and allies to the English and the Carnatic Payen Ghaut'.

Travancore was throughout acting with the British against Tippoo and in order to safeguard the mutual interests of both parties a treaty of 'future perpetual friendship, alliance and subsidy' was entered into in 1795 between the East India Company and the Ruler of Travancore. The object of the Treaty of 1795 was to 'defend and protect the Travancore country against foreign invasions and to strengthen and fix the terms



of the ancient friendship and alliance subsisting between the Company and the Raja of Travancore'. (*Vide* Articles 2 and 7 of the Treaty of 1795.)

It was freely recognized that the posting of British regiments in the State was intended for the protection of the interests of both Travancore and British India.

The further treaty of 1805 was one of 'perpetual friendship and alliance' between the Company and the Maharaja and it established a connexion between the contracting parties on a 'permanent basis of security for all times to come'.

It may be noted in this connexion that the treaties entered into with Travancore are substantially analogous to 'The Perpetual Subsidiary Treaty' of 1798 between the East India Company and the Nizam of Hyderabad and 'The Treaty of Perpetual and General Defensive Alliance' of 1800 with the Nizam of Hyderabad for the mutual defence of their respective possessions. Thus the relations of Travancore with the British power have throughout been one of 'friendship and alliance'. There have been invasions by Mussulman powers, but they never conquered Travancore.

On 1 October 1923 Travancore and four other South Indian States<sup>1</sup> were formed into the Madras States Agency and brought into direct relation with the Government of India. The Resident became the Agent to the Governor-General.

#### HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA

By a series of logical arguments the line of descent of the Travancore royal house has been traced back

<sup>1</sup> Cochin, Pudukottah, Sandur and Banganapalle.



to days of great antiquity, to the house of the Chera kings.<sup>1</sup> According to the *Purana Harivamsa*, Chera, Pandya and Chola were grandsons of Dushenthen and were given control of the three kingdoms in South India called by their names.

Although there are definite documents to show that King Veera Kerala Varma was crowned in A.D. 311, full information regarding the succeeding Rajas is not known. From the date when Sri Veera Rama Martanda Varma ascended the *gadi*, in A.D. 1335, the records of dates are complete. The list of Maharajas in the *Travancore Almanac and Directory for 1933* begins only with 1335.

All the Maharajas of Travancore have assumed the long name, Sri Padmanabha Dasa Vanchi Pala Kulasekhara Kiritapati Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur Shamsher Jang Maharaja of Travancore, as soon as they ascended the *gadi*. According to the canons laid down by Sri Parasurama, a Raja should perform two important ceremonies at his coronation: Thulapurusha Danam, a ceremony performed by weighing the body of the king against an equal weight in gold, and distributing the gold among Brahmans; and Hirannya Garbham or Padma Garbha Danam, in which the king immerses himself in holy water which is kept in a huge lotus-shaped tub. After these two ceremonies the Raja assumes the family titles of Kiritapati and Kulasekhara Perumal. It is not possible to say how old these ceremonies are, but if they were formulated by Parasurama they must be very old indeed. There are records to show that

<sup>1</sup> Menon, *History of Travancore*, pp. 16ff.



King Veera Kerala Varma performed them at his coronation on 24 January, A.D. 311.

The title Sri Padmanabha Dasa—the servant of Sri Padmanabhaswami—was taken by the great Martanda Varma in January 1750 when he dedicated his whole territory to the deity in the Trivandrum temple, Sri Padmanabha, and assumed the management of the State as the servant of that deity. Vanchi Pala means Ruler of Vanchi, which is another name for Travancore.

During the reign of Rama Varma, 1758-1798, His Highness was awarded the title of Manney Sultan Maharaja Raja Ramaraja Bahadur Shamsheer Jang by the Nawab of the Carnatic, as a token of affection and esteem.

Until 1866 the ruler of Travancore was called Raja, but during that year the Viceroy and Governor-General of India sent a *Kharita* to His Highness, saying that in recognition of the excellent administration of Travancore State, the title Maharaja was given and from henceforth he would be addressed as such. This title has since been declared an hereditary distinction.

#### GEOGRAPHY OF TRAVANCORE

Travancore is a State 174 miles in length and only 75 miles wide in the widest part. The coast line for practically the full length of the State is sandy, with occasional headlands jutting out into the sea. The sandy beaches vary in width. At Quilon the shore line is marked by rocky reefs. At Varkala there are cliffs of interest. The eastern part of the State is mountainous; the tillable soil is widest in the northern part, gradually growing narrower toward the Cape—



which is primarily rocky. In fact were it not for the rocky mountainous range which extends to the very tip of India, erosion would long ago have worn the Cape away.

The Western Ghats are forest-covered. They vary in height from 8,840 feet above sea-level to the merest foot-hills. The northern part of the State is marked by the High Range, known also as the Anamalais—elephant hills. Around the highest peak—Anamudy, 8,840 feet high—is the plateau known as the High Range. It is about six miles long and three miles wide, and tea is extensively cultivated. There are five peaks here over 7,200 feet high. Below the High Range are the Cardamom hills, of which the highest peak is 7,900 feet and the average height 5,099 feet. The Peermade hills averaging 2,800 feet with one peak of 4,780 feet come next; then the Poonmudi hills averaging 3,200 feet with one peak of 6,100 feet; and last the Ashambo-Mahendragiri hills averaging 3,000 ft. with the famous Mahendragiri hill rising 6,000 ft. The whole range is practically continuous, names being given only to those particular portions which have been or are inhabited and cultivated.

Mount Agastyar is a noticeable peak ranging in height over 6,200 feet. At one time there was an observatory on this peak. It is famous as the reputed abode of Agastyar the sage, savant, physician, philologist and theologian, from whom it is named. An interesting story is told regarding the selection of this particular peak by Agastyar as his home. Agastyar was a very powerful sage to whom the Devas went whenever they were in trouble. All manner of miraculous feats are ascribed to him. It seems that one



day the Vindhya Mountains in the Deccan grew jealous of Mahameru, the highest mountain in existence according to the *Puranas*. Jealousy arose because the Vindhyas discovered that the sun and moon in their paths seemed to circulate around Mahameru, and they wished this signal honour to be theirs. In spite of their pleadings, the sun and moon told the Vindhyas it was impossible for them to change their course through the heavens. The Vindhyas were not to be put off this way. They started to grow and grow until they became so high that they obstructed the path of the sun and the moon. The Devas were greatly alarmed that neither the sun nor the moon could trace its orbit, and carried their fears to Agastyar. The great sage was at that time north of the Vindhya mountains, so he came to the mountains and said he wished to go to the south and requested them to lower themselves so that he might pass over them easily. The Vindhyas obliged the sage, who extracted from them a promise that they would remain at the lower height until he returned. Agastyar passed over the mountains and came to the peak which now bears his name, took up his dwelling there, and is said to be living there still. True to their promise the Vindhyas remained at their lower height, and the sun and moon resumed their journeys around Mahameru.

According to tradition Agastyar is the author of the first Tamil grammar, *Agastyasutra*. He stands foremost among the great sages of South India.

It is small wonder that these ghats are appreciated by the people, for without the mountains Travancore would not know its many broad rivers and would become a dry, arid country. The rain-laden clouds



which blow over Travancore during June, July and August strike the cool atmosphere of the mountains and lose their moisture. The heavy rainfall during these months accounts for the abundant growth and makes possible the large acreage of rice and coconut cultivation. The rainfall is heaviest in the north.

An interesting story is told to account for the rainfall on the West Coast. There was once a time hundreds of years ago, when the kingdoms of Chera, Chola and Pandya had no rain at all, and all men and animals were about to die. The three kings, alarmed at the state of affairs, left their kingdoms for the forests where they did penance to Indra, the god of rain. At the intercession of the great gods, Indra relented and blessed each king with four months of rain every year. The kings returned happily to their kingdoms, but soon began complaining again: Chera had not enough rain; Chola and Pandya had too much. Again they went before Indra and explained their grievances. Indra settled the difficulties by commanding Chola and Pandya to give two months each to Chera. Satisfaction prevailed: Chera had then eight months of rain for his kingdom—the West Coast—while the eastern coast had only two months of rain. The first two weeks of each monsoon are said to give ambrosial showers, and seeds planted during this time are said to yield abundantly.

The rain varies from over two hundred inches a year in the northern and mountainous regions to less than twenty inches at the Cape. The sea-level temperature ranges between  $75^{\circ}$  and  $95^{\circ}$  and seldom does the temperature during the hot season go to  $100^{\circ}$ . Greater variance is noticeable in the higher mountain

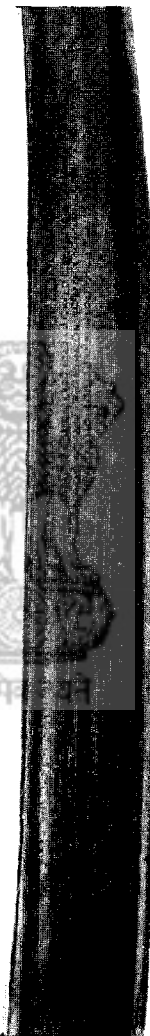
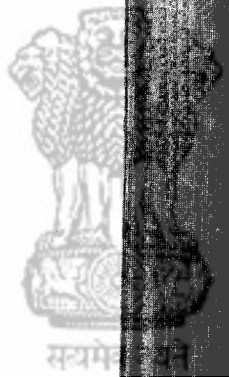
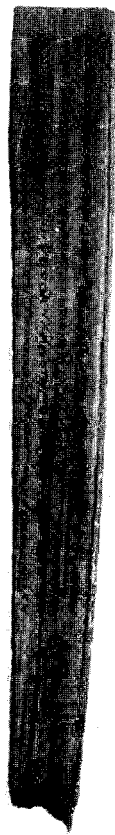


levels where temperatures as low as  $29^{\circ}$  and as high as  $90^{\circ}$  have been registered. The months of June, July and August mark the south-west monsoon. It is not such a good time for visitors, as the rains are heavy and incessant. Very often roads are flooded and traffic is hindered for several days. From mid-August to mid-September there should be a break in the monsoon, and fair weather assured. After this the north-east monsoon sets in, bringing land winds in its trail. This monsoon is not so heavy, the showers are usually in the afternoon and evening, and as a rule they do not cause floods.

The best months for visitors are from November to February. At the end of January it begins to get warm but the really hot weather comes in March, April and May. Even then the heat is not severe according to the thermometer, but the high humidity makes the air close and heavy, and seemingly much hotter than it is. Schools and courts close during April and May and those who can get away to the cool hills usually go at that time.

Travancore has many rivers, lakes, and miles of backwaters, which provide water for cultivation which can be carried on during the full twelve months of the year, and for transportation, which is greatly used and remarkably cheap. The backwaters are brackish and cannot be utilized for irrigation purposes. The largest river is the Periyar which is 142 miles long. Only the last thirty-five miles flow through inhabited tracts, but the river is navigable for sixty miles above its mouth. This river must be crossed by *junghar* (ferry) at Alwaye. The second river is the Ranni or Pamba river which rises in Peermade and





### AN OLAI

Travancore is in possession of a vast number of old manuscripts, written on palm leaves called *olai*. The variety of subjects is very wide and many of the manuscripts are of untold value.



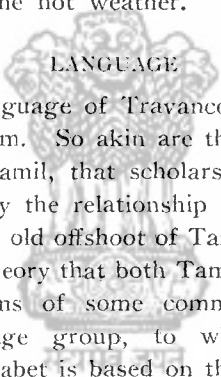


#### A TYPICAL VIEW IN TRAVANCORE

Travancore offers a wide variety of scenery. The Western Ghats which form the eastern boundary and extend throughout the State give the visitor most delightful mountain scenery. The undulating foot-hills covered with luxurious tropical greenery are very beautiful. On the western coast is the Arabian sea, which offers all the attractions of palm-covered, sandy coasts.



flows for ninety miles through Central Travancore. Over half of its length is navigable and the irrigation from this river is most valuable. The Kallada river stands third, measuring seventy miles long and providing twenty-five miles for navigation. It flows into the sea near Quilon. Travancore boasts eight other rivers from thirty to fifty miles long, besides many smaller ones. Although some of the rivers get very low during the hot season, none of the big ones ever get completely dry. Many of the small ones, of course, are dried up in the hot weather.



#### LANGUAGE

The present language of Travancore and the West Coast is Malayalam. So akin are the two languages, Malayalam and Tamil, that scholars have not agreed as to what exactly the relationship is. Malayalam is often called a very old offshoot of Tamil. Some scholars advance the theory that both Tamil and Malayalam are dialectic forms of some common form of the Dravidian language group, to which both forms belong. The alphabet is based on the Sanskrit alphabet and the prevalence of Sanskrit words is marked. Although Malayalam is the State language, the whole of South Travancore is Tamil-speaking. This is probably due to the fact that the district around Cape Comorin was once a part of the Pandyan kingdom. The Aramboli pass through the mountains was an easy pass, and intercourse between South Travancore and the rest of India was much easier than elsewhere in Travancore. Tamilian influence may be seen in many ways—architecture, dress, manners and customs as well as language.



There is not a very rich literature in Malayalam, although the publication by Government of old manuscripts is fast adding to its value. There is undoubtedly a large store of manuscripts to be found in the old homes of Nambudries which, when collected, transcribed and translated, will furnish a vast amount of most valuable information. In a country where the continuity of Hindu culture has not been broken by conquerors of any other religions, the store of documents has been allowed to remain untouched. They are of untold value. These old manuscripts are written in Malayalam, Malayazhma (old Malayalam) and Grantha<sup>1</sup> characters.

#### MONEY

Of immediate practical use to the traveller in Travancore is a knowledge of the currency now in use.

The sircar rupee, of which there is no coin, is computed at 28 chuckrums—or one half a chuckrum less than the British rupee. British silver coins are always accepted in the State, but very often the nickel pieces will be refused by the people and shopkeepers. British copper coins will be accepted in the State only in British India banks and post offices.

Travancore money is divided as follows:

16 cash = 1 chuckrum

4 chuckrums = 1 fanam

7 fanams (28 chuckrums) = 1 sircar rupee

There are copper one-cash, four-cash, eight-cash and one-chuckrum pieces; silver fanams; and seven- and

<sup>1</sup> A ready-made written language of Tamil plus additional letters to reproduce the various sounds in Sanskrit and used to transcribe Sanskrit language into Tamil characters.



fourteen-chuckrum pieces. The British rupee is always used.

Silver chuckrums, which were the earliest coins used in Travancore, are said to have been used in the days of the Pandyan kingdom. They were current in Travancore until A.D. 1900 when they were discontinued. These old small coins are now used decoratively by silversmiths in making various silver articles such as spoons, sweet dishes, salt dishes, tea strainers, and small trays. They are not used as currency.

The present silver fanam worth four chuckrums was first minted in A.D. 1860 in Trivandrum. Thirty years later the silver seven- and fourteen-chuckrum pieces were minted. Only the copper coins are minted now in the Government Mint. The fanam is still used as a unit of evaluation especially in court cases of costs; articles are valued at so many fanams instead of so many rupees.

Mythology enters even the subject of coins. It is said that in order to make the land prosperous and to yield abundantly, Parasurama minted small gold coins called *rasi* and flung them broadcast throughout Kerala. He also buried them in cairns which are found here and there on the hillsides. These *rasi* coins were current and used as a basis for evaluation of lands in North Travancore. They have been found in many places.

#### TRAVELLING THROUGH TRAVANCORE

Travelling through Travancore whether by backwaters or over the network of roads is always a satisfying and delightful experience. There is never any necessity to go to some particular place to find



something beautiful. Beauty surrounds the visitor, and the traveller should remember that a great part of a visit to Travancore is the enjoyment of every mile of his journey. It is a mistake to rush from one town to another to visit a ruin, an old church, or an interesting factory. These places should be visited, it is true, but as additions to the beautiful country through which the visitor passes. Much of the charm and spirit of the State will be lost, if visits are too hurried. The availability of first class travellers' bungalows where the needs of the visitor can be supplied makes a more leisured tour of the State possible.





## CHAPTER II

### ERNAKULAM TO QUILON

THE backwaters journey is the most beautiful one in the State. The luxuriant tropical scenery, thousands of palm trees, narrow canals, or great open stretches of lake make this journey a favourite one. If the journey can be timed with the waxing moon, it is perfect. Many visitors to India are disappointed at the dryness and barrenness of such a large part of the country, but Travancore is never dry or barren. It offers to the visitor the ideal of tropical nature.

There is much of interest on this journey from Ernakulam in Cochin State, where the traveller takes the steamer launch<sup>1</sup> to Quilon. The first backwaters after leaving the Cochin harbour pass through Cochin State. Travancore is entered at Arukutty and here Customs declarations must be signed. All along the backwaters just before Arukutty is reached are the huge Chinese fishing nets, a remnant of the days when trade between China and India's West Coast was vigorous and important, of the days when hundreds of Chinese lived on the coast around Cochin and brought their culture with them, little of which

<sup>1</sup> A word of caution must be said regarding the steamers. They are small and offer no sleeping accommodation. A camp cot may be put up. Food and drink must be carried by the traveller. Small and quicker private motor launches may be hired.



may be seen at the present time. But however much may have been forgotten, the Chinese left their impress on the fishing industry, and hundreds of men earn their livelihood by this unique method of net fishing. The rows of lights under water are used to attract the fish into the net. After leaving Arukutty the boat passes over the deepest water, called Kaithapuzha Kayal. The water here is always a deep blue. This portion of the journey needs the most careful piloting.

#### VAIKOM

Only four or five miles after entering the State, the boat stops at Vaikom, a place famous in both ancient and modern history. The name Vaikom comes, traditionally, from Vyaghralaya which means the home of the sage Vyaghrapada. By derivation, the word means a place surrounded by water. The history of the place centres primarily around the temple, which is a famous shrine dedicated to Mahadeva. It is a typical example of Malabar architecture. The traditional story of this temple relates how Rakshasa Khara when performing penance in the Chidambaram temple suddenly perceived God Nataraja before him. The god gave him three idols<sup>1</sup> and commanded him to go south and to consecrate them at three places which he considered fit. Khara started out with an idol under each arm and a third, balanced on his shoulder, held in his mouth. By the time he reached the place now called Vaikom the idol in his right hand became unbearably heavy and

<sup>1</sup> *Lingams*—the cylindrical stones worshipped in all Siva temples.



was dropped to the ground. When he tried to pick it up he could not move it. Then he heard a message telling him he should establish this idol here and the other two at distant places, Kadutturitti and Ettumanur.

According to the local tradition the second place means *kadich* (bite) *iruthi* (placed), or 'placed from the mouth'. The actual meaning of this word is *kadal* (sea) *thurthu* (island) which shows that this part of the country must have been at one time practically surrounded by water.

The third place is said to mean 'placed by the left hand', but actually the word means *ettum* (height) *ana* (is) *ur* (place), or 'the place situated at an elevation'.

Sage Vyaghrapada, another devotee, was also doing penance with Khara in the Chidambaram temple. The sage prayed that the god would name a temple where he could perform his daily worship and where he might live the rest of his life. He was directed south. When he came to the place where Khara had established the first idol, he was persuaded by Khara to remain there and take charge of the idol. He accepted the duty and thereafter the place became known as Vyaghrapadapuram, the place where Vyaghrapada lives. The temple is said to have been built by Parasurama, who visited the place and, finding the idol under water, moved it to higher ground, and erected the temple around it. It was enlarged in later years, but the first structure is very old indeed. The daily feeding of Brahmans which is still done was started by Parasurama during the year he lived at the temple.



The two chief festivals are the Ashtami festivals commemorating the appearance of Lord Siva to Sage Vyaghrapada. The first occurs in February-March and the second in November-December. The latter is a very important one and is attended by thousands of pilgrims from many parts of South India.

A great deal of attention from the rest of India was centred on Vaikom in 1925 when *sathyagraha* for the opening of all temple roads to all people was launched and carried through. For scores of years, probably centuries, low caste people were obliged to make a wide detour in order to avoid the temple. The spirit of freedom and equality was awakened among these low caste people, fostered by some of their higher caste brothers. Day after day they gathered before the bars of the forbidden road and asked for admission. In rain or shine they sat there, silent witnesses against what they considered to be an unfair tradition. Mahatma Gandhi himself came down to share in this *sathyagraha*. Government met the demand by a compromise: the pathway leading to the temple which had previously been closed to Avarnas, was now closed to all except those who were entitled to worship in the temple, and a new pathway beyond the pollution distance was made to meet the needs of other peoples.

#### COCONUT COUNTRY

The country between Arukutty and Alleppey is excellent for coconut cultivation. There are thousands upon thousands of coconut palms to be seen everywhere. The backwaters are lined with them and under the shade of the long graceful fronds the great



variety of work which coconut cultivation necessitates may be seen going on. So many questions—How does the man climb the tree? What are they digging from the water? What are they pounding? Why are the women walking backward?—come to the visitor's mind that a brief description of the coir industry is necessary to answer them.

There is a proverb in Malayalam which says that no part of the coconut is useless. This is literally true: the wood is used as props for building purposes, ornamental furniture, walking sticks; the leaves are used for thatching, decorations, brooms; the coconuts are used for oil-cake, copra and as food; the shells make the hottest charcoal and the cheapest spoons; the tree may be tapped for the sap from which toddy (a somewhat alcoholic beverage) and arrack (distilled toddy 75 per cent alcohol) are made, or for sap to be boiled down into a brown sugar; the husks are made into fibre yarn for the manufacture of mats and matting. It is quite probable that the door mat in front of the visitor's door in the far country is made from the fibre grown in this beautiful place.

The outer husk which encases the coconut is very thick and fibrous. These husks are transported in the huge wallums to be seen on the backwaters to special soaking pits. One of the most artistic sights on the backwaters is a wallum heavily and methodically loaded with coconut husks, its ragged sail sufficiently filled to make the boat glide smoothly through the waters. All along in the backwaters near the land may be seen the fencing which marks off the plots where husks are buried. The husks are covered with mud under the water, and left for eight months.



Divers then dig them up, put them into little dug-outs and take them to the beaters. It seems incredible that merely beating will transform the black, rotted, evil-smelling husks into light fluffy fibre, but it does. The fibre is then washed, dried, carded and spun into yarn or rope of various sizes. The spinning is usually done by the women. A younger member of the family turns a wheel to which the fibre is attached. The women, each with a bundle of fibre under her arm, walk backward spinning out the yarn as they go. This yarn is gathered into skeins and sold to collectors, to be resold to the factories in Alleppey and Cochin for the manufacture of mats and matting. These mats are shipped in great quantities to many foreign countries.

The monetary value of the coconut is very great. Thousands are engaged in this cultivation and the industries connected with it. Where coconuts abound there cannot be unemployment. A man who owns a grove of about one hundred palms is assured of a modest living for himself and his family.

#### VEMBANAD LAKE

Not many miles after leaving Vaikom the steamer enters the Vembanad Lake proper. Technically this lake is supposed to extend to Cochin, a total length of fifty-two miles. The local people, however, divide the lake into sections, making several lakes of it. Below Vaikom the lake broadens to a width of nine miles. The many little islands which dot the lake here and there throughout its length add not a little to its beauty. Every island is covered with coconut palms.



There is one fairly large island fully cultivated with coconuts, in the centre of the lake, which is called Patiramanal and which has an interesting story connected with it. Its name means 'mysterious sand of midnight'. The legend tells how a Nambudri Brahman who was once travelling in his canoe jumped into the lake to perform his customary evening ablutions. The Nambudri was such a pious man that when he immersed himself in the water, land immediately rose to form the island.

#### THE NAMBUDRIES

The Brahmans of Malabar form a distinct group in this priestly class. They are known as Malayalee Brahmans or Nambudries. 'They are Vedic Brahmans of the purest Aryan type, leading a high spiritual life and maintaining a high order of religious seclusion. In ancient times they devoted themselves to the practice of religious austerities and seldom cared to engage in schemes of aggrandisement or worldly ambition. In course of time because of their learning they became the expounders of law—both human and divine—and for this they were liberally rewarded by their rulers. The word Nambudri means 'to trust' and 'sacred', or 'knowledge' and 'to impart'.<sup>1</sup>

Tradition has it that many of the peculiar customs were given to these peoples by Parasurama when he brought them from the north and settled them in sixty-four villages, so that they could not mix with east coast Brahmans and would thus remain permanently in Travancore. Many of these customs still

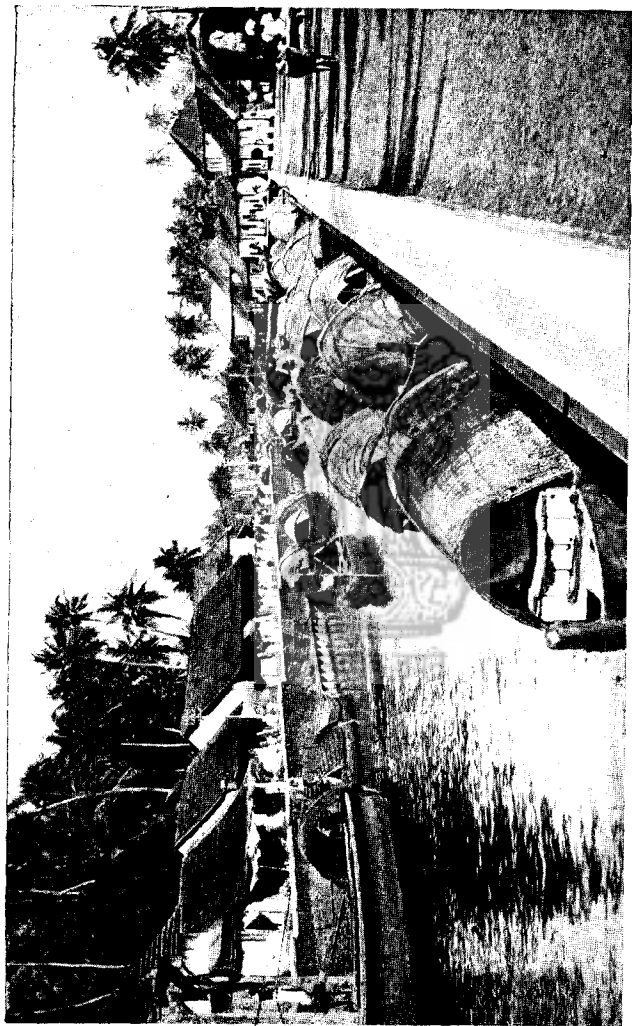
<sup>1</sup> Iyer, *Cochin Tribes and Castes*, Vol. II, p. 170.



exist. One may be noticed by any traveller. A Nambudri woman, when she goes out of her own compound, covers her body with a large white cloth from neck to toe and carries a large palm-leaf umbrella to shield her face from the gaze of passers-by, and is always immediately preceded by a Nair woman who clears the way for her. The Nambudri women are the only women in Malabar who observe purdah, and even among them the custom is dying out.

Nambudries are for the most part landholders and live simply in their spacious houses in the country parts, attached to the land. Others are priests. Their homes are known as *illams*; all members of one joint family are members of the *illam* and are known by it. Their system of inheritance is neither strictly matriarchal nor patriarchal, but rather a mixture of the two. Until very recently only the eldest son was allowed to marry a caste wife. If the eldest son had no sons he could marry a second or a third time. If a fourth marriage was necessary the next eldest son was married instead. Young brothers might enter a marital contract with women of the Kshatriya, Ambalavasi or Nayar castes, but any offspring belonged to the wife's house. By allowing only eldest sons to marry within the caste the family was kept intact and the property undivided. The *tarawad* home resembled strongly the Nayar *tarawad* except that a father took care of his own family, and brought his caste wife to his *illam*. The decrease in the number of Nambudries has necessitated a relaxation of this rule and younger brothers are now allowed to marry in the caste. The marriage prohibition also accounts

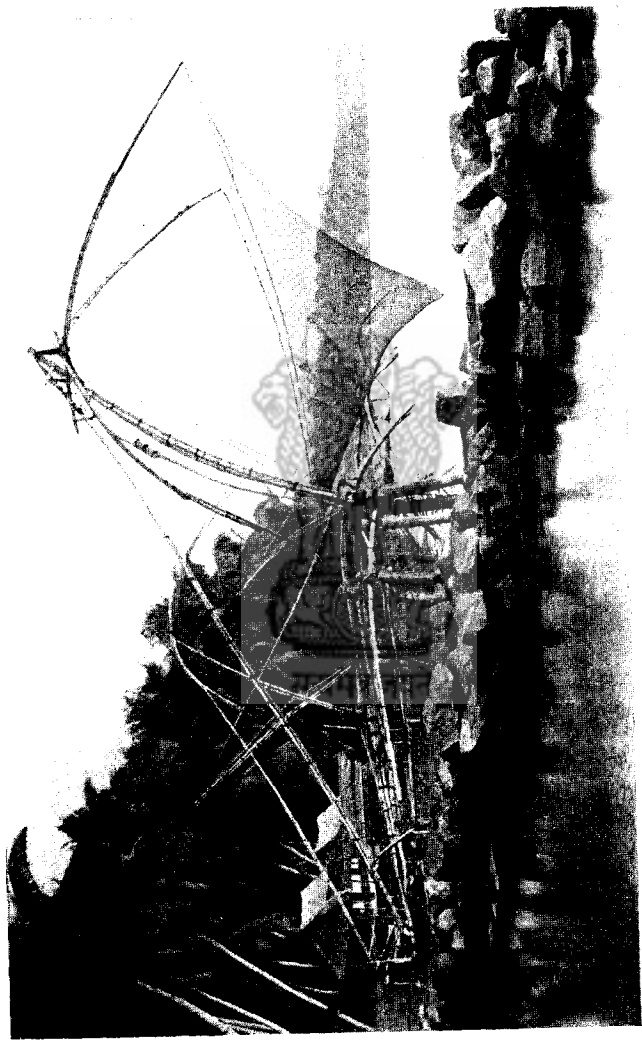




THE COMMERCIAL CANAL, ALLEPPEY

Alleppey is the largest commercial town in the State and ranks second in population. Many of the products of Travancore are carried by such wallums as are seen here.





#### CHINESE FISHING NETS

These fishing nets were brought to Malabar by the Chinese and are still used in the backwaters near Arunkutty (see p. 18). Trade between China and Malabar was very extensive during the early years of the Christian era.



for the fact that many Nambudri girls never marry, and that there is no disgrace if girls attain puberty before marriage. The chastity of women, however, is zealously guarded. Probably one of the most cruel institutions was the custom of public inquiry into suspected cases of adultery. Did the jury, who sat in judgment over the suspected woman, decide she was guilty, she was turned out of the house and disowned.

The Nambudries lived according to the law as laid down in the Vedas. They were punctilious in carrying out every detail of every ceremony. Their daily routine was as strictly observed as the frequent festivals and periodic ceremonies. Time has tended to change many of the customs, and the Nambudries are slowly but unmistakably entering into public life. For economic reasons, if no other, they are being compelled to give up to a greater or less extent, their aloof and contented country life. They still remain Vedantic scholars and in temple and religious matters they are acknowledged leaders.

#### ALLEPPEY

After leaving the lake the steamer passes through the canal which leads to the commercial town of Alleppey. In the days of Raja Rama Varma the work so ably begun by his illustrious predecessor Martanda Varma the Great in consolidating Travancore to its present size, was completed. Kesava Pillai, then Dewan, a far-sighted man, as soon as he was freed from the exigencies of war, turned his attention toward the development of commerce and industry. Until this time, about the close of the eighteenth century, Alleppey was a mere jungle inhabited by



jackals and monkeys. Kesava Pillai proceeded to develop Alleppey into a port town, built warehouses, brought in merchants from Sindh and Cutch, built a Hindu temple and Public Offices. Three ships were built at State cost to ply between Travancore, Bombay and Calcutta. The backwater traffic was fostered by extending the canals. With such impetus the town was bound to grow. Kesava Pillai built better than he knew, for the harbour has been greatly developed by nature.

The formation of this roadstead which was discovered centuries ago is one of the most interesting and baffling aspects of the sea coast. Although ancient mariners knew that anchorage off the coast at about this place was safe, and although it was obvious that the raging sea lost its fury and the waters were quiet, they did not know the cause. Scientists have spent much time and money examining the movements of what used to be known as the Alleppey mudbank. The latest explanation of this phenomenon is that during the monsoon, when the heavy rains settle on the waters of the backwater, the pressure and weight of more than 120 inches of rain squeezes out, subterraneously, oil mixed with mud which flows out into the sea at Thumboli about three miles north of Alleppey. When this flow meets the ocean current the heavy oil and mud mixture is whirled back in a semicircle and deposited on the sea-bed, forming a natural breakwater. For the past ten years the bank which has practically no height has not shifted perceptibly, and steamers have been able to anchor inside the mudbank in smooth water with complete safety. It is no less than thrilling to watch



a storm-tossed ship outside the mudbank suddenly right herself and steam into smooth waters, when there is no seen cause. In the calmer weather the oil can be seen floating on top of the water over the bank and within the smooth water enclosure. The approximate dimensions of smooth water caused by the mudbank during the south-west monsoon are two and a half miles out and about six miles along the coast.

Naturally any town with such a harbour will develop rapidly. Alleppey is now the second largest town in the State, boasting a population of 43,838. It stands first commercially. Shipping facilities coupled with a wealth of easily available produce is a sure magnet for business concerns, eighty-eight of which do business in this town. The town was opened to foreign trade in 1762. At present seven British, one Swiss, ten Cutch and Holay Memons, sixteen Gujarathi, one Parsi and nine Gauda Saraswath firms are located in Alleppey. The remaining forty-four firms are local Mohammedans, Hindus and Christians. Figures are most expressive of the amount of business carried on: the value of the export trade for the past year was Rs. 1.87 crores. Bankers estimate that the daily turnover of money used in commercial transactions—excluding money paid as wages and upkeep in factories, is about Rs. 15 lakhs, rather more than less. The list of exports from Alleppey is a long one, the chief exports being coconuts, the oil-cake left after oil has been extracted, coconut oil, dried coconut, coir fibre, yarn, mats, matting and rope; pepper, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, nux vomica; cashew nuts, arrowroot, tea, fish and prawns. Govern-



ment revenue from export and import, landing and shipping duties plus various miscellaneous duties is Rs. 9,69,034.

There are a large number of factories in Alleppey, the majority of which engage hundreds of workers in the manufacture of mats and matting. The mats are sent all over the world and are equal to the best in the market. The excellent designs and workmanship guarantee their popularity.

Alleppey is interesting for other things as well as its commerce. Colonel Munro, the second British Resident appointed to Travancore, was keenly interested in the development of Christianity, especially the furthering of the Syrian Christianity, which was highly influential. He believed that the Syrians would be benefited by having some English missionaries to work with them. In response to his urgent representations the Church Missionary Society sent out Mr and Mrs Norton who were stationed at Alleppey in May 1816 and who proceeded to establish a splendid work there. These two people were the first C.M.S. missionaries to Travancore.

Alleppey is the home of the first Post Office to be established in Travancore when postal communication was introduced in 1857. The system then introduced must have remained in force until recently, for the President of the Alleppey Chamber of Commerce in his report only last year stated that postal communication between Alleppey and Cochin, which was only forty miles away, took three days there and back! The time has since been considerably accelerated.

Due to the commercial interests located here, Alleppey has a large immigrant population, nearly 10,000



of the total population being from outside the State. Apart from one Jain woman in Alwaye, the only Jains in the State live in Alleppey. They have a Jain temple, the only one now existing in Travancore.

Various educational and religious institutions cater for the needs of the citizens. One interesting feature of the town is the many canals on which produce-laden wallums are constantly being poled. This transportation is the cheapest to be found anywhere. The first class travellers' bungalow serves the purpose of an hotel for travellers, and its situation so near the beach is attractive.

#### THE PORTUGUESE

The country and especially the ports on the coast have an interesting history dealing with foreign traders. It is difficult to say exactly where the ships of the Phoenicians, of King Solomon, of the Greeks and the Romans landed, but it is known that they visited the West Coast and probably touched at the old ports near Quilon and Alleppey, as well as south of Trivandrum and of the ports in Cochin and British Malabar. The visits ranged, it is estimated, from 1000 B.C. onwards.

Definite dates can, however, be affixed to the Portuguese and Dutch relations with Travancore. The first Portuguese traders were sent by King Emmanuel in A.D. 1497 under the leadership of Vasco da Gama. They landed at Calicut, but they were unable to sell anything because of the machinations of the Egyptians and Arabians, who resented competition. Eventually, with the sanction of the Cochin Raja, the Portuguese established themselves at Cochin. They



built factories and carried on extensive trade which was beneficial to both countries. The first advances made by the Queen of Attingal (south of Quilon) toward trade negotiations were politely refused, but the second were accepted. Vasco da Gama sent ships immediately to Quilon to take loads of pepper and spices. Thus Travancore was brought into direct commercial relationship with Portugal.

The following year a Portuguese named Almeyda was given the title of Viceroy of India and sent to India by the King of Portugal, with orders that he must erect forts at several places on the West Coast, one place being Quilon. There were various skirmishes between the Portuguese and the Arabs, and the Portuguese and Mohammedans at Quilon during the following ten years, but trade seems to have been continued. Just before his death in A.D. 1515 Albuquerque made a permanent establishment for the Portuguese at Goa, for the headquarters of the Portuguese in India. The following year the Queen of Quilon entered into a treaty with the Portuguese. According to this treaty all pepper and spices were to be sold to the Portuguese at the same price as at Cochin; the Queen was not to export any drugs or spices without knowledge of the Portuguese; in case of war with common enemies each was to assist the other; any of the Queen's subjects who wished to become Christians were at liberty to do so.

The Quilon Fort was built by Captain Rodriguez. The Queen, not wanting to pay the required amount of pepper that was overdue, gave permission for erection of a house. Rodriguez immediately began building his fort; but when Mohammedans who were



greatly concerned over this erection told the Queen, the Portuguese made a conciliatory move by presenting her with gifts of gold and money, and winning over the chief ministers. The Portuguese then received help in the building of the fort, which was completed in 1519. The fort being completed the Captain again asked for the overdue pepper. The Queen was annoyed, thinking this amount would never be asked for, since she had given permission to build the fort. She then laid siege to the fort, but after a long struggle, was finally defeated. Again a treaty of peace was signed (1520) and the Portuguese continued to carry on their commerce until the Dutch sent them out.

#### THE DUTCH

Not until 1602 was the Dutch East India Company organized. They settled in several places on the West Coast and by various methods, particularly by cultivating friendship with the Rajas and chiefs, gradually took the trade from the Portuguese, who were obliged to abandon their settlements. In 1653 they laid siege to Cochin which soon surrendered, and the Portuguese were forced to leave. This surrender left the Dutch masters of the foreign trade on the whole Malabar Coast.

At this time there were petty quarrels and jealousies among the chieftains up and down the coast. The country south of Cochin to Poracad, a port just south of Alleppey, belonged to the Raja of Poracad. South of that the principality of Kayemkulam; then the principality of Karunagapalli; then the principalities of Quilon, Attingal and Travancore. The Raja of



Travancore was really the strongest, and eventually he subjugated the other principalities.

The history of the Dutch in Travancore is one of dealings with all these Rajas both in peace and in war, always centring about the desire of the Dutch to further their commerce. When the Raja of Travancore had settled the internal affairs of his State, he set about conquering the principalities north of it. Although the Dutch East India Company had previously pursued a policy of neutrality they viewed this northern advance with great alarm. They felt that their interests would be served better could a balance of power on a friendly basis be preserved between the Rajas of the various principalities. So they adopted a policy of interference. Naturally the Raja of Travancore resented this, and politely yet firmly told the Dutch Governor that his business in India was trade and not the internal affairs of the country. Although the Dutch many times thought that peace would be the more prudent policy, they did not seem to be able to maintain it. Already in A.D. 1680 they began to realize that carrying on trade at the point of the sword was an expensive and unprofitable venture. The expense of maintaining garrisons at their forts at Cannanore, Cranganore, Cochin and Quilon was too heavy a tax, so in 1697 the forts were destroyed.

During the following quarter century, the Travancore Raja conquered, often with very severe battles, the principalities of Attingal, Karunagapalli, Kayemkulam, Kottayam and Ettumanur. Secretly aided by the Dutch, the Raja of Quilon defied the Travancore Raja's authority, but was defeated after several battles, and Quilon too was annexed to Travancore.



After this defeat the Dutch grew disheartened and sued for peace. Although the Raja of Travancore was prepared to declare war against the Dutch he agreed to make peace provided the Dutch would accept his terms. This treaty was not signed for many months. Several conferences were held to discuss the terms but they were broken up by one party or the other for various reasons.

The Travancore Raja continued to subjugate the coastal territories. Naturally, when they saw how irresistibly His Highness was advancing, the Dutch were more than ever anxious to establish friendly relationships with Travancore. Already the English had monopolized the pepper and spice trade of the Travancore principality. At long last, in 1753, the treaty between the two powers was ratified. This treaty ensured friendship, curtailed the advantages as to territory and trade with the English; ensured good trade and stipulated a certain quantity of pepper being given to the Dutch as well as Rs. 12,000 worth of munitions of the Travancoreans. The treaty was concluded at Mavelikara. The history of the Dutch in Malabar, from this time on, is closely interwoven with that of the British. Their trade continued declining rapidly until they surrendered to the English East India Company in 1795.

#### THE BRITISH

The rise of the English East India Company synchronized with the decline of the Dutch East India Company. The first Englishman to visit Malabar was Master Ralph Fitch, whose visit to India in 1588 at Calicut and Cochin was completed before



the first voyage of James Lancaster in 1591, which is usually regarded as the beginning of English trade in the East.<sup>1</sup> The English East India Company of London was formed in 1600, and seven or eight years later the first ships reached the West Coast at Surat. A factory was established here in 1612; and at Calicut, Tellicherry and Cranganore later. The Dutch East India Company were making such large profits from their trade that it was but natural that other traders and trading companies would be attracted to these districts. When the Dutch captured Cochin from the Portuguese, they ordered the English factors who had settled there in 1634-5 to leave. The factors at Poracac were also sent away.<sup>2</sup> Jealousy between the Dutch and the English grew. The English at this time were merely a company of merchants, not backed, as the Dutch were, by a strong home Government keenly interested in the promotion of trade.

The first settlement of the English East India Company was at Anjengo, a sandy strip of land twenty miles south of Quilon, in 1684, when permission was granted to them by the Rancee of Attingal. Some historians say that a settlement was made at Vizhanjam, fifteen miles south of Trivandrum, as early as 1644, but the majority of accounts point to Anjengo as the first. In 1690 they obtained permission to build a fort, the ruins of which may still be seen. Although their trade grew and prospered, it was not all serene. The progress of trade during these and the succeeding years was greatly hampered by the machinations of two groups of men known as

<sup>1</sup> Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.



Yogomars and Pillamars who managed to get most of the State affairs into their hands, and who reduced the Rajas almost to puppets. The story of Anjengo, given later,<sup>1</sup> tells of some of the trials and of the massacre the Company endured at the hands of these men.

When Travancore developed into a powerful military State, the Dutch felt constrained to abandon their policy of neutrality and adopt one of interference in the political affairs of the various Rajas and Chiefs. Such interference naturally created many enemies, and a decline in trade profits was an inevitable result. The English on the other hand kept strictly aloof from all political entanglements. As a neutral trading body they were not loath to arrange a regular supply of arms and ammunition to the Raja of Travancore, with whom very friendly relations developed.<sup>2</sup> It was only to be expected that trade for the English East India Company would prosper. When the Raja of Travancore turned to the English for help in protecting his newly conquered territory against Mohammedan invaders, treaties between the two Governments naturally followed. More and more trade flowed toward the English Company and less and less toward the Dutch. The Dutch trade at Batavia and the three successive wars which led to the acquisition of Java were so much more valuable to the Dutch that the trade in India was given continually less attention. Forts were abolished and the Dutch became so unimportant and powerless as to be

<sup>1</sup> See p. 75.

<sup>2</sup> Panikkar, *Malabar and the Dutch*, p. 120.



forced into signing treaties which left them little dignity.

'The war between England and France caught Holland in its toils and the alliance of the Batavian republic with revolutionary France gave the British Company an opportunity to demand the surrender of Cochin'<sup>1</sup>—the last Dutch stronghold of any importance on the coast. As soon as the attack was made, 'after the firing of a shell planted with excellent skill in the centre of Government House',<sup>2</sup> the Governor of the Dutch at Cochin surrendered. The treaty between the English and the Dutch was signed in October 1795, but the formal cession took place by the Convention of Paris in 1814.<sup>3</sup> The English were left the supreme foreign power in Malabar.

During these years, when British power in India was rising, the Raja of Travancore brought all the territory now in the State under his rule. The first treaty between Travancore and the British was signed in 1795. Five years later the first British Resident was appointed to Travancore.

The quarrels and wars between the existing principalities, the trade and commercial connexions between the Portuguese, Dutch and British of this period, were enacted on all this territory between Arukutty and Quilon. The Nayars were a warlike people, and, as may be seen, had plenty of scope for their profession. The aim of the foreigners was not acquisition of territory; their part in the wars and interference in the

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. III.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., Foreword by Sir Evan Cotton, p. xiv.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. II.



internal affairs of the State were prompted by their keen interest in ensuring steady and profitable trade.

Although the country is historically very important and was the scene of tremendous battles which turned the destinies of the people, there are comparatively few traces left to show that such activity once took place. As the traveller sails along over the blue backwaters surrounded on all sides by the lavish beauty of nature, with everything so peaceful, quiet and **serene**, it is difficult to realize that bloodshed has marked almost every foot of the way.

#### SOUTHWARD FROM ALLEPPEY

Visitors tranship at Alleppey into a somewhat smaller steamer launch for the journey to Quilon. This part of the journey is considered by many to be more beautiful than the Cochin-Alleppey journey, for the reason that, the waterway being so much narrower, the shores and shore life can be seen at closer quarters. The way lies through canals, rivers and narrow lakes. There is still an abundance of coconut palms on every side, but the landscape changes to extensive plains of rice cultivation.

There are few scenes more beautiful than the fields of growing rice with the various shades of green, all so fresh and clean looking. The country to the east of the waterways is almost entirely rice, or, as it is more correctly called, paddy cultivation. Here and there in the sea of green are little islands of somewhat higher ground full of coconut palms. Under the shade of the palms are small huts, where live the tenants or workers who watch the fields and



work in them. It is a beautiful sight which once seen will never be forgotten.

The cultivation of rice is very old. Megasthenes (300 B.C.) mentions rice as the food of the Indians. It is still. The sandy soil on the flats in the central part of the State seems to be excellent for rice. An interesting provision of nature is that during the monsoon a good deal of silt is washed down from the hills and deposited on the flats. This means that new and rich soil is ready every year for the cultivators. About a third of the 658,522 acres under paddy in the State, is in central Travancore. The paddy in these parts is wet cultivation, which means that water is required to cover the ground from ploughing time through the harvest. The ploughing is usually done in knee-deep mud, and when rains have been heavy it is not unusual to see the farmers in waist-deep water and occasionally in water so deep that the buffaloes are practically submerged. Seeds are sown broadcast in February and the grain is harvested in May. Thousands of labourers are engaged in this work. As may be expected there are many superstitions practised regarding the sowing of the paddy at a particularly auspicious time. Crops sown in September will be stolen, those sown in November will be destroyed, and seeds sown at certain hours of certain days will produce nothing. Likewise there are specially auspicious times, calculated from the stars, when seed may be sown to ensure an abundant yield. The average yield is ten hundredweights an acre.

Most of the work in the paddy fields is done by the Pulayas, and the grain is not reckoned to be



defiled although the workers are among the lowest outcastes. They have an interesting custom which is always observed before reaping and threshing. Having obtained permission from his master to start the harvest, the headman of the Pulayas faces the east and puts his sickle to the stalks. The first sheaf is reserved for the gods of his master, the second for the gods of his own caste. When they are ready to thresh, the headman takes a few stalks from the sheaf intended for his gods and sprinkles toddy on them. Another Pulaya does the same thing for the other reapers and as he does so says, 'Come threshing corn increase'. This is called 'filling the threshing floor'. When the threshing is over the headman puts the sheaf cut for his master's gods in the centre of the floor, and his own sheaf at a proper distance so that the two gods may look on with favour. The headman always has the privilege of measuring the paddy and as he counts says, 'Come paddy increase'. He has a unique way of counting, calling 'good paddy' to the first measure, 'bad paddy' to the second on to ten. The eleventh measure is the share of the reaper. The handful which he takes from this measure is placed in a separate basket, half to be given to the Pulaya and half in charity to the poor men who always gather around a threshing place.

The old custom of first-fruits of the paddy harvest is somewhat dying out. On the appointed day, heralded by the call of the conch shell, the priest of the temple goes outside to where a Pulaya has left a sheaf of newly-cut paddy. The priest takes the paddy into the temple. Each householder sends out



a man, who has just had a ceremonial bath, to cut some paddy. At the gate of the house he is met by a woman carrying a lighted lamp and some leaves on which the paddy is placed. This is carried into the yard in procession while those of the household who watch sing 'Fill, fill, increase, fill the house, fill the basket, fill the stomach of the children'. After three rounds it is placed on a plank with the lighted lamp to the right. Offerings are then made to Ganapathi and stalks of paddy with full ears of grain are placed in various parts of the house, on the farming implements and on trees. A sumptuous feast closes the ceremony.

After leaving Alleppey by canal and passing over the deep basin which is infested by alligators, about which many amusing or tragic stories are told, the boat proceeds twelve miles to the south to Ambalapuzha, once a principality, now a taluk of the State. The temple here is very old, is dedicated to Sri Krishna and holds important festivals. This temple, like many others, is enriched by legend—the story of the origin of the Ambalapuzha or Chempakacherry Rajas. The whole country through this part is commonly called the Kuttanad, a very wealthy part noted for its paddy cultivation. This tract was ruled by a powerful oligarchy of Nambudries who had their political and business, as well as spiritual headquarters in the ancient temple at Ambalapuzha. One day after their business had been transacted, the Nambudries sat at chess, 'rioting and revelling and chewing to their heart's content'. A ship-wrecked crew of a few hundred Europeans,—thought by some historians to have been Portuguese, by others to have been



natives of the West Coast—were cast upon the shore and made their way to the temple to beg the Nambudries to give them food and shelter. 'The thoughtless Nambudries, mad with the fatal game of dice and revelry, told the hungry crew in a vein of cruel jest, pointing to a pious old man coming to worship at the temple, that they themselves were poor but "here comes the greatest man of the village who will feed and clothe you, if you seek his help".' When the starved crew beseeched him, the very poor old man understood the jest, but taking it as a sign from Krishna, drew from his finger a gold ring such as Nambudries habitually wear, gave it to them and told them to sell it and buy food. They did and returned to the old man's house to be his guard and attendants. At the end of three days, the poor man had nothing to offer, but suddenly conceived the idea of sending the men to the house of a rich man and ordering them to remove the inmates without hurting them and then to bring all valuables to his own home. Day after day this procedure was followed until all the homes of the rich had been looted. Then he sent them to the temple to collect the dues, and finally he took charge of the temple and the country, becoming its king. Thus the line of Ambalapuzha Rajas was brought into existence, and this line remained in charge of the principality until it was annexed by the Raja of Travancore in 1746.

This history is used by one historian to show the political condition of Malabar at that time: bands of armed men would attach themselves to one who could pay them or care for them and thus little feudatory states were formed with the leader as ruler. It was



evidently such a band which helped the Nambudri to form the principality of Ambalapuzha.

For scores of years the principality seemingly fared well. When the victorious Rajas of Travancore, Martanda Varma and his successor Rama Varma, assumed the offensive toward the other principalities, they were forced to adopt an aggressive policy toward all their enemies and allies. Naturally when the plot between the Rajas of Kayemkulam, Ambalapuzha and Changanacherry was disclosed, the Raja of Travancore moved against them. Having conquered Kayemkulam he attacked Ambalapuzha. The then ruling Raja of this principality was of an inventive turn of mind. He equipped his army with an arrow with a poisoned tip. The slightest wound caused by this arrow was sufficient to get this deadly poison into the blood and cause death within a few hours. Although the Travancore army suffered severely from these arrows, their artillery was more than equal to them. Several of the huge iron bullets fired into the ranks of the archers soon put them to flight. The Raja was captured and sent a prisoner to Trivandrum. The defeated Raja had two ministers of note who had urged their king to sue for peace, though in vain. When the Raja of Travancore heard their prudent behaviour, he conferred on them the rights and privileges of their former master over the temple at Ambalapuzha. He granted certain lands to them, which are still in the families of these two men.

#### KARUMADIKUTTAN

The conspicuous black stone figure which stands by the side of the canal near the tiny village of

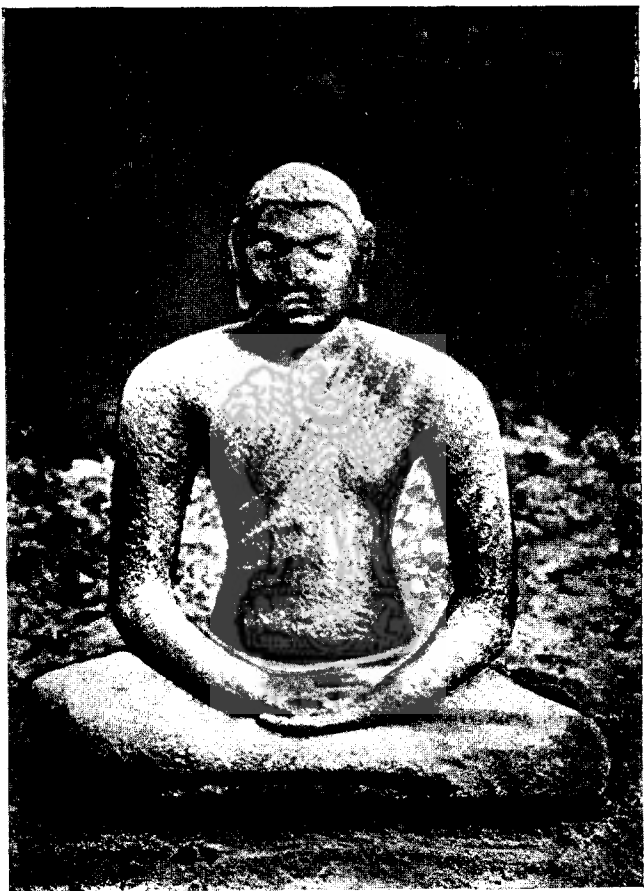




#### A TYPICAL BACKWATER VIEW

The backwaters of Travancore are famous. They are very beautiful and offer an ideal of tropical scenery. The shores are lined with thousands of coconut palms. The wallums which are poled up and down offer the cheapest transport to be found anywhere. The backwater and lakes are connected by canals so that the waterways are continuous from Trivandrum to Shoranur, 160 miles to the north.





### BUDDHA

There was once a strong Buddhistic influence in Travancore. Several images which have been found around Mavelikara (see p. 64), show that this part of the State was the centre of Buddhism.



Karumadi, only ten miles from Alleppey, is well known and greatly feared. This image was for many years under water until an enterprising Chief Engineer of the State had it placed on a masonry pedestal on the bank. Actually this image is one of the relics of Buddhism, which was once prevalent in Travancore as in the rest of India. That this figure is Buddhistic and not Jainistic is evidenced by the *Ushnisha* and *Jwala* on its head, and the traces of the upper cloth passing over the chest. The image is commonly called Karumadikuttan (*kuttan* means boy), and as far as local tradition goes has no connexion with Buddha. Several stories are told of this boy. Some believe him to be a Pariah by caste because he is so black; others believe he was one of the minor deities sent out from Chengannur to destroy Devanarayana, the Brahman King of Ambalapuzha, and that the deity in the neighbouring temple petrified him and fixed him permanently there. Still others believe that once when the Vilwamangala Swamiyar, a great sage of Malabar, was passing by this particular spot, this black boy polluted him by coming too close to him, and so the sage cursed him to be a stone for the rest of eternity. The boatmen who ply up and down the canal consider him a diabolic person and make offerings to him for their safe journey through the canal.

#### BLACK MAGIC

There are two important temples in this section: Thiruvizha in the country between Vaikom and Alleppey; and Thakazhi near Ambalapuzha. They are particularly noted for curing people who are suffering



under the evil influences of magic. The art of black magic is said to have reached a very powerful influence in Malabar. It is said that ancient manuscripts on this art could be found in abundance in the old ancestral homes of the State. With certain types of people the belief in magic is still prevalent, though decreasing. The Thakazhi temple is resorted to by persons possessed by the devil or who are suffering from acute skin diseases or leprosy. Those who are suffering from evil influences, or mental diseases, go to Thiruvizha to be cured.

The cure of this latter temple is unique. Special medicines prepared by the local *pujari*, from a prescription known only to him, are given to each patient. After a very short time a severe vomiting results and it is said that all evil influences are literally vomited out. Patients remain a day or two to partake of a simple diet and then return to their homes completely cured.

Legend furnishes an interesting origin for this temple. The jungle country all about this part was frequented only by those women whose life work was to tattoo people. One day a woman wandering through the jungle was surprised to see blood issue from the ground where she had thrust her stick. She found her stick had pierced a tall cylindrical object like a Siva *lingam*. She at once went to the owner of the property with her story, and the local astrologer pronounced the object a real *lingam*. The night after the consecration of this *lingam*, the priest was told in a vision that Siva himself had come here to protect the world from the influence of black magic. Siva then revealed the secret that a certain herb when



plucked would show blood-red roots, and if this herb were given to persons possessed by evil spirits, it would cure them. To this day people of all sorts—Hindus, Christians and Mohammedans—resort to this temple to be cured. It is said the temple is probably not much over four hundred years old.

#### PORACAD

Ten miles below Alleppey is the sea coast town of Poracad. Before the opening of Alleppey, Poracad was the main harbour between Cochin and Quilon. The ool mudbank, such as has been described at Alleppey, formed this harbour which until the last decade or two was used when the monsoon was at its height. The harbour was used not only by foreign traders, including the Portuguese and Dutch, but also by the native dwellers who were principally fishermen. Barbosa gives an interesting account of them: 'Poracad has a lord of its own. Here many Gentile fishermen reside, who do nothing and have no other occupation than that of fishing during the winter, and of plundering on the sea during summer such as fall in their way. They possess certain small boats like brigantines which they row skilfully, and collecting many of these together, they themselves being armed with bows and arrows, they surround any ship becalmed and after forcing it to surrender by means of their arrows, they proceed to plunder the crew and the ship. The booty they divide with the lord of the country who countenances them.'<sup>1</sup>

The Raja of Poracad was a strong supporter of the Portuguese and helped them in their wars until

<sup>1</sup> Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. II, p. 110.



they were driven out by the Dutch. His later history is confused with that of the Raja of Ambalapuzha. When the Travancore Raja had conquered the country about here and reduced it to a portion of his own kingdom, the deposed Rajas of Vadakenkur, Ambalapuzha and Changanacherry escaped to Cochin and persuaded its ruler to join them in a stand against Travancore. The Dutch warned the Raja of Travancore of this invasion. He immediately rushed his army to Poracad, placing them in formation on three sides of a square—leaving the sea coast to form the fourth. The unsuspecting intruders landed and proceeded to the interior only to find themselves completely surrounded. They were forced to surrender while their fleet was completely demolished. From a once prosperous sea coast village enjoying contacts with western people through commerce, Poracad has dwindled to a small fishing village, whose only reminder of former grandeur is found in the ruins of the old forts which may be seen now at low tide.

सयमेव जयते

#### KAYEMKULAM

The way by canal opens into Kayemkulam lake, which is about nineteen miles long and only four miles wide. The lake offers the same beautiful scenery, with shores of green paddy and waving palms.

About half-way down the lake is the village of the same name. It served as the capital of the principality in the days when it was a flourishing place. Like other places up and down the coast it was the scene of much warfare which did not end until the



State was annexed to Travancore in A.D. 1746. Commerce and trade were also great factors here. The village is connected with the interior by rivers and backwaters, and with the open sea by a natural bar which allows free passage-way for boats from the sea to the lake. The country was famous for its pepper and spices, especially cinnamon, and even today each little home compound has the dark green pepper vines growing up the trunks of the trees. Because of its pepper and spices it was a country zealously watched by all traders from the earliest times. It is interesting to know that according to the letters of l'Abbé Reynal,<sup>1</sup> the Dutch exported two million pounds of pepper annually from the West Coast and that fully one-fifth of this amount was obtained from Kayemkulam.

Many Syrian and Catholic Christians have lived here for centuries. The Syrian Church was founded in A.D. 829.

The Raja of Kayemkulam had authority over a large territory, having subdued a number of smaller principalities and annexed their territory to his own in early days. He kept a very large army of 15,000 Nairs with him always, and although their last battle did not testify to their valour, they were previously considered to be the best fighters among the States in central and north Travancore. The principality ranked second in the kingdom of Travancore.

#### THE NAIRS

All along this backwater route may be found the impressive old *tarawad* homes of the Nairs. They

<sup>1</sup> Menon, *History of Kerala*, Vol. I, p. 294.



are a caste of Hindus found only in Malabar. It is believed that they are the original inhabitants of this coast, and had already developed their own civilization long before the advent of Brahmanism and the introduction of Aryan culture. There are many distinct sub-castes. They were mostly nobles who neither engaged in handicrafts nor commerce, but devoted themselves to warfare. The material characteristics of the race have given way to milder ones, since the country has been consolidated into one entity. They are now, for the most part, farmers.

Many of their customs are unique. The matriarchal system of family organization is among the most interesting. Under this system the family consists of all persons who can trace their ancestry on the female side to one woman. Practically this means that a family may consist only of a mother and her children and her daughters' children, her brothers and sisters and her sisters' children. Originally the eldest female member of the family was the head and her word was law to everyone in the family. She was also the legal manager of the property. Later the affairs of the family and estate were given to the eldest male member. The male members of this family or *tarawad* always belonged to it. They could marry girls in other *tarawads*, but could never join that *tarawad*. This meant that a man never assumed the responsibility for his own children, but did assume responsibility for his sisters' children. All earning members of the *tarawad* put their earnings into the common purse and enjoyed the fruits of the joint property equally with the other members.

Three main reasons warrant this family system,



which some scholars believe to be a necessary one for a martial people whose adult males were so habitually away at war. The first reason is that it ensures purity of descent: there can be no possible doubt but that all members of a *tarawad* belong to it. The second is that the property will be kept intact, which assures a more or less respectable living for all members. The property could not be divided nor the joint family dissolved without the permission of all the members. The third and probably the truest reason was that it was a natural development. Before they became warriors it is considered that the Nairs were hunters, living in the forests, which meant that they were constantly on the move. When, however, their somewhat nomadic life ceased and they settled on the fertile plains, cultivation was taken up. The men continued their hunting and, through the necessity of guarding their land, gradually became warriors, so that the retention of property and the care of it fell to the women as their duty and share in family life and maintenance. The system was evidently efficient and the family life a very happy one, but changing civilization has brought new wants and opened up new activities, and many of the young people do not want to remain at home helping with the work of the estate. New professions have offered many attractions to the young men and bring severe demands upon the common purse. The organization has begun to weaken. Within the past few years the Travancore Government have passed the Nair Partition Bill, and many of the old *tarawad* properties have been divided. The patriarchal family system is fast superseding the matriarchal system.



The impressive old gateways which may be seen on the roadsides are relics of former years when neither life nor property was safe from the attacks of neighbouring chieftains. The Nairs built their homes on their estates and preferred country life to cramped quarters in a town. In olden days the Nair's home was his fortress. The solid strong wall which surrounded his immediate compound has a main entrance with a small door cut into the large gateway. On either side of the gateway were seats for the servants who kept watch. Over the gateway was a small room with small openings through which shots could be fired on any attacking army.

The small gateways with little thatched roofs which are so characteristic of town and country dwellings all over the State, no matter how humble they may be, are remnants of the old fortress gates. Some more pretentious entrances still have the seats on either side.

The old homes were built in strict conformity to laws of architecture and astrology. Roughly a compound was divided into four equal squares, the north-east or south-west corner chosen for the house, the south-east for the family burial ground, and definite spots set aside for the well, bathing tank, cow shed, serpent grove and family deity.

The high caste Nairs are Hindus who regularly attend temple worship. The worship of serpents holds an important place in their lives. The legendary origin of the worship is interesting. The first Aryan colonists settled by Parasurama found Kerala absolutely uninhabitable, and since it was impossible to improve their condition they returned to their old



country. After their departure the serpent gods of the lower world took possession of the partly reclaimed land. On a second venture, the early colonists found the land occupied and immediately waged war against the gods. Parasurama acted as arbitrator and decided in favour of the colonists, but ordered that they set apart a corner of every compound as an abode for the serpent gods. He also ordered that this portion must never be touched by the blade of a knife or the prong of a fork and that the undergrowth should not be cut away.

#### NAIR FESTIVALS

The Nairs celebrate three important festivals, the chief of which usually falls in the first month of the Malayalam year (August-September). It commemorates the annual visit to the earth of Mahabali, an Asura king. The story tells how the Devas became very jealous of the peace and prosperity which marked Mahabali's reign, and entreated Vishnu to rebuff the king. Vishnu in his fifth incarnation, Vamana, appeared before Mahabali and asked for a plot of three feet of earth. The request was granted, but to his surprise the king found that three feet when measured by Vamana was more territory than he owned. Vamana then placed his foot upon Mahabali's head and pushed him down to the regions below. The people were so grieved at the loss of their king, that they prayed to Vishnu to allow him to visit the earth once a year. This visit is made on Tiru-Onam, or the first of the four Onam holidays. Every household celebrates it by feasting and merry-making.



The second festival is called Thiruvathira, and is celebrated by the Nair women in commemoration of the death of Kama Deva, the Cupid of Indian mythology. Special songs and dances are performed on this day, which occurs sometime in December-January.

Vishu, the third important festival, marks the beginning of the astronomical year. The prosperity of the ensuing year is supposed to depend upon what the person sees first on Vishu morning. In order that the year may be prosperous various ornaments, clothes, money, silver vessels, fruits and flowers are arranged in a metal vessel, and in the early morning each member of a family is led with closed eyes before this lucky array and made to look upon it.

#### ASHTAMUDI LAKE

Kayemkulam lake is connected by canal with Ashtamudi lake, an especially beautiful sheet of water just outside Quilon. Its name comes from the eight creeks into which the lake branches. A great variety of flowers, shrubs and trees grow on its banks, and are reflected in the deep blue waters. The Raja of Kayemkulam lived near this lake. Although he had been conquered by Travancore and his was a tributary State, he wished to be freed from this control. The Dutch felt their position too insecure and refused him help, so he turned to the Rajas of the two principalities north of him, Ambalapuzha and Changanacherry. A conspiracy was formed. Suspicions arising from the non-payment of the tribute provoked the Raja of Travancore to send an army to Kayemkulam to enforce the agreements of the treaty already signed. The Kayemkulam Raja secretly resolved to



abandon his State rather than submit to the indignity of paying tribute. Accordingly he requested the Dalawah in charge of the army to give him ten days in which to collect the amount due. The request was granted. That very night the Raja sent his family, with all the jewels and other valuables which could be easily moved, away in covered boats into the territory to the north. He was left alone in the palace. Each night he took all the brass, silver and copper vessels, all guns, swords, furnishings and all usable or valuable articles that he could move, loaded them into boats and ordered them to be taken to Ashtamudi lake, there to be thrown overboard. He continued this until the palace was practically empty. On the eighth day he left his palace and made his way to the north where he had sent his family.

At the end of the tenth day, the Dalawah went to the palace to collect the tribute. He was astonished when he found the palace empty. A search of the place revealed documents which proved the conspiracy. When the facts were made known the Raja of Travancore proceeded against the conspiratory principalities and conquered them.

Many wallums and boats are made on the shores of this lake and launched into the sea. Only about two miles from Quilon the lake joins the sea. This particular place is known as Neendakara, and over this body of water the Neendakara bridge has just recently been opened. Before the completion of the bridge all road traffic had to cross the backwaters by ferry. It was a long ferry and a busy one. Although the water is not deep, the crossing was often a dangerous one, as monsoon winds not only caused a



rough surface but were apt to sweep the ferry out to sea. Nevertheless in ancient days this inlet was used as a port by traders. Here it was that the Chinese brought their wares to exchange for pepper. Here their ships always called when they were making their journeys to and from Persia. Evidence of Chinese influence is found in the fishing nets which are used at this particular place. Here also may be seen the stakes marking off the water fields where coconut husks are buried. Thousands of coco-palms surround one on every side, but one never tires of them: the traveller sees their beauty; the owner sees their value.

#### QUILON

When the traveller lands at Quilon he leaves the backwaters, as the steamboats go no further. From here to Trivandrum the backwater-canal journey must be taken by wallums—the boats of the people, more like glorified spacious canoes than anything else.

The city of Quilon, now the fourth largest city in the State, is more interesting historically than at present. It is one of the oldest towns on the Malabar coast. The port is an open roadstead protected by the Tangacherry point which juts out just at the north. Most of the sea trade has been transferred to Alleppey, where greater facilities are offered. That Quilon is still a commercial town is proved by the firms which carry on business there.

Quilon with the surrounding country was once an important State ruled over by its own Raja. In the earliest days the Phœnicians, Arabians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and Chinese visited the port. The



Chinese trade seemed to flourish and decrease. In the eighth century after Christ it revived. The records of the Tang Dynasty show that during the years A.D. 618-913 trade between China and the West Coast was brisk and centred at Quilon. Embassies were sent back and forth by both countries during the reign of Kublai Khan. The decrease in trade after this was not checked until the thirteenth century, when again it flourished. There was beyond doubt a large settlement of Chinese in Quilon. Many pieces of Chinese brass and china are found in forgotten or unexpected nooks. A heavy washing of the coast line by a stormy sea reveals many pieces of broken china of the familiar blue Chinese ware. Collectors have obtained here some very beautiful old specimens.

Marco Polo describes Quilon in his book of travels (1293). It was here that Friar Jordanus was consecrated Bishop of the first Roman Catholic see in India in 1330. In 1503 the Portuguese built their factory and fort, which were captured by the Dutch a century and a half later. Quilon was at various times in its history a tributary State to Travancore or Cochin, or an independent State. The ruler surrendered to Travancore in 1742 and from then on Quilon has been a part of Travancore State. So beautiful and important was the town that it warranted a proverb—‘He who has seen Quilon cares not for his house’. The Raja of Travancore selected the town for his capital and built his spacious palace on the backwaters. The British Resident did likewise. It served as the capital of Travancore until 1829. In pursuance of the treaty of 1795 between the British and Travancore, a British garrison was to be



maintained at some place in Travancore. Quilon was selected for this. During the insurrection instigated by Dewan Velu Tampi, additional forces were brought in. The Dewan's army met the British army at Quilon and after heavy fighting the Dewan was defeated. Troops were stationed at Quilon until 1900 when they were sent to China to participate in the Chinese War. They were never replaced. The parade ground is now used as a sports maidan.

The two dates M.E.—A.D., which are so often to be seen in front of public buildings, designate two calendars: the Malayalam Era and the Christian Era. The origin of this M.E. is not certainly known. It dates obviously from A.D. 825. The only history of its origin available relates that when King Udaya Martanda Varma was living in Quilon in the Kali year 3926 (A.D. 825) he convened a council of all the learned men of Kerala with the object of introducing a new era. '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 every month, it was resolved to adopt the new era from the first of Chingom of that year, 15th August 825, as the Kollam year one, and to call it the solar year.'<sup>1</sup> This system of dating was adopted throughout Kerala, and epigraphical translations show that in Madura and Tinnevely it was commonly used. Since the Malayalam form of Quilon is Kollam, historians believe that the new system was originated at Quilon and took its name from that town.

<sup>1</sup> Menon, *History of Travancore*, p. 88.



## NESTORIAN CHRISTIANS

Quilon was one of the earliest seats of Christian efforts in Travancore. Although the exact date of the advent of Christianity into Malabar cannot be given authoritatively it is definitely known that when Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Nestorian, visited India's west coast about A.D. 535, he found old and well established Christian churches with fairly large congregations. These churches were evidently of the Syrian religion.

There is evidence to prove that two Nestorian Bishops, Mar Saper and Mar Prodh from Babylon, reached Quilon about A.D. 825. They were allowed to build churches and shops, so a considerable Nestorian community was evidently established. Marco Polo visited this coast about 1293 and makes mention of Nestorian Christians to be found here of the St. Thomas tradition, and of Jews. Little more is known of the Christians until about 1324 when Jordanus, a Dominican Friar en route to China, visited Quilon. He was eventually made Bishop of Quilon, the first Roman missionary Bishop to India. Vasco da Gama and his followers during their sojourn in Malabar vowed to bring the church in Quilon under the sec of Rome. St. George's church in Quilon was built prior to 1348, probably by Jordanus, for John of Florence, a Minorite, writes that he lived for over a year in this church belonging to the Latin communion. Which church this old one was, is not known. Several churches built at the water's edge have been washed away.

The advent of the Portuguese was not a happy one for the Syrians. In the territory now occupied by



Travancore and Cochin there were a hundred and ten churches. 'In these churches where peace and order prevailed now nothing but anarchy and confusion followed, brought on by their obedience or rather disobedience to the Portuguese. It is painful to observe that the Syrians who had enjoyed some scanty privileges and liberty of conscience so long under Hindu kings, should have been denied those by a Christian nation from whom as brethren they expected better treatment. . . . The Portuguese asserted all dominion over the faith of this interesting body of Christians and employed questionable means to bring them to Papal obedience.'

Although the Syrians threw off the yoke of Catholicism to form the Syrian churches as we have them today, a number of families remained in the Roman church. Quilon remains a very important centre of Catholicism as well as the oldest see in India. The work centres about the Convent, a Girls' High School, a Boys' High School and two Seminaries. The schools are under the Carmelite order.

There is also a large group of Mohammedan merchants. Exactly when Mohammedanism was introduced into Malabar is not known. The trade which existed between Arabia and Malabar would naturally bring many of Mohammedan faith here, and thus pave the way for an introduction of this faith. It is said that in 224 A.H. (about the middle of the ninth century) a party headed by Malik-Ibn-Habil landed at Quilon to spread and propagate Islam, and that a great mosque was built by Hussain, one of his sons.

<sup>1</sup> Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, p. 4.



Writings of travellers furnish our best information. By the time of Ibn Batuta in the fourteenth century every town in all Malabar is said to have had its quota of rich Mohammedan merchants. This writer refers to 'the five mosques which stood as an ornament to the noble emporium of Quilon'.

#### COMMERCIAL PURSUITS

There are branch offices and several business firms located in Quilon. The largest firm—Messrs. Harrisons & Crosfield Ltd.,—were first established in Quilon in 1910, when a large factory was built for the preparation of green tea for the American and Russian markets. The estates under their control were administered from Colombo, but in 1912 the control was transferred to Quilon and the organization was strengthened by the purchase of Cameron & Co. The proprietor of this firm, the late Mr D. G. Cameron, had come out to Travancore in 1872 and gradually built up a large trading concern. One of the greatest benefits he conferred on Travancore was the introduction of tile-making which is now an important industry in the State. In 1916 the firm acquired the business of Messrs. Chisholm Ewart & Co. From this time and through this amalgamation the largest tile works and sawmills in India were established in Quilon.

From Quilon are controlled about 45,000 acres of tea, rubber and cardamoms—most of which is in Travancore. In addition there is a large engineering works in Quilon while branches are established all round the coast of South India from Tuticorin to Calicut, with several branches inland. Messrs



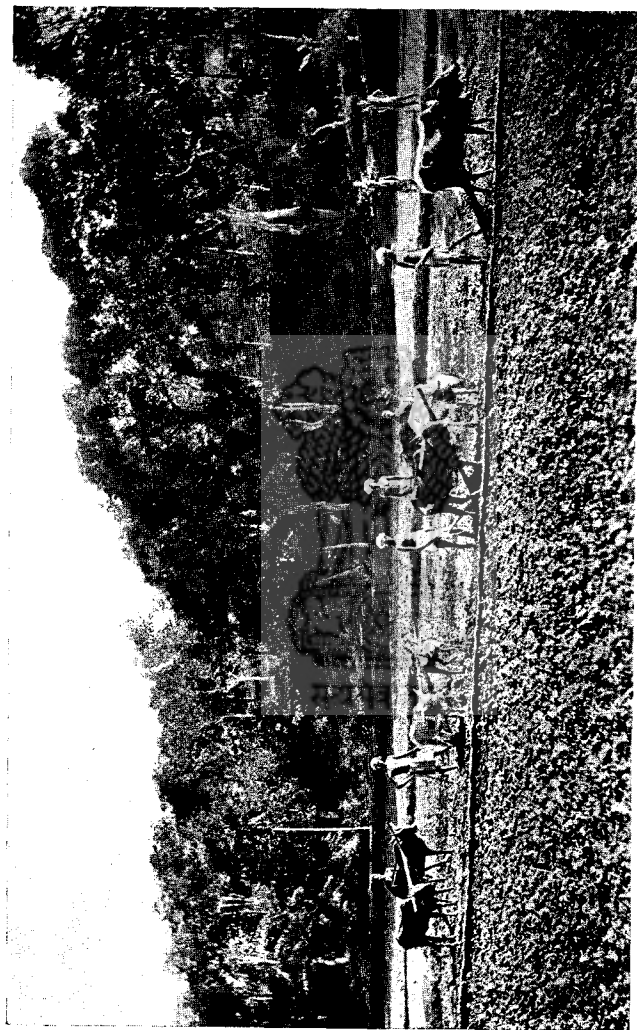
Harrisons & Crosfield Ltd. are easily the largest merchants firm in the State and handle every type of merchandise both as importers and exporters. They have also a large number of shipping and insurance agencies. The head office of the firm is in London but it has connexions and branches throughout the world.

#### TANGACHERRY

Tangacherry is practically a continuation of the town of Quilon. It is a small British possession of only ninety-six acres. It was most probably the home of the Chinese in the early years of this era. The Portuguese settled there in 1552, built a factory, fort, some churches and many houses. The Dutch captured the fort and in 1661 reduced the size of the protected area and built further fort walls. The place was known as Dutch Quilon. The treaty of 1795, which ceded Cochin to the English East India Company, included all Dutch territory on the West Coast. Tangacherry thus became a British possession. It was handed over to the British Resident with Anjengo in 1810.

The Anjengo District, which includes Tangacherry, is under the supervision of the Collector of Tinnevely. The land revenues are collected by the Government of Madras, but certain other items of revenue are leased annually to the Travancore Government. The traces of the old fort with the ruins of a tower and an old cemetery are the only evidences of former life. The lighthouse was erected in 1902, as an aid against the dangerous Tangacherry reefs. The light is visible eighteen miles out to sea.

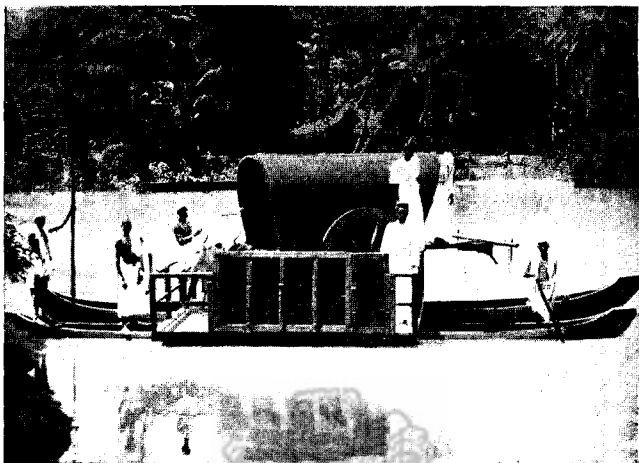




### PLOUGHING THE PADDY FIELDS

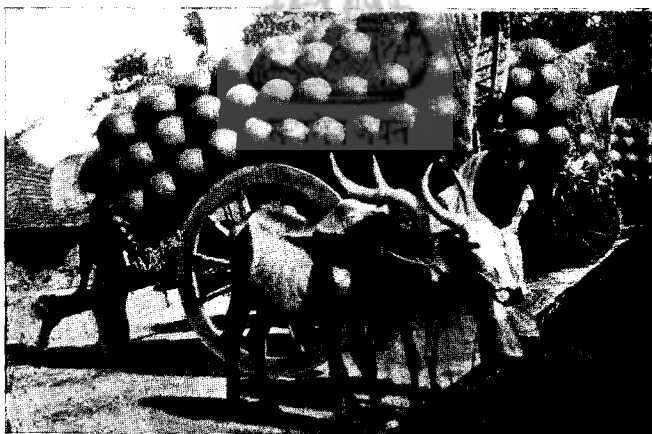
Travancore has extensive paddy lands, 658,522 acres under cultivation yielding about 329,261 tons of grain per year. The ploughing has to be done when the fields are standing in water, and the bullocks sometimes appear to be swimming.





### A JUNGHUR FERRY

Many rivers and backwaters in Travancore have to be crossed by ferry. These ferries are called *jungkurs*.



### POTTERY TRANSPORT

The pottery of Travancore is of a very high standard. A typical and pleasing sight on the roads is a line of bullock carts loaded with pots which are being taken to the markets.



## FROM ERNAKULAM TO QUILON BY ROAD

Nothing can be so beautiful as the backwater journey, yet the road journey is full of beauty and interest. On the whole the roads throughout the State are in very good condition. Since there is always luxuriant nature on every side every drive offers its charms.

The roadway follows more or less the backwaters, the roads passing through the same country. At Arukutty the backwaters must be crossed by ferry. The facts given in the backwaters journey, concerning the history, industries and people apply naturally to the road journey. The trip to Alleppey by car takes only two hours. Buses, of which there are many, take an hour longer.

From Alleppey southward the road winds and turns between paddy fields, coconut topes and pepper gardens. Often during the heavy monsoon this road is flooded. The third town passed through is Kayemkulam, once the capital of the State of that name and the home of the Kayemkulam Rajas.<sup>1</sup> The place is particularly interesting in that the Syrian Christians founded one of their early churches here in A.D. 829.

The village of Haripad is twenty-one miles south of Alleppey. There is a sacred temple with a very fine *kuttambalam*, or concert hall, dedicated to Subramonia in this village, where an annual festival is held for ten days during the month of April. The name of the village comes appropriately from *ari*, rice—the place of rice—which is grown so abundantly in these parts.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 47.



## MAVELIKARA

Not far off the main road from Alleppey to Quilon is the little village of Mavelikara, now a quiet beautiful country town. Like other places on this coast it has in days past seen enough of warfare and intrigue. The country, once an entity of its own, fell under the rule of the Raja of Kayemkulam. During the wars when Martanda Varma and his nephew Rama Varma conquered Kayemkulam and Ambalapuzha, Mavelikara was the seat of much activity, being a halting place for leaders and armies. The remains of an old fort built of stone and mud and measuring about two miles in circumference and with twenty-four bastions may still be seen. In this village Rama Iyen Dalawah, one of Travancore's greatest Dewans, died in A.D. 1754.

Mavelikara is usually thought of as the home of the present Maharanees. Succession in the ruling family follows the matriarchal system of inheritance, and occasionally it has been necessary for the rulers to adopt members into the royal family in order to ensure proper succession. Adoption has always been made from the Kolathunad family in British Malabar, a branch of the original Chera kings. Until the invasion of Haider Ali and Tippoo Sultan, this family lived in its ancestral lands. When they were forced to flee for their lives, they sought refuge in Travancore and settled in Mavelikara. The late Maharaja, having no sisters, found adoption necessary and accordingly adopted two princesses from the branch of the Kolathunad family residing at Mavelikara. The younger Princess, now Her Highness the Junior Maharanee, is mother of the Maharaja.



Because most of the figures of Buddha have been found in this section of the country around Alleppey and Mavelikara, archæologists are of opinion that the famous Buddhist temple of Srimulavasam must have been on the sea coast in this part of the State, and been washed away by an encroaching sea. The first figure of Buddha, known as Karumadikuttan, has already been described.<sup>1</sup> A second figure is at Mavelikara, a third is at Pallikal, and a fourth at a village of the same name but in another taluk.

The little village of Chettikulangarai, only about two miles from Mavelikara, has a greatly revered Hindu temple at which a unique annual festival takes place. The festival is called Kattukalachchai. It consists of exhibiting twelve or thirteen carefully and wonderfully constructed cars. The cars are of two types: one a tall, slender structure curiously enough called a horse, though not resembling it in the least, with its five stories at the bottom and seven tiers in the top part; the second variety bears a strong resemblance to the Nepalese temple. The origin and significance of this festival are unknown, but it has been suggested that the seven top tiers might correspond to the seven umbrellas sacred to Buddha. These great tall structures are built on a waggon platform and are dragged in front of the temple. They are made of bamboos, covered with white cloth and elaborately decorated. The whole festival bears a marked likeness to a Chinese festival celebrating the birthday of Buddha. This fact, and the likeness of some of the cars to Nepalese temples offer a tempt-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 43.



ing field of study to those students who would like to establish the existence of a highly influential Chinese culture in Travancore or a connexion between the peoples of Nepal and Travancore.

*List of Travellers' Bungalows on the Route*

*Note :—*I, means 1st Class T.B; II, means 2nd Class T.B.

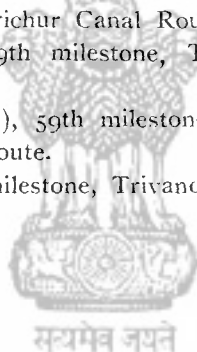
Vaikom (II), 111th milestone, Trivandrum-Trichur Canal Route.

Alleppey (I), three miles from the 88th milestone, Trivandrum-Trichur Canal Route.

Karumadi (II), 79th milestone, Trivandrum-Trichur Canal Route.

Ayiramthengoo (II), 59th milestone, Trivandrum-Trichur Canal Route.

Quilon (I), 40th milestone, Trivandrum-Trichur Canal Route.





## CHAPTER III

### QUILON TO TRIVANDRUM

THE question for the traveller who reaches Quilon to decide is whether he shall continue his journey to Trivandrum on the train, by the road or by a wallum on the canal. All three ways are interesting. The train follows the coast line, at some places near enough to see the sea and bits of backwater. The road runs parallel to the railway a few miles inland. The canal on the other hand winds its way, connecting lakes, following the coast line, and even tunnelling its way underground. Until the opening of the Quilon-Trivandrum Railway line, the majority of people travelled by wallum. The journey takes about eighteen hours. At present there is no regular service, but private arrangements for the trip can be easily made. It is a delightful experience, especially during full moon. The wallums are spacious enough to spread out bedding, and the soft swish of the water, as the boatmen pole the wallum along, is conducive to sleep. Since the speed is under three miles an hour, and the distance over forty miles, travellers usually preferred to travel by night.

The road journey is through open country, with many small hills and valleys and few straight stretches. Several little villages are passed through—none of very great importance now. School buildings are in evidence, as on most roads of the State.



Just outside Quilon is the little town of Chathanur, where it is said that Thomas of Cana built a Syrian church when he visited the West Coast in the eighth century after Christ. Nothing remains of this church but the tradition, which recent historians discountenance, although there is a Syrian church and congregation there now.

#### VARKALA

Half-way between Quilon and Trivandrum is a famous little village, Varkala. The origin of the place centres about the temple regarding which tradition tells two interesting stories. The great rishi, Narada, travelled about from one world to another playing on his *veena*. The sweet music so enchanted Vishnu that he followed Narada quietly and unobserved. When Narada reached the world of Brahma, Brahma saw Vishnu and immediately prostrated before him. Only then did Vishnu realize his delicate position and he suddenly disappeared. On standing up, Brahma found to his great amazement that he had prostrated himself before his own son Narada. Brahma's nine attendant gods were highly amused and provoked Brahma's wrath by jesting about this incident. This further provocation caused Brahma to curse his attendants so that they became human beings destined to suffer the miseries of birth and death. Narada offered consolation and told them to do penance at a place which he would select by throwing his back garment, called a *valkalam*. The garment fell on a tree at a place now called Varkala, a corrupted form of *valkalam*. A temple was built there by the attendant gods and consecrated to Vishnu.



Tradition further says this temple has been washed away by the sea. Long after this, one of the Pandyan kings, who was haunted by the ghost of a Brahman he had accidentally killed, and who had made many pilgrimages and performed many ceremonies to atone for this sin but all to no avail, came to Varkala. To his surprise and delight 'he cast but one shadow before'—the ghost had left him. For this relief, he was advised to build a temple to take the place of the one washed away. Accordingly the temple was immediately started. One night a god appeared before the king in a dream and told him to watch the sea on a certain day for the appearance of some flowers. These flowers would be floating just over the spot where the original idol was submerged. The king was told to take this idol for consecration in the newly built temple. With the help of fishermen the idol was raised from the depths and installed in the temple. The broken right arm was fixed in place with gold leaves. At the auspicious hour, when they were assembled in the temple for the consecration ceremonies, all the guests suddenly fell into a trance. When they recovered, they found that Brahma himself had come, consecrated the idol and disappeared. Naturally the king was highly gratified. He remained at the temple for some time; when he left he made rich endowments to the temple, leaving it in the care of trustees. Later the Sircar assumed the management.

It is believed that Brahma once performed a great sacrifice at Varkala, and that the strata of lignite and mineral waters found in the Varkala beds are due to this sacrifice. Varkala is a place of great pilgrimage,



being considered equal to Gaya in religious importance. Thousands of people visit the temple yearly.

Tradition also relates that, when the West Coast was reclaimed from the sea by Parasurama, quakings were continual, the land infertile and the place not fit for habitation. To overcome these difficulties Parasurama sprinkled gold dust over the land and buried coins in many places. Then he carried out a great sacrifice at Varkala.

Although Varkala was an important place as regards its religious significance, the village itself was a very obscure one. During the years when the Raja of Travancore was conquering the northern principalities, and establishing a kingdom, he also sought means of improving and stabilizing the country. In 1762 when his Dewan, then known as Dalawah, visited Varkala on one of his tours, he found the place worthy of improvement. Accordingly he built twenty-four houses all of which he gave, under authority of the Raja, to Brahmans who settled down there. At present the village, though small, is an attractive place, as much by its situation and natural scenery, as by its traditions.

The present temple uses an interesting bell in announcing daily *puja*. Once many years ago a Dutch ship was becalmed just off the shore in front of the temple. Not a breath of air stirred. The ship lay for weeks. One day, the Captain in despair said to the priest of the temple: 'I would give my ship's bell, if only a wind would rise.' The priest answered: 'If you will give your ship's bell to the temple, the god will cause the wind to blow.' The Captain



promised and the priest went to conduct the evening worship. In the night, the prophesied wind arose. True to his word the Captain sent his bell to the priest who installed it in the temple where it has been in use ever since.

#### THE HOLY THEERTHAMS

The three springs at Varkala are famous throughout India. Having been blessed by the gods, *puja* performed with these waters is especially efficacious. The history of their origin as given in the *Sthala Purana* is most interesting.

The first *theertham* is called Chuckra Theertham. When the nine gods of Brahma were doing penance to atone for their rudeness to him, as recounted in the story on page 67, it was necessary to have some water. They made supplications to Narada who had already helped them, who went to God Maha Vishnu to beg him to use his miraculous powers to produce water for the worship. By the use of his magic wheel (*chuckrum*), a weapon which he always carried in one of his four hands and which was all-powerful, Maha Vishnu brought the Ganges which is under the earth to the surface in the form of a spring. This spring is known, therefore, as Chuckra Theertham.

The second spring is known as Papanasam Theertham—water, bathing in which delivers one from sins. This water is said to be made up of sixty-six crores of *theerthams*, i.e. waters over which mantrams have been pronounced. It is said that once Brahma was making ready to perform a sacrifice. His preparations were on such a lavish scale that he began to feel very proud of himself. Maha Vishnu saw



this vanity and resolved to teach Brahma a lesson. Presenting himself in the room prepared for the sacrifice, in the guise of an old Brahman, Maha Vishnu asked for food. Everything available was given to the old man, and yet he was not satisfied. At last Brahma's eyes were opened. His pride was humbled when he realized that, in spite of all his supposed grandeur, he could not satisfy even one person. He begged Maha Vishnu for mercy. The proposed sacrifice was abandoned, and, on advice from Maha Vishnu, the sixty-six crores of *theerthams* which had been collected were left in their places, and covered with a mountain, to become a spring of welling water for the benefit of mankind.

Although the *Purana* tells nothing of the third *theertham*, the popular belief is that the water poured over the image of Janardhana Swami, the god of the temple, takes its course to the well on the northern side of the temple and appears again as several springs. This *theertham* came into existence only after the consecration of the Janardhana Swami image.

#### BACKWATERS AND TUNNEL

The natural backwaters and lakes from Cochin to Quilon, connected by a few simply made canals, provided water traffic centuries ago. Difficulties in constructing canals to connect the lakes and backwaters to be found between Quilon and Trivandrum were evidently considered too great to be overcome, until A.D. 1825. Then two canals named after Her Highness Parvathi Bai, Regent of Travancore, were started. These two canals, one from Trivandrum





#### RUINS OF THE ANJENGO FORT

Anjengo is a sandy strip of land about half-way between Quilon and Trivandrum. The English East India Company established their first settlement in Travancore at this place and built a fort in 1699. Until 1810, when the factory was abolished, the little community at Anjengo was in a flourishing condition and trade was brisk. Nothing remains now except a few ruins and a small fishing village. Its tragic history is told on pp. 246.





### CANAL TUNNEL, VARKALA

This is the tunnel, 2,364 feet long, which pierces the cliffs at Varkala. Its construction cost more than seventeen lakhs of rupees, but it has been of immense commercial benefit to the State, linking Quilon with Trivandrum.



north and the other from Quilon south, are over seventeen miles long. They were separated by the cliffs at Varkala. Passengers in backwater boats were forced to land, walk over the cliffs to the canal on the other side and take a second boat for the remainder of the journey. While it was comparatively easy for the passengers to tranship this way, it was a great annoyance for commercial transportation. It was necessary to dig two tunnels; the first 924 feet in length and the second 2,364 feet. The construction cost over seventeen lakhs. Through traffic was opened in 1880. Even now the school children think it a real lark to ride through these tunnels, which have been a great help in furthering the commercial interests of the State.

#### VARKALA OF THE FUTURE

The past of this little village is rich in folk-lore and tradition; the future is rich in possibilities. Near the temple are the excellent springs, the water of which is beautifully clear and pure. For years this water has been considered medicinally good, and great numbers of pilgrims have taken advantage of it.

In order to keep the springs themselves pure, the water has been piped to a special place near the tunnel entrance. Here the visitors may bathe.

The springs are situated in a particularly fortunate place near the seashore and the cliffs. It is an ideal place for a sanatorium. Guests could be housed on the cliffs overlooking the sea, gain all the advantages of sea bathing, sea air and outdoor life, and drink the freshly drawn waters. A recent analysis of this water by C. Edward Sage, of London, shows that it



is exceptionally free from organic impurity and mineral salts, and 'this property might be of especial value to individuals who habitually drink hard waters containing lime and magnesium salts, and who seek relief from the ailments which an excess of those constituents produce or aggravate'.

#### SIVAGIRI MUTT

As in the ancient days, when world-weary travellers came to the temple at Varkala in search of peace and understanding, so also today do those seekers after truth journey to Varkala to the Sivagiri *mutt*.

Just over seventy-five years ago, a son was born of lowly parents. From his obscure infancy, this child grew to be a great religious leader, Sri Narayana Gurudev, called by many a 'Prophet of Peace'. Early in life he saw the evils of caste and set his life to work for the uplift of the many thousands who were preëemptively cursed from birth by the custom and tradition of caste. His philosophy took a practical turn and since he realized that 'the chains of servility are not so much the chains of external authority, as those forged by oneself', his first teaching and practice was self-purification and his second, reforms in society. The underlying principles of his life and method of work were 'the moral and spiritual identity of the individual's as well as the community's life and growth, based on the Oneness of all life, the identity of the Laws which govern it, and the supreme Unity of purpose'. These principles, he tersely put into the simple motto which figuratively flies over every temple he consecrated, 'One Caste, One Religion, One God'.



Some of the reforms he instituted were far-reaching. In order that there might be places where untouchables could worship, he himself consecrated temples open to all. Finding that people were about to form another sect with him as their leader he definitely forbade it. He abolished idols in some temples, and substituted mirrors, so that those who worshipped might be reminded that 'as we are, so are our gods too'.

The *mutt* was built at Varkala only in 1904. There the great teacher breathed his last in 1928. His special tomb may be visited at any time. The *mutt* is the headquarters of the Sri Narayana Dharma Sangham, an organization of his disciples named after the founder. The *sanyasis* who train here go out to serve humanity in whatever way they are needed. An unostentatious place in itself, the influence toward truer and cleaner living which emanates from this place, may be considered of very great value to this country. This work is the only religious movement which has originated in Travancore.

Near this *mutt* is another large building which was opened only in 1931 by the London Mission to house their training school for teachers. There is a practice school and the hostel for the pupil-teachers which is called an Ashram and which is run, in a measure, on Ashram lines.

#### ATTINGAL

The long single-street village of Attingal is half-way between Quilon and Trivandrum on the main motor road. It is a fairly large village, being the headquarters of the taluk and one of the London



Mission stations. There are the usual public buildings and schools. It is said that the village was founded in A.D. 1254.

The most interesting thing about the country is that it is the hereditary domain of the Senior Ranee of Travancore. The Maharanees of Travancore are known as Attingal Tampuratties. Until 1730 Attingal was a separate principality. In this year, it was made over to the Raja of Travancore. The Ranee of Attingal was the mother of the Raja of Travancore, Martanda Varma. A treaty was agreed upon between mother and son, the articles being engraved on a silver plate. The treaty stipulated that thereafter only male children born of the Ranees of Attingal should become rulers of Travancore. When Ranee Lakshmi Bhai was Regent of Travancore during the infancy of her son, Kerala Varma the Pretender, a relative, put forward his claim to the throne. The silver plate treaty was such conclusive evidence against him, that he managed to get hold of it and destroy it. It is interesting to know that this dispute was settled by Colonel Munro, the British Resident.

Every year the Maharaja of Travancore visits the old temple at Attingal and worships the family deity there.

#### ANJENGO

Half-way between Quilon and Trivandrum on the sea coast is Anjengo, a narrow strip of sandy land cut off from the mainland by a river. Seldom visited, sparsely inhabited, menaced by an encroaching sea, this bit of land is rich in history and sentiment. Great scenes of heroism, romance, tragedy, treachery



and intrigue have been enacted here. All that remains is the ruins of the old fort, a narrow village street, and some crumbling gravestones.

Anjengo—an anglicized form of Anchutengu or five coconuts—was the home of the first English settlement in Travancore. In the year 1684 the Ranee of Attingal gave permission to the Company to establish a trading centre there. Six years later she granted them permission to erect a fort. The choice of the site is difficult to understand, as there was no safe anchorage on the rocky coast. The heavy surf made landing difficult and dangerous. Drinking water had to be brought three miles. The saving point was that it commanded the line of water communication north and south. A great quantity of pepper was available from the inland districts, and the piecegoods or calicos were abundant and excellent in quality.

Several attacks were made on the small fort which was only about eighty-six yards square. Instigated by the Dutch who told her all manner of stories, the Ranee of Attingal made an attack before the fort was completed. The attack was easily repulsed. The activities of Captain Kydd, who was sent from England to put down European piracy in Indian waters, aroused great fears in the minds of the people who began to think the Anjengo people were pirates. The second attack was also repulsed.

The third attack in 1721 was made after a foul massacre at the court of the Ranee. During the first years of their settlement, the English had made annual presentations to the Ranee. A quotation from Hamilton is entertaining: ‘. . . when our factories were at



Puttera and Brinjan, they sent a yearly present to the Queen of Attingal whose court is about four leagues within land from Anjengo. *In anno* 1685, when the present was sent, a young beautiful English gentleman had the honour to present it to her Black Majesty and, as soon as the Queen saw him, she fell in love with him, and next day made proposals of marriage to him, but he modestly refused so great an honour: however, to please Her Majesty, he staid at court a month or two, and it is reported treated her with great civility.'

After the second outbreak, feelings between the people of Attingal and the English at Anjengo were strained. The Pillamars, a group of men who had ruthlessly assumed control of the affairs of the State, were so powerful that the Rajas and Ranees were little more than figureheads. A representative of these men presented himself at the Anjengo Fort and in the name of the Ranee demanded the annual tribute due to her. The Chief of Anjengo suspected falsity and said he would take the tribute to the Ranee in person.<sup>1</sup> Thinking to do the Ranee great honour and to make a fine impression, the Chief of Anjengo (Mr Gyfford) took with him the principal officers of the fort and practically all the garrison. They were received by a huge crowd and given a friendly reception. The details of what followed are imperfectly recorded. In spite of advice from his own men and the Ranee, the Chief would not return to

<sup>1</sup> Some historians give various reasons for the hatred shown to the English by the people, chief among which were insulting demands made on Brahmans and Mohammedans—forcing them to do things which were against their caste laws.



Anjengo that night. The men were quartered in various houses and in the night were attacked and cruelly murdered. The officers, it is said, were reserved for a more cruel death by torture. None of them ever saw Anjengo. The news of the massacre was taken to the fort by a few native servants who managed to escape, though all were badly wounded and hurt. The consternation within the fort, which was manned only by a few old, infirm men, and the grief of the wives and the children is not hard to imagine.

Gunner Samuel Ince took charge. He sent the women and children away in a ship which fortunately lay in harbour. Mrs Gylford, the wife of the murdered chief, took all the Anjengo records with her. Ince then proceeded to stock the fort with seven hundred bags of rice, salt fish for a month and the Company's treasure, all of which were stored in the warehouses outside the fort. For garrison he had about thirty-five boys and pensioners. The fort was made of wood and thatched with palm leaves. The attack eventually came. The settlement outside the fort was looted and burned. Many of the Indian women and children were taken into the small fort. No concerted attack was made on the fort, but the efforts to set fire to the thatch by fire arrows necessitated dismantling the roof. All during the six months the siege lasted, the garrison were subjected to the scorching sun or the relentless rains of the monsoon. Their sufferings must have been pitiable.

Although word had been sent to Bombay in April, it was not until October that help was able to reach Anjengo. Men and supplies were landed and the



affairs of the Company somewhat put to rights. The Rancee of Attingal sent a message to say she had nothing to do with the siege and was very sorry for the actions of the people, and told the newly arrived Chief he must take his own vengeance on the people. By a series of raids he subjected the country to some sort of order. A treaty was signed by the English Company and the Rancee in 1722, and the following year one between the English Company and the Raja of Travancore. Although the English seemed eager and agreed to help the Raja of Travancore to put down the Pillamars, there is nothing to show they did more than furnish a regular supply of arms and ammunition in exchange for pepper, spices and piecegoods.

After this, affairs of trade and friendship continued prosperously and smoothly. The Dutch watched with jealous eyes the progress of the English trade, but could do nothing to prevent it. Anjengo grew in importance. It ranked second only to Bombay and its Chief ranked second in council. Anjengo was the first port of call for all outward-bound ships. When other ports in India developed, Anjengo loomed less important, and in 1776 it was reduced to a residency.

Again in 1809 Travancore was the scene of a severe insurrection. Anjengo was blockaded and many Europeans suddenly caught on the backwaters were murdered. Order was eventually restored with the help of English regiments and the leader of the insurrection committed suicide.

In 1810 the factory at Anjengo was abolished and Anjengo was transferred from the English East India Company to the Resident of Travancore. From this



time onward, Anjengo forgot its former glory and went back again to the quiet little fishing village, where villagers spun coir yarn in the shade of the palm trees. During the century and a quarter when this little village waxed and waned, life was intensely lived: great were the joys and prosperity, greater were the perils and tragedies. The encroaching sea may some day sweep away this narrow spit of land, but it will never be forgotten. In 1728 Robert Orme, the historian, was born at Anjengo. Sterne, in his poem to 'Eliza'—Mrs Daniel Draper—who was also born here, and the Abbé Reynal's apostrophe to Eliza Draper beginning 'Anjengo! thou art nothing, but thou hast given birth to Eliza!' have immortalized Anjengo for posterity.

Another very large and ancient temple is at Kazhakuttam, half-way between Attingal and Trivandrum. This Siva temple has some exceptionally fine wood carving in it.

Some people have tried to find traces of Buddhistic influences in the temple cut into the huge rock at Madavupara not far from Kazhakuttam, but the temple is of too recent an origin to warrant any such belief. The cave measures about twelve by four by seven. It has a few figures which tradition says are self-cut, being once mere traces but becoming more and more prominent as time goes on. The caves are about fifty feet up from the foot of the rock, and are reached by laterite and granite steps, at the top of which is a small platform, the ante-chamber of the temple. Practically nothing is known about this temple, aside from its tradition. The owner says he has no records.



## THIRUPPAPUR

About the sixth milestone, is the turn-off road to the tiny village of Thiruppur. This name means 'the place of the feet of Maha Vishnu'. From the story of the origin of the Sri Padmanabha Swami temple in Trivandrum on page 170 it will be seen that this is the place where the feet of Maha Vishnu rested. This story also accounts for the origin of this temple, which is religiously one of the important temples of the State. After his coronation, the Maharaja visits this temple for worship, and only then assumes the title, Tiruppur Swarupam, an ancient name of the Travancore royal dynasty.

## OOLLOOR

The ancient temple of Oolloor dedicated to Subramonia attracts hundreds of worshippers during the year. Within the temple walls is a very old Sasta shrine, one of those established centuries ago in the then forests of Travancore and dedicated to the forest deity for the protection of the land and the people. The tiny village is only about four miles from the capital.

## THE ILAVAS

Wherever there are coconuts there are Ilavas, as these people are the hereditary coconut cultivators. They are the largest single caste in Travancore, and numbered 869,863 in the 1931 census. They are believed to be descendants of men who settled in Travancore from Ceylon. The traditional story tells that the Ilathunad Raja of Ceylon visited Kerala, and finding



the land suitable for the cultivation of coconuts asked for some land for this purpose. The Ceylon Raja sent four men to cultivate the land. The four men were bachelors and with the consent of the Raja married local women. After some years, the men were recalled because the gardens were not bringing sufficient profit. The wives and children remained behind, and were called Ilavas, from the word *Ilam* which meant Ceylon. They formed the nucleus from which this large caste has grown.

By profession the Ilavas' occupation is the rearing and cultivation of coconut and palmyra palms, which includes toddy drawing. A recent temperance movement among the Ilavas led them to give up in a large measure tapping for toddy and, since most of this work was done by them, the toddy market was crippled. Many Ilavas are general agriculturists now, in fact they may be found wherever heavy work is done. Many are boatmen. The women are expert in making coir yarn. They are a prosperous community who have increased rapidly during the past decade. The law of inheritance in some families is matrilineal, in others patrilineal, although the tendency is more toward the latter. They are Hindus who worship God Siva. Various forms of demon worship and animism, which once occupied an important place in their religious observances, are fast going out. The work of Sri Narayana Gurudev among these peoples has tended to elevate their culture and lives. They are interested in education and rank fairly high with 42.7 per cent of the male, and 12.1 of the female population being literate. In ceremonials and appearance they are somewhat similar to the Nairs.



*List of Travellers Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route*

NOTE—I, means 1st Class T.B.; II, means 2nd Class T.B.;  
and C.S., means Camp Shed.

(The milestones are on the Trivandrum-Quilon Road.)

Quilon (I).

Kalluvathukal (C.S.), 33rd milestone—about ten  
miles from Quilon.

Varkala (C.S.), six miles from the 26th milestone.

Attingal (II), 22nd milestone.

Pallipuram (C.S.), 13th milestone.

Trivandrum (I).





## CHAPTER IV

### ERNAKULAM VIA KOTTAYAM TO QUILON OR TRIVANDRUM

VISITORS to Travancore often leave the train at Ernakulam and proceed by car or bus to Kottayam in central Travancore. The country passed through is very different to the overland journey described in the previous tour. The country is less level, the soil is less sandy and the agriculture necessarily different. The red soil indicative of laterite is not as fertile as the low lying land of the flats. On almost every journey in the State one can find paddy and coconut cultivation, and it can be found on this journey. Pepper, ginger and spice cultivation, tapioca, vegetables and bananas will be found in abundance.

The history of this country deals with the history of Christianity. Very soon after leaving the Cochin boundary, the old Roman Catholic church of Udayamperur is passed. This ancient church was the seat of the Syrian Chiefs. Here the Synod of Diamper was held in 1599. This Synod is one of the turning-points of Christianity in Travancore and stands out in great importance. It will be remembered that Christianity dates back, traditionally, to about A.D. 52, when St. Thomas came from Palestine to convert people to the new religion taught him by Christ; and according to documentary evidence, to the sixth century when Cosmas Indicopleustes, a Nestorian by faith, lived a



number of years on this coast. His writings tell of well-established churches with fairly large congregations. We have little history of these early years but we do know that the Christianity of this coast was under the sway of Nestorianism, quite probably started by Cosmas, during the years when Mar Saphos and Mar Prodh, two Nestorian Bishops, were the leaders. When the Portuguese came they found Nestorianism had permeated into practically all of the churches on this coast. Their great desire was to see all Christians brought under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church, and to this end they resorted to questionable means, force, and eventually the inquisition which they brought from Spain and Portugal to their headquarters at Goa. The Syrians resisted this dominance in their church with what vigour and strength they could, some of them even unto death, but the Portuguese were too strong and eventually so cowed the leader of the Syrians that he could fight no more, and signed a document to the effect that he acknowledged the Pope, abjured the Nestorian faith, cursed the Patriarch, would deliver all religious books and records to be burned or amended, and would gather all his priests at a Synod to be held at Diamper. On 20 June 1599 Archbishop Menezes formally opened the Synod which was attended by the Portuguese Governor of Cochin, the civil and military authorities and one hundred and fifty-three Syrian priests with their laymen and the crushed Archdeacon. The presence of such a large number of laymen was a most unusual procedure.

Resolutions were rushed through without opposition.

Thus in nine Acts or Sessions 267 important decrees



affecting the future of the Syrians were hurried through the house without a fair discussion, and at the last day the 26th of June with abundance of tears Archbishop Menezes rose from his throne and blessed the congregation. The stern Archbishop went in a great procession around the church chanting praises and thanksgiving to God for the success of his labours, while the ancient liturgies and other Syriac books, regulations, documents and manuscripts on ecclesiastical subjects were committed to the burning pile of flames. With the aid of the Jesuits he proceeded to enforce his authority by the most violent means. Thus, much of the precious literature of the Syrians was lost by the mistaken and blinded zeal of Menezes.<sup>1</sup>

From now on Nestorianism was completely abolished and all the Syrian churches were subjugated to the Catholic Church, the only concession allowed them being the permission to keep Syriac as their liturgical language. In all matters of discipline the Syrian Christians had to submit themselves to the Holy Office of the Inquisition established at Goa.

The control of the Christian churches in Malabar lay vested in Rome as long as the Portuguese were in power. Since their submission was made merely because they were unable to endure oppression longer, it is not surprising that the Syrians chafed under Catholic rule and continued under it most unwillingly. Open rebellion was the obvious outcome, and when the Portuguese imprisoned a Bishop coming from Mosul, a group of Syrians met at Coonen Cross near Muttancherry in Cochin in 1653, and took

<sup>1</sup> Agur, *Church History of Travancore*, p. 50.



a solemn oath that they would never submit to Rome. Though all connexion with Rome was definitely severed by this oath, a few Syrian families chose to remain in the Catholic Church. These families separated from the other Syrians and became known as the Romo-Syrians under a Jesuit, Archbishop Garcia of Cranganore. The main body of Syrians returned to their ancient faith, probably Nestorianism, which they had previously professed. A great deal of dissatisfaction was felt by the Romo-Syrians under the Jesuit Archbishop, and many people swerved back to the Syrian faith. To meet this problem, the Carmelite Mission was sent to Malabar by the Pope in 1656, in an effort to regain the Christians for the Catholic faith. The Carmelites established their headquarters at Verapoly,<sup>1</sup> the northernmost part of Travancore, on land given by the Maharaja. Within a very short time after the coming of the Carmelites, seventy Syrian churches made their submission to Rome and were reunited.

With the overthrow of the Portuguese by the Dutch, a greater freedom in religious matters was evinced. The Dutch—a Protestant people—were intolerant of the Roman Catholics, but although they curtailed the power of the Catholic Bishops they did not interest themselves to any extent in church affairs.

The next important step in the history of Syrian Christianity was their incorporation into the Jacobite faith. When the Syrians rebelled against Catholicism, they had no Bishop of their own, and the local

<sup>1</sup> The Church and Seminary at Verapoly were founded in 1674, and the permanent establishment began only in 1696.



consecration of their chosen priest was deemed irregular. This irregularity caused so much dissatisfaction that the Patriarchs of Antioch, Egypt and Babylon were petitioned to send Bishops. The Patriarch of Antioch responded, and thus in 1665 the Syrians were quietly absorbed into the Jacobite faith, as taught by the first Jacobite Bishop Mar Gregory.

History repeated itself: there were disputes and dissatisfaction, to be settled only to rise again, much of the trouble arising from the fact that Antioch was too far away to send Bishops regularly enough to ensure the proper consecration of local Bishops, and to the fact that a certain group among them wished to acknowledge Antioch as the head of the church in Malabar, while the others wished to remain an independent see, as they considered they originally were in the early years of this era. This Syrian Church was, however, free to follow the dictates of its conscience. In 1813 Joseph Ramban built the seminary at Kottayam, and two years later being consecrated Mar Dionysius I, took up his residence there.

About this time the Church Missionary Society of England sent out three missionaries—Baker, Bailey and Fenn—to co-operate with the Syrians. After twenty-two years of close and profitable work in which the Bible was translated into Malayalam, schools were established and the courses at the Kottayam College were widened, the union was dissolved. The severance came because of reforms which a section of the Syrians and the missionaries wished to introduce into the Jacobite Syrian Church. The intention of the missionaries being so misconstrued, the only course left to them was to withdraw from the co-operation.



Two young men, George Mathan and Matthew Athanasius, who were brilliant students in the Kottayam College, took great interest in the development of their church. Because of their reforming principles, the two boys were subjected to persecutions of all kinds and finally, along with all the reforming party, were excommunicated. They went to Madras for further study. Mathan, coming to believe that the 'Syrian Church was so steeped in superstitions and so overgrown with rank weeds that any attempt at reform would be a bootless task', received ordination at the hands of the Protestant Bishop and returned to Travancore as a C.M.S. missionary. Matthew Athanasius took a different view saying, 'I will yet live to pluck out the weeds by the roots and reduce our church to its pristine purity and simplicity of faith'. Accordingly he went to the Patriarch of Antioch to study for several years. There he was consecrated Metropolitan of Malabar. On his return to Travancore he found a group of people under the leadership of Bishop Mar Dionysius determined to work against him. Difficulties involving court cases were constantly obstructing the path of the reformer who, in spite of the enmity, did much to bring the ritual and service within an easier understanding of the people.

At last the party under Mar Dionysius definitely broke away from the Metropolitan and declared they owed allegiance direct to Antioch. The party under Mar Athanasius maintained they were an independent see—the Syrian Church of Malabar. This definite split occurred in 1875. The Government of Travancore in former days had supported the then Bishops by issuing



proclamations to the Syrians that they must subject themselves to the leadership of the Bishop. The expense and difficulties in instituting inquiry committees, when affairs in the Syrian Church become so complicated, were deemed too great and the Government told the rival claimants they must settle their grievances in the civil courts. Mar Thomas Athanasius, successor of Matthew Athanasius, was forced to carry on the litigation which was tried before Hindu judges. After five years of careful study, judgment was given in favour of Mar Dionysius, and all diocesan church properties were awarded to him. Later cases were tried and judgments pronounced so that at the present time the Mar Thomas own fourteen of the old churches exclusively, and five churches jointly with the Jacobites.

By the end of the nineteenth century there were four divisions in the Malabar Syrian Church: the Romo-Syrians who adhered to the Roman Catholic faith; the Syrians who, once Nestorians, now profess allegiance to the Patriarch of Antioch and are known as Jacobite Syrians; the Syrians who have joined the Church of England and are called C.M.S. Syrians; and the original body of Syrians, an independent see, known as the Mar Thoma Syrians. Of these four branches more will be written later. Within the past few years a new movement has come into being which is called the Bethany Conversion Movement. Mar Ivanios, a Jacobite prelate, believing that the ancient church certainly had orders of its own, started two religious congregations—the Brotherhood and the Sisterhood of the Imitation of Christ. He wished for a reunion with Rome, and when he and his suffragan made their



abjuration before the Bishop of Quilon, the two congregations followed. The Holy See has granted these two Bishops jurisdiction over all converts from the Jacobite Church and has permitted them to retain their old Malankara (Malabar) rite and liturgy. Thus Mar Ivanios in June 1932 was nominated the first Archbishop of Trivandrum for the Malankara rite—and a new hierarchy has been established.

About eighteen miles from Ernakulam is the village of Vaikom, famous for its important temple, which has already been described,<sup>1</sup> and as the seat of the *sathyagraha* movement of 1925 in which Mahatma Gandhi participated. It is a small rural town, the headquarters of the taluk of the same name.

About a mile and a half north of Vaikom is the important temple of Udayanapuram, which is usually visited by the pilgrims who visit the big Vaikom temple near by. Although the temple is known as Udayanayakipuram—the abode of Udayanayaki (another name for the Goddess Bhagavathi)—it is dedicated to God Subramonia. The story as told by the inhabitants of the place says that a certain group of men started to build two temples—one for Subramonia at Kumaranelloor, and one for Bhagavathi at Udayanapuram. When circumstances forced the builders to consecrate the temple originally intended for Subramonia to Bhagavathi, as related on page 94, they reversed their decision regarding the second temple and dedicated it to Subramonia. The temples are still known by the names originally intended for them.

<sup>1</sup> See page 19.



Several Roman Catholic churches are situated on this road. At the Kadutturitti church nine miles from Vaikom a dramatic scene took place in 1704 when the people vowed they would serve under the Vicar Apostolic Francisco and the Carmelites rather than obey a newly appointed Jesuit Bishop of Cranganore. The Muttuchira church, only a mile south, has one of the interesting Pahlavi crosses. This particular stone appears to have been brought hither some centuries ago from another old church which had probably existed elsewhere near by, and it was found in the foundation of the altar of this chapel when the flooring was raked up during repairs. The inscription has been badly mutilated, but what is left has been deciphered to mean 'Lord Messiah the supreme'. The open-air cross in front of this church was built in 1623, according to the inscription on it, and bears a facsimile of the altar cross, except that the inscription has been omitted.

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century a certain group of men began to make plans for the development of a religious house of their own, where they might devote themselves to the attainment of evangelical perfection and to work for the social, moral and spiritual advancement of their brethren. The idea materialized in the monastery and associated institutions at Mannanam in 1831. At this place the first Catholic Press in Malabar was started in 1844. One of the most important developments took place eleven years later when eleven men took vows to become the first professed fathers of the congregation called 'Servants of the Immaculate Mother of Mount Carmel'. The work of this institution so prospered and grew



that further monasteries and schools were started in several places in the State. At one such institution at Coonamavu the Carmelite Sisters of the Syro-Malabar rite were founded in 1866, and this house became the mother-house of the order for all Malabar. The meetings and conferences, which eventually ended in a complete separation of the Latin and Syrian rites of the Roman Catholic Church, were held at Mannanam. The final separation was made in May 1887, and the Romo-Syrians were placed under their own Syrian Bishops. Mannanam Hill is conspicuous for its many large buildings. A flight of steps leads from the roadside to the centenary arch at the top and thence to the various buildings.

Tradition connects three important temples on this road: Vaikom; Kadutturitti, which is nine miles south; and Ettumanur which is another nine miles on. These three Siva temples are greatly revered and much visited by pilgrims, the second one less than the others. The story of their origin has been given in detail on page 19.

The Ettumanur temple in its first state was very humble. The land about here was only sparsely settled, as it is said the people were terrified of the thunder and lightning, a symbol of the divine wrath of Siva. A second temple on the same spot was dedicated to Sri Krishna at the request of the people. This seemed to appease the god so that people began to inhabit the place in greater numbers. And at last, between 1541 and 1544, the landlords who managed the temple built a new and splendid one. The tall gold flagstaff in front of the temple is especially beautiful. The collection of jewels is particularly fine and valuable.



It is interesting to know that, in commemoration of his victory over Tippoo, the then Maharaja gave a gift of seven gold elephants to this temple. This particular temple is one to which persons possessed by evil spirits resort and where by prayer and worship they are relieved of their possession and become normal again. A few such persons may always be found attending this temple. The large number of feasts which are celebrated in this temple by those who have been cured are ample proof that the faith in the exorcist powers of the god is justified. No medicines are given as in the Thiruvizha temple. Government have had the supervision of this temple since 1811.

About four miles on toward Kottayam is still another temple of importance. This is a private temple managed by the Nambudries of this place and is called Kumaranelloor, the village of Subramonia, but the temple is dedicated to Bhagavathi. Again legend gives us an interesting story. An old priest in the Madura temple was accused of stealing the nose-diamond of the goddess there. The goddess appeared before the pious old man one night, and bade him follow her. Together they fled from the Pandyan kingdom and by dawn reached Kumaranelloor where a temple was being built for Subramonia. The priest told the authorities that the temple should be dedicated to the goddess Bhagavathi since she had visited it. The incredulous authorities proceeded on their way to fetch Subramonia, with the caustic remark that were this true the goddess herself would tell them. The party set out, but were soon so completely surrounded by a thick mist that they dared not proceed. The old priest said the mist was sent



by the goddess to prevent them from reaching Subramonia, and when the authorities promised to dedicate the temple to the goddess the mist immediately cleared. Further proof that the goddess was guiding them was evidenced by the finding of an image for consecration in an old well, as prophesied in a vision vouchsafed the old priest. Thus it is that the temple named after Subramonia is really dedicated to Bhagavathi. The country around this temple is known as Manjur, which comes from *manj*—mist and *ur*—place. The connexion of this temple with the temple at Udayanapuram has already been noted.<sup>1</sup>

#### KOTTAYAM

The town of Kottayam is richly endowed by nature with a great variety of scenery. The visitor who spends a night in the comfortable Travellers' Bungalow wakens to a sunrise over the distant mountains, reflecting palm trees in the backwaters or turning to brilliance the clear green of paddy fields. The country is one of ups and downs—all intensively cultivated and continuously green.

Kottayam is the educational centre of Central Travancore, boasting the C.M.S. College, C.M.S. High school, C.N.I. Seminary, Baker High school for girls, Government Vernacular schools for boys and girls, Government Vernacular Training school, Mar Thoma Theological Seminary, Mar Thoma Seminary, Jacobite Seminary, Convent for girls, besides the Primary schools.

<sup>1</sup> See page 91.



Mention has already been made of the missionaries who were co-operating with the Syrian Church at their college in Kottayam. It is interesting to know that this mission came to Travancore at the urgent request of Colonel Munro, Resident and Dewan of Travancore. Previous to this, reports as to the desirability of missionaries being sent, were made by Colonel Macaulay, the first British Resident, and several men had been sent from Madras and Calcutta to visit the Syrian Churches.

The first missionary arrived in 1816, and several others followed within the course of a few years. For about twenty years there was close friendship and connexion between the Englishmen and the Syrians. The missionaries aided greatly in the establishment of the Syrian College at Kottayam and in the work of translating the Bible and liturgy into Malayalam. At the incitation of Colonel Munro the English liturgy was translated and used in all Syrian churches. Schools were established and reforms which weeded out certain unscriptural practices were put into effect. Many tributes to the missionaries regarding their policy of co-operation and non-interference with Syrian observances may be found in the old literature of this period. Times changed, a new Metropolitan came into power, and slight differences of opinions widened until co-operation was no longer possible.<sup>1</sup>

Not until 1838 was the definite break made and the Church Missionary Society permitted by its headquarters to establish mission work of its own. They

<sup>1</sup> See p. 88.



immediately set up a college for all castes and creeds, and proceeded to build churches, schools, and houses. The Printing Press, established in 1821, is reputed to be the first Malayalam printing press in the State. In 1820 Mrs Baker, the wife of a missionary, started a girls' school which she conducted for seventy years and handed on to her daughters. It is now one of the important girls' schools in Travancore. Other mission work was started in Mavelikara, Thiruvella, and Pallam in Travancore State. The first Indian pastor was ordained in 1844.<sup>1</sup>

Until 1835 the general supervision of the C.M.S. missionaries was done from Calcutta; and from then on Travancore work was under Madras. The work had progressed so successfully that in 1879 Travancore and Cochin were formed into a separate diocese with its own Bishop, and headquarters at Kottayam.

At present the C.M.S. comprises 78,146 Christians, 61 pastors, 112 churches and a large number of educational institutions ranging from Primary schools to a second grade college.

#### SYRIAN CHRISTIANS

The term Syrian applies to a very wide group of people, as has already been explained in the general remarks on Christianity at the beginning of the chapter. That there are many branches of Syrians is proved by the unusually large number of Bishops, who though under either the Roman Catholic Church or under a Protestant form of religion have jurisdiction over a special group of people. Volumes

<sup>1</sup> See p. 89.

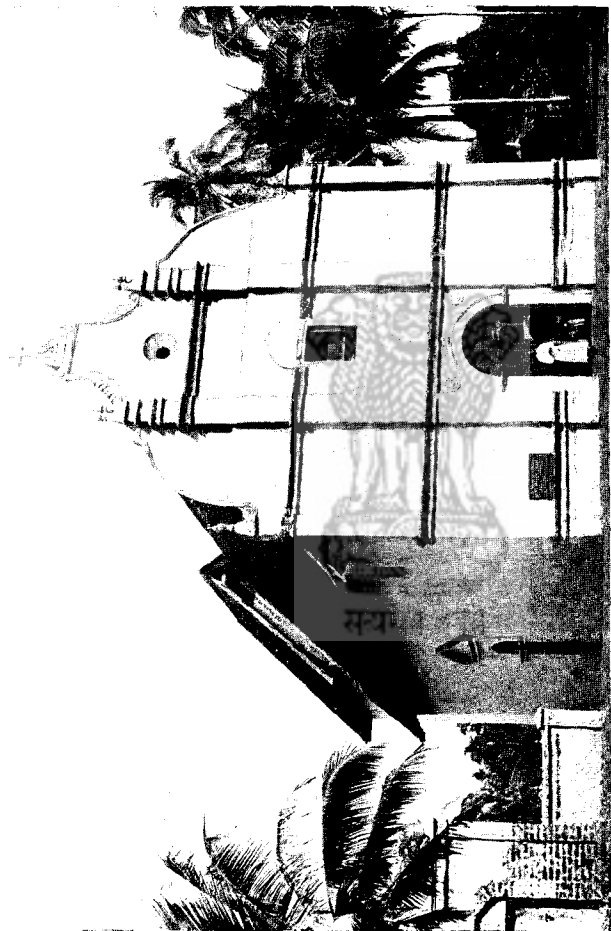




### PAHLAVI CROSS

The several crosses which are found in Southern India are among the most interesting relics of early Christianity. It is said that St. Thomas the Apostle visited Travancore and started Syrian Christianity as early as A.D. 52. This cross in the Kottayam church, although probably not very old, is a copy of one of the earliest crosses in India.





#### SYRIAN CHURCH, UDAYAMPURUR

This church was the scene of the Synod of Diamper in 1599 when all Christians in Travancore were forced to swear allegiance to Rome. In his zeal for his faith Archbishop Menozes caused all the Syrian religious books and records to be burned. The allegiance lasted little over eighty years, when many of the Syrians returned to their former Nestorian faith (see pp. 84-7).



would be required to explain the intricacies of all these so-called branches of Syrians. Kottayam is the headquarters for several of these branches. Two Roman Catholic Bishops live here: one having jurisdiction over the Kottayam diocese of those persons who adhere to the Latin rite; one having jurisdiction over a group of Syrians known as Sudhists.

### THE SUDHISTS

It is believed that when an Armenian merchant, Thomas of Cana, visited the West Coast of India on business (A.D. 345), he found the St. Thomas Christians in large numbers, and that he felt called upon to do something to help them live true to their professed faith. He returned to Mesopotamia to place his findings before the Cassolikkos (one with powers of a Patriarch). It was resolved that a body of men and women should be sent to Malabar, and accordingly about four hundred people arrived at Cranganore to settle down as permanent residents. They obtained permission from the ruler to build their homes and churches. Tradition relates that a street was built in front of the Raja's palace, all the foreigners settling on the southern side and all the native converts and Christians on the northern side. Thus it came about that the foreigners became known as South-ists or Sudhists and all others were called North-ists or Nordhists. The difference between these two groups is therefore one of race. To this day there is no inter-marriage between them. At feasts and weddings, the Sudhists sing songs commemorating the day of their colonization at Cranganore. They call themselves Syrians because



they believe their ancestors were converted from Judaism to the Syro-Chaldean rite of Christianity by St. Thomas before they came to Malabar.

During the time of the Portuguese and later when the Jacobite faith was introduced, some Sudhists remained in the Roman Catholic Church and some joined the Jacobite Church, just as it is stated generally in the history previously given. Those Sudhists of the Roman Catholic Church, wishing to preserve their old Syro-Chaldean rite, were allowed to have a diocese of their own with their own Bishop. They form the Sudhist group in the Roman Catholic Church. Likewise under the Jacobite Church, the Syrian Knanaya (Syrians of Cana) who follow the Antiochian rite have their own Bishop whose headquarters is also at Kottayam.

Legend—unfortunately not supported by those historians who demand authentic fact—connects the Sudhists with the ancient Pahlavi cross in the Valiapalli—now a Jacobite Sudhist church. When during the days of oppression and riot the Christians were forced to flee for their lives from Cranganore, they carried with them two precious treasures: a granite cross and a golden crown. It is reputed that the cross had been shaped by the Apostle Thomas and placed in the Cranganore church. The Christians put it in their new church at Kottayam. The golden crown, still preserved in the Roman Catholic church of Chungam, was supposedly a gift of gratitude for services rendered by him, to Thomas of Cana from King Cheraman Perumal.

Visitors to Kottayam never fail to visit the Valiapalli. Students of archæology and epigraphy believe



the original cross at St. Thomas Mount, Madras, to be not older than the ninth century after Christ. The small cross in the Valiapalli may then be considered an imitation. Tradition says that this small cross was brought from Kadutturitti, from which place the Sudhist parishioners of the Valiapalli church had come. The first wooden church was begun in 1550 and the second or present laterite church was built in 1577. This would make the date of the small cross about 1580. The larger cross is dated much later—perhaps only A.D. 1824 or '25. The history of the several Pahlavi crosses to be found in Travancore forms a very interesting study, but information is so scanty that the student must be especially careful in what he accepts.

#### THE JACOBITE SYRIANS

A brief history of the Jacobite Christians has already been given. Up till 1875 all the Protestant Syrians were under one Metropolitan—known as the Metropolitan of Malankara. When the definite split between the two parties of the Church occurred, they were known as Jacobite Syrians and Mar Thoma Syrians. The head of the Jacobite Church in Malabar is still known as the Malankara Metropolitan. In 1875 the Patriarch of Antioch visited Malabar and, in order to facilitate the work of administration, divided the Church into seven divisions with Suffragan Bishops or Metropolitans of equal rights over them. An association of the seven Bishops was formed with the Malankara Metropolitan, the ruling Metropolitan, as President. Later an eighth diocese was formed known as the Syrian Knanya Diocese of Malabar. The



Bishop of this diocese is called the Syrian Knanya Metropolitan and has under his jurisdiction the Knanites who form a tribal sect of the Syrians (from Thomas of Cana).

The Jacobite Church has two religious communities, one for men known as the Bethany Brotherhood, and one for women known as Mount Thabor Sisterhood. As with most Syrians, their Sunday begins at six o'clock on Saturday evening and ends at six on Sunday evening. They follow the Julian calendar, which means they celebrate such days as Christmas and New Year about two weeks later than the usual dates.

The Jacobites own a number of very old churches. St. Mary's Church at Niranum, near Thiruvella, is as old as Christianity in Malabar and is reputed to have been built by St. Thomas the Apostle. The present building is not very old, but has in it some of the stones of the old church. It is side by side with an ancient Hindu pagoda.

The Jacobite Syrian Church holds all those tenets that are contained in the first three Ecumenical Councils (Nicea 325, Constantinople 381, and Ephesus 431) and the Nicene Creed. They hold the sacramental system, and practise all the seven sacraments. They pray for the dead and have the invocation of Saints.

There are 450 Jacobite churches in Travancore, conducted by 380 pastors. The Jacobites have a number of schools, High, Middle and Vernacular, under their management.

Because Christianity is numerically so strong in Travancore, comprising 1,604,475 persons out of a total population of 5,095,973, the actual number of



Christians returned under the various denominations is of interest.<sup>1</sup>

## SECT

Anglican Communion	...	85,261
Jacobite Syrians	... ..	337,872
Mar Thoma Syrians	... ..	142,486
Romo-Syrians	... ..	449,173
Roman Catholics	... ..	360,217
Salvationists	... ..	58,991
South India United Church	...	138,958
Others, including other Syrians	...	31,517

Kottayam is the junction where the road turns toward the hills of Peermade and Vandiperiyar. Practically all of the produce of these districts—tea, rubber, and pepper—is sent into Kottayam, there to be shipped by backwaters to Cochin or Alleppey for shipment overseas. This produce going through Kottayam constitutes the only business element in the town.

The journey of two hours across the Vembanad lake to Alleppey is particularly beautiful with all the charms of lake and backwaters. The regular motor service is twice daily.

## CHANGANACHERRY

The country around the village of Changanacherry, eleven miles south of Kottayam, was once an independent principality of that name, under its own Raja. From the history of Kayemkulam and Ambalapuzha given in the second chapter, it will be seen that the Raja of Changanacherry joined in a conspiracy with

<sup>1</sup> *Census of 1931*, p. 338.



the Rajas of these two places to check the advance of the Raja of Travancore; that the conspiracy was discovered and that the Raja of Travancore resolved to proceed against them all.

Although urged by his younger brother to become a vassal State to Travancore, the Raja of Changanacherry refused. In spite of this refusal, the younger brother went to Trivandrum to make such an offer. The Raja, naturally very angry, demanded the return of his brother. The Raja of Travancore feared for the young man's life if he returned to Changanacherry and refused to give him permission to go. Not to be foiled like this, the elder brother sent word that their mother was on her death-bed and wanted him. Against his good judgment the younger brother went back to Changanacherry and, as anticipated, was strangled before he reached home. When the Raja of Travancore's army marched upon Changanacherry they came upon a band of Brahmans who blocked the way, believing that as Brahmans they would not be killed. The Travancore army were forced to clear the way and continue the march. The confusion caused by the Brahmans was sufficient, however, for the Raja of Changanacherry to escape and flee from his country. The principality of Changanacherry was added to the State of Travancore.

The seat of the Syrian Roman Catholic Bishop is in Changanacherry. The history of Catholicism in Travancore and its relation to the Syrian Church has already been mentioned. When those persons in the Roman Catholic Church who wished to have their own local Bishops and their own rite were granted their desires, the district of Changanacherry was



raised to a Vicariate in 1887. The mission was formally established there in 1896; and then in 1923 erected a Bishopric. This diocese is for the Romo-Syrians under the Syro-Malabar Rite. There are 203,242 Christians, 242 churches, and 326 secular priests; many educational institutions, from the lowest schools to a first grade college, give education to many thousand students. St. Berchman's College and three High schools are located in Changanacherry.

#### THIRUVELLA

Another religious centre is in Thiruvella, eighteen miles south of Kottayam. Here the reformed party of the Syrians known as the Mar Thomas have their headquarters. As has already been related,<sup>1</sup> when the Syrians flung off the yoke of Catholicism as placed on their shoulders by the Portuguese Jesuits, some returned to Roman Catholicism under the guidance of the Carmelites, while others accepted the guidance of the Jacobite Patriarch of Antioch who sent a Bishop to them. In this body of Jacobites were a group of people who felt that the Jacobite faith was anachronistic, and who claimed that the Mar Thoma Syrian Church, Apostolic in origin, had always been spiritually independent and ecclesiastically autonomous, and maintained that neither Rome nor Antioch nor Babylon had any rights of supremacy over the St. Thomas see of Malabar. The name Mar Thoma is thus the name of the ancient autonomous Church in Malabar, which the Mar Thoma Syrians have been using even after reforms were introduced in the

<sup>1</sup> See p. 86.



Church. The word *mar* is the Syriac for Lord, and is usually understood as equivalent to Saint. The date of the definite split of the Malabar Syrian Church into the two parties Jacobite (directly under Antioch) and Mar Thoma, is only 1875. The court cases over properties resulted in giving the Mar Thomas exclusive rights over fourteen of the ancient churches, and joint ownership with the Jacobites over five churches. In these five churches the two parties hold services on alternate Sundays.

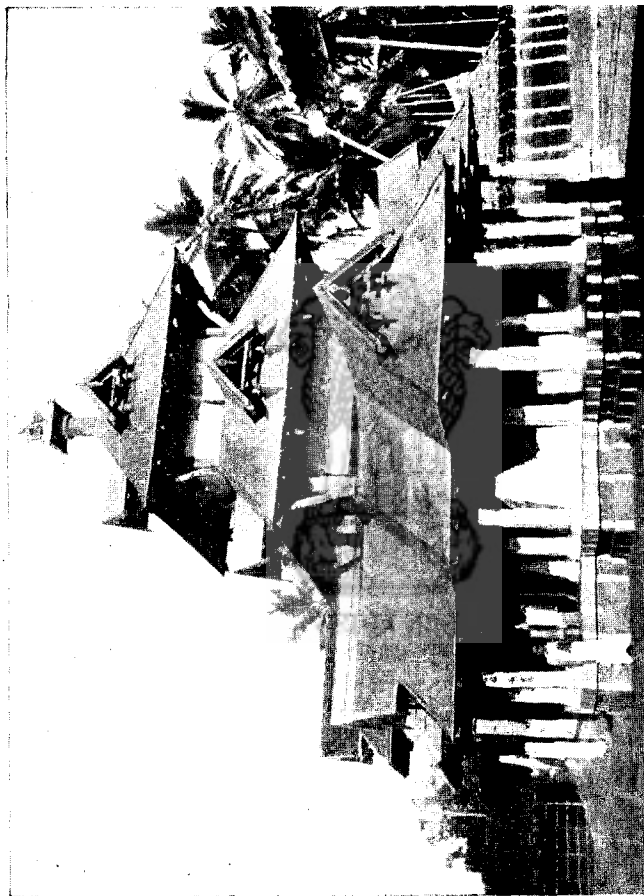
The tenets of the Mar Thoma Church which distinguish it from the Jacobite Church are in the main:

1. The Holy Bible consisting of sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament is the only rule of faith.
2. Auricular confession to a priest and an absolution from him are not necessary, as every Christian has free access to God and is justified not by his works but by faith.
3. Prayers to the departed saints and for the dead are not allowed.
4. There is no belief in consubstantiation.
5. Communion should be in both kinds.
6. There should be no Eucharistic service where there are no communicants to take part.

The total membership of the Mar Thoma Church is 142,486, for whom there are 105 pastors and 225 churches. Like other religious bodies, the Mar Thomas are interested in education and have many schools under their supervision.

Probably the most interesting event of the Mar Thoma year, and an event which is unique in Christianity, is the annual convention held at Maramanu.

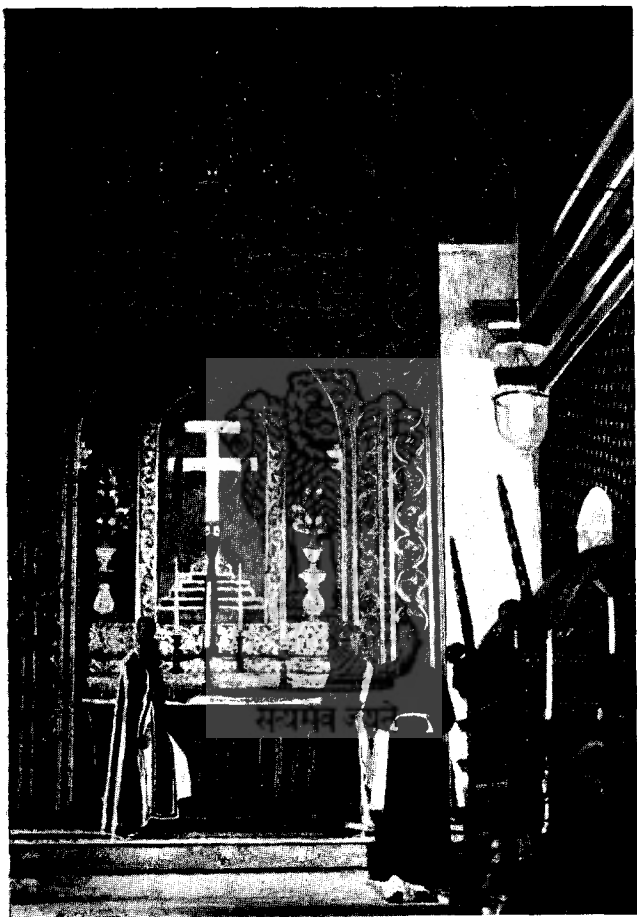




THE MAHA VISHNU TEMPLE, THIRUVELLA

This ancient and unique temple is one of the most sacred temples in the State. The flagstaff, which is a monolith of black granite fifty feet high and two feet in diameter, rises through the centre of the building. The carvings and the five-metal Garuda are remarkably fine.





ALTAR OF THE CHURCH AT KOTHAMANGALAM  
The church at Kothamangalam is one of the oldest churches  
in Travancore.



A group of evangelists visited the Syrian Church in 1894 and held a series of successful meetings in various churches. In March 1895 they held a great convention which lasted for ten days. Twenty-five thousand people gathered in the dry sandy river bed to listen to the sermons. The Mar Thoma Church sponsored this first great convention. From that year onward, except for three occasions, during the full moon week of February the convention has been regularly held and attracts thousands of Christians to hear the speakers. A more ideal place cannot be imagined: the broad sandy river bed offers a clean level place where the huge *pandal* is erected. Many families live in the big wallums in which they come to Maramanu. The river furnishes sufficient water for the people, and when the monsoon breaks a few months later, the whole place is washed clean for another year. The convention opens on Sunday and continues until the close of the following Sunday, when often as many as thirty thousand people may be seen quietly sitting on the sand listening to the special speakers who have been invited. Services begin at 7.30 in the morning with the children's meeting, which is attended by three thousand or more children. Special meetings for men and women as well as general meetings are held each day. The effects of this convention are far-reaching and it is a source of great spiritual value to all the Protestant Churches in Travancore. The Maramanu Convention is often referred to as the largest Christian convention in the world.

The village takes its name from the magnificent temple of Tiruvallalappan (Sri Vallabha or Vishnu). This is the most important temple of the many old



shrines and temples in this vicinity. Some of the smaller ones are probably older, but at present the Maha Vishnu temple is the best known and most often visited. The site was chosen because of the pool of fresh clear spring water there. Near it was a jasmine grove where rishis used to do penance. According to tradition, a colony of Brahmans and Sudras built a small temple and installed Vishnu's discus in it. Later Vishnu himself was installed in the temple and the temple given his name. The natural pool is the big tank within the temple, and is considered a rare phenomenon. In the central sanctum there are five figures besides Vishnu, all made of the famous alloy of five metals called *panchaloha*—gold, silver, tin, lead and copper. The main image of Vishnu is, traditionally, the image that was made for Satyaki, a great friend of Krishna, and set up in Krishna's city. After the god's death, the image was entrusted to Garuda, Krishna's bird, who eventually put it in a river. The Kerala king was told by Garuda in a dream where the image was, and the king ordered it to be installed on the bank of the river. The Thiruvella temple is built around this image.

There are wonderful corridors all made of large granite slabs. The most wonderful thing about the temple, however, is the flagstaff—a unique structure, 'a round column of black granite about fifty feet high and two feet in diameter. The length of the buried portion of the column cannot be ascertained, but it is believed that the bottom end of it touches water underground, perhaps to avoid lightning stroke. There are no granite rocks within a radius of five or six miles round the temple. . . . How this long,



brittle, heavy column was transported from a distance of five or six miles, by land or by river, and how it was raised into position we do not know. . . . On the top of this flagstaff is a *panchaloha* or five-metal image of Garuda, Vishnu's vehicle, in winged human form, about three feet tall in the sitting posture. The image is always bright, and requires no burnishing. . . .

'It is a pity, however, that only the top end (about three and a half feet) of this wonderful flagstaff is visible, the rest being entirely hidden by the thick laterite buttresses built against the four sides of the column. The buttresses are protected from rain by three copper-covered square roofs one above the other. The whole structure enclosing the granite column now looks like a three-storied minaret. I know of no other temple in India which can boast of such a granite flagstaff, which the ancient builders of Thiruvella temple must have esteemed much more valuable and wonderful than a gold-covered one.'<sup>1</sup>

When some repair work was necessary, the buttresses were bored to find out if the column was a real monolith. The engineers were convinced it was.

Another remarkable feature of this temple is the underground strong room. The cellar is believed to be very spacious. Ornaments, large cooking vessels, pots, pans, lamps and other articles of gold are said to be lying down in the dark cellar even now. It is believed that the cellar has not been opened for over a thousand years. About thirty-five years ago the Peishkar of Quilon 'ventured into the entrance to the

<sup>1</sup> Nambyar, *Kerala Society Papers*, Series 2, p. 68.



mysterious cellar with ordinary cloth torches, but had to withdraw immediately owing to the dreadful nature of the chamber. It is said that he saw serpents, and even demons guarding the golden vessels. According to a chronicle the king and representatives of the sixty-four Brahman village colonies of Kerala used to gather at the Thiruvella temple once in twelve years and hold a grand meeting and feast for which the gold vessels, lamps, etc. in the cellar were taken out in the presence of competent witnesses. After use they were again stowed away in their old recess and the strong room locked. . . . This custom, says the chronicle, stopped sometime before the beginning of the Quilon era (A.D. 825).<sup>1</sup>

The temple is a rich one and the jewels are very valuable. A century or two ago, there were 101 thin gold pots among the treasures. 'These pots, each one *para* or about 640 cubic inches in capacity, were thin-walled and collapsible (much more so than modern toothpaste or colour tubes of leadfoil) and could be concealed in a shirt pocket when pressed flat and folded. They could easily be restored to their original shape by merely blowing into them forcibly with the mouth.'<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately none of them are left. It is said that a Dalawah took all but one for the State treasury and an under priest stole the last one. Many of the temple walls are covered with excellent paintings depicting various scenes from Puranic lore.

An interesting and peculiar custom of feasting one Brahman every noon, before food can be offered to

<sup>1</sup> Nambyar, *Kerala Society Papers*, Series 2, pp. 70-71.



Vishnu, is still followed. Food is served not as is usually done on a plantain leaf, but on a plate and dishes cut from the sheath of an areca nut. Every noon one of the priests stands in the *mandapa* and calls 'Vedantamale, Vedantamale'. Some Malayala Brahman, one who has the right to study the Vedas, then appears and accepts the invitation to dine. This custom has a legendary origin. The only surviving member of a Nambudri house was a lady known as Sankaramangalathamma. She lived a solitary and very religious life. Although she was very wealthy she lived simply with only two servants, and entrusted all her movable valuables to relatives for fear of Toliya, the merciless robber chief. The Amma observed certain fast days and feasted a Nambudri on the day after the fast. One day no *brahmachari* came. The distressed Amma closed her eyes and prayed to Vishnu, who soon appeared himself in the guise of a *brahmachari*. He was immediately invited to dine, but warned that he must bathe at the well, not in the river, as the dreaded Toliya (robber) would probably molest him. The spirited guest went straight to the river, where he met Toliya and killed him with his discus. The place in the river is still known as Chakrakshalana ghat, the place where the discus was washed clean from the Toliya's blood. The guest returned to the Amma's home and was sumptuously fed from dishes made from the areca nut sheath. After the feast the *brahmachari* installed his discus in the courtyard of the house, while divine conch shells were sounded in the heavens. The Amma was so delighted with the honour done her that she gave all her lands to the discus, and her servant also to manage the



estates for the discus. The pious Amma and her maid-servant ascended bodily to heaven.

#### CHENGANNUR

The next village passed through is Chengannur. The temple here is of great importance, and is richly endowed by legend with two stories of origin. Tradition relates that when Sakti Rishi, a very devout and spiritual sage, was at worship, God Siva appeared to him and asked what he wished for. The sage prayed that Siva and Parvati would consent to be consecrated in that temple. Since Sage Agastyar had also craved this same boon, Siva consented and brought his consort. Agastyar consecrated them both.

The second legend deals with the Arayans—professional fishermen—who lived in the wooded country on the bank of the Pamba river near Chengannur. One day while they were fishing, the net was caught by something which when dragged to the shore proved to be the familiar cylindrical object. Since this particular night was *sivaratri*, they decided to set up this object for their worship. While they were worshipping, a divine sage came and performed the *puja* for them. He told them this particular *lingam* had been worshipped by rishis in ancient days and should be reconsecrated for worship now. The sage then disappeared. The temple was built and the auspicious day for consecration awaited. Astrologers told the authorities that the auspicious time would be indicated by the appearance of a peacock and a woman bringing flowers. The priests, tired of waiting, interpreted the arrival of an old man carrying a holy covering decorated with peacock feathers to be the sign. When



the ceremony was completed, suddenly a peacock kept by a Christian family freed himself from his cage and flew direct to the temple. At the same moment a woman bearing garlands and flowers entered the temple. The impatient priests then saw their mistake. It is believed that had the consecration of this temple actually taken place at the auspicious time, prayers offered in this temple would be far more beneficial to mankind. Because of the part played by the Arayans in the origin of this temple, they are even now given plantains and tender coconuts from the temple every *sivaratri* night, even though, being of the depressed classes, they are not allowed to worship in the temple itself.

The produce of this country is rich and varied. Paddy and coconuts are always found; bananas and sugarcane are also good crops; all manner of edible roots, especially yams, are grown in great abundance. The two rivers which flow through this taluk make the cultivation possible and account for the abundance to be noticed everywhere.

The road south leads through the small village Pandalam, once the seat of the Pandalam Raja, but now only a small village. Branch roads lead to Mavelikara and the coast, or to the hills and the Shencottah pass. According to an old copper plate, the Pandalam Raja, a subordinate Kshatria Raja under the Pandyan kings (of Madura), immigrated to Travancore in A.D. 964. Nearly two hundred years later grants of land were given to the family, and for several centuries the Raja ruled his estate as an independent principality, which was over 700 square miles in area. The greater part of the area was unprofitable hill



country. When Martanda Varma was conquering the neighbouring principalities, Pandalam acknowledged his suzerainty. Unable to meet the demands of the Raja of Travancore for money to meet expenses due to the attacks of Tippoo Sultan, the Raja of Pandalam gave over all his property. By 1820, the Travancore family assumed the whole of the principality and settled a pension on the Pandalam family. The descendants of this family are still living near the village named from them.

At Adur, the next village, there is little of importance. Since the Government schools have been established the place has developed considerably.

The roadway continues through beautiful country to the village of Kottarakara, once the capital of the principality called Elayadathu Swarupam, which was ruled by a branch of the Travancore royal family. In 1734 the country was seized by Martanda Varma and the family brought to Trivandrum. One princess escaped. The Dutch, who at this time were attempting to dominate the country for the sake of the pepper trade, placed the princess on her throne again. The Travancore Raja immediately proceeded against the Dutch and utterly defeated them. The poor princess fled to Cochin, where she was pensioned by the Dutch.

The town has an interesting old temple and an ancient Syrian church. The local history of this church is of interest, though there is little documentary evidence to satisfy the true historian. It is believed that the church is over 700 years old. In the days when Kottarakara was an independent principality with its own ruler, only one family of Christians lived



there. The Raja of Kottarakara built the church for this Thekkedathu Christian family and gave the land free of tax. It is interesting to note that the church is still presided over by a descendant of this same family, and that no land tax is ever paid. Although the church is in a somewhat ruined condition, the fine carving and beams are noteworthy. The church belongs to the Mar Thomas.

Kottarakara may lay claim to fame as the place where the *Kathakali*, a unique dramatic form, was first originated. This dance-drama is intensely interesting. A more detailed description will be given in the chapter on Arts and Crafts.

Eight miles from Kottarakara is the little village of Kundara. The ancient Syrian church here belongs to the Jacobites, who also have large schools. The London Mission Hospital treats a great many patients during the year. From Kundara a branch road leads across to the main Quilon-Trivandrum Road, saving eight miles. The main road leads on into the city of Quilon, one of the most important towns in the State, which has already been described.

The road from Kottayam to the turn-off just a mile before Kottarakara is a part of the main central road, commonly known as the M.C. Road, which traverses the State from Cape Comorin to Alwaye. Instead of going into Kottarakara the Main Central Road cuts through the central portion of the State much nearer the hills. As a result this road is one of constant twists and turns, ups and downs. It is as beautiful as it is twisty. The lower levels of the country traversed are turned into small paddy fields, bordered by coconut palms. The wooded slopes are uncultivated



but yielding valuable timbers. The higher ground is cultivated with tapioca, a plant which thrives on poor ground and bids fair to become one of the staple crops of the State.

There are practically no villages on this road, though a few houses are always in view. The land is thickly populated and the people do not congregate in towns, but live on the lands they cultivate.

Even though there are no villages, the country passed through has interesting history. At about the twenty-fourth milestone, the village of Kilimanur is reached. Only a few small houses mark this place so rich in history. The village was owned by the Kunnumel Raja, according to tradition, an aggressive chief of the Pandala caste. The Kilimanur fort and two temples, Deveswaram and Mahadeveswaram, were built by him. The Raja was discovered in conspiracies against the Maharaja of Travancore, who dispossessed him of his property and annexed it to Travancore.

The estate, a little over seventeen square miles, now belongs to the Koil Tampurans, having been granted in 1727 by the Maharaja of Travancore because of the heroic service rendered to the Senior Rancee and her infant son Rama Varma by Kerala Varma Koil Tampuran, when they were travelling to Attingal from Trivandrum and were waylaid by worthless conspirators. The bridegrooms for the Rancees of the Travancore royal family were always taken from Kilimanur Koil Tampurans. Thus it is that the Kilimanur house has been closely connected with the Travancore royal family for over two centuries.



In 1742, when the Dutch and the Raja of Kayemkulam were warring against Travancore for supremacy in Attingal and Quilon, they led their forces to capture the Kilimanur fort. At this time, the Travancore Maharaja was in the south. He gathered forces and, attended by his trusted Captain De Lannoy, marched to Kilimanur and laid siege to the fort. The siege lasted for sixty-eight days, at the end of which the Dutch and Kayemkulam armies were forced to surrender. The ruins of the fort may still be seen.

Raja Raja Varma, the artist, belonged to the Kilimanur house. He was the first Travancore artist of note, and his nephew, whom he taught, became the famous Ravi Varma known throughout India for the excellence of his oil paintings. Many of the beautiful originals are still housed in the palaces at Kilimanur and Mavelikara. Later sons of the family have carried on the tradition and are still producing works of great merit.

The remainder of the journey into Trivandrum is uneventful except for the beauty of the scenery.

*List of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route.*

Vaikom (II), 18th milestone—about 18 miles from Ernakulam.

Ettumanur (C.S.), 100th milestone, Main Central Road—about 21 miles from Vaikom.

Kottayam (I), 95th milestone, Main Central Road.

Thiruvella (C.S.), 79th milestone, Main Central Road.

Chengannur (C.S.), 75th milestone, Main Central Road.

Pandalam (C.S.), 67th milestone, Main Central Road.



Adur (II), two miles from the 58th milestone, Main Central Road.

Kottarakara (II), 46th milestone, Main Central Road.

Nilamel (C.S.), 29th milestone, Main Central Road.

Vamanapuram (C.S.), 20th milestone, Main Central Road.

Trivandrum (I).





## CHAPTER V

### KOTTAYAM VIA PEERMADE AND KUMILI TO MADURA

THE journey from Kottayam over the Peermade hills is pure delight for those who ride, but those who drive must watch the road. The first stretch of thirty-three miles is on the plains, approaching the hills. The way lies through extremely beautiful country, wilder than the roadways through the western part of the State, and yet well under cultivation. The seven-mile ghat brings one to Peermade and tea country 3,000 feet above sea level. Then the mountain road over the hills to Vandiperiyar brings one to another tea planting region. The road on to Kumili is through real jungle. At Kumili, the mountain pass, the visitor leaves Travancore State, and enters the Madras Presidency to proceed to Madura and the south, or to Kodaikanal Road and the north.

This drive offers all varieties of scenery and cultivation. On the first part of the plains the usual cultivation of tapioca, bananas and vegetables is carried on. There are a great many pepper gardens which are always lovely to look at. The vines are planted at the foot of the trees and trained over the trunk and lower branches. The dark green leaves form a pleasing background for the soft blue flowers. The pepper itself grows in bunches—a number of the small peppercorns closely attached to a stem averaging about three or four inches long. If this



drive is taken during the pepper harvest the visitor will see scores of mats spread in the sunshine by the roadside, with tiny green, brown or black pea-like corns on them. The green corns are the freshly picked pepper; the brown corns have been in the sun for about two days; the black corns are nearly dry enough for market and have probably been drying for a week.

Pepper is a very satisfactory crop. It is a hardy plant requiring comparatively little labour, grows easily and normally produces well. The vine must be protected from weeds and watered during the first year. It comes into flower during the third year, and is producing well by the sixth year. The yield will increase yearly until about the fifteenth year, and given average care and average conditions the vine will continue to produce at this same yield for years, as the root periodically sends forth new shoots. Other varieties die out after about fifteen years and new vines have to be planted. In normal times pepper is a very profitable crop as it requires little attention and fetches a good price. Practically all of the pepper is sold to pepper merchants in Alleppey, in fact the outside world knows this crop as Alleppey Black Pepper. The merchants re-dry and store the pepper to sell to exporting firms who send it all over the world. The great desire for pepper led foreigners to frequent this coast centuries ago, and at present it still maintains large business firms. During the year 1930-31, 48,650 candies (500 lb. per candy) were exported from Travancore.

Several small towns are passed through on this journey. The road is more and more hilly and twisty



as the foothills are approached. Soon after leaving Vazhur, a pretty little village about eighteen miles from Kottayam, one reaches rubber country. It is like driving through extensive parkways. The rows upon rows of rubber trees, with the green vine 'cover' which covers the ground is an interesting contrast to the wild profuse jungle country around.

The Kanjirapally Planters' Association comprises thirty-six estates with a total cultivated area of 2,535 acres and a reserve area of 186 acres. These estates are fairly small, ranging from 850 to 22 acres. They are mostly owned and managed by Indians, and they do not have the big factories found on the Munda-kayam estates.

In the twenty-sixth mile from Kottayam, a side road leads nine miles to Erumalai. From here the jungle footpath must be followed for thirty-five miles to the Sabarimala temple, one of the five Sasta temples guarding the Western Ghats.<sup>1</sup> Tradition relates that after Sri Parasurama had recalled this territory on the West Coast from the sea, he established various temples and shrines along the eastern mountain boundary and along the sea coast. Five important temples were placed to guard the Western Ghats. These were all dedicated to Sasta or Aiyappen, the forest deity, and are known as the five Sasta temples. The most important is the temple at Sabarimala. Completely surrounded by dense jungle forests and situated on top of a steep hill, this temple is difficult of access, yet thousands of pilgrims attend the big annual festival which begins in the middle of January and continues for forty-one days.

<sup>1</sup> See p. 159.



According to the *Puranas*, the northernmost Sasta temple is called Kanthamala and is in the forests north of Sabarimala. No one has ever been known to return from a pilgrimage to this particular temple, where it is said the Devas themselves come to perform the worship. It is said that if pilgrims at Sabarimala attending the *puja* there on the first of the Malabar month Makaram (January 15) look to the east at 6.30 in the evening, they can see the lights of the procession being conducted at Kanthamala.

#### THE ULLATANS

The territory near this temple was once the home of a hill tribe known as Ullatans. Two derivations for the word are given: that they are descendants of a Nambudri woman who when outcasted by her people for committing some offence said, 'Ullatanu', meaning, 'It is true'; and that the name comes from *ull*—within—and *otunna*—runs—that is, one who runs into the jungle at the approach of anyone. The Ullatans were servants at this temple, but left because of fear of the wild elephants and tigers. They live in the forests on the plains as well as on the hills.

Most of these people are very wild, living in temporary bamboo and coconut leaf huts, eating such roots, herbs and fruits as can be found in the forests. They clear a bit of forest to cultivate *ragi*. They are expert in the use of bow and arrow, and if someone will provide a gun, they are excellent shots. Their accuracy in spearing fish is wonderful. They have a novel arrow: a piece of iron at one end and a strong string about thirty feet long attached to the other. In shooting fish, the string helps to bring the



catch in, and in shooting birds or animals prevents the precious arrow from being lost. They use a cross-bow, which one writer thinks is a hangover from the days when the Portuguese used arrows in their warfare. Crocodile meat is considered a delicacy. When they want to catch a crocodile they put a kill conveniently near on the river bank, and place an iron hook attached to a long string in the kill. When the crocodile comes to eat the kill, the iron hook gets entangled in its mouth, and the watching Ullatans rush up and kill him.

Their marriage ceremony is unique. The bride is seated in a small round coconut leaf hut which has been especially made for the purpose. All the eligible young men armed with bamboo poles dance around the hut, occasionally thrusting their poles through the leaves into the hut. The father of the bride sits at a little distance beating a tom-tom. The dance continues for about an hour, when the girl seizes one of the poles, and the young man who is holding the pole is the chosen bridegroom. The ceremony is completed by a feast. Marriage is indissoluble; inheritance follows the matriarchal system.

#### MUNDAKAYAM

Mundakayam is in the very heart of the rubber country. The first clearings for rubber were made in 1903. There are now twenty-two estates with a total acreage of 13,817 under cultivation and 3,731 in reserve. They range in size from 1,403 to 258 acres. The majority of the estates are owned by European firms and individuals. At present only three of the estates are being tapped, while nineteen have been



closed down. The town has grown up because of the estates around it, and consists mostly of shops. There is a Roman Catholic church, a C.M.S. church, and the European Club.

In the days when the rubber market was good the estates in this district produced 3,558,468 pounds a year. They provided work and living for thousands of men. The figures for the past year tell a story of tragedy, disappointment and heartache: only 893,048 pounds were produced on the three estates now working.



#### PEERMADE

The short ghat road to Peermade offers some wonderful views. The visitor can look for miles over dense virgin jungle, dotted here and there by tea estates. The road is usually very good. It is a veritable heaven for nature lovers, but practically the whole of Travancore is that. On this road, the varieties of ferns are legion. Jungle flowers are very beautiful, and the butterflies and birds add a great deal to the colour and delight of the landscape. The first class Travellers' Bungalow at the top (the 46th milestone) is a good place to spend the night. It is easily available to the many estates around.

These Peermade hills are a rolling plateau about sixty miles long and twenty miles broad and form the boundary between Travancore and British India. It is said that they were once the residence of a Mohammedan saint, Peer Mahomed, and thus the hills are called Peermade. These hills were bought by a wandering ruler from Madura from the Tekkenkur (Changanacherry) Raja. They were known as the



Poonjar lands or principality, so the descendant of the Pandyas took the name Raja of Poonjar. No date is given, but this transaction was probably made about A.D. 1190. When the Raja of Travancore conquered the Raja of Tekkenkur in A.D. 1756, he automatically assumed authority over the Poonjar principality, which was reduced to a zemindari with large tracts of jungle land, valuable because of the hill produce and the demand for land by European planters.

Apart from the Europeans who manage the estates, the coolies who work on the estates and the few shopkeepers who always settle in such places, the hills are inhabited only by a few numerically small hill tribes.

Her Highness the Senior Maharanee of Travancore has a palace to which she comes during the hot months of March, April and May. There is also a Residency, a C.M.S. church and a European Club with tennis courts and a golf course.

The climate is delightful in the dry weather, December to June, but when the monsoon breaks in June, the rain is incessant and mists hide the views and make travelling very difficult. Peermade has a heavy rainfall, averaging nearly two hundred inches a year. The temperature ranges from around fifty to ninety degrees.

Peermade is primarily known as a planting district. The first clearings were made for coffee in 1862. Four years later a coffee estate was started in Vandiperiyar. From this time on a large quantity of excellent coffee was produced. In 1875 a serious leaf disease swept off tree after tree, and although the planters did their best to fight the disease in every possible way, they



were defeated. One by one they deserted coffee and started tea, until now there is no coffee at all in the district, but there are 25,384 acres of tea under cultivation, and 22,550 acres held in reserve. Of the fifty-five estates, Cheenthalar with 1,470 cultivated acres is the largest, and Heaven Valley with 140 acres is the smallest.

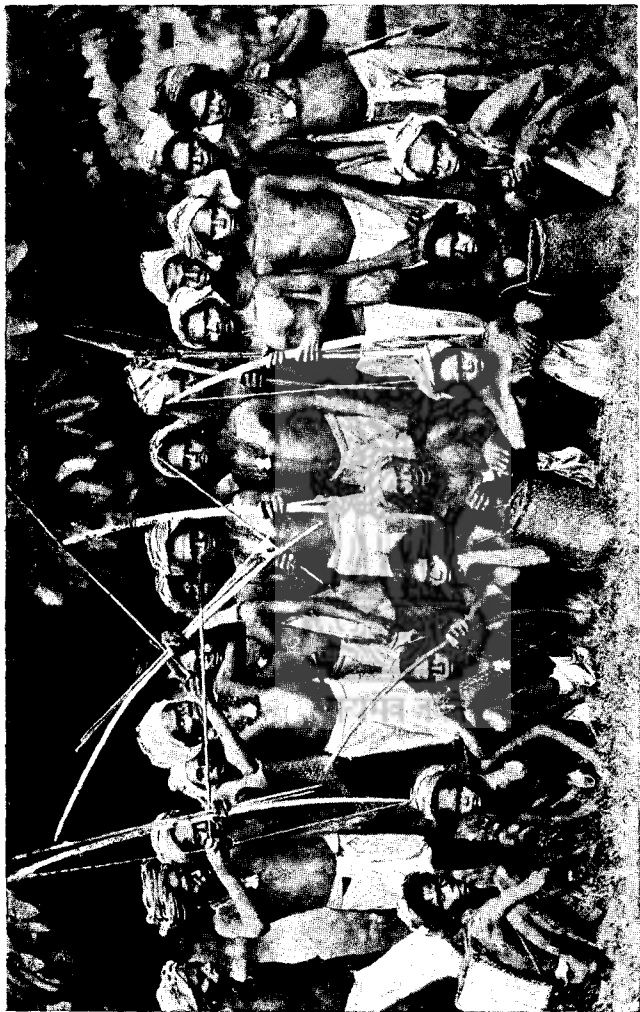
The cultivation of tea in normal times is a profitable industry. Leaf-plucking can be begun only when the plant is three years old, and is continued at regular intervals as the plant sends forth new shoots. Only the three or four tender leaves are plucked. The baskets of tea leaf are taken to the factory where the processes of withering, rolling, fermenting, drying and grading are gone through. An average crop on an average acre will yield 500 to 575 pounds of tea.

Practically all of the tea is taken via Kottayam to Cochin and shipped to the west. Until the opening of Peermade and the large scale cultivation carried on there, there was very little habitation on the Kottayam-Mundakayam road. One planter wrote: 'There was a time when starting from Kottayam on his pony to ride to Peermade there were only six places on the long weary track of forty-five miles where a planter could obtain fire to light his cheroot.'

The cultivation of cinchona was tried by the Government and then given up. Later some planters took it up and found that Peermade was an excellent place for raising this tree, the bark of which was sold at a good price in London for making quinine. No cinchona is raised for market now.

The drive across the hills to Vandiperiyar is one of constantly changing, very beautiful views. From





### HILL TRIBES

Several interesting hill tribes make their homes in the forests of Travancore. Some of the tribes are practically never seen, living their nomadic life far from civilization. Others occasionally frequent markets where they barter their jungle produce.





### PERIYAR LAKE

The Periyar Lake of 8,000 acres is the storage for the water which irrigates about 115,000 acres of first crop and 78,000 acres of second crop between Madurai and Tinnevely. The Dam was formally opened in 1895. Periyar Lake is in the heart of the jungle and excellent shooting country surrounds it.



one place, on a clear day the visitor may see in the far distance the High Range hills, another planting area. A tea garden is a beautiful place and the visitor has ample proof of this as he drives through the well-kept gardens into Vandiperiyar. In ravines the woods are dense and offer cover for a variety of wild animals, including bison, tiger, panther, sambar and bear. The rest of the country around Peermade is tall tiger grass or short grassy undergrowth. Only beyond Vandiperiyar do the woods become dense. Here there are plenty of elephants. The dense tangled undergrowth, the tall graceful bamboos, and the small jungle rivers make this part of the drive truly lovely. Outside the estates there is no cultivation on these hills.

Visitors who wish to see Periyar Lake and Dam, leave the main road at about the sixty-ninth milestone, and go to Tekkadi. There is a second class travellers' bungalow here, but it is scantily furnished and visitors must supply their own food. The Periyar—Big River—is the largest river in Travancore, 174 miles long. Its source is in the hills near Kumili. In 1886 the British Government leased for 999 years from the Maharaja of Travancore a large tract of land on which to construct a huge dam and tunnel which would turn the water from its normal course so that it would flow down the eastern slope of the mountain providing irrigation for the arid country around Madura. The volume of water available for irrigation is nearly 30,000 millions of cubic feet. Nearly 115,000 acres of first crop are thus provided with water, and about 78,000 acres of second crop. The immense value to the wealth of the country and



the comfort and convenience of the people can easily be imagined.

The work of construction began in 1887. The dam was formally opened in 1895. In writing of this project one of the engineers has said: ' . . . a work unique in the history of engineering—built amidst unprecedented difficulties across a turbulent river whose highest flood discharge exceeds that of the Thames at Windsor fifteen times and was equal to half the average flow of Niagara: impounding a lake covering more than 8,000 acres and with a maximum possible depth of 176 feet.<sup>1</sup> The cost of the head works was over fifty lakhs. The construction of about six miles of distribution canals and branches added nearly twenty lakhs more.

The country around Kumili is a happy hunting ground for the hunter or the anthropologist. The forests abound in big game, the mahseer furnishes the best of sport for the fisherman and the hill tribes are unique.

#### HILL TRIBES

The forest dwellers of the hills are among the most primitive peoples, and offer an intensely interesting, little explored field to the anthropologist. There is one tribe never seen even by those who live in the hills on tea estates bordering the very jungle where the tribe lives. This means that the tribe has little or no connexion with the outside world.

Probably the nearest approach to wild jungle men are the Pandarams, a small tribe numbering 187 in the last census. They form the only nomadic hunter tribe

<sup>1</sup> Mackenzie, *History of the Periyar Project*, p. 180.



existing in the State. The recent census report gives their average height to be only sixty-one inches. They live in the heart of the jungle near Vandiperiyar and do not frequent markets, so very little is known about them. Their dwellings are in caves or in the hollows of trees; they wear bark for clothing and live on the produce of the jungle. Occasionally now they build huts of leaves and jungle wood, and have cloths to wear. They make fire by the flint and steel method. The marriage customs as given in the last census report are interesting. Marriage is usually contracted between cross-cousins, and girls may be married either before or after puberty. On the wedding day the bridegroom is presented with a pair of cloths. The bride's father places the right hand of the bride in the left hand of the groom and says: 'I hand over my daughter to you. Take care of her.' The two then sit on a mat when four balls of rice are placed in front of them. The bride gives two balls to the bridegroom who eats them and then gives the remaining two to the bride. When she has finished eating the rice the ceremony is over. One particular group of Pandarams live near a certain tea estate and have an arrangement whereby one of the workmen on the estate will bring certain things like salt, matches, and rice to a specified place in the jungle. At this place he finds some forest product, honey, wax, fowl, ivory or fish, which he takes away with him, leaving his parcel of salt. Practically never does the workman see the jungle men, but the barter goes on regularly twice a month.

Another group of Pandarams is to be found in the Shencottah district.



A larger group of hillmen are called the Uralis, who numbered 916 in the last census. They live in the Cardamom hills, the long range which extends along the eastern boundary of the State between the High Range and Kumili.

Tradition has it that this tribe descended from the umbrella carriers of a Madura king; that they accompanied the king to a place near the hills, and were left there to become rulers. The name, *ali*—ruler, and *ur*—country, bears out this tradition. Uralis means 'rulers of the country'.

They are far more civilized than the Pandarams. They frequent the hill markets and occasionally visit the low country. They live in huts made of bamboo and grass. Chief among their implements are their chopping knives, with which they plough as well as chop and cut, and without which no Urali would ever go any distance from home. They also possess brass and copper vessels, mortar, sickles, flint and steel. They cultivate hill paddy, some of which they barter in the low country for cloths. Half of the year they live on rice, half on roots and herbs found in the jungle. After marriage the girl is taken to her husband's hut, where they are left alone; the girl wears no symbol of marriage. The dead are buried; a new cloth is put into the grave by each relative; a shed is built over the grave. The matriarchal system of inheritance is followed. As a rule they have more belief in magic and sorcery than in medicine for the cure of disease.

#### HUNTING

The hill tribesmen are a great boon to hunters. They know, as no others, the ways of animals, how



to take care of themselves in the jungle, and how to find their way through the dense undergrowth. Many of them are excellent marksmen; their ingenious methods of trapping are marvellous.

The hunting in these hills is very good, offering a wide range of game: elephant, tiger, leopard, panther, black sloth bear, wild boar, sambar, bison, and a wide variety of jungle fowls and birds. A hunting trip, although it requires careful planning, is not difficult to arrange. Good roads lead to the edge of the forests, so little time need be spent in long marches.

Enthusiastic fishermen have pronounced the fishing up the Periyar and in the other mountain rivers to be the best in the world. The huge mahseer gives plenty of real sport before he can be landed. These fish weigh as much as a hundred or more pounds, though the average is considerably less, about twenty to twenty-five pounds.

Special licenses must be taken out for hunting. Only rogue elephants, notice of which has been published in the *Government Gazette*, may be shot. All ivory is the property of Government.

#### THE FRONTIER

The mountain pass at Kumili is the frontier. Here the visitor must sign the Customs book and await the lowering of the barriers. The way on to Madura lies in the Madras Presidency. The Kumili ghat is only seven miles long. The roadway across the plains to Madura is ninety-four miles and to Kodaikanal eighty-seven. A train may be taken at Kodaikanal



Road, which is about seventy miles from the foot of the ghat, or at Madura.

*List of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route.*

Kottayam (I)

Pambadi (C.S.), 11th milestone, Kottayam-Kumili Road.

Kanjirapally (II), 23rd milestone, Kottayam-Kumili Road.

Mundakayam (C.S.), 33rd milestone, Kottayam-Kumili Road.

Peermade (I), 46th milestone, Kottayam-Kumili Road.

Tekkadi (II), 70th milestone, Kottayam-Kumili Road.





## CHAPTER VI

### ALWAYE TO KOTTAYAM

THE visitor who comes to Travancore from the north and arrives by train from Shoranur Junction, may well leave the train at Alwaye, long known as the health resort of the State. It might easily become a famous watering-place.

The little village of Alwaye stands on the bank of the Periyar River—the largest river in Travancore, measuring 174 miles in length. There are many homes built on the river bank, the more pretentious having enclosed bathing places in the river. For many years before the advent of railways people about Cochin, Ernakulam and northern Travancore all resorted to Alwaye during the hot summer months of March, April and May. Since, however, it has become possible to get to the mountains, the popularity of Alwaye as a summer resort has declined.

Since the construction of the Periyar Dam the volume of water which flows down the Travancore side is considerably lessened. During the heavy south-west monsoon (June-August) the river is often in flood. In 1924 the floods were very severe; thousands of houses were swept away, crops were ruined, and the homeless people huddled together on the high grounds.

The floods of the Periyar are not always a detriment to the country. In 1789 when Tippoo Sultan



invaded Malabar, he marched his victorious way through Cochin State to the banks of the Periyar river near Alwaye. The Raja of Cochin was reduced to a tributary ruler. Demands were sent to the Raja of Travancore, which, not being conceded, led to war being declared against Travancore. The first repulse angered Tippoo so that he vowed he would remain in that camp until he took the lines and conquered Travancore. Various battles took place during the first months of 1790. In May Tippoo Sultan established his army on the other side of the Periyar river, committing atrocities on all sides, desecrating both Christian and Hindu places of worship and burning the homes of the rich and the poor. And then the monsoon broke with great severity: the river rose and flooded the land. Having destroyed all the buildings around, there was no means of shelter for his army; the soldiers suffered seriously from exposure; ammunition was rendered harmless; Tippoo Sultan was forced to retreat to his own country, defeated not so much by the excellence of the Travancore army, as by the Periyar river. Tippoo had immediately to give his attention to the attack of the English on the eastern part of his territory, and he never again turned toward Travancore.

Alwaye is the educational centre of north Travancore. In 1921 the Union Christian College was started by a group of Indian Christians who felt the need for the promotion of Christian education in general, and more especially for the missionary purpose of helping the Syrian Church to a fuller and deeper understanding of its possibilities for service. The college was started by leaders from the Jacobite and Mar



Thoma Syrian Churches and the Anglican Church. It claims to be the only Christian college in India that is truly Indian: all others have been started by British, American or Continental missionaries. After eleven years it is a thriving college with splendid hostels and buildings, playing fields and all facilities for college life. It is an Arts college affiliated to the Madras University, with 300 resident students, two-thirds of whom are Christians of seven denominations and the other third Hindus of different castes, and Mohammedans. Active co-operation with the foreign missionaries has been shown in that several foreigners have been appointed to the faculty. The college is financed by friends in India, England and America.

In 1927 the Christava Mahilalayam was started, a Union Christian High school for girls. Over eighty girls are in residence there. The simple and efficient way in which this school is so admirably run is inspirational.

Two settlements have been started by the college and the High school, for work with outcaste boys and girls. The work is an interesting experiment in rural education and improvement. There are various other schools in the town. The several churches are fairly recent, the oldest being the Roman Catholic church which dates back only about eighty years. The *Sivaratri* festival in the village temple is very largely attended.

Alwaye has been famous through the decades of the past for its basketry and umbrella making. The baskets are made from a variety of bamboo and are very durable. They are used by Indians for travelling.



The non-collapsible umbrellas are made from palms and bamboo. They are rainproof as well as excellent protection from the sun. Worshippers are prohibited from taking ordinary collapsible umbrellas into many temples, but these palm-leaf varieties may be taken in any temple. It is a particularly large short-handled umbrella of this non-collapsible sort that the Nambudri women use to protect themselves from the gaze of the world.

### JEWS

In the extreme northern part of the State in the territory bordering Cochin is a small colony of Jews—numbering about three hundred.

Like so much else in Travancore, the early history of these people is conjectural. It is not improbable that Jewish traders visited Malabar in the days when King Solomon's ship came in search of spices and peacocks and sandalwood. Some historians believe that a large colony fled from Jerusalem after the destruction of the second temple. Their first settlement was at Cranganore, in Cochin State, north of Parur. For many years they lived peaceably and prosperously, and carried on trade. Dissensions and strife arose within their own community over various rights and privileges granted to the white Jews but denied to the black Jews. On intervention by the Ruler, a group of the Jews fled to Cochin and established a colony there. This was probably about 1471 and is reputed to be about a thousand years after their arrival at Cranganore. In 1524 the Mohammedans attacked the Jews—the provocation having arisen over some alleged adulteration of pepper. Many Jews were put



to death, synagogues were burned and homes sacked. Those who escaped fled to neighbouring villages. The Portuguese were equally aggressive against the Jews, and it was not until the Dutch had gained supremacy over the Portuguese and driven them from Malabar that the Jews enjoyed any peace and liberty.

It is probable that, when they were driven from their villages in Cranganore and later from Cochin, some families settled in Parur. This section of the country was not annexed to Travancore until the eighteenth century.



#### ALANGAD

A few centuries ago, this territory in the extreme north-western part of the State was a thriving principality. The history of this small plot is an example of the rise and fall of a State. The land originally belonged to Cochin. The Alangad Rajas were the commandants of the Cochin forces, but gradually increased their power until they became actual rulers of this portion of the country. When the Zamorin of Calicut made war against Cochin, Alangad sided with Calicut and for some time the State was subjected to the Zamorin's rule. In 1764 Alangad surrendered to Travancore whose ruler promised to maintain the family in a suitable manner. The Raja of Alangad now receives a pension from the Travancore Government.

The surrender of Alangad was a necessary procedure over which the Raja of Alangad had no control. During the war between Cochin and Calicut, Cochin had secured the help of Travancore and in return for his services, the Raja of Cochin ceded to the



Raja of Travancore the territory of Alangad and Parur.

## VERAPOLY

The little island of Verapoly near Alwaye is the seat of the Carmelite Order of the Roman Catholic Church. A number of Carmelites were deputed to India by the Pope in 1656, to repair a division in the Roman Catholic Church occasioned because a goodly number of the members did not want to be subjected to the Portuguese Jesuit Order. The Italian Carmelite missionaries were very successful in their work. In 1673 they built their first church at Verapoly on land given them by the Raja of Cochin.

Tippoo Sultan had no great respect for Christian churches or buildings, nor for Hindu villages. When, in 1790, he marched against Travancore, he ruthlessly destroyed whatever came in his way. He seemed to wreak his vengeance particularly on Christian churches and still worse on their libraries. Many invaluable records were destroyed. Verapoly had built up a very fine library and had carefully kept records. When the priests fled before the warrior, they took with them some of these records. Ill luck was following them, for in attempting to cross the Periyar by ferry, the records were lost in the river. The Verapoly buildings and gardens were completely demolished.

Under the protection of the Raja and the goodwill of the British Resident, the Carmelites began to rebuild their headquarters. The work has so grown that there are now three suffragan dioceses—Quilon,



Kottar and Vijayapuram (Kottayam). Only Christians of the Latin rite are included in the Archbishopric of Verapoly.

#### MALABAR MATCHES

With a view toward opening up the country and utilizing some of the vast quantities of raw material available in the forests, a match factory was started in 1923 in the High Range forests. It was thought that the quickly growing *etah*—elephant bamboo—would make excellent wood for the sticks and boxes. To this end special machinery was made; four and a half lakhs of the ten lakhs capital was called in and work started. The company struggled for four years trying to use the *etah*. This wood, however, was so completely fibrous that in spite of all efforts, bits of the fibre would clog the machinery. So great was the loss of time and labour that the factory had to be abandoned. The remaining capital was called in, new machinery bought from Sweden and a new factory set up at Mudichal on the Periyar river, not far from Alwaye.

The first wood was obtained from Sweden. Experimentation soon proved that the cottonwood tree which grows readily in Travancore would be suitable and available. This wood is now being used for sticks and boxes. In order to ensure a regular supply, a planting scheme has been arranged with Government, whereby one hundred acres a year for five years will be planted out. It is estimated that at the end of five years the cotton tree will be about eighteen inches in diameter, the size which can be most economically used in the machinery.



The future of the company looks promising. Sales have been excellent and the machines are working at full capacity—one thousand gross a day. The matches are all sold in India. Last year the company made a profit of 11.7 per cent on the invested capital (excluding the first loss). The majority of the shares are held in India, so that profits remain in the country. Employment is provided for about three hundred people directly, and of course with the planting scheme in operation, many more people will find employment.



#### SRI SANKARA ACHARYA

The little village of Kaladi, about six miles east of Alwaye, is the birthplace of the great saint and scholar, Sri Sankara Acharya. The history of this great man is shrouded in mystery, and where facts are not known, a world of legend arises to take their place.

Sankara was born of Nambudri parents, both of whom were devout worshippers of Siva. When, late in life, this only child was born to them, they named him Sankara in grateful acknowledgment of the grace of their god. The date of his birth has been greatly disputed by students and devotees, the range differing from 45 B.C. to the ninth century after Christ. The most accurate dates thus far ascertained are A.D. 805-837. All sources of knowledge agree that Sankara lived only thirty-two years.

At the age of three, Sankara's father died. Early in life the child showed great interest in religion and his interpretations of the religious literature were



marked by an extraordinary foresight. He wanted to become a *sanyasi*. Because of the custom prevailing in Kerala that it was not proper for a *brahmachari* (unmarried boy) to become a *sanyasi*, Sankara would have to go elsewhere to find his teacher. His devoted mother could not bring herself to part with her son. One day, while bathing in the Alwaye river, the boy was caught by a crocodile from which he had a remarkable escape. Interpreting the escape as a sign that he should devote himself to a religious life, the boy persuaded his mother to allow him to leave Travancore. He immediately went to Nerbuda in Central India to become the disciple of Govindabagavatpada. After studying with this great teacher, he went to Benares for further study. He became widely known for his wisdom and learning.

Sankara was greatly needed. At this time Hinduism was divided. There were those who believed in an elaborate ritualism and preached salvation for those who followed this method; there were those who followed Buddhistic teachings and revolted against ritual and sacrifice; there were those who believed in a creed of worship in temples. Here was a great opportunity for the teacher who could bring the various forms of Hinduism under the one authority of the Vedas. Sankara himself was a Vedantist, who through this philosophy had been able to attain emancipation, and his great ideal was to expound the great philosophy so that every person could realize identity with the infinite. He realized, however, that this teaching could not be immediately understood by all, so he composed many very beautiful hymns in praise of various deities and thus taught a number



of his truths and sowed the seed for future understanding.

A tireless worker, he wrote and preached continually. His works, which include commentaries, hymns, poems, have been collected in twenty volumes. When one recalls that he lived only to the age of thirty-two, this amount of work is prodigious. Both in poetry and prose, he takes the first place among Sanskrit writers. The force and vision shown in his writings were inspired. His greatest work is his commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras, and is called *Brahmasūtrabhāṣya*. This was written in Benares and in Badrinath, a temple in the Himalayas where he spent a great deal of his time. After finishing this work, it is said that he visited every centre of learning in India, to hold discussions with all men of wisdom. To each one he proved his interpretation was the true one, and over the whole country he exerted an influence toward a truer and deeper spirituality.

It is often said that a prophet is without honour in his own country. Sankara felt the pinpricks of orthodoxy and the sting of ostracism from his own people. He returned to Travancore just before his mother died, and after her death performed the obsequial rites himself. Some historians say he was forced to do this because his own people, angered because of his outspoken denunciation of some of their practices, would not help him. Whether or not this be true, his performance of his mother's obsequial rites was not according to law, as a *sanyasi* was not considered to be competent. For this reason, if no other, the orthodox Nambudries turned against him.



Four *mutts* or monasteries were established by Sankara: the first one at Sringeri in Mysore; the others at Puri, Dvaraka and Badrinath. The priest at Badrinath temple must still be a Nambudri Brahman of a certain class from Travancore or Cochin. No other person is allowed to touch the idol. This particular temple is under the control of the ruler of Tehri, who makes the actual appointment, but the Maharaja of Travancore is requested by him, through the Agent to the Governor-General, to select a suitable candidate.

Trichur, only a few miles from Alwaye, is intimately connected with the history of Sankara. Although some historians say the great reformer died at Kedar-nath and others at Sringeri, the Kerala tradition that he died at Trichur holds as much probability. A corner of the compound of the Vatakunathan temple is believed to be the last resting-place of Sankara. Four *mutts* were established in Trichur by four disciples, and of these two—Tekkemmatam and Natuvilematam—are now in existence. Not until 1910 was any attention given to his birthplace. Then the *swami* of Sringeri built a temple which is visited by hundreds of pilgrims every year.

Comparatively few facts and no relics are left of this great man. Yet the influence of that young life, with a mind above men and above things, is still felt and is still a blessing to his country.

#### MUVATTUPUZHA

Muvattupuzha is a small town twenty-eight miles from Alwaye. This part of the country is largely owned by Syrian Christians. The last census report returned fifty-two per cent of the population as



Christians. The main crop is areca nuts, which are exported in thousands. The areca nut palm is very slender and usually quite straight. About four hundred are planted to the acre. During the first five years before flowering, the young tree has to be watered during the hot seasons. It yields twice a year, and an average income of four annas per tree per year is all that can be expected, which means only Rs. 100 per acre per year. The palms are planted so close together that the young climber, who goes to the top of one palm to cut the nuts, swings himself from one tree to another to cut the fruits from them, instead of making special journeys up each one.

One comes across the sheath of the nut in many unexpected places. The beggar uses it as a beggar's bowl; in olden days, baby's first bath was taken in this softly lined sheath as an improved bath tub; drama enthusiasts made masks, crowns, and head-dresses from it; in the Thiruvella temple every noon a Brahman is fed from plates and dishes fashioned from it; the fisherwomen carry fish to market on it. When dried it is hard and durable.

On a hill top, which has an area of about three by one and a half miles, are ruins of a cave temple, an old parade ground, and various buildings. This hill is called Purameda and is about five or six miles from Muvattupuzha. The rock cave has several large rooms with various images. Most interesting is the hermitage near by. Six large cells are covered by a single rock slab, 60 ft. x 20 ft. x 1 ft. It is quite natural that local people believe this place was built by supernatural beings. Each cell has in it an ant-heap



which is considered very valuable in the treatment of disease.

Sixty-one per cent of the population of Minachil, the taluk south of Muvattupuzha, is Christian. There are a number of large churches, Syrian and Catholic, here.

Minachil is famous for its ginger. The cultivation of ginger requires a great deal of labour and excellent, rockless red soil. Care must be taken in digging, fertilizing and burning over the ground before the ginger is planted. The smoked seeds are planted just under the surface, in especially ridged ground, about four inches apart, just after the monsoon breaks. Care must be given at regular intervals until the crop is pulled six months or so later. During December and January, one often sees the ginger spread on mats by the roadside to dry. The air is filled with the odour of spices, which is delightfully appetizing. Ginger has been cultivated for long years on this coast and was one of the products which induced merchants to brave the perils of land and sea to obtain it. Most of the crop is exported, but the villagers use it a great deal. Bits of ginger in various curries are as delectable to the palate, as they are efficacious in a medicinal potion.

This country is also excellent for raising bananas and plantains of which there is a large variety of totally different flavours and textures. The visitor to Travancore should make it a point to try as many varieties as he can buy, for only then will he appreciate the plantains. Every little wayside shop will have strings of many kinds for sale. There are huge fat green ones which can only be eaten when boiled in



curry or fried like chip potatoes; large yellow ones which are better when boiled; fat red ones which must be eaten very ripe; slender green ones and all sizes of yellow ones down to the tiny sweet ones, about the size of a little finger. Travancore is famous for its plantains—a fame richly deserved.

This road joins the Ernakulam-Kottayam road just before Ettumanur is reached.

*List of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route*

Alwaye (C.S.).

Perumpavur (C.S.), 143rd milestone, Main Central Road.

Muvattupuzha (C.S.), 131st milestone, Main Central Road.

Kuthattukulam (C.S.), 119th milestone, Main Central Road.

Kozhai (C.S.), 111th milestone, Main Central Road.

Ettumanur (C.S.), 100th milestone, Main Central Road.

Kottayam (I).



## CHAPTER VII

### HIGH RANGE

ONE of the most beautiful mountain sections of Travancore is found in the northernmost part—the High Range. A great variety of scenery is found, from very wild virgin jungle and dense growth to open stretches and deep valleys planted with tea. The Periyar river adds not a little to the beauty of the hills. This particular section is called the Plateau of the Anamalais. The plateau is over 5,000 feet above sea level, and possesses a most delightful climate during the dry months. When the monsoon has broken, rain, cold and mist are too abundant to be enjoyable. When it rains, it rains; not a mild down-pour of a few inches a day, but torrents of rain pounding down in a fashion seldom known elsewhere.

In the centre of these hills in a valley is the little town of Munnar—the central meeting place for the many planters who manage the estates near and far on the hillsides. The Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company, which owns a majority of the estates in the district, has its head office in Munnar. A European Club, a church, school, shops and post offices provide the people with modest requirements.

There are only three entrances to the High Range: one, from Travancore, a motor road turning off the Main Central Road at the village of Muvattupuzha;<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The 132nd mile M. C. Road (59 miles to Munnar).



one, from Coimbatore, a motor road through Pollachi and Udumalpet; one, from Bodinayakanur—a bridle path to Top Station. The road from Travancore has been opened only a few years; floods washed out an old motor road which followed a different track. Floods easily play havoc with roadways in this part where torrential rains are such a frequent occurrence. The new road, about sixty miles, takes the visitor right through the heart of jungle country. The elephants are loath to seek new haunts further in the interior, and adventures are not unknown.

The entrance from Coimbatore follows the motor road through Pollachi and Udumalpet and thence up to Munnar, nearly a hundred miles. This is called the Northern Outlet Road and for many years was the only motor road leading into these hills. The dry, almost barren country of the hot plains, changes to the beautiful country of foothills and mountains where the cool air is wonderfully refreshing and exhilarating.

From Bodinayakanur, which may be reached by train from Madura or by bus from Kodaikanal Road, there are eleven miles of cart road to be covered to the foot of the short ghat, which is only seven miles. This ghat must be walked or ridden. Like all small jungle roads, this one is very beautiful. Top Station and Bottom Station are the top and bottom of the ropeway over which the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company ships all its produce. The new ropeway was opened in 1932. It takes thirty minutes to ship 600 pounds of tea from the hills to the plains. During January 1933, 1,207 tons up and 459 tons down were shipped. This may be considered an average month although the larger crops in August to December



increase the downward tonnage. This company has a lorry road the twenty-two miles to Munnar. It also has a fourteen-mile ropeway from Top Station to Munnar. It takes  $3\frac{3}{4}$  hours to run a load of 600 pounds over this ropeway, which takes the place of a light railway which was partially washed away in the floods of 1924.

From Top Station the visitor may look over on to another range of hills, the Palneys. About thirty miles from here is Kodaikanal, one of the famous summer resorts in South India. There is a scheme, partially worked out, of cutting a road over these hills from Kodaikanal to Top Station, and when it is completed it will offer a unique drive, one of the most beautiful in the world. Holiday-makers in Kodaikanal do organize hikes over into Travancore State now, but eventually what was possible only for the few, will be open to the many.

#### COMPANIES

Two companies operating in the High Range are the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company Ltd., with thirty estates, and the Anglo-American Direct Tea Trading Company Ltd., with three estates, but both companies are under one management. The first company has under cultivation 20,560 acres of mature tea, 5,695 acres of immature tea and 4,248 acres of fuel reserve planted up with Red Gum trees. The figures for the second company are 2,369 acres of mature tea, 498 acres of immature tea and 431 acres of fuel reserve. The crop for the Kanan Devan Hills Produce Company for 1932 was 11,547,880 lb. and for the Anglo-American Direct



Tea Trading Company 1,210,620 lb. The two companies provide work for thousands of people, namely, 30,840 coolies, 563 contractors, 45 mechanics and 527 Indian staff, besides the European managers and assistants.

#### A JUNGLE TREK

For the general public it is correct to say there are three entrances to the High Range. For those few adventurers who are looking for interesting things to do, there is a fourth. The author is reputed to be the only white woman who has taken this trek straight through. The way follows an old elephant path from Devicolam, a village near Munnar, southward through the Cardamom hills, to Kumili, the frontier station in Travancore in the Peermade hills. Nothing could be more perfect than this trek. Some of the most inspiring scenery one could ask for is here. The wild flowers, many of which have never yet been named, are marvellous: one flower, a very tall stem proudly bearing a cluster, almost as big as a man's head, of blossoms in an entirely new mauve, vies in beauty with the dainty little orchids that gracefully watch their reflections in a jungle stream. Could landscape architects, gardeners and decorators, spend time and study in any of a hundred places on this march, nature would teach them a new meaning for their arts. Yet civilization has threatened to enter even here. If and when motor cars travel along this path, all will be changed. No more will tribes of monkeys leap from tree to tree and chatter noisily to those who walk below as they follow them through the *sholas*. No more will the black bear



huddle himself on the pathway looking for all the world like a black rock until he rises to grasp his unsuspecting prey. No more will the elephants make toboggan slides into the rivers. One would regret these changes and be thankful only that the leeches had to seek new places.

The trek, sixty-five miles through the Cardamom hills, is marked throughout by the evidences of animals. Tracks of bison, sambar, jungle sheep, bears, tigers, and elephants may be seen fresh every morning. The hills are a veritable happy hunting ground for the man who is keen on hunting. Tales, amusing and pathetic, are told by the tribesmen about the animals who share the forests with them.

#### CARDAMOMS

The name of these hills is taken from the spicy cardamoms which grow so luxuriously in the undergrowth. Travancore is the original home of the cardamom, although this spice is now raised in other parts of South India, Ceylon, Java, West Africa and Madagascar. The plant thrives best in a damp rich soil such as is available in the forests. The tall, large-leaved, long-stemmed plant grows from bulbs. The small capsules, each of which contains a number of the small seeds, grow on shoots from the roots, so it is necessary to dig for this spice. Wild cardamoms were collected by the forest tribes and sold to Government until 1823, when active encouragement was given to the cultivation of this commodity by the Government by the creation of a special Cardamom Department. Ryots then carried on an inefficient cultivation. In 1896 Government monopoly was



renounced and another system of land tax was put into effect. There are now several estates on these hills. An average yield per acre in Travancore is between twenty and twenty-five pounds. In the Anamalais the yield is about forty-five pounds.

#### HILL TRIBES

Chief among the hill tribes living in the Cardamom hills are the Muduvans, a tribe of people believing that their ancestors were driven from Madura when their king was attacked. It is said that they carried their children (or their goddess Meenakshi), on their backs and that this is what has given them their name Muduvar—back-people. They live in the northern part of the range, nearer the tea estates. Their wanderings have been curtailed to a very large extent by the tea cultivation which has taken over so many hundreds of acres. They are a timid people who have limited contacts with the world outside the jungle. The men have occasionally to visit the markets to barter hill produce for their cloths and immense turbans. Both sexes are fond of beads and trinkets.

Their dwelling places are tiny huts made of bamboo and grass or *etah*, built on a hillside so that the roof slopes on to the ground behind and obviates a back wall. Their implements are few, the chief one being the bill-hook with which the Muduvan does everything from building his house to skinning animals or planting his crops. They have the flint and steel for making fires, although they sometimes use friction. Their time is occupied in raising their food—hill rice, *ragi* and vegetables; in hunting, or building their villages.



They are excellent guides and hunters. They also collect hill produce such as ivory, honey, wax, herbs, and spices which are sold to Government at fixed rates. They help the Government also, when desired, in making paths and in forest protection work.

According to some authors there are two different tribes: one practises both polyandry and polygamy and eats flesh, except beef, dog, snake, jackal and pig; the other tribe is monogamous and considers pig a great delicacy. They do not think any other caste is good enough to eat, drink or smoke with them. The number of bad omens is very large and unfortunately they have no good omens to counter-balance them. Their ceremonials are simple. The marriage is interesting: if the parents agree to a match, the young couple leave the village to live a few days or weeks in a cave by themselves. On their return they inform the parents whether or not they wish to marry. In case they do, the bridegroom publicly gives a pair of ear-rings, a bangle, a cloth and a bamboo comb to the bride. In case they do not, they are both at liberty to contract other marriages. Widows remarry. The dead are buried lying down, in a grave dug north and south; a low shed is built over it and large stones are placed at either end. The Muduvans have a firm belief that anything lying north and south will never be touched, so should a tiger's prey fall in this direction it would be useless for the hunter to watch for the tiger to return to it. They follow the matriarchal system of inheritance. They like to play on a tom-tom, which they make by stretching a monkey skin over a split bamboo.



## MANNANS

The territory south of that occupied by the Muduvans on the Cardamom hills is occupied by the Mannans, a similar people who according to tradition came to these hills from Madura, perhaps in company with the Uralis and Muduvans. It was from this tribe that the Chief of Poonjar, centuries ago, selected three men to be his agents to aid in the administration of his territory and in the collection of forest produce. To the first he gave a silver sword, to the second a silver bangle, to the third a silver cane, as badges of authority. These three agents were the headmen of their villages. This tribe is not as timid as the Muduvans, for they willingly associate with Europeans, gladly guiding them through the jungles and initiating them into the arts of jungle hunting. The huts of the Mannans are the best to be found among jungle tribes. Their implements are few and primitive. Agriculture, raising the food they eat, is their chief occupation. They, like other hill tribes, pay no taxes, but collect the forest products to sell to Government at a fixed rate and also help the Government whenever they are required. The ceremonials connected with important events are simple. The pollution observances are less rigid than those of Uralis.

## OODUMBANSHOLA

In the very heart of this wild jungle is the little Government revenue centre of Oodumbanshola. The little village is surrounded by a deep elephant trench. The few inhabitants who have to take care of the revenue camp shed, the dispensary and those few who choose to live there, are terrified of elephants,



for they know what mischief and havoc these great beasts can make. Proof of this fear is seen in the plot of ground covered with clay and stone images of elephants, which are daily worshipped with offerings of food and flowers. The careful way in which the people close, lock and bar their houses at night, to prevent any monkeys, tigers or other prowling animals from entering, is also indicative of their fears.

#### POST RUNNERS

The only regular pedestrians through this jungle track were the Anchal post runners who carried the post from Kumili through to Munnar. This through service has been stopped since the opening of the motor road from Muvattupuzha. Formerly one runner left each morning at 6 a.m., carried the mails twelve miles inland, handed them over to another runner who took them another twelve miles, gave them to a third who went ten miles to the little office of Oodumbanshola where the letters were kept during the night. The next morning at six another runner took the mail, which was handed over after stages of ten, nine and twelve miles until it reached its destination—Munnar. The distance of sixty-five miles was thus covered in two full days. The runners averaged a speed of three miles an hour, which, when one considers the hilly country, is very good time. Because of the great number of wild animals all through these hills, letters were carried only in the daytime and even then the runners had many interesting or terrifying experiences.

Although the through service has been abolished, runners are still stationed at Kumili to carry mails



inland to Vandamettu—twelve miles, and at Devicolam to carry mails to Oodumbanshola—twenty-six miles. During the dry weather seasons these marches have many very beautiful aspects, but during monsoon weather when the rain is torrential and incessant, and the leeches are legion, it must be as trying and unpleasant a task as one could imagine.

*List of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route*

Ernakulam (I).

Alwaye (C.S.).

Perampavur (C.S.), 143rd milestone, Main Central Road.

Muvattupuzha (C.S.), 131st milestone, Main Central Road.

Munnar (I) & (II), 57th milestone, Muvattupuzha-Munnar Road.

Thalliar (C.S.), 15th milestone, Northern Outlet Road.

Marayur (C.S.), 26th milestone, Northern Outlet Road.

Chinnar (C.S.), 37th milestone, Northern Outlet Road.

Masupatty (II), 47th milestone, (British territory), Northern Outlet Road.

Pollachi (II), 72nd milestone, (British territory), Northern Outlet Road.



## CHAPTER VIII

### SHENCOTTAH TO TRIVANDRUM

Of a different type is the beautiful drive sixty-four miles from the frontier to Trivandrum. Visitors who motor from Madura often choose this road. It follows the natural mountain pass through the hills, just as the railway does, for the first eighteen miles to the Tenmalai Station, and then turns southward to Trivandrum. An excellent roadway more or less following the same course as the railway leads into Quilon. This road goes through more open country where cultivation is extensively carried on, and, while very beautiful, lacks the luxuriant growth and wooded country which marks the Tenmalai-Trivandrum road.

Shencottah is the frontier town of Travancore and the first railway station. The section of the country around here is the only part of Travancore which lies on the eastern slope of the mountains. It is inhabited by Tamilians. At various times in its history this has been owned and ruled by its own Raja, been acquired by the Raja of Travancore, been under the sway of the Nawab of the Carnatic, and eventually came permanently under Travancore.

Various small irrigation systems provide sufficient water for agriculture, which consists mainly in raising a variety of grains.

### THE RAILWAY

Although suggestions for extending the South Indian Railway into Travancore were made in 1873, it was



not until twenty-seven years later that actual work was begun. The railway was extended from Tinnevely to Shencottah and Quilon. The natural mountain pass was followed, but it was necessary to cut five tunnels through the rocky hills. The longest tunnel, over half a mile, is at Ariyankavu, about ten miles from Shencottah. The line was opened for traffic in 1904. As was to be expected, the railway did much to open up the country in central Travancore. A large station for the public was built at the terminus, Quilon, and a special station for the use of the Royal Family; ten small stations were built at the villages along the line. Passengers from Trivandrum usually made the journey to Quilon in wallums by backwater.

Before the advent of the railway the mountainous country of the pass was the home of wild animals. Trains could only be run in the daytime at first, for at night inquisitive elephants got into the tunnels and too successfully blocked the line. This state of affairs did not last very long, and the journeys to and from Madras safely covered this section by night. The opening of the Tenkasi-Virudhunagar chord line has shortened the distance so much that railway timings now take trains through the beautiful ghat section during daytime. This is a distinct advantage for the tourist.

The Courtallam Falls and temple are greatly revered by Hindus both for beauty and for worship. Thousands of pilgrims bathe in the waters; hundreds of visitors come yearly to worship at Siva's shrine or just to see one of South India's beauty spots. The falls are about three miles from Shencottah and are in British territory. There is a Royal Palace, a



Residency and a Dewan's Bungalow there. The Maharaja also maintains a *satrom*.

Courtallam temple is an ancient one, though how old is not known. Historians tell us, however, that the temple was of great importance when the Pandyas were rulers of that section. It is but natural that devotees should have dedicated a shrine in such a beautiful place, which has all the attractions that forests, river and beautiful falls can give. The inscriptions in the temple are not very old, the earliest dated A.D. 1455. They deal mostly with endowments and donations to the temple.

#### ARIYANKAVU

The little village of Ariyankavu was once a thriving town watching all travellers from Madura and Tinnevely trail through the mountain pass over which it stood guard. Since this pass was the only possible one for cart traffic it was used a great deal. Merchants from Tinnevely brought grain to barter for spices and the resulting commerce between the east and the west coast was great. All the world liked the spices of Travancore. The great desire to have them led to bloodshed and injustice. When the Portuguese accepted the invitation of the Rance of Quilon to buy pepper and spices from her, trade with Tinnevely suffered. The Portuguese, given an inch, proceeded to take a mile: they assumed full control over the pepper trade.

While secretly building a fort under the guise of building a house the Portuguese Captain heard that 5,000 bullock cartloads of pepper which had been bartered for an equal number of loads of rice were



being taken through the Ariyankavu pass by Tinnevely merchants. Angered because the pepper had not been given to him, the Captain demanded that the Ranee stop them and hand over the pepper to him. She refused, whereupon the Captain hired 500 Nairs to seize the loads by force, and even offered fifty rupees for every human head brought back to him. The hired soldiers brought back all the pepper and the heads of the five leaders. Such a horrible experience most naturally frightened east coast merchants, who dared not use the pass any more. The trade route once so flourishing gradually fell into disuse.

One of the five Sasta temples, reputed to have been established by Parasurama to guard the Western Ghats, is in this little village. Hundreds of pilgrims worship the forest deity at this temple during the *Mandala puja*, which lasts forty-one days from mid-January.

Of the other Sasta temples not so much is known. Achenkovil temple is situated in the mountains north of Ariyankavu, and Kulathupuzha in the mountains to the south. The other two Sasta temples—Sabarimala and Kanthamala—have been described on page 120.

The mountain scenery from the pass is most beautiful—rolling hills and valleys covered with the dense undergrowth and tall trees so typical of a wet tropical country. The pass itself is not very high, being only 650 feet above sea level.

The section around Tenmalai is one of the important planting areas of the State. The Kalthuritty valley has several large tea and rubber estates. Several other valleys also have been planted out in either tea



or rubber and other hills are dotted here and there by isolated estates. Naturally when there are such hundreds of thriving acres supplying a steady market, there is plenty of work for the labourers. During the past few years the slump in rubber has necessitated closing many of the estates and thus many hundreds of labourers are forced into unemployment. Several estates have been combined under the management of one man. Certainly it will be many years before the estates are again working full time and full quota—if ever.

Tenmalai boasts one of the two match factories in Travancore. The factory has an excellent site on the bank of a river and also on the main road. Shipping can be easily made by trains from Tenmalai station near by. The factory is a purely Indian concern, being financed and managed by Indians. The quality of matches is acceptable. The wood for sticks and boxes is obtained in the local forests. The factory is not run steadily at capacity limit, but the output of matches indicates a fairly satisfactory concern.

#### PUNALUR, PAPER AND PINEAPPLES

Should one follow the road to Quilon, the next town of importance is Punalur, a small place noteworthy for its paper mill and for the exceptionally large luscious pineapples which grow in this section.

The paper is a purely indigenous enterprise, which was started in 1888. Special machinery was imported. The chief raw material used is bamboo reed, easily available in the vicinity. While this reed is one of the best materials for the manufacture of paper, it is so fibrous that a certain amount of old cloth and



waste paper has to be mixed with it. The maximum amount made in one day of twenty-four hours is eight tons, which means about three hundred feet of finished paper a minute. An interesting comment was made by the manager in a letter, to the effect that there are only seven paper mills in all India, which is indicative of the difficulties to be overcome in the development of this industry. Two things are essential: cheap raw material and cheap power. Both these requirements could be easily available in Travancore where waterways are numerous and the forest produce abundant. The future of this Punalur company seems assured. They employ about one hundred people in the factory and another hundred in the forests. Out of an authorized capital of seven lakhs, about four and three-fourths are paid up. The Governments both of Travancore and Madras place orders with this factory.

The road south from Tenmalai follows rivers and crosses many streams, all of which add in no small degree to the beauty and pleasure of the drive. Traffic on this road is light, and one often drives for miles without meeting a vehicle or a pedestrian. Occasionally a hill tribesman with his bow and arrow is met. One or two tree houses, built near a plot of cultivation, are usually to be found. Estate roads lead off the main road to small estates in the interior.

#### POONMUDI HILLS

The Poonmudi hills are reached from the Kallar road which branches from the Shencottah road about fourteen miles from Trivandrum. Here again are several tea estates and a small acreage of rubber.



Being only thirty-eight miles from Trivandrum and about 3,000 feet above sea level, Poonmudi is a delightful health resort. Government have two sanatoria in these hills, where visitors may go to escape the heat of the plains. The views are wonderful and a day or weekend spent here is a delightful one. The road from Trivandrum is usually in good condition, and like other drives in Travancore, takes one continually through beautiful country.

These hills and the range extending to the south are the home of the Kanis, another hill tribe.

#### THE KANIS OR KANICKARS

The forest dwellers who live in the mountains near Poonmudi, Nedumangad and Neyyattinkara are called Kanis or Kanickars, meaning land proprietors. The accepted tradition says that they are descendants of two hill-kings, Sri Rangan and Virappan, who emigrated from the country the other side of the mountains under pressure of some superior force. One author calls them the aborigines of the land.

It is comparatively recently that they have frequented markets and have thus come in contact with modern civilization. Their huts are temporary affairs made of bamboos and reeds. They live mostly in trees, as a safe refuge from the wild animals in which the hills abound. Their time is spent in raising crops, hunting and collecting. They clear a plot of ground, burn the underbrush, and plant their crops—hill-rice, *ragi*, pulses, vegetables. In the rich virgin soil crops grow easily with little cultivation; and when the land has run out after a few years, they abandon the place to start a village and clearing in another



suitable place. Though this method is simple for the Kanis it is very destructive to the forests, and Government were forced some years ago to prohibit this practice.

Wherever a Kani goes he carries a wicker basket and his bill-hook. They are most useful in the collection of forest produce, which they sell to Government at fixed prices. They also help in catching elephants. They shoot with bows and arrows. It is interesting to note that only about ten years ago a village was found where the inhabitants had the bow but still no arrow, using bits of stone instead.

They live peaceably with the foreign invader, but do not work on the estates. A certain group of these hillmen became interested in a kindly planter near whose estate they lived. They sent their children to a little school for the sole reason that they wanted the quinine the planter would give them if they did. One day they invited the planter to go on a hunting expedition with them. Questions brought out the facts that they did not know where they would go, how long they would stay, and that no arrangements for food had been considered necessary. The planter was very busy and could not leave his estate, a condition the tribesmen could not fathom.

This same planter once took three of these men in his car to the capital, showed them the buildings, the strange animals in the zoo, a train, even took them on an engine on a turn-table. Nothing surprised or amused them until he took them upstairs in his bungalow and turned on a water tap: the wonderful planter had made water run uphill and they knew it could not be done!



As may be expected their ceremonies are simple. The *tali*-tying marriage custom is used; widows remarry; divorce is permitted but rarely used. They have little faith in medicine except quinine, preferring to resort to magic and sorcery. They bury children, but cremate adults.<sup>1</sup> Just before a man dies his top-knot is cut off. Like the tribes of the northern part, the Kanis place the body north to south. To signify the severance from earthly affairs, a few of the deceased's cooking vessels are broken.

The Kanis live in separate villages. When it is necessary to call the leaders of the several villages together in council, a messenger carries a certain knot of creeper fibres to a village, and this knot is passed on from village to village until the members all gather. This tribe goes periodically every few years to see the Maharaja. They bear gifts of jungle produce, notably the wild bamboo banana, hill paddy seed and bamboo joints filled with honey. The Maharaja gives them in return gifts of clothing, tobacco and salt. They are a simple people, quiet and honest, primitive in many ways, and yet unsurpassed in jungle lore.

#### NEDUMANGAD

Although there remains practically nothing to show that the section of country eight to fourteen miles from Trivandrum was once a prosperous independent principality ruled over by its own Raja, history nevertheless gives us a few facts to prove such was

<sup>1</sup> One author says cremation is not practised.



the case. This place proved a safe harbour for Umayamma Ranee when she became Queen Regent of Travancore in 852 M.E. Her history is tragic. For over two centuries the affairs connected with the temple had been in the hands of a group of despots who called themselves the Ettara Yogam. Co-existent with them were the Ettuvittil Pillamars, originally only farmers on the land of the eight despots. These two groups ruled the country under guise of religious authority. When a strong-minded sovereign came to the throne, built his residence near the temple in Trivandrum and demanded that the accounts of the temple be submitted to him, he naturally earned the disfavour and opposition of the Yogakars and Pillamars. During the next nearly two centuries the friction and annoyance of the two institutions toward the ruling house were marked but never led to open conflict. Eventually they set fire to the then Raja's residence, and poisoned their Ruler. The sole family of this cruelly murdered Raja was his niece Umayamma Ranee and her six sons, all of them under age. The Ranee was made Regent. Not long afterwards the rebels, who now were making every effort to do away with royalty and become rulers themselves, enticed the five eldest boys to play in a tank, and then drowned them. The poor mother's grief must have been unbounded. She found it continually more and more unsafe to remain near the capital and give attention to the affairs of the Government. She fled with her nine year old son to Nedumangad, there to watch over him and protect the only heir to the throne.

The Yogakars now had the country to themselves,



but contention arose between them, and each chief became the sole ruler of his own lands. Misconduct and despotism were so rife, that it was easy for a Mogul Sirdar to capture the country and assume authority over it. Because of representations placed before him by a few faithful Mohammedan servants of the Regent, the Mogul did not destroy the Trivandrum pagoda nor forcefully convert Hindus to Mohammedanism, nor did he ever proceed against the principality of Nedumangad where the Regent and her son were staying. With the coming of the Mogul, the Yogakars and Pillamars fled. The Regent invited Raja Kerala Varma to come to her aid. With his help the kingdom was restored, the Yogakars and Pillamars kept in abeyance and affairs of the government put into such condition that when the Regent's son ascended the *musnud* in his sixteenth year, he could satisfactorily rule his kingdom.

During these years four members of the family of the Kolathunaad sovereign, in British Malabar, were adopted into the Travancore royal family. The son of the adopted Junior Rancee was the great Martanda Varma who is known in Travancore history as the saviour of Travancore. He it was who conquered the small principalities and consolidated them all into the present Travancore, and set up a system of government which has ruled the kingdom well ever since. Nedumangad was also a refuge for this prince. Early in life he took a great interest in State affairs and was permitted by his uncle to help curb the power of the confederates, which naturally turned their cruel attention to his destruction. Prince Martanda Varma could not live long in any one place, but in disguise



lived for short times in the south, in Nedumangad, Attingal and Mavelikara.

#### ARUVIKARA

Ancient culture and modern progress may be seen side by side at Aruvikara—a small village about seven miles from Trivandrum. The life of the place centered about a sacred temple which was built on the river bank below the falls. The pool below the temple had sacred fish which were fed from the temple.

The quiet of the country has been disturbed, the echo of barking deer has changed to the metallic clang of hammers on iron and stone. The even flow of the water over the low falls is gone for ever. Engineers have thrown a dam across the valley and built tanks, so that the people in Trivandrum may have plenty of pure water. This waterworks has been a big work involving an outlay of many lakhs of rupees, but providing work for hundreds of labourers. It will be a tremendous boon to the people in Trivandrum, especially during the hot season when wells are apt to run dry.

The drive into Trivandrum continues to be beautiful, following a small rocky river. A good deal of traffic, due primarily to the waterworks, is on this part of the road. The country is thickly inhabited, with houses always in sight. Cultivation is general, including rice, plantains, tapioca and vegetables. The whole drive from Shencottah is only sixty-five miles, but a more beautiful wooded-country drive would be hard to find.



*List of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route*

Trivandrum (I).

Nedumangad (C.S.), 11th milestone, Trivandrum-Shencottah Road.

Pallode (C.S.), 21st milestone, Trivandrum-Shencottah Road.

Madattirakani (C.S.), 31st milestone, Trivandrum-Shencottah Road.

Shencottah (II), 59th milestone, Quilon-Shencottah Road.





## CHAPTER IX

### TRIVANDRUM

TRIVANDRUM is the capital of Travancore, the home of His Highness the Maharaja, the seat of Government and the headquarters for the various Governmental departments. It is a city of 95,000, made beautiful by the wealth of tropical greenery so characteristic of the West Coast.

Except in the fort and the immediate surroundings, there is very little congestion, so that Trivandrum may rightly be called a spacious city. It has a large number of well constructed big buildings. The large stretches of paddy fields within the municipal limits are always a source of interest and surprise to visitors, as such cultivation is hardly expected in a city of this size. These plots are gradually being filled in and utilized in other ways, as naturally such land, often near the centre of the town, is very valuable.

### SRI PADMANABHASWAMI TEMPLE

The name of the town is connected with the story of the origin of this temple, which is venerated as one of very great antiquity. No one knows exactly when the pagoda was first built, but the *Brahma Purana*, in describing the sanctity of various places, names the temple in Trivandrum.

Trivandrum means literally *tiru* (*sri*—sacred), *ananta*



(snake), *puram* (place), or the place of the sacred snake. The site of the temple was once a wild jungle-covered plain in the midst of which a Pulaya and his wife lived, earning their living by cultivating a small paddy field. One day while the wife was working in the field, she heard a cry and discovered a beautiful baby which she dared not touch, deeming it to be divine. She bathed herself and then fed the child from her breast and laid him in the shade of a tree. As soon as she left, a five-headed cobra put the child in a hole in the tree and spread his hood to provide shelter from the sun. This child was an incarnation of God Vishnu. The Pulaya couple daily offered milk and *kunjee* in a half coconut shell. The ruler of Travancore heard of this and immediately had a temple built at the very place.

The second story also tells of a child. The Vilva-mangalam Swamiyar, often mentioned in connexion with temples in Malabar, daily performed his worship to *saligramams*.<sup>1</sup> Whenever he closed his eyes in meditation some small child would disarrange his stones and flowers and annoy him in the way only small children know, and yet, when he opened his eyes, the child would immediately disappear. One day this annoyance reached the limit, so without opening his eyes the Swamiyar reached out his left arm and rudely brushed the child away. It was the child's turn for anger, and before the Swamiyar could open his eyes he was told that the child he had so rudely

<sup>1</sup> Small fossilized mollusc-like stone conch shells. They are sacred stones representing the incarnation of Vishnu and are gathered from the head of the River Gandak near Benares.



used was the very deity he was praying to see and that he could never see him except at Anantankad. The Swamiyar was greatly distressed. He had never heard of such a place, so he ran wildly in the direction whither he thought the child must have gone. The occasional tingle of waist ornaments led him on and on. After several days of such wandering in the open country, the hungry, distressed Swamiyar heard a child's cry. He hastened toward the child in time to see a solitary Pulaya woman say to her own small child, 'If you continue weeping like this, child, I will throw you out into Anantankad'. The Swamiyar was delighted to hear this name and begged the Pulaya woman to show him where it was. As he started toward the place he heard again the tingle of waist-bells and immediately a tremendous crash as a huge tree fell to the ground. There before him lay God Vishnu on his thousand-headed serpent—but in such a gigantic form that he reached from Tiruvallum, three miles south of the Trivandrum Fort, to Tiruppur, six miles north. The central portion of his body was at Anantankad, now Tiruanantapuram or Trivandrum. The Swamiyar was then pardoned for his action in so rudely striking the child, and was blessed. He prayed that the god would make himself smaller so that the daily *pūja* and circumambulations could be more easily done. The god shrank to a normal size and the Swamiyar regularly performed his worship before him.

It is said that the tree which crashed to earth was carved into the image of Vishnu, over which the then Raja of Travancore erected a temple. This carved image is still in daily use in the Sri Padmanabha



Temple, and the golden bowl shaped like a half coconut shell in which the rice offering is made to the god is said to represent the shell in which the Swamiyar offered his oblation to the deity.

The actual building at present is not so old, although no doubt some parts of it date back many centuries. The earliest inscription in the temple is dated 340 M.E. (A.D. 1165) and refers to repairs and additions. Before the great Martanda Varma became Raja, he made plans for reconstructing the temple, and during the first year of his reign put the work under way, giving it much personal supervision. The image of the god was remade, and consecrated with 12,000 *saligramams*. The *ottakal mandapam* in front of the idol was built with one huge slab of stone measuring twenty feet square and two and a half feet thick, which was brought from Thirumalai, three miles from Trivandrum. The *gopuram*, the foundations for which had been laid in A.D. 1566, was completed up to the fifth story; the remaining two stories were added during the reign of the next Raja. The building of the magnificent corridor, roofed with stone slabs 25 feet by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet by  $1\frac{3}{4}$  feet, and supported by 368 granite pillars beautifully sculptured, was a tremendous task. This work was completed in six months by 4,000 masons brought from Tinnevely, Madura and Trinopoly; 6,000 coolies and 100 elephants. In spite of this army of workers it seems an almost impossible achievement. The flagstaff, an important part of every Hindu temple, was raised at this time. The special teak log was felled in the forest thirty miles away and brought to the temple by men and elephants without ever touching the ground, following the



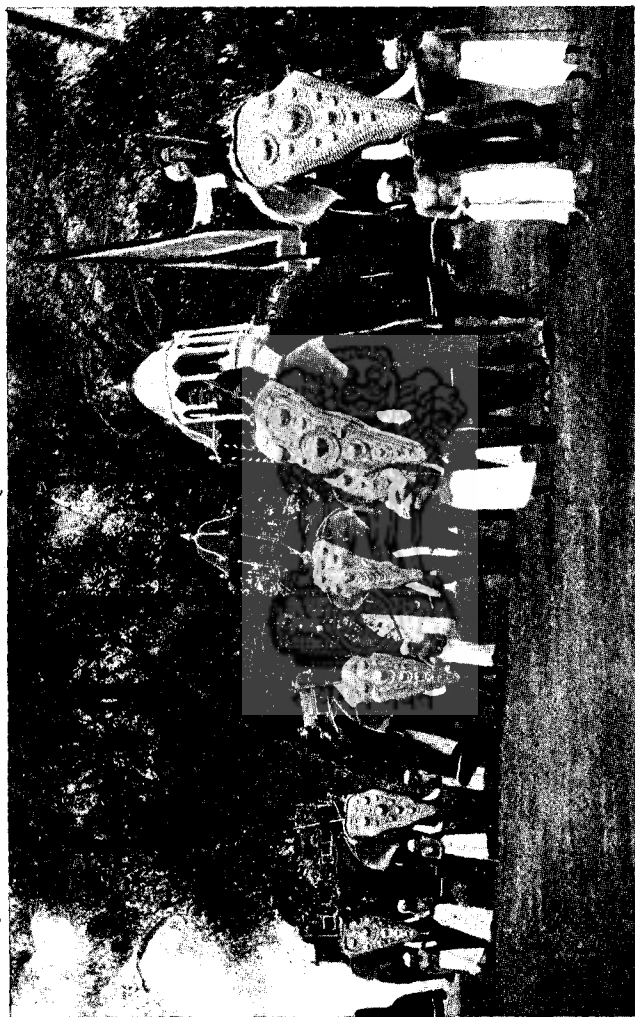
regulations laid down in the *Silpasastram* for temple-building. The teak pole is completely covered with gold plating.

The rebuilding of the fort wall in granite stone was begun, but before it was completed the Dalawah (Dewan), who had the work in hand, died. The work was never completed, and even now part of the fort wall is still of mud.

It would be sadly amiss when speaking of the Trivandrum temple not to mention the collection of jewels there. Although they are seldom displayed, they are reputed to be very valuable, especially the emeralds, diamonds and rubies.

The temple also had vast coffers of wealth, which until recently have lain in vaults under the temple. The large wooden chests placed ready to receive the daily offerings of the worshippers had only one opening—the small coin slot in the top. When the chests were filled they were lowered into the vaults for safe keeping. About twenty-five years ago, when the State needed additional money, it was thought expedient to open these chests and use the wealth they contained. A group of people met for this purpose, and men carrying torches went to the vaults. Here the picturesque touch enters the story. The men, much to their surprise and horror, found the vaults infested with cobras, and quite naturally they fled for their lives. They said the gods had placed the cobras there to guard their wealth and that the State must not take it. The treasure was left undisturbed until a year or two ago when the vaults were again opened. This time elaborate arrangements were made with electric lights and a system of fans to force fresh

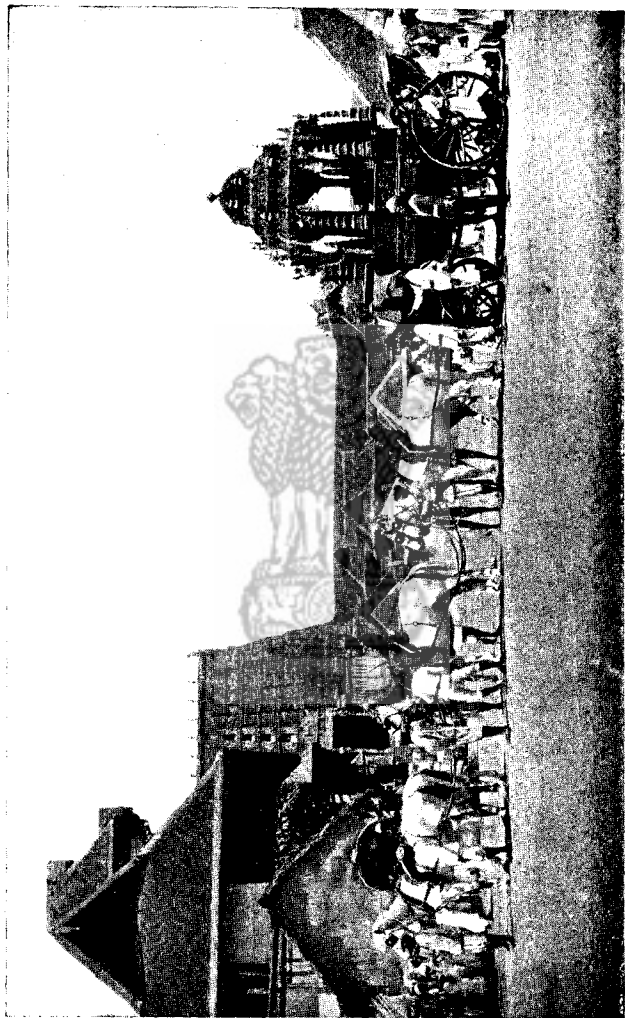




### STATE ELEPHANTS

The State elephants, gaily caparisoned with gold and silver trappings and howdahs, are an impressive addition to all State processions and public arrivals





### THE GOLDEN CAR

When His Highness the Maharaja goes in State Procession for certain festivals he rides in the Golden Car.



air into the vaults, and some of the treasure was safely removed.

Besides housing the temple and adjacent tanks, there are several old palaces in the fort. These palaces were residences of former Rajas, and were closed when the Rajas died. The old Durbar Hall is near the fort residence of the present Maharaja. It is never used now.

#### FESTIVALS AND PROCESSIONS

Every year several processions of great interest are conducted in Trivandrum.

The Pooja Eduppu procession takes place in October every year. Lord Subramonia and Goddess Saraswathi visit Trivandrum, and after ten days' stay return to Velli and Padmanabhapuram. They are taken in procession three miles to the *mandapam* at Poojapurai, and here His Highness pays his homage in state on Pooja Eduppu day. The procession attracts thousands of people who line the gaily decorated roads. The procession is headed by the elephant carrying the Nijan flag; then follow the elegantly caparisoned State elephants with their howdahs and gold and silver trappings, the riderless Kothal horses (the 'pet' animals in the royal stables) led by their trainers; the Bodyguard, the two Battalions of the Nair Brigade with the Brigade band. The palace staff in various uniforms come next, the men with spears and shields representing to some extent the warriors who usually attended the sovereigns of old. The pipers and other musicians follow with people carrying a cushioned chair, in case His Highness should require one, a covered box containing a complete set of clothing for



His Highness, and a large box containing betel and flowers which are scattered on the road as the procession moves slowly on. The sword of His Highness, enclosed in an ornamental velvet sheath, is carried just in front of the golden royal chariot drawn by six horses, in which His Highness sits. An A.D.C. and the Commissioner of Police ride just at the back of His Highness. The Elaya Raja, the Koil Tam-purans and officers of the State follow.

A salute of nineteen guns is fired when the procession leaves the Fort about 4.30 in the afternoon. It reaches the *mandapam* about 5.30. His Highness there worships the deities, and then returns to the Fort Palace where he scatters gold and silver coins which are eagerly picked up by the waiting crowd.

The Sastamangalam procession takes place once a year. It has no religious significance. The Potti who rendered valuable services to the then Maharaja, when asked to name any reward, requested that the rulers of Travancore should accept his hospitality once a year, in full state. This procession starts from the Fort and winds its way three miles to Sastamangalam, the residence of the Potti. The order of the procession is the same as for the Pooja Eduppu.

The Arat and Vetta processions are held twice a year during the Utsavam festivals in March-April and September-October in the Sri Padmanabhaswami temple.

The Vettai, conducted on the ninth night, commemorates the day on which Lord Sri Padmanabha went out for a hunt in the adjoining jungles. The tradition is kept up by His Highness escorting the deity to the



customary place, where His Highness himself as the representative of the deity shoots out one or two arrows from his quiver, hitting some coconuts, and thereby ensuring prosperity to the land. The illusion of hunting is kept up and the procession proceeds in absolute silence until the shooting is over. The return march is accompanied by music and pipes, signifying a successful hunt.

During the Arat, His Highness walks on foot to the beach where His Highness bathes with the deities in the sea. The Arat procession is headed by the Nijan flag. The Bodyguard, the military and the band come next. The Nair officers with sword and shield go in front protecting His Highness and the deity; His Highness comes next and the Brahman officers walk behind. The images of Lord Sri Padmanabha, Narasimha and Sri Krishna are carried by the priests of the temple in the rear, and are protected by the State elephants and a strong police cordon.

This procession is one of the most impressive. Thousands of people come from near and far to watch it. The procession, which starts about 4 p.m., returns to the Fort about eight, by the light of the flaring torches which are one of the attractive features of the procession.

The birthday of His Highness is the occasion of great rejoicing. His Highness goes in procession to worship in the various temples in and near the Fort. His Highness is carried in a beautiful green and silver palanquin and is accompanied by the State elephants, Bodyguard, Brigade, Palace staff and State officials.



## MAIN ROAD

A great many buildings of interest are situated on or just off the main road, which extends from the Fort to the London Mission Church, a distance of nearly two miles. Leaving the Fort, one soon passes the new Power House, erected only in 1929, since when electricity has been available. A stone's throw beyond is the viaduct over the railway, and a newly made road leading to the station which was first used to receive the guests who arrived for the investiture of His Highness in 1931. Again at the right, the green lawns, once the site of the Trivandrum Residency, now mark the office of the Commissioner of Police. On the left, a furlong on, are the Zilla Courts, interesting as the first free English Government school in the State. The big tree in front of the new Post Office buildings is one of the landmarks of the city. On the right just one mile from the Fort are the public offices. These buildings not only house the offices for administration of various State departments, but the High Court and the Durbar Hall as well. The Durbar Hall occupies the central portion of the building. The hall is decorated with mirrors, paintings of Their Majesties and Maharajas, and five beautiful glass chandeliers. Behind the Maharaja's throne is kept the flag presented to His Highness by Her Majesty Queen Victoria soon after the first Imperial Assemblage at Delhi in 1877. In presenting the flag the Resident said: 'In further token of this closer union and of Her affectionate regard, Her Majesty has been pleased to direct through the Viceroy and Governor-General the presentation to Your Highness of a Banner emblazoned with Your



Highness' arms and surmounted by Her own Imperial Crown to be carefully preserved and handed down as a symbol of the friendship existing between the British Crown and Your Highness.'<sup>1</sup>

Just behind the Public Offices are the Police Parade Grounds, a splendid sports field with cement seats built the full length of the side. To the south are the Y.M.C.A. buildings, and the Sri Mulam Thirunal Sasthiabdhapurthi Memorial Institute, a building built in 1927 by public subscription as a loyal tribute to His Highness Sri Mulam Thirunal, the late Maharaja. This institute aims to exhibit specimens from the various industrial and commercial institutions in the State. It has also a library and reading room on kindred subjects.

On the main road opposite the Public Offices is the only statue in the city, that of one of its most eminent Dewans, Sir T. Madhava Row, who was the head of the administration from 1858 to 1872. Next in order are the Law College on the right hand side of the road; the Y.W.C.A. on the left, set back from the road; the Jacobite Syrian church on the right. His Highness the Maharaja's College of Science, on the left, the first building of which was occupied in 1873, was then the only college for higher education and was a College of Arts. Gradually as the desire for education developed, chairs in other subjects were instituted. This naturally necessitated additional buildings. The possibility of more buildings in that compound having been exhausted and yet the number of students increasing so rapidly, it was

<sup>1</sup> *Administration Report, 1952 M.E. (1876-7).*



found necessary in 1923 to bifurcate the college. Accordingly the Arts students were moved to another building and all old buildings were used for the College of Science. It is somewhat alarming that the number of students registered in the Science College now is more than were registered for both Arts and Science subjects when the bifurcation was made.

Immediately across from the Science College is His Highness the Maharaja's High School for Girls. This building used to house both the High school and the Women's College. Lack of room made the separation of school and college necessary. The college was moved in 1923. Now the headmistress is complaining of cramped quarters and begging for more space.

The Victoria Jubilee Town Hall, which forms the last in this group of public buildings, is the meeting-place for the Legislative Council, Popular Assembly, public meetings and entertainments of all sorts. It is always in great demand.

The Cantonment bazaar, the general shopping district for foods and sundries, is not very large. The Mohammedan mosque is situated at the left; at the end of the bazaar, just opposite the cavalry parade grounds, is a bit of open ground owned by the British Government. Opposite this is the Roman Catholic church. On the left is the memorial monument to those who fell in the Great War, and beyond the Church of England church and cemetery.

There is no documentary evidence to show when the Government chaplaincy was instituted in Travancore. The original charter granted to the East India Company in 1698 made obligatory provision for a



chaplain in every garrison and superior factory. It is quite possible that the first English settlement at Anjengo which had a fort, factory, garrison and numerous Europeans had a chaplain. The first chaplain of whom there are records was placed in Quilon in 1816. Trivandrum's first Protestant church was built in 1837 and was interdenominational. The present Church of England church was built in 1858, and two years later the headquarters of the Government chaplaincy was moved to Trivandrum, Quilon being made an out-station.

The School of Arts on the right belongs to the Industries Department and fosters those industries of art of which Travancore has reason to be proud. While the School of Arts is a school and teaches, it also produces articles for sale. The ivory carving done in Travancore is of a very high order. Beautiful pieces may be seen in the process of making. *Kufgari* work, steel inlaid with silver, is confined to this part of India. The process is a difficult one which is practised only by a special class of people. Lacquer work and pottery are also taught and practised here. It is fascinating to watch the potters turn the lump of clay on their wheels into sundry articles of good design. Wood carving is a speciality of the school, and articles of silver and gold are also made. A drawing school is also working. A textile department teaches weaving, dyeing and embroidery. The School of Arts is one of the most interesting places in Trivandrum. Visitors should be sure to see the pictures by Travancore's great artist, Ravi Varma.

In order to make the many excellent articles of handicraft which are produced in Travancore available



to the public, and in order to encourage and revive the many which are fast declining, the Government have opened a Sales Depot in Trivandrum with branches in other parts of India. The Depot desires to stock all articles made in Travancore. The venture has just been started and should do much to encourage the small industries of the State, many of which are unique.

The growth of the Trivandrum Public Library, the next building on the right, from a few volumes housed in the old Travellers' Bungalow about eighty-five years ago to the present building, with its 30,116 volumes, is indicative of the interest taken in literature.

The Collegiate Hostel on the right, replacing a small thatched building, was opened in 1926 to meet the great demand for living quarters for students. It offers accommodation for 107 students. This building is particularly fortunate in having the Brigade parade grounds just in front of it, as so much open space ensures good air.

The main road ends in front of the London Mission Church, an excellent granite building opened in 1906 for the local parish. The Mission Hostel is just at the left. At the right the entrance to the Public Gardens is in full view.

#### MUSEUM

The Museum holds much of interest for visitors. A huge ornate building, it is situated in the Public Gardens, one of the truly lovely spots in the city. The wealth of trees and foliage plants, a small tank, green lawns and many flowers make this park a favourite place. The cages housing the Zoo are situated



in various parts of the garden. The gardens are used by thousands daily and the Museum is frequently visited by old and young. The nucleus for a public museum was started by some interested gentlemen in 1852. The few collections were housed in the Observatory bungalow for the time. The Public Gardens were laid out seven years later, but it was not until 1873 that the present Museum was started. It was opened in 1880 and called Napier Museum after Lord Napier, Governor of Madras.

There are several things in the Museum of special interest to the general visitor, chief among which are the models of a Nair *taravad* home and the cabin boats such as were once used on the backwaters. A relief map of Travancore and collections of old jewels, coins and birds are most interesting.

#### OBSERVATORY

The present Observatory is situated on the highest ground in Trivandrum, just near the Public Gardens. It is to share its beautiful location with the reservoir for the Trivandrum water supply, construction of which is now going on. Trivandrum has had an Observatory for nearly a hundred years, the first small beginning having been made in 1836. Seventeen years later a fairly elaborate observatory was built on Agastyar peak twenty-two miles from Trivandrum. Here a great amount of work was done. Very careful tabulations and calculations were made during the ten years this Observatory existed, and most of the results were edited by J. A. Brown and published by the Travancore Government and the Indian Meteorological



Department. The work covers ten large volumes. The Government decided that the Rs. 15,000 annual expenses of this Observatory might better be turned toward education, and since the Madras and Trivandrum Observatories were so near together it was highly probable two such institutions would add little more to scientific knowledge than one. A much smaller Observatory was continued at Trivandrum where meteorological observations are still taken daily and sent to Madras and Simla. The rainfall records for various parts of the State are carefully kept by nearly a hundred out-stations as well.

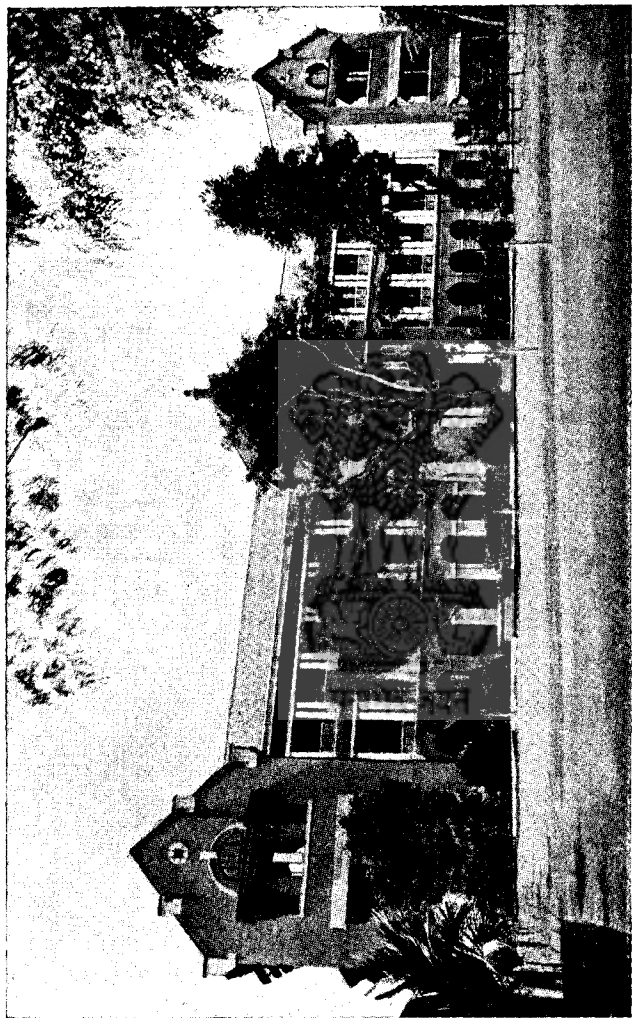
Another group of impressive buildings centres about the Residency, the Travancore home of the Agent to the Governor-General. The Arts College, Training College and Model School are housed in several large buildings to the west.

On the road south of the Residency are the spacious grounds and buildings of the Women's and Children's Hospital, one of the finest hospitals in South India. The hospital was opened over forty years ago and has proved an increasingly-used boon to thousands of women. Its usefulness is indicated by the numbers who are treated: 6,184 admitted to hospital during the past year, and 53,683 treated in the out-patients department; 2,577 midwifery cases were treated. It is interesting to know that the hospital has been staffed entirely by women since 1896.

The new railway station is not far from the hospital.

The General Hospital in another part of the town was opened in 1865 and has recently added another large building in order to meet the demands placed on it. The Chronic Diseases, Mental and Lepet Asylums

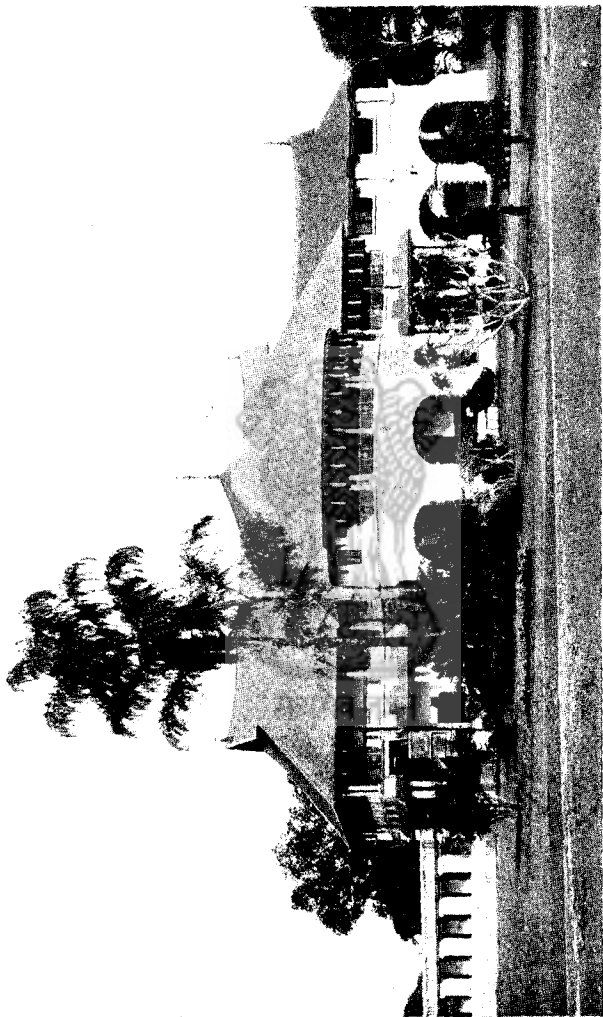




#### ARTS COLLEGE, TRIVANDRUM

Travancore boasts many educational institutions from primary grade up to first grade colleges. She stands third among the provinces of India in literacy, with 28.9 per cent of her total population literate: 41 per cent of the male, and 17 per cent of the female population are literate.





THE STATE GUEST HOUSE, TRIVANDRUM



are situated in beautiful open country about two miles from Trivandrum.

Distinguished State guests are entertained in the Guest House—a spacious, well-appointed house, set in a beautiful garden commanding a splendid view of the Western Ghats.

Kavadiyarkunnu Palace, the residence of His Highness the Maharaja, is on the same road, several furlongs beyond. The grounds are being elaborately laid out and eventually the gardens will be very beautiful.

The State maintains a nine-hole golf course, just east of the Palace. It is one of the delightful spots of the city. The view of the hills is especially fine from here.

#### GOVERNMENT

The history of Government in Travancore is one of continued development and progress. Early records show that before the middle of the seventeenth century authority over revenue matters was vested in the local Chiefs, who estimated and collected certain taxes, taking out what was necessary for various religious ceremonies, and handing the rest over to the ruler. When Ravi Varma was ruler (1684) he took many powers from the chiefs and appointed his own officers. Martanda Varma, the maker of present Travancore, soon found the systems, which had evidently been sufficient for the management of a small state, were not able to cope with the larger kingdom. He proceeded to establish a ministry of able men and a systematic government over which he was the final authority. The first efficient survey of lands and property was begun in 1751 and completed after



three years of constant work. During the reign of Rama Varma, his successor, the territory of the State was divided and subdivided into manageable divisions and special officers put in charge. Up to this time the ruler's chief executive officer had been called Dalawah, but from this reign on his title was changed to Dewan, as he is called at present. A general re-organized government on more efficient lines was effected by Colonel Munro, the British Resident who, at the request of Rane Lakshmi Bai, assumed charge of the administration during the years 1811-1814.

Travancore took the lead over other Indian States when in 1888 the first Legislative Council was formed. The Council was purely a deliberative body for purposes of legislation and had no administrative functions. Its constitution and powers have been undergoing considerable change since then.

In 1904 the first Sri Mulam Popular Assembly was constituted. This Assembly of 100 members had no powers, but was a body representative of the people, who placed before Government the needs and desires of the people and their views on the various measures adopted by Government. The Assembly met once a year.

By an ample measure of reform promulgated by His Highness the Maharaja on 28 October 1932 (21st birthday of His Highness), the Legislative Council and the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly have been remodelled so as to function as parts of the same Legislature. The new Legislature consists of two Chambers: the Sri Mulam Assembly and the Sri Chithira State Council. The Assembly has seventy-two members, of whom sixty-two are non-officials and



ten officials. The Council has a strength of thirty-seven. Of these, twenty-seven are non-officials and ten officials. All persons have the right to vote for the Assembly who pay an annual land revenue of Rs. 5, or a municipal tax of Re. 1, or profession tax of any amount, or are assessed to income tax, or are graduates of recognized Universities, provided they are not under twenty-one years of age. The franchise in the case of the Council is granted to all persons who pay an annual land tax of Rs. 25, all graduates of recognized Universities of ten years' standing and all persons who earn a monthly pension of Rs. 100 and above on retirement from Government service, provided they are not below the age of thirty. Women are placed on a footing of complete equality with men in the matter both of franchise and membership in the Legislature.

The Dewan is *ex officio* President of both Chambers. But the Assembly has the right to elect a Deputy President, and in the Council the Dewan has the power to appoint a Chairman to preside in his stead.

Both the Chambers have the right to initiate and pass legislation. All legislative measures generally require the assent of both Houses before they can be passed into law. Difference of opinion between the Chambers will be referred for decision to a Joint Committee of both Chambers. Certain special subjects like matters relating to the Ruling Family, relations with the Paramount Power, etc., are removed from the cognizance of the Legislature. Every Bill passed by the Legislature has to receive the assent of His Highness the Maharaja before it becomes law. In cases of emergency, the Dewan can submit to His



Highness Bills which on receiving his assent become law and have force for the space of six months.

The annual budget estimates of the State are placed before both Houses. They both have the right of general discussion, but the Assembly alone has the right to reduce or omit a grant. In cases of emergency, the Dewan has the power of certifying demands refused by the Legislature and of authorizing expenditure not referred to the Legislature.

The members of both Houses have the right to ask questions and supplementary questions and to move resolutions. The privilege of freedom of speech is conferred upon the members by statute.

His Highness the Maharaja retains his prerogative right to make and pass Regulations and Proclamations independent of the Legislature.

The Government of the State is carried on in the name and under the control of His Highness the Maharaja. The Dewan, as His Highness' Minister, takes public responsibility for all actions of Government. He is assisted by an organized Secretariat closely resembling that of the Government of India, and a Public Service divided into several Departments. Each Department has its own staff and a separate budget.

The Land Revenue Department deals mainly with the collection of land tax and the protection and disposal of Government lands. For purposes of land revenue administration, the State is divided into four divisions. The three divisions in the plains are in charge of Dewan Peishkars: the High Range division is in charge of a Commissioner. The Dewan Peishkars and the Commissioner are also the District



Magistrates of their Divisions. The general control of the Department is with the Land Revenue Commissioner.

The Excise Department is concerned with the Salt, Excise and *Abkari* revenue of the State. Salt is a Government monopoly as in British India. About 75 per cent of the salt consumed in the State is manufactured in Government factories. The Excise revenue of the State is derived from the manufacture and sale of country and foreign liquors and from the sale of tobacco, opium and *ganja*.

The Customs revenue of the State is also administered by the Excise Department. An agreement entered into with the British Government in 1865 governs the Customs policy of the State. Under this agreement, Travancore does not levy duty on imported goods, with certain exceptions, produced or manufactured in British India or in Cochin State, or on goods which have already paid import duty in Cochin or British India. But Travancore levies duty on articles imported direct from abroad. Tobacco, salt, opium and spirits are excluded from the agreement. The assigned values and rates of duty adopted by Travancore in regard to imports from foreign countries follow the British Indian Tariff. In regard to exports, the State is free to levy duties on any commodity. The rates of export duty are, however, regulated by the agreement with the British Government.

The judicial administration of the State rests with the High Court except in the matter of offences committed by European British subjects. For these there are special courts established by law. Subject to this exception, the High Court is the highest civil and



criminal court in the land. Its decisions in some important civil and criminal cases are, however, subject to confirmation by the Sovereign.

The State Department of Agriculture has an Agricultural and a Veterinary branch. The Fishery Department is also administered as an annexé to the Agricultural Department. The Agricultural branch engages in the scientific analysis of soils, demonstration of improved methods of agriculture, supply of scientific manures, etc.

The Industries Department maintains a Research laboratory, an experimental Tannery and a Textile Institute. Another important institution belonging to the Department is the Trivandrum School of Arts, which manufactures and sells pottery, ivory and other articles.

The Public Works Department takes 18.9 per cent of the State revenue. There are in Travancore 1.02 miles of roads and water communications for every square mile of inhabited area. This is in addition to the backwaters and navigable rivers. The Department maintains an irrigation project called the Kodayar Project. The State Electrical Department and Water Works Department are also under the control of the P. W. D.

There is a well organized Medical Department under the control of the Durbar Physician. Free medical aid is afforded in all the Hospitals and Dispensaries. There are two fully equipped Hospitals for Women and Children, one at Trivandrum and the other at Quilon. The indigenous system of treatment called the Ayurvedic system receives the special attention of Government. There is an Ayurveda Hospital at



Trivandrum and several Ayurvedic dispensaries all over the State in receipt of grants-in-aid from Government. The State maintains an Ayurveda College also.

The State has its own postal service known as the Anchal, and issues its own stamps, which can only be used within the Travancore and Cochin States.

### EDUCATION IN TRAVANCORE

The history of education in Travancore is of great interest. Like all Hindu kings, the Rajas and Maharajas were actively interested in the instruction of those over whom they ruled. The learning and great understanding of some of Travancore's rulers have become proverbial. Their courts were frequented by the most learned men in India. The *Dharma Sastras* enjoin all Brahmans to impart knowledge, and wherever they congregated, schools, in which Vedas, grammar, logic, philosophy, law and religion were taught, came into existence. Regarding these schools, the following comments are enlightening:

'This system of education, bound up as it was with religion and law, did not reach the lower castes of the Hindus who had no access to it. The ancient method of instruction aimed at the taxing of the memory and the undue development of the critical faculty by exercising the pupil in metaphysical refinements and in fine spun commentaries on the meaning of texts which they had to learn by heart. For the lower classes of the population there were village schools scattered over the country in which rudimentary education was given. These were of a later date and though they were primarily intended for the lower



classes, the children of traders, land-holders and well-to-do cultivators took advantage of the instruction offered in them. The curriculum of studies was simple and easily mastered—a few short lessons in Ethics, Astrology, praises of the principal Hindu divinities and tables of the first four rules in Arithmetic composed by the village schoolmaster for each pupil and learnt by him by rote.<sup>1</sup>

When the country was put into confusion by the wars of the eighteenth century, education was neglected. It was because of this that Her Highness Parvathi Bai, Rancee of Travancore, issued a rescript giving the causes of the decline in village schools and the resolution that 'the State should defray the entire cost of the education of its people in order that there might be no backwardness in the spread of enlightenment among them, that by diffusion of education they might become better subjects and public servants and that the reputation of the State might be advanced thereby'. This rescript was issued in 1817, only four years after the East India Company had recognized a responsibility in the matter of education.

The Protestant missionaries had already turned their attention toward the matter of education. The first English school in the State was established at Nagercoil in 1818 by the L.M.S. missionaries. Later in the same year English was introduced by the C.M.S. missionaries at Kottayam, though a regular teaching of English as a subject was not incorporated in the curriculum until a year or two later. In 1834, the then Raja visited the Nagercoil Seminary and was so

<sup>1</sup> Iyer, *State Manual*, Vol. II, p. 445.





#### THE BATHING BEACH, KOVALAM

Only about 12 miles from Trivandrum is Kovalam, one of the most delightful bathing beaches to be found anywhere. The drive from Trivandrum is particularly beautiful.





#### SRI PADMANABHASWAMI TEMPLE AND TANK, TRIVANDRUM

The Sri Padmanabhaswami temple in Trivandrum is the most important temple in the State. It was here in 1750 that His Highness Martanda Varma, having consolidated the various principalities into the present State, handed over the State to the God and undertook to rule Travancore as the servant of the God (see pp. 169-74).



impressed by this school that he wished to start an English school in Trivandrum. With the help of one of the Englishmen of Nagercoil as headmaster, the Raja's free school was opened. The following year the Sircar took over this school. From then on English education has grown steadily until today there are eleven Colleges with a registration of 3,626 and 262 High and Middle schools with 53,397 pupils. One college and thirty-seven schools are exclusively for girls. In the smaller towns where special schools are not available for girls, the schools are co-educational.

The bulk of education is in the vernaculars, Malayalam and Tamil. The total of vernacular High and Middle schools for both boys and girls numbers 361 with 1,33,300 pupils. Primary schools number 3,027 and are attended by 4,10,029 pupils.

The cause of women's education was sponsored by Mr Mead, the L. M. S. missionary who established the Nagercoil Seminary and who was later Superintendent of Schools in the State. Mrs Mead headed the first effort by organizing, in 1819, a boarding school for girls at Nagercoil. The following year Mrs Morton at Alleppey and two years later Mrs Baker at Kottayam followed suit. In 1863 the Zenana Mission founded an English School for Girls in the Fort in Trivandrum. Although they did what they could to encourage the idea of education among women, Government did not assume any responsibility until 1865 when they took over a private school in the centre of Trivandrum. This modest beginning developed to the status of a First Grade College affiliated to Madras University in 1928.



Travancore has reason to be proud of her literacy. She stands third, Burma and Cochin standing first and second, with 28.9 per cent of her total population literate; 41 per cent of the male and 17 per cent of the female population are literate. Compared with India as a whole, with only 16 per cent total literacy and 3 per cent female literacy, Travancore ranks very high.

In English literacy, Travancore comes fourth, being preceded by Cochin, Bengal, and Bombay. Nineteen out of every thousand persons in Travancore are literate in English.



#### DRIVES ABOUT THE CITY

There are a number of beautiful drives about Trivandrum. Probably the favourite with the residents is the one which leads to Kovalam, a splendid bathing beach. A round, offering a good variety of scenery, may be made from Trivandrum through the small village of Tiruvallum, where stands a temple of great sanctity. This temple is of special interest as it is one of the few temples containing a shrine to Parasurama, the god who reclaimed Travancore. It is also famous as the resting-place of Krishna's head when he appeared before Vilvamangalam Swamiyar in his search for Anantankad, as was described in the story on page 170.

In July-August many pilgrims resort to this temple to perform their annual rituals to their ancestors.

The road to Vellayani gives splendid views out over the sea. Recently Her Highness the Senior Maharanee built a palace overlooking the Vellayani lake. With a forest of palm trees all about the lake, and



glimpses of the vivid green of paddy fields, a more pleasant site could hardly be found. Vellayani has an old temple, the priest of whom belongs to the Vatti caste. Every three years they have a special festival which lasts about three months. During this festival they stage the fight between Kali and Darika. The earth groans under the oppression of Darika and, when the people through their sage appeal to Siva for help, Siva promises to send Kali to destroy Darika. At the appointed time, two characters appropriately dressed and impersonating Kali and Darika appear. The two act out the battle which eventually ends in a victory for Kali. A second palace has been built at Kovalam on a headland. It is just below the palace headland that the sea coast is sufficiently sheltered to make sea bathing safe and delightful. A bathing house has just been put up for the convenience of bathers.

On the return to Trivandrum, visitors may take the road branching off from Tiruvallum, which leads through pretty country to the main Southern Road at about the third milestone.

A second drive through Cannamoolay, a suburb of the city, leads past Cannamoolay hill, a place connected with the exposure of Velu Thamby's body. This man, 'characterized by selfishness, covetousness and fierce instincts, unhallowed by refinement of thought and unsoftened by learning or culture'<sup>1</sup> rose to the position of Dewan. He was a rebel of the first order and it was under his instigation that the Travancore army rebelled against the Europeans in Quilon

<sup>1</sup> Iyer, *State Manual*, Vol. I, p. 445.



and Anjengo, murdering many. When he found that his insurrection was doomed to failure he fled from the city. His pursuers were too much for him, but, rather than be captured alive, he cut his own throat. The body was brought to Trivandrum and exposed on a gibbet with chains. In later years the London Mission acquired this property and built a bungalow on its summit. There are many stories told of a headless ghost dragging his chains haunting the hill-top.

The road continues to Velli Forest Reserve, a delightful casuarina *tope* where there is truly music in the trees. The hill overlooks a little lake, Akolam, which flows into Velli lake, an important lake in the backwaters waterway. This hill used to be known as Pulayanar Kotta or the Pulaya Fort. It seems that in some ancient time a Pulaya ruled this part of the country as its king. The fort was built on the hill-top and commanded a full view of all the surrounding country and the sea coast. It is thought that some now unknown king conquered the Pulaya king and forced him to run away.

Velli Hill was a favourite resort of His Highness Sri Visakam Thirunal who ruled 1880-85. A bandstand was built for His Highness, and is still in fairly good condition, though used now only by picnic parties. After the death of this Raja, the hill was turned into a fuel plantation and planted with casuarina. It is a truly beautiful place to visit. The birds are especially numerous here. The drive continues on along a narrow country road little frequented to the village of Ooloor on the main Quilon-Trivandrum road, and thence back to Trivandrum.



A third drive takes the visitor past the State Guest House; Salvation Army Headquarters; Kowdiar,<sup>1</sup> the residence of His Highness; Perukkada, the headquarters of the Missouri Lutheran Mission work in Travancore, to the Government Cattle Farm. The view from the top of this hill is inspiring. For the person who has but a limited time in the State, the view from here gives better than any other an appreciation of the rolling country which gives the coast its name Malayalam—hills and dales. On one hand are the Western Ghats with proud Agastyar rearing her head above the others; on the other, the blue stretch of the Arabian Ocean losing itself in the horizon; and in between the uncultivated hillsides contrasting their dark green unkept foliage with the ordered brilliance of the irregular paddy fields literally nestling in the valleys. Only the tallest of the Trivandrum buildings can be seen.

In the distance, separated from the mountains, is Mukunni Mala—the three-hilled mountain. From this position only the last hill can be seen. This mountain, often called Brinjal Hill,<sup>2</sup> has been a landmark with mariners from time immemorial. It is always easily identified from the sea.

<sup>1</sup> Or Kavadiyarkunnu.

<sup>2</sup> It is the considered opinion of the author that this name is a corruption. One of the oldest ports along this southern coastline was Vizhanjam. Mukunni Mala standing out as it does from other mountains has been a landmark for mariners for centuries. From the sea, the Hill stands inland from the port Vizhanjam. The pronunciation of this word is difficult for all foreigners and it is usually written Vrinjan or Brinjan, some historians have even spelled it Brinjohn. It is an easily understandable step from Brinjan to Brinjal.



Sunsets are seen to the best advantage from this Cattle Farm hill-top. As the daylight fades away the lights of Trivandrum city shine out, though only a few can be seen. It is most surprising to see no other lights around. There are thousands of people living all about, and each little hut or home will have at least one tiny light, but the foliage is so dense that hardly a light can be seen on any side. The road winding on through paddy fields and open higher country leads on to the Main Central Road and thus on into Trivandrum.

Still another drive leads past the Museum, out to Sastamangalam where lives the Potti to whose home the Maharaja pays an annual visit commemorating the event already described.<sup>1</sup> The road to the right to the Sandalwood Reserve leads over high ground where a pleasing view of the hills and the sea may be had.

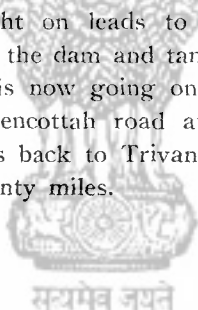
At the junction are several roads, the extreme left one leading out to the Sri Ramakrishna *mutt*, a beautiful place built only eight years ago. This *mutt* is situated on a hill-top and commands a wonderful view of the country and the sea. This Ashram is the most important of the several Ramakrishna Ashrams in the State, and is considered the most prominent Ashram in all Kerala. The teachings of Ramakrishna have permeated into the life of Travancore in a large measure and the influence of this great life is being more and more felt. Swami Nirmalananda, a disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, pays an annual visit to this Ashram and spends some time

<sup>1</sup> See p. 175.



in helpful teaching. The Ashram is open to all persons irrespective of caste, creed or colour. The monks and novices are conscientiously trying to identify themselves with God and to intensify their lives in the spiritual realm, engaging themselves mainly in prayer, study and meditation, all the time insisting upon and trying to realize the supreme value of God and religions and recognizing the harmony of all religions. The *sanyasis* are always ready to help in any ways they can in times of distress or calamity, and always prove themselves tireless, selfless workers. The peaceful spirit and quietude of the *mutt* is beautiful.

The road straight on leads to Aruvikara, where the construction of the dam and tanks for the Trivandrum waterworks is now going on. This road joins the Trivandrum-Shencottah road at about the ninth milestone and leads back to Trivandrum. The whole round is about twenty miles.





## CHAPTER X

### TRIVANDRUM TO CAPE COMORIN

THE trunk road from the capital to the Land's End of India is one of the busiest roads in the country. It offers a wide variety of scenery and takes the visitor into an entirely different type of country, from fertile plains of coconuts and rice, to rocky dry land skirting the foot of the mountains. Not only the country, but the language and the customs of the people also change. The southern part of Travancore bears the impress of foreign culture, and is more at one with southern India than the rest of Travancore, a condition due to the fact that this part of the country was more easily accessible to wanderers from the Pandyan kingdom. The mountain pass was not as effective a barrier as the flooding Alwaye river. Although Travancore for the most part kept her independent integrity, cultural influences may be evidenced in many ways.

The Karamanai river marks the boundary of Trivandrum. At the right, the section of the city called after the river is an exclusively Brahman section. Early morning the bathers may be seen in large numbers in the river. The bridge was ceremonially opened by His Highness in 1854. Just before the fifth milestone the road to Mukkunni Malai leads off to the left.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See comments on p. 196.



The first sizable town is Balaramapuram, eight miles south, a village founded by Dewan Oomni Tampi about 1808 and named after His Highness Bala Rama Varma. It has been a commercial village since it was established, the chief industry being weaving. At present there is a flourishing co-operative society which produces gold lace cloths of excellent quality.

Neyyattinkara, the 'village on the bank of the river of ghee', has a large Nair population. It is only four miles beyond Balaramapuram and is likewise a weaving centre. The town is very old, and used to be the chief place between the old capital of the State, Padmanabhapuram, and the present, Trivandrum. In the temple, dedicated to Sri Krishna, is a famous jack tree in the bottom of which the great Martanda Varma hid to escape the Ettuvittil Pillamars who were pursuing him. Unni Kerala Varma, an uncle of Martanda Varma, who was administering the State for Umayamma Rane, had his residence in Neyyattinkara, as he found living in Trivandrum near these same Pillamars too risky. This village is also the birthplace of Ayyipilla Asan, a poet who lived in the thirteenth century after Christ. His songs are still preserved.

Raja Kesava Das, one of the most romantic figures in Travancore history, was born in a little village near by, and lived many years in Neyyattinkara. Born of very poor parents, his mother a maidservant in the Maharaja's palace and his father an astrologer, the lad had to make his own way. His quick alert intelligence won him place after place until he rose to the position of Dewan of Travancore. An interesting story is told of his first meeting with the



Raja. One day his master, a merchant, took him along to an interview with the Raja. The interview lasted well into the night and the little lad fell asleep in an antechamber and was forgotten. When the Raja rose the next morning his first sight was of the poorly clad boy. He considered this most inauspicious and ordered the boy to be punished. Little more than an hour later the news of a richly laden vessel nearing port was brought. His Highness was delighted and attributed this good news to the 'first sight' of the boy. The boy was taken into palace service where by merit he rose to prominence. It was Kesava Das who opened correspondence with the English East India Company and the Dutch. He became an efficient general in the Travancore army and was responsible for much of the success of the Raja. During his regime the title of the administrative officer was changed from Dalawah to Dewan. In recognition of 'his ability and prudence and firm attachment to the East India Company', he was honoured with the title Raja. Raja Kesava Das served under His Highness Raja Rama Varma who ruled from 1758 to 1798.

Through the co-operation of the Rockefeller Institute, the State has been fortunate in securing the services of an Adviser on Public Health. Several young doctors have been sent to America for specialized training. A Health Centre has been established at Neyyattinkara which is the headquarters for intensive work in the immediate area. General health and sanitation and maternity and child welfare work keep the doctors and nurses busy. This experiment to improve the physical condition of the villagers seems



very successful and contributes in a large way toward cleaner and happier living. This is the first centre of its kind in the State, but it is expected that others will be established in due course.

The village church just across the river Neyyar marks the beginning of Amaravilla, a fairly new village with a large Christian population.

Travellers cannot fail to notice the Ponnankulam Tank, about seventeen and a half miles from Trivandrum, because the sharp bend in the road necessitates all motors slowing down somewhat. The tank is said to be about four hundred years old and is one of the most important assets to the immediate countryside. As might be expected there are traditions about it. It has never been known to go completely dry, although occasionally it gets very low. Usually there is a goodly quantity of water always available. It is used to a very large extent by the villagers, and nearly always one may find buffaloes and bullocks refreshing themselves in its depths while their loaded carts stand by the roadside. Some people believe the name, Gold Tank, was given to it because of its great value to the people, especially in time of droughts. Others believe the name was given because the men when digging it found gold at the bottom of the well.

On the roadside bank of this tank is the goddess Chempakmoot Lekshi. Almost never does one find this shrine without decorations or visible signs of worshippers having been there. It seems that once upon a time, when a barber magician was returning after having given a magic performance, he suddenly discovered he was being followed by the goddess. In the twinkling of an eye, he transfixed her there and



told her she must remain there for ever and get her maintenance from travellers. The goddess is supposed to be very harsh and people are afraid of her.

About half a mile further on is another smaller tank on the right hand side of the road. This tank is known as 'The Tank without Frogs'. It is supposedly about three hundred years old and is of immeasurable use to the people. There are several amusing stories to account for the fact that no frogs live in the tank. One story relates that when the great Raja Martanda Varma was in disguise to protect himself from the Pillamars who were constantly seeking his life, he spent a night on the bank of this tank. The frogs were very noisy, and the poor Raja swore they were of far more annoyance to him than his enemies. He uttered a curse against croaking frogs and from that day no frogs lived in this tank. A second story tells about a Nambudri who owned a small temple near by. Early one morning when he was offering prayers after his bath in the tank, the croaking of the frogs and the call of the conch shell disturbed his thought so much that he cursed both disturbing noises, since when the frogs deserted the tank and the conch is never blown at the temple.

A much more picturesque story is told of the hundreds of frogs who lived in this tank becoming tired of their frog king. One day an alligator came to live in the tank. At once the frogs crowned him king and gloried in his grandeur. The new king was most kind, giving his subjects rides on his back and even opening his large mouth and letting them hop inside to see what it was like. Not long after this, the



frogs suddenly discovered their numbers were considerably smaller, and they began to see that those frogs who went to see the sights in the king's mouth never returned. They realized their mistake too late. Soon all the frogs were gone, and the alligator went to conquer new kingdoms. This story is often told to the children, with the pointed moral that one must not take too great a pride in grandeur.

Parassala, at the nineteenth milestone, is a village centring about two widely diverging religions: Hinduism, around the ancient temple; Christianity, around the district headquarters of the London Mission. The temple is said to have been consecrated by Rama Iyen Dalawah about three hundred years ago. The carvings on some of the ornamental pillars represent some Nairs thought to be the Ettuvittil Pillamars, a group of men who controlled Travancore for their own private benefit, and who were subdued about the time of the consecration of the temple. This is the largest district of the mission. The name Parassala is well known to many women in countries all over the world for the remarkably fine embroidery done by the Indian Christian women under the supervision of the mission. This work was started nearly thirty years ago and has brought a great deal of money into the district and been helpful in raising the standards of living among the poor country people. The village now boasts a hospital, and a High school.

The toll gate near the twentieth milestone gives proof of the heavy traffic which continually passes over the Main Southern Road. It is said that this toll gate is one of the largest in India. It has sold



for Rs. 1,01,005. A change in charges in the last year has reduced the figures considerably.

### MARKET-PLACES

One of the most interesting institutions in this State is the weekly or twice-weekly market, 'those primitive institutions, most picturesque and interesting from both a sociological and economic point of view. As many as five thousand people come to a rural market-place on market days, each person to barter or sell what he has for what he wants more. This trading day constitutes a large share of the social life of the villager. Here along with his bartering he meets practically every one of his near and far neighbours, and there is always much talking and visiting. At nightfall the bustling, noisy, market-place quiets down into just a barren country field, so to remain till next market day'.<sup>1</sup>

No matter what day the visitor travels down this road, he can find at least one market. The largest one is probably in the newly walled grounds just in front of the big Roman Catholic church in the little village of Kaliakavila. It is impossible to imagine the life and confusion, when one looks upon the barren field, perhaps dotted here and there with a few large flat stones which on market days serve as counters for the seller who sits or squats on the ground beside it. And the variety of merchandise and rural products to be found! Usually the goats, cows and buffaloes are in a separate place. In the grounds, for entrance to

<sup>1</sup> Hatch, *Up from Poverty in Rural India*, p. 66.



which those who wish to sell must pay a small tax, may be found old and young. Every person who is not accustomed to such markets, should visit one. In the vegetable section are all sorts of country vegetables including a wide variety of peculiar roots and tubers; buttermilk mixed with chillies and water ready to drink, is always at hand; the fish section is not so tempting; piles of green leaf manure or seedlings for planting vie with piles of coconuts and jaggery; cloth merchants display their hand-woven cloths and sarees to tempt the men and women; baskets of several varieties, from the tiny pochette affairs in which the countryman carries his betel and tobacco, to the watertight, beautifully made large basket which the climber carries to the top of the palmyra trees to collect the sap in; ingenious combs made of wood vie in usefulness with the petty notions so brilliantly arranged on a cloth spread on the ground. Very often a group of men, wearied with visiting and the rounds of the market, will gather under the shade of a big tree to sing and dance some of their most difficult and interesting folk-dances.

The road for several miles on either side of the market will be thronged with people coming and going to market. Market day is the great social event of the week and is the only community gathering which the countryside as a whole knows. Its value is, therefore, far greater than its economic side alone.

The little village of Kuzhithura is just off the main road on the bank of the Thamraparni River. The bridging of this river in 1879 greatly facilitated traffic. To the left may be seen the old crossway connecting Kuzhithura with Martandam. During most of the



year the water is low, so that many cars and carts cross the river this way.

About four miles north of Kuzhithura is an interesting old temple, situated on a huge rock, easily accessible and fortunately one which may be visited by non-Hindus. Chitaral Rock Temple is an example of a Jain temple remade into a Hindu temple. That this particular section was once a centre of Jain religion is proved by a number of epigraphs in the Tinnevely District. These inscriptions give the names of many Jain teachers and disciples who were natives of Tiruchcharanam, which place is Chitaral.

The temple is cut into the rock, with its hall built outside the rock. There are a number of images inside. One, of a sage having a bald head, clean shaven face, no Brahmanical thread and a tier of three umbrellas, represents a Jain image, as these points are characteristic of their images. The Jain tradition has been so completely forgotten, and the temple has been so completely appropriated by Hinduism that many people think it is a genuine Hindu temple. The image of the sage is taken to be Vishnu. Just in front of the temple is a rock spring which makes a little tank, very clear and cool. The top of the rock commands a splendid view of the sea of palmyra palms and the not-distant jungle-covered hills. It is a favourite picnic and excursion place for the youth of the countryside.

Just across the bridge below the road on the left is another interesting temple. This is a purely Hindu temple dedicated to Vettumani Sastha. The god who dwells in this temple turns a deaf ear and cannot hear prayers spoken before him in the usual way. It



is first necessary to get his attention, which is done by making a modest explosion of gunpowder. All day long, and often far into the night, one can hear these explosions which tell the story of a prayer for safety being offered by some passer-by. Practically every car that passes slows down so that the occupant may throw a chuckrum out to the little boy waiting at the top of the steps. A call by the boy, an answer from his companion below, and then the explosion may be heard. Every bus driver has at least one prayer offered a day to insure himself and his passengers against any untoward accident. One is not surprised that the collections average about twelve to fourteen rupees a day. The firing of shots is common to all Sastha temples. There are three stories given to account for this custom, though the usual explanation is that the god is deaf. One story tells of Sasthavu, the son of Siva and Maha Vishnu, when Vishnu assumed the form of a woman in order to kill a Rakshasa. Being the son of Siva, Sasthavu became a great hunter. These shots are fired to signify Sasthavu's fondness for hunting. A second story tells of people wanting to worship Sasthavu, who is one of the incarnations of Vishnu. Sasthavu closed his eyes and stood quiet. In desperation one worshipper fired a shot which caused him to open his eyes and bless him. The third story says that Sasthavu does not believe in hoarding wealth but wishes all wealth to go up in smoke, and that the firing of shots stands for this belief.

Just beyond this busy little temple which typifies much of the ancient culture of India, and next to a large English High school, is the Martandam



Y.M.C.A. Rural Demonstration Centre, which because of its comprehensive programme aimed to improve the lot of the rural class has taken a lead in the particular field of service called Rural Reconstruction and is being widely influential throughout India. Visitors are always welcome. This is only the modest headquarters of a large programme in the villages around and in many other villages throughout the State. Buildings and methods are kept inexpensive so that the poorest villagers may copy. The system of rural improvement taught from this Centre is one of self-help with intimate, expert counsel. Greatest emphasis is put not on the Centre but on helping large numbers of village families to take up better ways of life—spiritual, mental, physical, social, and economic. The wide influence of the Martandam Rural Centre comes partly from its Practical Training Schools, to which leaders come for training from various parts of India, Burma and Ceylon.

The village of Martandam is of fairly recent origin. The old village of Thoduvetti centred about the market-place. The land now occupied by the London Missionary Society was acquired by them over a hundred years ago and since then the little church has been regularly conducted. The mission hospital was opened there in 1883. In 1886 the then Maharaja visited the place. The missionary in charge pointed out the possibilities of the place and asked permission to call it after His Highness. The Maharaja readily agreed and from then on the village was known as Martanda-Varma-Puram. When, some years later, a missionary was stationed there and began to develop the place with bungalow, school buildings and hostels,



the simplified name Martandam was found more useful. The mission now has a large Girls' School, a Boys' School, and a Training School. Probably the finest building in South Travancore is the church just being completed. It has been done entirely by local workmen under the supervision of the District missionary. Some of the carving and stone work will rival that done anywhere and will certainly set a high standard of workmanship for the countryside.

#### TIRUVATTAR

Just after the twenty-fifth milestone, the road leads off to Pechippara, one of the loveliest places in Travancore. The road passes through several small villages on its four miles to Tiruvattar. This little village bears an interesting history. In the days when the insurrectionists were particularly offensive, Umayamma Ranee was forced to flee from Trivandrum with her only remaining son, and dared not give much attention to Governmental affairs. Before she could get a relative, Raja Kerala Varma, from Malabar to manage the State for her, an adventurous Mohammedan, a petty Sirdar under the Mogul Emperor, swept down upon Travancore and easily possessed the land. He made his headquarters just outside the Trivandrum Fort. Raja Kerala Varma was a great warrior who lost no time in attacking the Mogul Sirdar. When the attack was made, practically all the forces of the Sirdar were scattered over the State, collecting revenue. The Sirdar had to retreat immediately, hotly pursued by Kerala Varma. Being reinforced by his cavalry the Sirdar made a stand on the hillside at Tiruvattar. It was an ill-chosen spot



for him. The rocks and jungly undergrowth made it almost impossible for his mounted force to be of any use, but they were the greatest protection to the Raja's archers and slingers. The conflict was severe and the loss of life great. The Raja was aided by an unforeseen event. When the mounted Sirdar sat under a tree watching the progress of the battle, one of the enemy's arrows or stones hit a huge wasps' nest in the tree. The infuriated insects descended in hundreds on the Mogul commander and his horse, stinging them both most cruelly. The frightened horse threw his master on to a rock, when immediately arrows and stones rained upon him. Their commander dead, the army went into confusion and were easily captured by the Raja. With the three hundred horses and great equipment thus captured, Raja Kerala Varma established a cavalry of his own and brought the feudatory chiefs of the countryside into subjection.

The temple at Tiruvattar is one of the oldest in the State, and is considered to be as sacred as the Trivandrum temple. Although the exact age is not known, the Alvars, great hymn-singers of the eighth century after Christ, made reference to Tiruvattar in one of their hymns. It is dedicated to Adikesava Perumal, the first great god who destroyed the demon Kesi, and an incarnation of Vishnu. It is reputed that this great god took rest in this temple after having killed a demon who had caused great misery in the world. Unlike the reclining image of Vishnu in Trivandrum, this image is in a seated position. The temple, one of the largest in Travancore, has some excellent examples of Dravidian sculpturing and stone work. The wood carving is also very intricate and excellent.



The river Thamraparni flows about the temple walls. One special feature is its special situation on high ground, so that a flight of steps is necessary for entrance from any side. Many of the paddy lands about are part of the temple endowments, which yield a handsome income devoted to temple use.

Four or five miles beyond Tiruvattar at Tiruanandikara is a rock temple estimated to be about a thousand years old.

The Pechippara Dam is the head of a scheme of irrigation which has almost literally made the desert to blossom like a rose, turning the dry land of south Travancore into the fertile plains of Nanjanad, the granary of the South. Back of the hundreds upon hundreds of acres of flourishing paddy line, lies a history full of romance and marvel. So accustomed are we to the miracles of modern engineering, that we usually pass them by with an appreciative nod. Engineering feats of the past, however, make us pause, wonder and marvel. The old Pandyan Dam and Pandyan Kal constructed about A.D. 900 create in visitors a deep admiration for the foresight and effort put into this undertaking. In the words of one historian: 'Much of the fertility of Nanjanad is due to the labours of the ancient engineers of the Pandyan ruler, who, about a thousand years ago, constructed a dam upwards of twenty feet in height, built of massive squared stones, across the Paralayar, and cut a channel chiefly through solid rock for a distance of about two miles through the saddle forming the extreme western watershed of the Pazhayar (another river). But for this ancient anicut and channel, a mighty work of genius and invention, Nanjanad would not have been



what it is—one large paddy flat of smiling green, dotted with numerous towns and villages; it would have been a famished district with a poor water supply.<sup>1</sup>

So successful was this ancient dam, that in A.D. 1750 another dam was stretched across the same stream about a quarter of a mile from it, to irrigate the country around Neyyoor. This was also a stupendous task which required skill, both in planning and in executing. The then ruling Raja, the great Martanda Varma, was keenly interested in this project which would do so much for his country and people, and he supervised much of the work. An interesting anecdote is told about this ruler. Often His Highness would come early in the morning and remain until night, taking only one meal during the day. On these occasions he sat on a rock near by. A servant was wont to hold one of the typical Malabar palm-leaf, non-collapsible, long-handled umbrellas to protect his Royal Master. The Raja decided that his servant should be working on the canal, ordered a stone-cutter to make a hole in the rock, fixed the umbrella pole in the hole and sent the servant to work. People still point out the rock with the hole in it, where His Highness' umbrella was put.

When during the last century the question of further irrigation schemes was mooted, engineers were in many minds about them. One interesting thing, however, may be noted, that modern engineers built their work as a continuation of the works already so ably and admirably done in the distant past centuries.

<sup>1</sup> Iyer, *State Manual*, Vol. III, p. 101.



The present Pechippara Dam was completed only in 1907. The 141 miles of main channels and 184 miles of branch channels supply 55,612 acres, once dry and arid, with water, and bring them under intensive cultivation. It is difficult to appreciate how much this means for the prosperity, comfort and sufficiency of a needy people. The Government camp shed overlooks the lake of 3,230 acres which is surrounded by forest-covered hills. Visitors have often reported seeing wild animals come to the edge of the water to drink. In the midst of such quiet and beauty, there is the reminder that such great works too often take their toll: a simple cobblestone monument marks the last resting-place of one of the engineers who was supervising the construction of the dam.

Pechippara is such a beautiful place, it is regrettable that the great majority of visitors to the State do not drive the few extra miles off the main road to see it. Those visitors who wish to spend some time there, should go well armed with mosquito curtains.

#### MAHENDRAGIRI

Following the Tiruvattar road and going miles beyond, one comes to a planting section on the Western Ghats—and to the famous mountain of Maha Indra or Mahendragiri. The peak is the highest in the south, ranging about 5,500 feet. The Hanuman river rises in these mountains, flowing down through the southernmost part of the State. Mahendragiri, according to the *Ramayana*, is the mountain from which Hanuman jumped when he went to Ceylon in search of Sita, Rama's wife. It is said that Parasurama, the warrior god who reclaimed Travancore from



the sea, lived for a number of years in Mahendragiri. The Ashambo plateau, once the scene of large coffee plantations, is now cultivated sparsely in tea. Near here is a famous waterfall, Alakkayaravi.

### PALMYRA INDUSTRY

It is a most interesting thing to note the sudden change in the countryside about twenty miles south of Trivandrum. Rocky, more undulating, dry ground is usually cultivated with tapioca, one of the staple foods of the poorer people. The coconuts all change to palmyras, a tall, scrubby-topped palm, when compared with the graceful long leaves of the coconut. But like the coconut, the palmyra palm is a most useful tree, contributing in no small way to the livelihood of the people. One of the sights not to be missed is to see a climber go up and down a tree. To those persons who are new to the country, it is no less than amazing to see how simply and how quickly a man climbs to the top of a very tall tree. His only help is a tough thong which holds his feet together. The feat is not as simple as it looks. Palmyra smashes are quite common: the climber slips, or loses his hold for a second and comes crashing to the ground. To see a man lose hold, slip, slide down the tree at a great speed for twenty or thirty feet before he is able to catch himself gives one a decidedly uncomfortable feeling. It is not to be wondered at that when each climber safely reaches the ground he stands facing the tree, touches it, and then places both hands together in front of him in an attitude of prayer to signify his gratitude to the



kind providence that is watching over him. One man usually takes care of forty trees, which he must climb both morning and evening—a heavy task which begins very early and continues until late into the night. The chief produce from the palmyra is the sap which is either sold as toddy (an indigenous drink somewhat analogous to beer) or boiled down into sugar. Trees tapped for toddy are licensed and pay a large annual revenue to Government. The sap very quickly ferments and becomes highly alcoholic. There are Government regulations concerning the sale of toddy to ensure it is fresh. When the sap is drawn for sugar making, the dripping pots are rubbed inside with lime in order to prevent fermentation. The juice is boiled down until thick, then poured into moulds, usually a half coconut shell, to harden. The sugar is analogous to the famous maple sugar of America in consistency, and, although the taste is different, is considered by many as delectable. The best quality is of a light brown colour. Tons and tons of this sugar are made annually in south Travancore, constituting one of the largest cottage industries. The sugar is sold to refining factories where it is demineralized to make white sugar. Such a factory is making sugar in Travancore now, at a place soon to be reached on this main road.

The housewives make many interesting delicacies with the sugar—puddings, sweets, coated nuts. One particularly appetizing sweet is made by adding spices to the boiling syrup before it is poured into the moulds. Re-boiled to make a thick syrup, resident foreigners use it in ways similar to treacle or molasses. During the tapping seasons, great quantities of



the fresh sweet sap is drunk as a substantial part of the diet. Chunks of the sugar, followed by a drink of water, are eaten by coolies as their midday meal when they go out into the fields for daily hire. School children often carry this sugar for their lunch.

Tons of the brown sugar are distilled to make arrack—a sort of indigenous whisky, about 65 per cent and 75 per cent alcohol. These two drinks—toddy and arrack—are widely used in Travancore and the tax thereon constitutes a large part of the excise revenue.

The fruit of the palmyra, a delicacy to the people of the country, is not very attractive to strangers. The only edible portion is a small jelly-like substance found in three small pockets in each fruit. The fruit furnishes another more hearty food, which may usually be seen at the bus stops where women sell it to the passengers. The planted fruit sends down a root which is pulled when about three months old. The root, then about a foot long, is boiled until somewhat tender. It is still hard but edible, has a strong flavour, and is mealy in consistency. This food is very sustaining, which is probably one reason why it is eaten so much.

The leaves are ingeniously used in a number of ways: thatching, basketry and mat-making. It is a common sight to see a few mats and baskets, sometimes brightly coloured, hanging outside a gateway waiting for a buyer. The water buckets that the road workers, children and housewives may be seen using are made of these folded leaves. They are most artistic but perishable. Palmyra fans are a great boon on a hot day—and one might well ask when is it



not hot! Palmyra fibre is used in making brushes. This industry is mentioned on page 224.

### TAPIOCA

The development of tapioca cultivation in Travancore clearly shows two important things: the possibility of furthering land production by introducing new crops; the need for foodstuffs. It was introduced into Travancore less than fifty years ago. Within a few years it has increased greatly in popularity. There are now 498,379 acres under cultivation. The acreage under paddy, an old crop, is 658,522 acres. This is a remarkable growth which may be accounted for in several ways: tapioca grows on high ground with poorer soil, such as laterite usually is, and although it requires a moist climate does not require irrigation; it grows easily without very much labour and yields abundantly, maturing in nine to eleven months; the country people like the taste. For these same reasons tapioca is very cheap. It now constitutes a major portion of the diet among the poorer people of south Travancore, many of whom cannot afford to eat rice. It has the additional advantage that when cut in slices and thoroughly dried, it will keep in perfect condition for months.

There are several varieties of tapioca. Several of them require par-boiling to rid the root of the poison in it. Tapioca contains a cyanogenetic glucoside associated with an enzyme which has the property of causing the splitting up of the glucoside and the consequent formation of prussic acid. When the first water is thrown away the tapioca is again boiled and becomes an easily digested starchy food. Since this root



constitutes such a major part of the diet of thousands of people, it is regrettable that it is not more nourishing. A pure diet of tapioca is not as nourishing as a pure diet of Irish potatoes.

The leaves of the plant, which grows from five to eight feet in height, are used as a green manure around banana trees. The plant may be seen growing profusely all along the way from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin and the roots may be seen by basketsful on the tops of the heads of marketers.

#### MULUGUMOOD

Behind the great high wall, which shuts out the world of the high road, is Mulugumood, an important Roman Catholic centre, founded by Father Victor of St. Antony. He began work in Thiruvithankodu, the old capital of Travancore, in 1860. Only two years later he started an orphanage for boys and girls at this Mulugumood. Although funds were limited, the work grew, the barren country was cultivated and at last a new convent was started. Many of the orphans who had been trained in carpentry, masonry and smithy helped in building. Again pressed for money, he started a tile factory.

In 1897 Mother Louisa and Mother Ursula arrived from Belgium to take charge of the convent and the work for the women and girls. Mother Louisa was a most remarkable woman who worked fearlessly and tirelessly, trusting in divine providence to provide her with ways and means of carrying on her work. The famous Mulugumood lace and embroidery work was started by her and has been the means of financing a large part of their orphanage work. Mother Louisa,



over forty when she came to India, died in Louvain only in 1928. The work at Mulugumood is for women and girls only—except for a few small boys. The boys' work and the industries connected with that, such as carpentry and tiles, have been abolished.

A mile beyond Mulugumood a signboard points to Monday Market. This road leads through seemingly quiet country, through the little villages of Thiruvithankodu, Neyyoor, Eraniel to Colachel. Peaceful though the country is now, its past is fraught with tradition and history as rich and romantic as one could desire. This country was part of the original principality or kingdom of Travancore.

#### THIRUVITHANKODU

The little village was the original capital of the principality which took its name from the town. The name of this now small, unimportant village is said to be a corruption of Sri-Vazhum-Kodu, a place where the goddess of prosperity dwells. At present it is almost entirely a Mohammedan village, but when it became so is not known. Probably some of the Mohammedans who invaded and even for a short time possessed the southern part of Travancore remained behind when their leaders were driven out. There is a mosque, of course, and a very old Siva temple here. There is a small Christian Church here which is attended by the one remaining family of Dhariyakals. These people claim to be the descendants of the true St. Thomas Christians who were converted to Christianity by St. Thomas in Mylapore (Madras) and who were driven away by the persecutions of Hindu kings. Whatever may be their history they

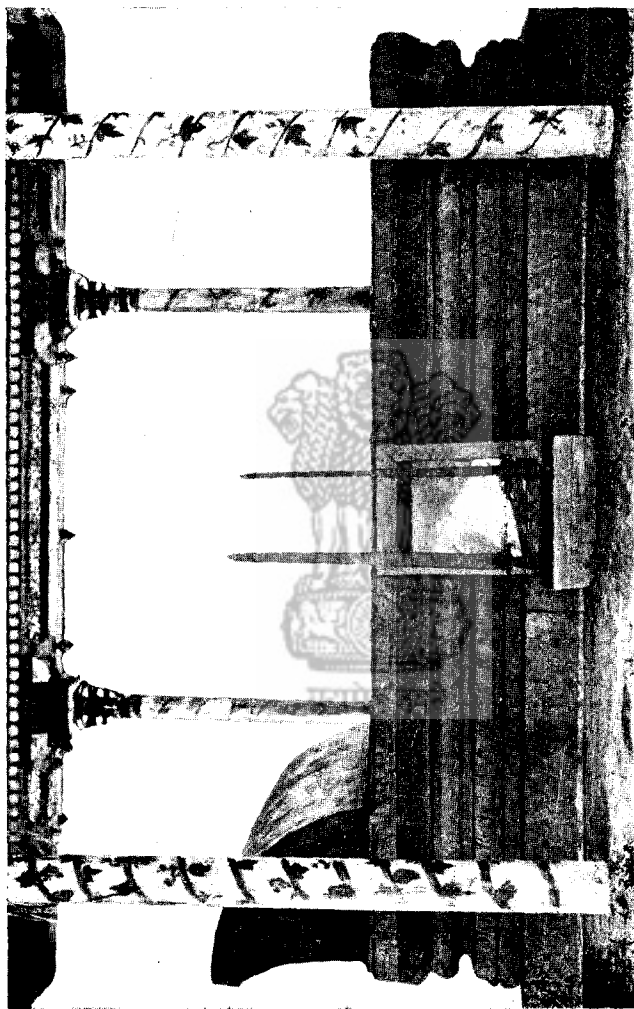


have sedulously clung to their tradition and still refuse to classify themselves with other St. Thomas Christians, and have kept their worship and customs quite distinct.

On a side road near Thiruvithankodu stands a tall four-faced pillar, with writing on all four sides. It is a most curious document relating to an old social practice. This pillar is a royal edict prohibiting these practices called *pulappedi* (fear from Pulayas) and *mannappedi* (capture by Pulayas). The pillar is dated Kollam 871 (1696-97) when the practices must have been current. Pulayas are a very low caste people, and Mannars are the washermen who wash for the Pulayas and are thus outcasted. During certain times of the year, any high caste woman, if touched by a Pulaya or hit by a stone thrown by a Pulaya, was so contaminated that she was excommunicated and forced to follow the particular Pulaya who polluted her. The Pulayas were allowed certain privileges of walking on the roads and mingling somewhat with high caste people during these special days, so it was possible for them to touch high caste people. This pollution was so dreaded that women almost never went out. If a woman were accompanied by a male child over three years of age she could not be polluted. If the woman touched happened to be pregnant, she was kept by the Pulaya until the birth of her child. If the child were a female, the woman became the property of the Pulaya, but if the child were a male, the woman was free to return to her high caste husband.

The edict proclaims that the practice shall no longer exist, that any Pulaya attempting it shall be killed





### THE STONE COT IN THE PALACE AT ERANIEL

From this stone cot in the palace at Eraniel it is said that a Maharaja mysteriously disappeared. A light has been kept burning there ever since, in commemoration.





#### AN OIL MILL.

One of the products of coconut palms is coconut oil. The oil is crushed from the dried kernel and sold in great quantities. The huge stones of the oil mill being turned by bullocks are a familiar scene on the road side in Travancore.



immediately, that any woman so polluted may purify herself by bathing in a tank. The custom must have died out very soon. The only reminder of it at present is the expression *Pulappedi-kālam*, which is sometimes used to mean 'the age of lawlessness'.

#### NEYYOOR

Beyond, about a mile, following the irrigation canal which has been so beneficial to cultivators in this district, is the village of Neyyoor known widely all over India as what is said to be the headquarters of the largest medical mission in the world. The medical mission was started in 1838 in Nagercoil. In 1852 the Neyyoor Hospital was founded and since then has become the head of the medical work of the London Mission. The mission now has thirteen branch hospitals. The hospital, equipped with 173 beds, has accommodation for 132 surgical patients. In 1932 the mission treated 2,17,000 patients. It was at this hospital several years ago that Dr. Pugh made the first discovery in India that the chronic indigestion which is such a scourge in many parts of Malabar was due to an ulcer of the stomach and that a surgical operation offered the only chance of cure. About three hundred of these operations are performed every year. Neyyoor is one of the important and oldest of the London Mission stations in Travancore. The most noticeable buildings are the mission institutions, hospital, leper homes, church and schools. A recent addition to the hospital equipment is the European Nursing Home with a European nurse in charge. This home has proved a great boon to the residents of Travancore and the rooms are usually booked well in



advance. A laboratory for preparing vaccines was opened only last January.

Eraniel, of which Neyyoor is really a suburb, is a very old village which has been conspicuous in Travancore history. In ancient days before the rulers moved to palaces within Padmanabhapuram Fort, they lived in Eraniel. The name of the village is said to be a form taken from Ransinganallur, or 'the town of Ranasinha'. Since this word means the lion king, or the lion in battle, historians conjecture that the town may have been named after some ruler who lived there. The old palace has a stone couch of great interest. It is said that while sleeping on this couch one of the old ruling princes suddenly disappeared from sight. In some miraculous fashion he became invisible and was never heard of thereafter. In commemoration a lamp has been kept burning by the side of the couch through the centuries.



#### COLACHEL

A few miles beyond Eraniel is the port town of Colachel, well known and used by the merchants who visited India in the early centuries of this era. Although it has declined greatly in this respect, a certain amount of shipping—fibre and mineral sands—is still done from this port. Fibre from the palmyra palms and aloe plants forms the bulk of export by the one foreign company, Aspinwall. A resident European is in charge of this company. Aloe fibre is used for rope making, and produces a very fine strong rope, not unlike manilla. Only about forty-five years ago was the fibre from the palmyra palm made commercially



valuable. After the rainy season, the leaf stem called the *pattel*, is collected from each tree. The fibre, obtained by beating the stem, is sold in the local markets to the collectors and taken to the Colachel factory. Here the brown and black fibre is separated, cut to required size and dyed. After drying and cleaning, it is bundled into hanks and baled. The fibre is exported to various parts of the United Kingdom and the United States. It is used in the manufacture of brushes. The quality of the fibre depends on the age of the tree; the younger the tree the greater quantity of black fibre. Each stem has black and brown fibre, but the black is stiffer and more desirable. One tree yields about one and a half pounds of fibre a year. About five hundred tons are exported annually.

Not far from Colachel on the sea coast are two unique factories—the largest ilmenite factories in the world. At present ilmenite is being mined in Travancore, Norway and Senegal, the volume of production being in this order. It has been mined previously and still occurs in Brazil, New Zealand and Quebec. The 'Travancore Minerals' factory was started in 1907 originally to mine monazite, a yellow sand which contains thorium, the oxide of which has the property of becoming incandescent when heated and is thus valuable for gas mantles, Very lights and pyrotechnics in general. Monazite is usually found with a much larger quantity of black sand or ilmenite. Before 1907, Brazil supplied the world with monazite. In this year Karl Schemberg, a former engineer in Brazil, heard that black sand beaches existed in Travancore. A visit to these beaches revealed the facts



that both sand minerals occurred and that there was sufficient monazite to be worked. Later investigation proved that Travancore monazite contained a higher percentage of thorium than Brazil monazite.

With the decline in the use of gas mantles for illuminating purposes after the war, the demand for monazite decreased and for some time the factory did no mining. The demand for ilmenite was soon very heavy and now the factories are working full shifts. The larger factory exports about 30,000 tons annually, mostly to the United States. The principal use for ilmenite is in the production of paint. Originally the black sand was ground up and mixed with an adhesive material and applied as black paint, but this process is now obsolete.

Ilmenite is composed of the oxides of iron and titanium. Titanium oxide is white and when separated from the contaminating iron is used as a basis for white paint in the same way as white lead. Paint made with titanium oxide has great covering properties and does not darken in course of time. It has the additional advantage of being non-poisonous, so there is reason to believe it will displace the use of lead paint in the not-too-distant future.

These beach sands contain other minerals such as zircon, garnet and rutile. Zircon is being mined and is used for lining high-temperature furnaces. Practically all of the sand is shipped from the Colachel port, a mile or two north of the factory.

Weaving is a great cottage industry in these parts. The co-operative society here has several branches and the membership includes 2,000 families; 2,400 looms are kept busy making cloth which finds a ready market.



Weaving is an old industry which is being revived through the present vogue for hand-woven cloth.

During the early years of the eighteenth century the Danes had a small factory at Colachel, and although contemporaneous writers assure us that trade could have been vigorous, the Danes seemed indolent and indifferent and their enterprise unsuccessful.

Such cannot be said of the Dutch. When the Dutch realized that the Raja of Travancore was bent on conquering the principalities in which they had trade interests, they decided they must adopt a policy of interference. They wished to stop the advance of the Raja of Travancore and to this end decided to make an attack on him simultaneously in the north and in the south. They sent to Cochin and Ceylon for help. Before any help came, they were defeated and the victorious Raja pressed on to further victories in the north. Meanwhile delayed help from Ceylon landed at Colachel. There was nothing to prevent them, so they possessed the land, established headquarters and proceeded to march southward toward Nagercoil. With Travancore leaders and army all in the north, it was a simple matter to intimidate the country, which completely surrendered as far south as Kottar. The Raja, surprised at this unexpected attack, immediately returned to his capital at Padmanabhapuram to make preparations to drive out the enemy. The enemy were also making preparations to proceed against Padmanabhapuram. When the old forces arrived from the north they were joined to the newly-raised army.

The accounts in the Tiruvattar temple show that before he began the attack on the Dutch, the Raja



visited the temple, placed his sword in front of the god, worshipped, received back his sword from the priest and then gave a donation of five hundred fanams (about Rs. 170) to the temple. From the temple he went straight to his army and began the great battle of Colachel. The Dutch stationed their garrison outside a newly-built fort in Colachel. This battle was one of the most severe in the history of the State. For two months war was waged. The Dutch ships were surrounded by small Travancore boats which watched all their movements. When the garrison retreated inside the fort, siege was laid. The Dutch were at last forced to admit defeat, and as many as possible fled to the ships and escaped. The dead and wounded were left behind. Twenty-four prisoners were taken alive, and 389 muskets, cannon and swords were added to the equipment of the Raja's forces.

This battle was of great importance in Travancore not only because it marked the decline of Dutch power and interference in the State, but also because one of the prisoners taken became a competent and trusted military officer under the Raja's regime. All the prisoners were treated with such kindness and consideration by His Highness, that all were glad to serve in the State army. M. Eustace de Lannoy was so successful in training a few companies of sepoys, that His Highness placed him in charge of the garrison at Padmanabhapuram. He proceeded to build Udayagiri Fort and to manufacture cannon balls. Many of the victories later won in the north were largely due to the discipline and training given to the Travancore army by De Lannoy.



## MUTTAM

Beyond Colachel, several miles south along the coast, is Muttam, a delightful place often visited by those who want a seaside holiday. The place has been known and dreaded by mariners for centuries, because of the treacherous Crocodile Rock rearing its head a few miles out in the sea. A lighthouse was built here to help the ships and has proved a great benefit.

Many years ago the London Mission acquired property and built a church. The congregation, however, reverted to the Roman Catholic faith and the building was remodelled to make a bungalow and a holiday home for the missionaries and many others who use it. The Roman Catholics have built a large church in the little village. The churchyard has some old graves in it—perhaps of persons who were shipwrecked on Crocodile Rock.

Muttam may be reached via Colachel, Mandakad or Nagercoil.

## MANDAKAD

The most important place in the tiny fishing village of Mandakad is the Bhadrakali temple. Thousands of pilgrims visit this temple during the annual festival in March. The deity here is in the form of a large ant-heap. Tradition says that some ploughboys made a heap of mud from their fields and worshipped it. Before long, the mud became divine and around this divinity the temple and festival have grown. Animal sacrifice used to be an important part of the festival, but this has been abolished.



## UDAYAGIRI

Back on the main road, which the narrative left at the Monday Market turning, the road continues a few miles through the village of Thackalai to Udayagiri Fort, one of the historical centres of Travancore. A travellers' bungalow<sup>1</sup> has been built on a corner of the fort wall, and travellers may halt for a few hours or the night.

The fort was built by De Lannoy, one of the prisoners captured during the battle of Colachel (A.D. 1741) and who eventually became the head of the Travancore army. Strong granite stone walls, fifteen feet thick and eighteen feet high, enclose about eighty-five acres of land, in the centre of which is a hill 260 feet high. The view from the top of this hill commands the whole of the countryside. De Lannoy lived in this fort for many years. He manufactured ammunition here and trained the Raja's army. The ruins of a small church are still preserved within the fort. Here De Lannoy, his wife and son were buried. Their tombstones may be seen, along with several others. The epitaphs give historical information. The translations run as follows:

*'Through this sign do souls soar heavenwards.'*

*Stop and rest here, pious Christian and wayfarer!*

*Here lieth an intrepid and brave soldier, Captain of the soldiers of the kingdom of Travancore, John Eustace Benedict de Lannoy, born in the year of Our Lord 1745, a Wednesday, the 5th of the month of August. Fatally wounded at the storming of the Fort*

<sup>1</sup> This is a second class bungalow: bedding and food must be taken by the traveller.



of Kalakkad in the kingdom of Madura, he died of his wound in the year of Our Lord 1765, a Saturday, the 14th of the month of September, comforted with all the sacraments of the Holy Roman Church.

Farewell ! and neglect not to pray to the Almighty for his soul's salvation, as Christian charity demands.

May he rest in peace ! Amen.

Stop wayfarer !

Here lieth Eustace Benedict de Lannoy, who as the General-in-Chief of the troops of Travancore was in command and during about 37 years served the king with the utmost fidelity. By the might of his arms and the fear (of his name), he subjected to his (the king's) sway all the kingdom from Kayangulam to Cochin. He lived 62 years and 5 months and died on the 1st of June (of the year) 1777.

May he rest in peace !

In this tomb lies lady Margaret de Lannoy, the faithful wife of the far-famed, unconquered Eustace de Lannoy, (who), for her incessant large alms, was fitly called by all the mother of the poor and is on that account and because of her other virtues, worthy of everlasting remembrance.

She died on the 11th September 1782. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Across the road from the old fort is a sugar factory which makes white sugar from the jaggery produced in such quantities from the palmyra palms.

#### PADMANABHAPURAM

Within a mile of Udayagiri Fort is the famous old Padmanabhapuram Fort, the old capital of Travancore.



When the capital was changed from Thiruvithankodu is not definitely known, but Padmanabhapuram came into great prominence during the reign of Martanda Varma the Great, who had his residence there. There is a shrine within the palace, which only caste Hindus are allowed to visit. The place has an underground passage leading beneath the fort walls out into one of the surrounding paddy lands. This was used as an escape in the days when attacks from feudatory chiefs or foreigners were more or less common.

The Padmanabhapuram Palace is one of the most historical palaces in Travancore. As the seat of Government, it was used by various Rajas. Momentous events took place there. The most often recounted story is the one which tells of the attack on Raja Martanda Varma by the Ettuvittil Pillamars and their two leaders Pappu Tampy and Raman Tampy. The two Tampys were sons of the late Raja and the eldest did his utmost to gain the throne, even to making representations before the Nawab at Trichinopoly. After investigation, the claims were found to be groundless and worthless. The rising popularity of Martanda Varma infuriated the Tampys and the Pillamars. For nearly two centuries they had held the balance of power in the State in their hands, and they wished now to further their dreams of possession. Martanda Varma, when Elaya Raja, had spent his life escaping from the designs and traps of the Pillamars. He had a number of trusted spies throughout the country, who kept careful watch on the movements of these men and informed him of everything.

At last the time came when His Highness could no longer tolerate these rebels. He was as determined



to end their days, as they were his. He gave definite instructions to his horsemen, whom he placed at stated intervals along the Trivandrum-Nagercoil road, and in strategic places elsewhere. When these men received a certain signal they were to arrest all the Pillamars and their confederates and bring them all to the palace at Padmanabhapuram for trial.

His Highness knew that the Tampys were intent upon murdering him. He stationed guards with drawn swords about his house, and gave orders that if anyone attempted to come up the stairs to see him, they should be stopped; if they resisted, they should be cut down. The two Tampys arrived. Being sons of a Ruler they had the privilege of coming into His Highness' presence without being announced. The elder Tamy therefore, giving no heed to the guards, started up the stairs. He was stopped. Annoyed at this insult he drew his sword, but before he could strike, he was attacked by the other guards and killed. The younger brother saw this, and vowing he would take vengeance on the Raja, drew his sword and rushed up the stairs into the room where His Highness was sitting nonchalantly on a swinging cot. Tamy rushed at the Raja and raised his sword to strike. The sword struck against the heavy beam of the low ceiling. This gave the quick-witted, strong Raja a fraction of a second to recover. He rushed at Tamy, wrested the sword from him, threw him to the ground, sat upon him, and plunged his dagger into his heart. The Raja then went to the window and gave the pre-arranged signal and ordered the men to expedite their work.

By morning all the rebels had been arrested. They



were arraigned before the Raja and the trial proceeded. The four Brahman confederates were out-casted by having the figure of a dog branded on their foreheads, and were driven out of the land. The eight Pillamars and certain of their helpers were condemned to be hung. The execution took place in Padmanabhapuram at the then cutcherry. The wives and children of the Pillamars were given in slavery to the fishermen on the coast. The lands and properties of the Pillamars were confiscated; the lands were added to Sircar lands and the buildings torn down, the materials being used to build parts of the Trivandrum temple. One historian closes the incident thus: 'Thus ended a race of chiefs who had been guilty of rebellion against the royal house for many hundreds of years, and at whose hands the royal family had suffered injuries and wrongs of the most inhuman and atrocious character. Perfect order and peace now prevailed in the country.'<sup>1</sup>

#### KALLIYANKADU TEMPLE

In this southern taluk is the small temple where once a scene of great loyalty and heroism was enacted. Martanda Varma the Great lived a most precarious life in the days when the Ettuvittil Pillamars were so powerful. His life was constantly sought and some of his escapes were little short of miraculous. One day when the Raja was in this little temple, he suddenly discovered the place was surrounded by his enemies. There seemed little hope of escape. The priest, a loyal and heroic man, quickly changed clothing with the prince, gave him a pot of buttermilk and whispered some mantrams to him. He told the prince

<sup>1</sup> Menon, *History of Travancore*, p. 125.



to go out through the crowd muttering these mantrams and giving heed to no one, but to tell someone that the prince was hiding inside. The prince did as he was told and escaped. The threatening crowd rushed into the temple, saw someone in the dress of the prince, rushed at him and killed him. Only afterwards did they discover their mistake.

#### NANJANAD

The drive from Udayagiri to Nagercoil is one of particular beauty. The road winds through thousands upon thousands of acres of paddy land. The country has well earned its name of 'the granary of the South'. These are the most extensive paddy fields in the State. There is a proverb which states that the paddy produced in Kuttanad, the paddy country in central Travancore, would serve only as seed for Nanjanad. All this vast acreage of paddy land is made available by the irrigation works headed by the Kodayar Lake and the Pechippara Dam, which has already been described. Irrigated land ensures two crops a year. Parts of the road are bordered by narrow tanks covered with lotus. During certain seasons thousands of pink lotus vie with the vivid green of the paddy field in beauty. It is a sight one cannot soon forget. The road passes continually nearer the rocky mountain range which extends to the Cape. The variety of scenery is most pleasing.

Nanjanad has had an eventful history. In the days when the Pandyas of Madura were at the zenith of their power, the whole of southern Travancore was under their sway. It is evident from the architecture, the different type of people and from a study of their



manners and customs that Tamil influence was uppermost. The temples, particularly, are of Tamil design, so unlike the temples of Malabar.

About the close of the thirteenth century, the warrior king of Quilon, Jayasimha, conquered part of Nanjanad. His son, Ravi Varma, brought the whole district under his sway. After his death, it is traditionally thought that a hunter, Konangi Koravan, rose to the position of ruler. His is a romantic story. One day when he was out with his two wives and one son, on Taduga Malai, near Butapandi, gathering fibre to make baskets, he struck the stem of a date palm with his knife and was amazed to see it turn into gold. Seeing a well near by, they dipped all their implements into it, and watched them turn magically into gold. They hid the well from sight and kept their secret. In course of time Konangi became very wealthy and his influence grew more and more powerful. Gradually the whole country including Cape Comorin came under his sway. He ruled with kindness and was beloved by the people. The only tribute he asked was iron implements. The people and the country prospered. His son succeeded him, their rule extending over sixty-seven years. When his grandson came to the throne, he was greatly worried because he had no son. At last the seventh wife bore him a son, and the rejoicing was unbounded. All the people were invited to the first giving-of-rice ceremony. The Vellalas—a higher caste—were asked to stay behind when the other guests left. They were horrified when Nanji Koravan asked for one of their daughters to marry his son. At last one promised. The Vellalas conspired to kill their ruler. When the boy was five



years old the marriage was arranged. To suit their designs, the Vellalas told the ruler of various customs: the marriage must take place in an elaborately built stone *mandapam*. The father of the bride superintended the building and arranged some way so that it would collapse whenever he wished. During the ceremony, the Vellalas made the whole family of the Koravans sit inside the *mandapam* while the bride's party walked around the outside singing. At the right moment the building collapsed and the Koravan family were crushed to death. Another period of history was closed.

Nanjanad eventually came under the rule of the Raja of Travancore, and although from time to time foreigners attacked or invaded the land, it remained fairly constantly under Travancore.

#### AZHAKIYAPANDIPURAM ROCK TEMPLE

About ten miles north of Nagercoil on the road which leads to the famous Mahendragiri hills, is an ancient rock temple, estimated to be well over 1,200 years old. It has in it an image of Onwayyar and an old image of Vishnu. The inscription in it belongs to a Chola king. Probably the inscription was made during the time when the Chola kings were in possession of south Travancore.

#### NAGERCOIL

The largest town in the south is Nagercoil. It has a population of 42,945. It comprises several small places, Vadaveswara and Kottar being the most important.



The temple at Nagercoil is thought to have been originally a Jain temple. It was assumed by the Hindus and made into a Hindu temple. It has a shrine dedicated to Ananta—the serpent god. It is said that many serpents live about the temple, but anyone bitten by a serpent within a mile circuit will suffer no ill effects as the god is being worshipped so devoutly. Every year Pambumakad Nambudri of north Travancore, a famous Nambudri who has special powers over cobras, visits this temple and performs certain ceremonies.

Nagercoil is the headquarters of the L.M.S. in Travancore and has a large Christian population. Many 'firsts', such as the first English school, the first printing press, the first newspaper, have been due to the influence of the missionaries.

#### LONDON MISSIONARY SOCIETY

The starting of the L.M.S. work in Travancore reads almost like a legend of great antiquity. Maharasan, a villager who lived in the tiny village of Myladi, set out on a pilgrimage to seek for that enlightenment and spiritual peace which he could not find in the demon-worship practised in his village. His purpose was to visit shrine after shrine in South India and at last reach Chidambaram. He did this, and when he reached Chidambaram he lay down in the temple court to sleep; and it is said that in a vision he saw someone in white bending over him, rebuking him for coming thus far, and bidding him to return to his own village, there to find his heart's desire. The next day Maharasan and the nephew who accompanied him set out on their return journey. They stayed for



a while with some Christian friends in Tanjore and it was there he embraced Christianity, and was baptized with the name Vethamanickam. When the two travellers were asked, on reaching home, for the sacred rice and ashes supposedly brought from Chidambaram, Vethamanickam held out a copy of the Tamil New Testament saying, 'Here is the holy gift of the Lord of all worlds'.

From then on Vethamanickam worked for the cause of Christianity. In 1805 he visited Tranquebar, the cradle of Protestantism in South India, and made the acquaintance of Mr Ringletaub, a Prussian by birth, a Lutheran by religion, who had come to India on a Danish ship, and who had already made progress in the study of Tamil. At the request of Vethamanickam, Mr Ringletaub came to Travancore as the first Protestant missionary. His history is one of great perseverance against almost superhuman odds, but also one of conquest. The first church was built in March 1809 at Myladi, very near Cape Comorin.

The move to new headquarters was made by the second missionary in 1818, when Mr Mead settled in Colonel Munro's circuit bungalow at Nagercoil. The Colonel was most helpful and encouraging. Government also helped their work by granting them the land on which their present church, college, and mission buildings stand. The Nagercoil church is an outstanding example of the unswerving faith of those early missionaries. Much criticism and ridicule was offered because such a huge building was erected—but although this church still remains one of the largest in South India, with a seating capacity of two thousand, it is very often not large enough.



The first English school in Travancore was established by the L.M.S. in 1819, when the mission seminary was begun. The teaching of English had been regular since 1814. This seminary developed steadily until today it is a reputable second grade college. The first girls' school was also started in Nagercoil in 1819 by Mrs Mead. It was in this boarding school that embroidery and pillow lace making were first introduced. The lace industry grew to large proportions and continues to this day, making available most beautiful hand-made lace, that will rival any made in the world. In the days before the abolition of slavery the mission taught little slave girls to make lace and purchase their freedom.

With machinery and workmen from Tranquebar, the first printing press ever introduced into Travancore was set up (1819).<sup>1</sup> The paper for this press was sent from England. It is interesting to note that it was with workmen from this press that the Government Press in Trivandrum was started.

At this time there was a great mass movement, when over 3,000 Shanars joined the church. All of this work was in the Tamil area. The mission desired to start work in the Malayalam area, which they did in Quilon in 1821. Several approaches were made toward starting work in Trivandrum, but Hindu prejudice against any Christian work so near the sacred pagoda was too strong, and permission was not granted until 1838. Six years later the Neyyoor District was separately established; in 1838 the Parassala District was started.

<sup>1</sup> The Kottayam Press was set up the following year



At present, one of the best known and most outstanding features of the work of the L.M.S. is the medical work which heads up in the hospital at Neyyoor. This work was first started in 1840 by one of the first two medical missions ever sent out by the society. Due to various circumstances the work was not continually carried on until the hospital was built in 1861.

Classes for medical evangelists were also started, and offered new openings for young men of the district. The hospital has now many branch hospitals under qualified men and many more dispensaries. Neyyoor hospital has an enviable reputation throughout India.

Any history, however brief, of this mission would be incomplete without mentioning the three severe and horrible persecutions to which the missionaries and their followers were subjected. The first was in connexion with the insurrection headed by Dalawah Velu Thampy, when the Christians of Myladi had to flee to the hills and hide in caves. The second, in 1828-30, and the third in 1856 were really caste wars, provoked because the low caste women who became Christians wore cloths over the upper parts of their bodies—a custom allowed only to high caste women. There was much bloodshed, burning and pillaging of Christian homes and churches. The persecution was severe and horrible, yet instead of weakening, it strengthened the cause, and literally thousands of Shanars placed themselves under the guidance of the missionaries. Whole villages destroyed their shrines, erected bamboo and palm leaf meeting-places and studied the *Bible*. Many of these temporary meeting-



places later became permanent buildings to be used for schools on week days, and worship on Sunday. The days of persecution are long past and the mission is recognized both by Government in their grants, and the people in their attendance, as contributing much to the growth and prosperity of the State.

#### THE SALVATION ARMY

Although a few of the travelling officers of the Salvation Army visited the country around Nagercoil during the few years following 1887, it was not until 1892 that this organization was definitely settled in Travancore. Their first effort at permanent work was made at the request of Rev. Cox who invited the Army to work among the coolies on his coffee and tea estate in the Mahendragiri Hills. A group of workers had started work, about this time, in the district just beyond the Travancore lines. The response to their work here was not encouraging and the Army gradually withdrew to Nagercoil where they established their headquarters. They began work among the depressed classes, where their message of faith and hope was heard. Village after village accepted Christianity. From then on their work went from success to greater success.

Life was not without trials, however, and the path to success was not beaten smooth. When the leaders of the Army substituted Sunday a day of rest and worship, for the Sunday of continued labour, the caste people for whom the depressed classes worked, rose in indignation and wrath. The officers were cruelly beaten and all manner of obstacles were put in their way. The undaunted spirit with which the



Salvationists continued their work speaks volumes for the conviction and trust which underlay their faith.

Schools were opened and teachers trained to carry on the work, special work for women was begun and industries were taught and practised. The lay public knows perhaps best the work of the Catherine Booth Hospital at Nagercoil. From a humble beginning to its present state, the hospital has been a source of immense benefit to the countryside. The hospital was commenced in 1897 by Dr H. Andrews, who was killed afterwards on the western frontier of India, and posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for rescuing wounded under fire. The hospital has 125 beds, while the seven branch hospitals have 102 beds. In-patients admitted to the parent hospital and branches during 1932 numbered 3,316. Out-patients numbered 29,032, and those who made more than two calls 63,319. A large number of eye cases are dealt with, many people coming from long distances. Every bed in this section is constantly filled. A good work is carried on among women and children, for whom a separate self-contained hospital is maintained, comprising Maternity, Surgical, Medical and Children's blocks. The hospital is equipped throughout with electric power and piped water. It also has a well furnished and equipped X-ray and Diathermy Department, and up-to-date operating theatres. A motor ambulance is also maintained.

Most of the Branch Hospitals are in out-of-the-way places, and carry on a great work among the very poor of Travancore. Negotiations are proceeding with regard to the opening of a Leper Asylum in northern Travancore with forty beds. The Senior



Medical Officer in addition to being physician to His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, has been appointed a Deputy Durbar Physician.

The work of the Army also includes a Lace and Needlework Industrial department at Nagercoil, which provides training and employment for young women, and an endeavour is also being made to establish an Industrial department in Trivandrum, where boys attached to the boarding school may have an opportunity of learning book-binding. There are two boarding schools in Nagercoil and one in Trivandrum, providing accommodation for 200 boys and girls.

Membership in the Salvation Army at the close of 1932 was nearly 65,000. The Army manage many schools, mostly village Primary standard. There are 1,251 centres of work in Travancore.

With such numbers coming into practically daily touch with the high principles of the Army, it is obvious that the Salvation Army is of considerable influence in the State.



#### KOTTAR

This ancient city is a part of Nagercoil, but forms the oldest part. 'This town was a flourishing centre of commerce from a very early past and Ptolemy (A.D. 150) mentions Kottiaras as a metropolis with considerable trade, while Pliny calls the town Kottara, which is a nearer approximation to its correct present-day designation.'<sup>1</sup>

The city is still a centre of trade and industry. The floral garlands and decorative pieces made here adorn

<sup>1</sup> Travancore Archæological Series, Vol. VI, part i, p. 1.



all the grandest wedding halls. Weaving is one of the most notable industries. India has long been known as the home of the most excellent weaving, and Travancore has had her share in this reputation. Most probably, however, the weavers were brought into Travancore from the Pandyan country. Having come to teach, they remained to live and work. The Saliyans, a weaver caste, live primarily around Kottar and Eraniel. They trace their original home to Gujarat, from which place they fled during the Muslim invasions. They settled in Tanjore, Madura and Tinnevely, finally coming to South Travancore. The heritage established has continued, and now the weavers around Eraniel and Colachel produce thousands of yards of cloth annually. Time was when they spun their own yarn from locally raised cotton. The advent of spinning machinery practically annihilated this part of the industry. The handloom weaving was all done with mill-made yarn. The vogue for spinning has revived this industry to a certain extent, so that a part of the yardage now produced is pure *khadi*. Weaving vies with the palmyra cultivation in popularity in this part of the country.

#### ST. FRANCIS XAVIER

The name of St. Francis Xavier is always connected with Kottar and indeed with the whole of south Travancore. There are many stories told and retold about this great saint, but like the legendary tale, they have gathered colour through the generations. In reality St. Francis spent only about three months in Travancore in 1544, travelling from Cape Comorin to Quilon. He paid a few other short visits to



Travancore. Popular belief says that the little St. Francis chapel in Kottar was built by the saint. It was built in commemoration of St. Francis who lived for a while in a little hut on the same spot. Tradition relates that it was here he was miraculously saved from fire, with which his enemies had surrounded him.

The invasion of Travancore by the Badagas is closely connected with fact and story in the life of St. Francis. These marauders, as they were called, bore down on the villages on the fishery coast and at Cape Comorin, plundering, pillaging and massacring mostly the Christian villages. The letters written by St. Francis during this time are full of concern and anxiety for the poor Christians who were so mercilessly treated. It is believed by historians that these Badagas were a tribe settled in the northern part of the Madura kingdom, owing allegiance to the Naick of Madura and allowed by him to collect tribute due him from neighbouring states in his territory. The raids on the Christians extended over some months and the people lived in constant fear.

A more formidable invasion of Travancore by these men headed by the Naick of Madura was started in 1545. The most famous action of the saint was at this time. It is said that the Raja was not prepared for this attack, and the army which he managed so hastily to collect was in no way competent to withstand the attack. St. Francis allied himself with the Raja of Travancore. 'St. Francis then, taking his crucifix walked alone towards the enemy. Placing himself before the foremost rank he said in a loud voice, "In the name of God the terrible, I command you to halt." They halted. The others who were



marching behind pressed them to go forwards but they said they could not advance, a giant of enormous size was barring the way; he was dressed in black and his face was so resplendent that his countenance blinded them. The higher officers ran up to see what had happened; the whole army was seized with an indescribable terror, and they fled in disorder.<sup>1</sup>

The saint went barefooted, in ragged clothing, giving no thought to himself, from village to village, preaching and teaching. The vast number of conversions and the many miracles he performed left an indelible imprint on the life of Travancore, especially in the coastal villages. An extract from one of his many letters gives a picture of this great man at work:—

‘In this kingdom of Travancore, where I am now, God has led many pagans to Jesus Christ His Son. In the space of a month I have baptized more than ten thousand.

‘The method which I follow is this: I arrive at a pagan village and call all the inhabitants, men and women, to assemble together. I then explain to them the elements of Christian doctrine, teaching them that there is but one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; and after having invoked the three persons of the one God I get them to make the sign of the Cross three times; I next pass to the Confiteor, the Credo, the Paternoster and the Ave Maria which I recite aloud in Tamil, and which all, great and small, repeat after me. I afterwards explain to them in Tamil the Credo and the Decalogue.

<sup>1</sup> Zaleski, *St. Francis Xavier*, p. 113.



‘When they are sufficiently prepared for Baptism, I tell them publicly to ask pardon of God for their past life. They do it in a loud voice so as to make impression on those who refuse to become Christians, and to inspire them with the sanctity of Laws of God, and make them despise their idolatrous worship.

‘These heathens listen willingly when I explain to them the mysteries of our Faith. Even the wicked show me favour. But many are obstinate and deliberately reject the truth which they have acknowledged.

‘After a sermon suitable for the occasion, I ask each one of those who are waiting to be baptized, if he believes, without the least doubt, all the articles of the Faith. They all affirm that they believe, holding their hands crossed upon their breast. Then I baptize them and give to each his name written on a slip of paper. Once baptized, they bring me their wives and their children.

‘After I have baptized them, I send them to demolish their temple and break the idols. I cannot describe the joy which this spectacle affords to me, when I see the idols broken by those who have worshipped them.

‘I leave in each village a copy of the catechism written in Tamil, and I order it to be taught in the schools in the morning and in the afternoon. When I have finished in one village, I betake myself to another, and visiting the country in this manner I gather its inhabitants into the fold of Christ. And the happiness which I experience, I cannot express it either on paper or in words.’<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 105.



When the matter of canonization of this saint was being considered, and the stories of his miracles were retold, they were questioned. Eye-witnesses were found who gave incontrovertible evidence as to the validity of many of them. One of his greatest miracles was performed at Muttam, the little fishing village already mentioned. One day St. Francis met a funeral procession, carrying the body of a youth who had died of a malignant fever. ' . . . led by the prayers of the parents and pitying their bereavement, he knelt down, and raising his eyes to heaven, prayed to God for the life of the lad; then he sprinkled the body with the holy water and bade them cut open the funeral shroud, and when the body was seen, he made the sign of the Cross over it, and taking him by the hand, bade him in the name of Jesus to live, and at once the youth rose up alive, and he gave him sound and in good health to his parents.'<sup>1</sup>

It was no doubt the almost unbelievably vast amount of work that St. Francis did when in Travancore, that has warranted popular belief in thinking that he was in Travancore over a number of years. Visitors always stop a few moments at the little chapel erected to his memory. It is easily accessible from the main road.

#### SUCHINDRAM

Of great architectural beauty and antiquity are the stately *gopurams* which crown the temple of Suchindram. Second only in importance and wealth to the Trivandrum temple, Suchindram is visited by

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, *The Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier*, p. 215.



thousands of pilgrims throughout the year. The temple is rich in tradition and Puranic lore. The story of its origin is about the sage Attri and his wife Anasuya, renowned for her chastity, who were doing penance in a hermitage at this place. Brahma, Vishnu and Siva wanted to test her chastity, and disguising themselves as three Brahmans, went to the hermitage and begged alms. A guest must be treated as a divine person, so, in the absence of her husband, Anasuya set about to serve them. When they were seated for their food they told her they had each taken a vow that they would never eat food served by a person who wore any clothing. Confident of her own purity, Anasuya sprinkled holy water on them as she uttered a prayer. Immediately the three Brahmans were turned into suckling babes and Anasuya nursed them. Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati, the wives of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva came in search of their lords, and finding them in the form of babes gave themselves up to severe penance to God Mahadeva. The babes were then changed back to gods and Anasuya was amazed to find the three gods before her. She fell at their feet and begged forgiveness. Her prayer that she should be granted three children like them was answered when her son Dattatreya was born, as in this child were all the essential virtues of the three gods. In commemoration of this event the temple at Suchindram was erected and all three gods are worshipped here.

Suchindram takes its name from God Indra, and means 'the place where Indra's sins were forgiven' or 'Indra purified'. It seems that Indra could not free himself from a curse inflicted on him by Sage

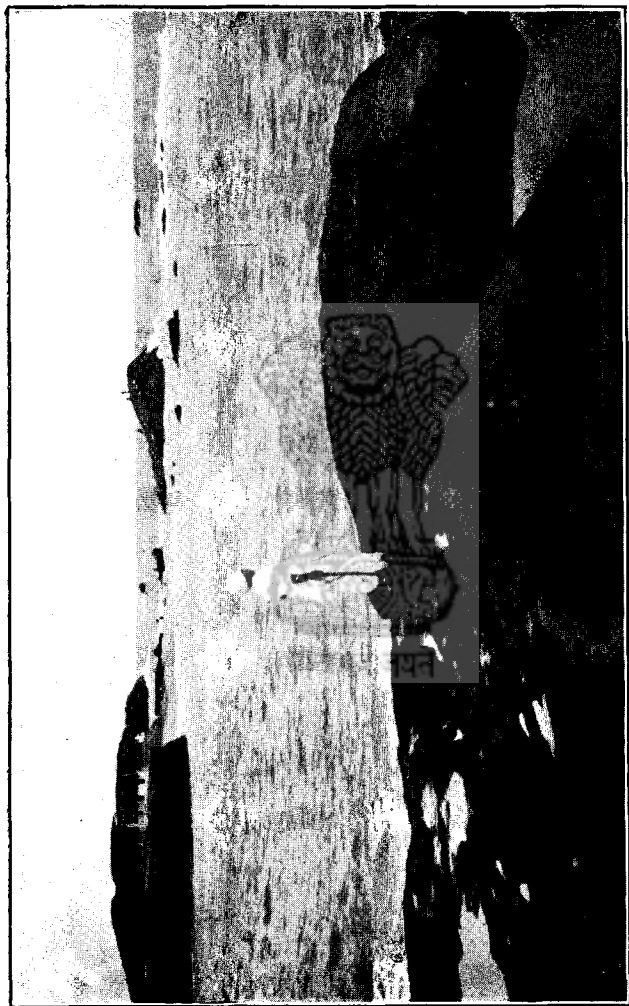




#### AN IMAGE OF SRI PARASURAMA

According to legend Travancore was reclaimed from the sea by the warrior god Sri Parasurama. The temple city, Gokurnam (Goa) having been submerged by the sea, some rishis begged Parasurama to restore their temples to them. Parasurama prevailed upon the god of the sea to grant him permission to hurl his battle-axe out into the waters. The axe fell at Cape Comorin and immediately the water receded, leaving all the land now known as the West Coast or Malabar (see p. 2).





#### CAPE COMORIN

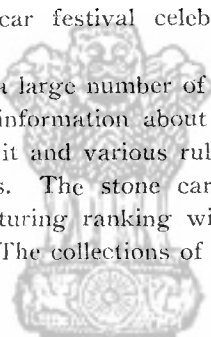
The Southern extremity of the Indian Continent is one of the few places in the world where one may stand on the shore and watch the sun rise and set in the same ocean.



Gautama until he came to the temple at this place and worshipped. When he did, the effects of the curse were felt no more. Because of the special benefit received from this temple, Indra comes every night to worship before the Kailasa shrine. The inhabitants often tell how they hear the tinkle of the bells from Indra's car as it stops at a place now called Therur, named from *ther*, or car.

Parasurama constructed towers, *mandapams* and *corridos* and instituted several annual festivals, chief of which is the car festival celebrated annually in December.

The temple has a large number of inscriptions which contain historical information about the temple—various gifts made to it and various rulers and important people, with dates. The stone carving is excellent, some of the sculpturing ranking with the best to be found anywhere. The collections of jewels and images are very fine.



#### CAPE COMORIN

Cape Comorin, the Land's End of India, is one of the famous places in this great country. A curious point of land, it is one of the few places in the world where one may stand on the shore and watch the sun rise and set in the same ocean. It is rocky and somewhat barren. Were it otherwise, erosion would centuries ago have worn away the point and Cape Comorin would not exist. It is thought that land did extend a mile or more out, but the huge rocks and the rocky mountain range which extend to the Cape seem to prevent further encroachment.

This Cape, with the temple which stands there, is



one of the seven sacred places of India. Pilgrims are always in attendance. The anglicised form Cape Comorin is taken from Kanniya Kumari—the virgin goddess Kumari. Kanniya Kumari lives in the temple which is built almost at the water's edge. This goddess is still waiting for her bridegroom. It seems once upon a time a marriage was arranged between Kumari and Lord Siva. Gods and goddesses visit the earth only during the night. All the preparations for the wedding were ready at the Cape, but the bridegroom delayed. Kumari, feeling anxious, started out in search of Siva. She went as far as Kazhukkanpara, about half-way between the Cape and Suchindram, and fearing daylight would come she turned and fled back. The imprint of her foot on a rock at Kazhukkanpara is still to be seen. Siva was delayed and was able to reach only Suchindram when the day dawned. He was, therefore, forced to take refuge in the temple at Suchindram where he still lives. The disappointed goddess returned to the Cape temple without her bridegroom. All the various foods prepared for the wedding feast were turned into sands. This is why small pebbles quite like rice are found abundantly on the coast, and why there are so many varieties of coloured sand in evidence.

The eastern gate of the temple is opened only twice a year during certain festivals. Two stories about this are current. When the gates are open the goddess looks directly out into the sea. Once centuries ago some mariners were so attracted by the brilliant light from the jewels in the head-dress of the goddess, that they mistook their course and crashed against the rocks and were all drowned. The other story



tells how some men in small craft at sea, saw the flashes from the brilliant gems, came ashore and robbed the goddess of her beautiful jewels. Whatever value the stories may have, the fact remains that the gates are always closed, except at two festival times.

The Maharaja has a palace near the temple. The Residency and two first class travellers' bungalows look out over the ocean. The latter are frequented by many visitors. There are several *satroms* and *choultries* where pilgrims may stay. Bathing on the open beach is dangerous, but just at the point masonry walls break the strength of the waves and bathing is safe. In the early morning there are always pilgrims bathing and worshipping there.

On the eastern coast is the village of Comorin, inhabited mostly by Roman Catholic fishermen. Their small crafts dot the beach, and often they may be seen pulling in their heavy nets. It was in this little village that St. Francis Xavier worked to relieve the suffering caused by the raids of the merciless Badagas. The huge church seats a thousand worshippers.

#### VATTACOTTA FORT

Less than three miles up this eastern coast is an old fort, Vattacotta. This was part of the defence plan perfected by De Lannoy, during the reign of Martanda Varma the Great. The South Travancore lines extend from this fort across the country to Aramboly, the mountain pass. Some earthwork defence lines were in existence before this reign (1729-1758) but these were strengthened and extended. Bastions were built at regular intervals and a fort



gate at the pass. When Colonel St. Leger brought his forces through this part in 1810, a part of the lines was demolished. The Vattacotta Fort was left intact, as it stands today, a silent witness to the life and labours of bygone years. The only purpose the fort fulfils now is as a camping ground for Boy Scouts and picnic parties, and a sight for visitors. The buildings inside the fort once housed the garrison. The well and tank are practically useless now. The fort was well built and offers tribute to the efficiency and thoroughness of De Lannoy.



#### ARAMBOLY PASS

The way out of Travancore lies back through Nagercoil to Aramboly. Customs books must be signed before the visitor is allowed to leave.

It has already been noted that the mountainous range which separates Travancore from the rest of South India rendered the State almost impregnable. Such natural protection against conquest-loving kings or ambitious plunderers made possible the continuance of Hindu culture on this part of the coast. The few mountain passes, nevertheless, offered temptation to the most courageous adventurers. The definite break in the chain of hills at Aramboly made possible the various attacks on South Travancore. The gap in the mountains is nearly three miles in width. Through this pass came the Pandyas, the Cholas, the Vijayanagar generals and the Nayak kings. The wealthy town of Kottar was a great attraction. But sooner or later all foreigners were driven away and the land left under the Raja of Travancore.



Aramboly is eight miles from Nagercoil, and the Travancore frontier fifty-three and a half miles from Trivandrum. The main road through the pass continues on forty miles to Tinnevely where connexion with the railway may be had. When visitors leave Travancore, they leave the tropical greenery so beautiful and restful. The other side of the mountains is without the abundant rains of the West Coast, and is comparatively dry and barren. Visitors also leave the undulating country and the mountains to make their way over flat level country. There is much to interest in Travancore, but not the least is the beautiful country with which Nature has so generously endowed her.

From Tinnevely the journey may be continued in several directions. Both train lines and motor roads lead to Shencottah and Quilon, to Madura and Madras, or to Tuticorin. From Tuticorin an easy passage to Colombo may be made twice weekly. Many visitors to India land at Colombo, and take the boat to Tuticorin. The passage is for one night only and it is a direct way to Travancore. Train connexions to Tinnevely and car to Cape Comorin put this delightful place at the convenience of the public.

*List of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds  
on the Route*

Trivandrum (I).

Neyyattinkara (II), 12th milestone, Main Southern Road.

Parassala (C.S.), 19th milestone, Main Southern Road.



Kuzhithura (II), 23rd milestone, Main Southern Road.

Udayagiri (II), 34th milestone, Main Southern Road.

Villukeri (C.S.), 36th milestone, Main Southern Road.

Nagercoil (I & C.S.), 42nd milestone, Cape Road from 41st mile (M. S. Road.)

Aramboly (C.S.), 50th milestone, Main Southern Road.

Cape Comorin (I), 54th milestone, Cape Road.





## CHAPTER XI

### ARTS AND CRAFTS

No book on Travancore would be complete without some special mention of the arts and crafts which have been fostered within her borders.

Travancore is probably best known to the world of arts through the paintings of Ravi Varma, from whom the school of oil paintings is called. His Highness Swati Thirunal who reigned from 1829-47 was keenly interested in all artistic and intellectual pursuits. His court was frequented by the most noted and learned men of the times, and naturally such a condition did much to encourage art and learning. To this court came a Naidu of Madura who had some reputation as a portrait painter. Raja Raja Varma, one of the Koil Tampurans of Kilimanur, became his pupil and soon excelled him. Ravi Varma was the nephew of Raja Raja Varma, under whom he studied the art of painting. When an English portrait painter who used oils as his medium visited Travancore, Ravi Varma began anew. His real forte lay in the field of oils. His first picture was exhibited in 1874 at a Fine Arts Exhibition in Madras where he won the Governor's medal. From then on success was assured.

Ravi Varma's pictures are decorative in type and depict scenes from Puranic lore. He worked constantly and turned out a great number. The family home at Kilimanur has many of his works. Several are



on view in the Government School of Arts in Trivandrum. Fourteen pictures adorn the palace and museum walls at Baroda and nine the palace at Mysore. Ravi Varma excelled in painting drapery. The draped folds of the sarrees worn by the women have a quality distinct and excellent. Many critics also single out the glossy black hair of his heroines as depicting especially fine skill.

The Kilimanur family still preserve the heritage so ably begun by Raja Raja Varma. Many of its sons and daughters have been artists of merit, and a number are still adding to the art contributions of the State.

Poetry, drama, song and dance are closely allied in Travancore. Practically all verses were meant to be sung. Dances were accompanied by song, and the particular drama of Travancore is accompanied by both song and dance. Poets were also composers of music.

There have been many poets of merit since early centuries. Due to the comparatively young age of Malayalam, the oldest poets wrote in Sanskrit, old Tamil, Grantha, and Old Malayalam called Malayazhma. Little prose writing was done until much later. It is interesting to note that a list of the best known poets contains the names of a large number of Rajas and members of royal families.

Among the dances common on this coast are the *Thiruvathirakali*, *Kayyukottikali* and *Kaliel*. The first is always danced during the Thiruvathira festival in December or January. It offers a great variety of steps from very simple to very complicated, difficult and strenuous ones. It is particularly graceful and



beautiful to watch. Little girls love to do this dance. As it is a group dance almost any number of dancers can take part. It is always danced about a lighted lamp. Sometimes the girls carry short sticks which they beat together to help keep the rhythm. All the time they are singing the special songs.

The *Kaliel* is danced by men and boys. The steps are elaborate and sometimes furious, so that onlookers may well wonder how the dancers have enough breath to keep up the songs. It is not unusual to see groups of men by the side of market-places doing some of these dances in the friendly shade of a tree. One regrets that the vogue for these old folk dances is not as great as it once was. Certainly all steps should be taken to revive an interest in them, as they are thoroughly indigenous and a definite part of the artistic and recreative life of the country.

#### KATHAKALI

Two art forms were originated in Travancore. The *Kathakali* belongs to the realm of drama and the *Ottam Thullal* to the realm of story-telling.

The *Kathakali* is a unique drama form which was first composed and used by the Raja of Kottarakara. Who this ruler was and the exact date of his reign are unknown, but it is conjectured that he lived during the latter half of the seventh and the first half of the eighth century M.E., which is 1575-1650. It is extremely difficult to define a *Kathakali*. In it, song, dance, gesture, costume and make-up, drums and cymbals, all have an almost equal share. A type of pantomime using a stylized gesture language, acted to the accompaniment of drums and songs sung by special



singers and the whole set in a framework of dance, the *Kathakali* has no counterpart elsewhere, except in the shadow dances and dramas of Java.

The *Kathakali* made use of all elements at hand in a most ingenious way and unified them into a new and distinct art. The gesture upon which much of the acting depends is taken from the standard dramaturgy, the Sanskrit *Bharata Natya Sastra*. This hand language is made up of definite hand positions which have no relation to any particular thing, of interpretive gestures which attempt to represent the object meant, and natural gestures which are in common use by the people in everyday life. It is extremely difficult to follow, but fortunately for those who understand the songs, the meaning can easily be taken from them. The actor finishes every section of verses with a special dance, which is simple and quiet or very strenuous, according to the demand of the story. An interesting thing about this drama is that the actor is given an opportunity to elaborate his story as much as he wishes. After the singers have finished their verse, of whatever length it may be, the actor takes up the same verse and elaborates it—all in pantomime. In the days when people had time to sit a night through at a performance, an actor might take an hour to show a single word. If for instance the word happened to be 'elephant', the actor would show how the elephant walked, or stood, or swayed back and forth, or moved his ears or trunk—the more elaborate the acting the more accomplished the actor. This type of acting is very difficult and is extremely hard work.

The actor is not the only one who has a heavy task. Two singers are kept busy. The first singer

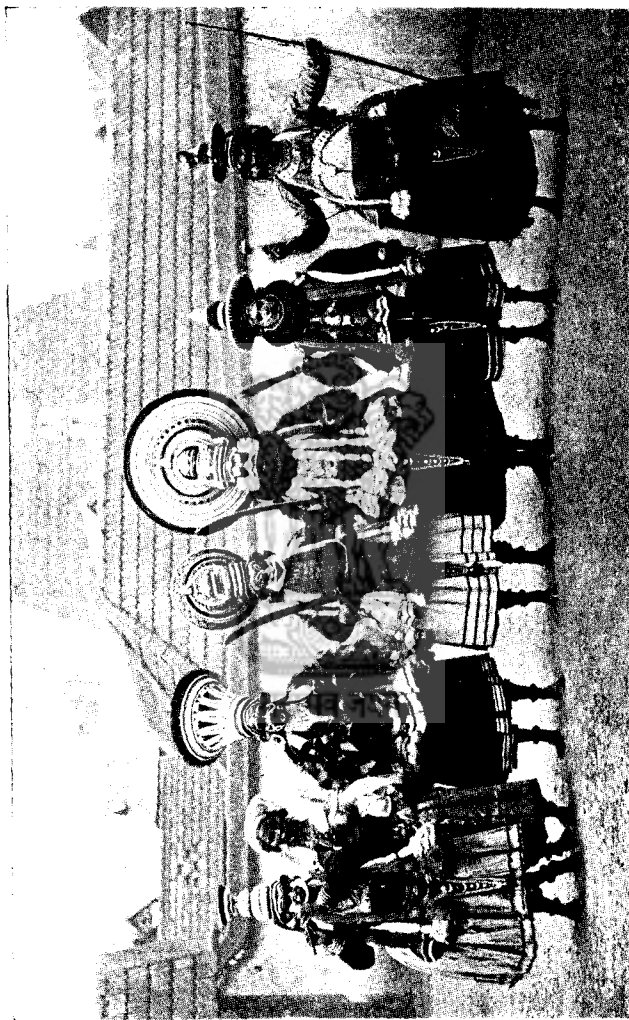




### THE CHAKKIYARKUTHU

The *Chakkiyarkuthu* or *Ottam Thullal* is a popular entertainment in the temples during certain festivals. The Chakkiyar is a wonderful story-teller whose witty versions of Puranic stories are enlivened by local criticisms.





KATHAKALI ACTORS READY FOR A PERFORMANCE

The *Kathakali* is a unique drama form of Malabar. It combines acting, elaborate gesture and dance in a type of pantomime which is accompanied by song and drums.



bears the responsibility for the memory work. He sings the couplet, and the second singer repeats it. When the actor has not finished his gesture version, the singers must repeat the couplet again and again until he has. Since a *Kathakali* takes from eight to ten hours, it is not to be wondered at that it is necessary to have relays of singers.

The same applies to the drummers. Two drummers constantly accompany the actor. The variety of sounds which they can produce with their hands, fingers and sticks is little short of marvellous. They emphasize each gesture the actor makes as well as keep the rhythm for the singers. It can easily be seen that the closest co-operation must be observed between the three artists. One cannot continue without the other.

Costume and make-up are no little part of a *Kathakali* performance. It is almost impossible to describe either, for so elaborate and unusual a process beggars description. The make-up is a tedious affair which takes two or three hours to complete. There are standard make-ups for the different types of actors, but red, yellow, green, black and white are the only colours used. Kings and gods wear what is called *chutti*, a curious fluted collar effect made of rice flour and put on the actor's face by a laborious process, bit by bit, with time given for the mixture to harden. The *chutti* forms a frame for the face and extends from the temples to the hollow in the chin below the lips. There is no attempt toward a natural make-up. Curious lines and angles divide the face, producing a peaceful or terrifying countenance. The make-up for the women characters is the simplest. The



costumes are as elaborate as the make-up. All characters except rishis, Brahmans or sages wear voluminous skirts which remind one of a ballet dancer's skirt. Bangles, anklets, armlets and necklaces are brilliant and numerous. The most beautiful of all are the headdresses, huge magnificent heavy affairs made of a light-weight wood and decorated with bits of mirror, spangles and vari-coloured stones. They are as beautiful as they are difficult and heavy to wear. An actor has eighty knots to tie in the process of dressing.

Dance, gesture, costume, make-up are all highly stylized. That the effect is true art is proved by the fact that when a change or omission is made in any of these component parts, the unity is spoiled and the whole sadly incomplete.

The *Kathakali* has stimulated poets to the creation of some of the best poetry to be found in the language. The themes are all taken from Puranic lore, which offers a wealth of material suitable for this conventionalized drama. Needless to say, the modern type of problem play does not lend itself to this type of acting. Several Maharajas have written *Kathakalis*.

This drama must be enacted at night. In the evening the drummers, with a special call, announce the performance. The audience collects after the night meal, and the performance begins. A play lasts until about dawn. The *Kathakali* is always played before a large coconut oil lamp which stands about five feet high. The yellow flickering flame is in keeping with the rest. There is no scenery. The actors perform in front of the singers. The drummers stand at one side. All parts are played by men.



Time was when this artistic form was very popular. It has been almost swept aside by the business of modern life and the relentless conquest of imagination by cinemas. The *Kathakali* has a definite contribution to make to the drama, and one can only hope it will not be allowed to die out.

#### OTTAM THULLAL

A popular form of amusement is the story-telling known as *Ottam Thullal*. It was originated by Kunjan Nambiar. Nambiar is a caste name. The duty of this caste is to play the drums in the temple during the performance of a *Chakkiyarkuthu*. This *Kuthu* also belongs to the realm of story-telling. The Chakkiyars, also a special caste, are well versed in Sanskrit and Puranic lore. They tell Puranic stories, repeating the Sanskrit *slokas* and then explaining them in Malayalam. They are keen-witted men, who intersperse all manner of local witticisms and criticisms of local people and events in their discourse. The Nambiaris accompany the recitation of the *slokas* with the beating of the drum. Now it seems that one day in the Ambalapuzha temple, the Nambiar was careless and did not beat the drum exactly as he should have done. The Chakkiyar was annoyed and during his story strongly reproved the Nambiar. Kunjan Nambiar in his turn was annoyed. The cut of reproof seemed to whet his imagination. He worked hard the whole night through and evolved a new form of story-telling. The next day after the stinging reproof, Kunjan Nambiar went as usual to the temple, but instead of drumming for the Chakkiyar, he began his own *Ottam Thullal*. In a very short time, he had



the whole of the audience listening to him, while the poor Chakkiyar spoke to an empty hall. Since that day, this new form of entertainment has been very popular, combining as it does simple Malayalam language, dance, song and acting.

In *Ottam Thullal* the story-teller is aided by two musicians, one who leads the song and plays on an instrument, and one who keeps time by beating cymbals. The actor takes up the song and as he sings it, acts out the meaning by use of dance and gestures. It is strenuous work. The actor wears a simple costume consisting of a frilly skirt, some arm and chest decorations and an elaborate headdress.

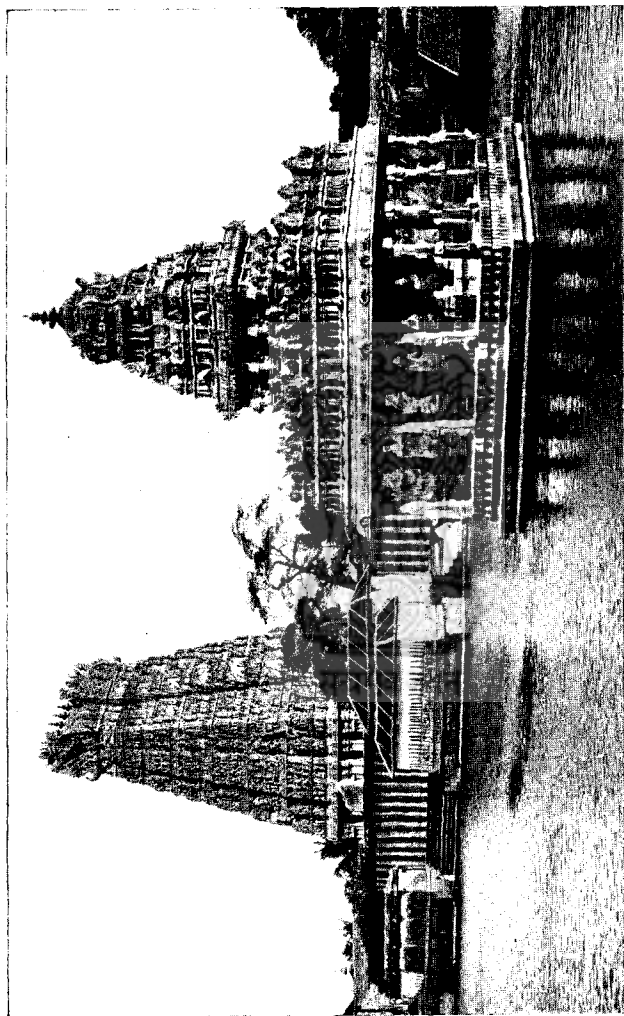
The new art has inspired many poets to write verses suitable for presentation in this form, and Malayalam literature has been enriched thereby.

Apart from the songs composed for these dances and dramatic forms, Travancore has had several composers of note who wrote words and music for vocal and instrumental music. The songs sung by the boatmen as they pole their boats up and down the backwaters are a distinct group, very pleasing and quite different from the usual type.

#### ARCHITECTURE AND SCULPTURE

The architecture of Malabar is unique. In south Travancore, because of the influence of Pandyan and Chola cultures, the Dravidian type of architecture predominates. This is not true of northern Travancore. Little attention, outside following the rules laid down in the Sanskrit works, was given to house construction. The temples of Malabar are very simple and spacious, allowing plenty of light and air. They





#### SUCHINDRAM TEMPLE

The Suchindram temple is one of the few examples of Dravidian architecture in Travancore. The place is named after God Indra, as it was here that he was purified and obtained release from a curse (see pp. 248-50).





KARNA IMAGE, SUCHINDRAM TEMPLE

The Suchindram temple contains some wonderful examples of sculpture in stone and bronze.



make no pretence to grandeur, and yet achieve an artistic simplicity which might easily claim to be the highest type of grandeur.

The use of wood is noticeable. The abundance and availability of timbers in the forests warrant this usage. Since most of the architects' skill was spent on temples, it is to the temples we must go for the highest examples of wood carving. Images, panellings, beams, pillars are carved with the utmost skill both in design and workmanship. Some of the old *tarawad* homes also have excellent specimens of carving in decorative ceilings, walls, door frames and wainscoting.

Pointed gables to buildings are characteristic of Malabar. The origin of this can no doubt be traced, as in China, to the sagging bamboo ridge pole. It is particularly attractive and gives scope for ornamental gables. All houses of any pretension whatever have handsomely carved gables. The building at the Golf Course, the State Guest House and the Museum, all in Trivandrum, have excellent examples of carved gables.

Beautiful carving is not always for show. Tucked away under the loaded bullock cart, one always finds carving on the cross beam between the wheels. Sometimes it is very simple, sometimes it is elaborate and very beautiful.

To the temples one must go to see the sculptor's work. The corridors are usually marked by pillars beautifully sculptured in a great variety of forms. Many of the images are also among the best examples of stone sculpture.

The ivory carving and sculpturing in the State is among the best in India. The caskets, boxes, figures



and a variety of toilet and desk articles are exceptionally well done.

### HANDICRAFTS

Competition from machine-made imported articles has all but placed many of the handicrafts of the State in the realm of things forgotten.

Except as examples of rare antiques, one never sees the inlay enamel work which used to be done by Travancore gold- and silver-smiths. The specimens occasionally brought out for exhibitions are exquisite.

The silk weavers of Kottar cannot find a market for their produce and have all but ceased to weave the gold and silver brocaded fabrics once so famous in India. Silk yarn of inferior quality but cheaper price flooded the market. The gold and silver threads once made by the weavers themselves from alloy of real gold and silver have been displaced by artificial threads. Only a very few families still practise this difficult process of making gold thread, and then only for special orders which are few.

*Kufgari*—silver hammered into steel—is unique in Travancore. The process is secret and the work requires both skill and patience. Boxes, ash trays, brooches, cuff links, buttons offer an interesting variety of articles of this ware.

Bell metal and cutlery are in the same declining state. The bell metal made by certain families around Mavelikara is famous and coveted. Their processes are secret and the quality of the metal they produce is of the highest. It is almost impossible to buy this metal now, and so low is the market that the metal workers are becoming indifferent to the isolated



orders they do get from time to time. Although the quality of the workmanship is declining with the industry, it is felt that a revival of this industry is possible and feasible.

The metal mirrors, known as *aranmula kannadi*, are unique in Travancore. The village of Aranmula is near Thiruvella, and centres about a famous ancient temple. The mirrors made at this place by the bell metal casters deserve a place among notable curios. Only tradition points to any history or origin, and this may be regarded as valuable only in so far as the reader cares to accept it. Three or four hundred years ago, the Chief of the Aranmula temple invited some professional metal workers to settle in his territory and make the necessary articles for temple use. For some reason, the workers were unsuccessful in their casting, and when threatened with eviction, made special sacrifices and prayers. They decided to make a special crown for the idol. The women threw all their ornaments into the melting-pot. The finished crown was wonderful to behold. The ornaments had been made of pure tin, and when melted with the copper produced an entirely new and different metal, which shone brightly and reflected objects like a mirror.

The discovery was immediately put into use. The Chief declared it was essential that a mirror be one of the auspicious articles used in religious ceremonies. The new mirror was soon in great demand. The advent of cheap mirrors brought too great competition, and at present there are only two families who know this old and secret process. It requires highly skilled workers. The metal is more brittle than glass, however, so the mirror must be carefully handled. They



are highly prized by collectors and because of this a market ought not to be difficult to establish.

Several plants in Travancore yield a fibre, a kind of raffia, with which baskets, mats, hats, purses and similar articles are made. This provides a splendid cottage industry and much of the work is wholly creditable. The fine mats made from screw pine are both good-looking and serviceable.

Lace making and embroidery have already been noted in connexion with the London Mission Society and the Convent industries. Quantities of this work are usually available at the various centres. Lace and embroidery from Travancore always take prizes when exhibited in India and foreign countries. The work is done by the women and girls in their homes.

Visitors to Travancore, as they travel up and down the backwaters, or motor over the inland roads, will have ample opportunity to see examples of the arts and crafts in the State. As she has been through the centuries, Travancore is still, the home of Hindu culture. Her arts are truly her own. It is to be hoped that the kind Providence which has guarded her through the ages, will continue to do so, and that she may keep unspoiled that which is hers and thus enrich the present civilization as she enriched the past.







# APPENDIX I

## SOVEREIGNS OF TRAVANCORE

				Year of Accession
1.	H.H.	Sri Veera Rama Martanda Varma Raja	...	1335
2.	"	Eravi Varma Raja	...	1375
3.	"	Kaler Kulasekhara Perumal	...	1382
4.	"	Chera Udaya Martanda Varma Kulasekhara		
		Perumal Raja	...	1382
5.	"	Venad Mootha Raja	...	1444
6.	"	Sri Veera Martanda Varma Raja	...	1458
7.	"	Aditya Varma Raja	...	1471
8.	"	Eravi Varma Raja	...	1478
9.	"	Sri Martanda Varma Raja	...	1504
10.	"	Sri Veera Eravi Varma Raja	...	1504
11.	"	Martanda Varma Raja	...	1528
12.	"	Udaya Martanda Varma Raja	...	1537
13.	"	Kerala Varma Raja	...	1550
14.	"	Aditya Varma Raja	...	1553
15.	"	Udaya Martanda Varma Raja	...	1567
16.	"	Sri Veera Eravi Varma Kulasekhara Perumal		
		Raja	...	1594
17.	"	Sri Veera Varma Raja	...	1604
18.	"	Eravi Varma Raja	...	1606
19.	"	Oonni Kerala Varma Raja	...	1619
20.	"	Eravi Varma Raja	...	1625
21.	"	Oonni Kerala Varma Raja	...	1631
22.	"	Aditya Varma Raja	...	1661
23.	"	Umayamma Ranee	...	1677
24.	"	Eravi Varma Raja	...	1684
25.	"	Oonni Kerala Varma Raja	...	1718
26.	"	Rama Varma Raja	...	1724
27.	"	Martanda Varma Kulasekhara Perumal Raja	...	1729
28.	"	Rama Varma Kulasekhara Perumal Raja	...	1758
29.	"	Bala Rama Varma Kulasekhara Perumal		
		Raja	...	1798
30.	"	Ranee Gouri Lakshmi Bai	...	1810



			Year of Accession
31.	H. H. Rancee Gouri Parvathi Bai	... ..	1815
32.	„ Rama Varma Kulasekhara Perumal Raja	... ..	1829
33.	„ Kulasekhara Perumal Bhagyodaya Martanda Varma Raja	... ..	1847
34.	„ Kulasekhara Perumal Rama Varma Maharaja, G.C.S.I.	... ..	1860
35.	„ Kulasekhara Perumal Rama Varma Maharaja, G.C.S.I., etc.	... ..	1880
36.	„ Honorary Colonel Kulasekhara Perumal Rama Varma Maharaja, G.C.S.I., G.C.I.E., etc.	... ..	1885
37.	„ Maharanee Setu Lakshmi Bai, c.i.	... ..	1924
38.	„ The Maharaja	... ..	1931

## DEWANS OF TRAVANCORE

Oommi Tampi	... ..	1809
Devan Padmanabhan	... ..	1814
Shungoo Annavi	... ..	1815
Raman Menon	... ..	1816
Venkata Row <i>alias</i> Reddy Row	... ..	1817
Venkata Row	... ..	1822
Subba Row	... ..	1830
R. Ranga Row, Acting	... ..	1837
R. R. R. Venkata Row	... ..	1838
Subba Row	... ..	1839
V. Krishna Row, in charge	... ..	1842
Venkata Row <i>alias</i> Reddy Row	... ..	1843
Sreenivasa Row, in charge	... ..	1845
V. Krishna Row	... ..	1847
Sir T. Madhava Row, K.C.S.I.	... ..	1858
Sir A. Seshiah Sastri, K.C.S.I.	... ..	1872
N. Nanoo Pillai	... ..	1877
V. Ramiengar, C.S.I.	... ..	1880
T. Rama Row, C.I.E.	... ..	1887
S. Shungarasubbier, C.I.E.	... ..	1892
K. Krishnaswamy Row, Dewan Bahadur, C.I.E.	... ..	1898
V. P. Madhava Rao, B.A., C.I.E.	... ..	1904
S. Gopalachariyar, B.A., B.L., Dewan Bahadur	... ..	1906
Sir P. Rajagopala Chari, M.A., B.L., Dewan Bahadur, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.	... ..	1907



# British Residents in Travancore and Cochin 271

Sir M. Krishnan Nair, B.A., B.L., Dewan Bahadur	...	1914
T. Raghaviah, B.A., Dewan Bahadur, C.S.I.	...	1920
Maurice E. Watts, B.A., Barrister-at-law	...	1925
V. S. Subrahmanya Aiyar, B.A., B.L., Dewan Bahadur	...	1929
T. Austin, I.C.S., Barrister-at-law	...	1932

## BRITISH RESIDENTS IN TRAVANCORE AND COCHIN

	Date of Appointment	Date of Relief
Colonel C. Macaulay	... 1800	4-3-1810
Colonel J. Munro	... 23-3-1810	24-1-1819
Colonel S. McDonall	... 23-4-1819	7-11-1820
Colonel D. Newall, C.B.	... 15-2-1821	1-5-1827
Colonel W. Morison, C.B.	... 13-3-1827	7-12-1829
Lieut.-Colonel E. Cadogan (acting)	... 25-12-1829	24-6-1834
J. A. Casamajor	... 14-4-1834	12-1-1836
Colonel J. S. Fraser	... 5-1-1836	15-8-1838
Captain A. Douglas (acting)	... 3-8-1838	1-11-1839
Lieut.-Colonel T. Maclean	... 4-10-1838	31-7-1840
Lieut.-General W. Cullen	... 8-9-1840	11-1-1860
F. N. Maltby	... 1-1-1860	1-5-1862
Wm. Fisher	... 1-5-1862	7-4-1864
H. Newill	... 15-4-1864	
A. MacGregor (acting)	... 26-2-1867	
H. Newill (resumed)	... 27-5-1867	25-3-1869
G. A. Ballard	... 29-3-1869	
J. I. Minchin (acting)	... 31-3-1870	
G. A. Ballard (resumed)	... 22-6-1871	
Major A. F. F. Bloomfield (acting)	... 13-7-1874	
G. A. Ballard (resumed)	... 14-10-1874	
Major W. Hay (acting)	... 19-4-1875	
A. MacGregor	... 11-10-1875	
H. E. Sullivan (acting)	... 10-3-1877	
J. C. Hannington (acting)...	... 20-2-1878	
A. MacGregor (resumed)	... 28-3-1879	
J. C. Hannington	... 1-4-1881	
W. Logan (acting)	... 5-5-1883	
R. W. Barlow (Sir Richard Barlow, Bart.)		
(acting)	... 25-2-1884	
J. C. Hannington (resumed)	... 15-8-1884	



	Date of Appointment
General Sir H. N. D. Prendergast,	
K.C.B., V.C., R.E. (acting) ...	7-7-1887
J. C. Hannington (resumed) ...	7-10-1887
H. B. Grigg, C.I.E. (assumed) ...	16-7-1890
J. C. Hannington (resumed) ...	16-10-1890
H. B. Grigg, C.I.E. (assumed) ...	6-7-1891
J. C. Hannington (resumed) ...	5-11-1891
H. B. Grigg, C.I.E. (assumed) ...	8-11-1892
J. D. Rees, C.I.E. (acting) ...	15-4-1895
J. Thomson, M.A. ...	12-7-1895
J. D. Rees, C.I.E. ...	8-8-1896
F. A. Nicholson (acting) ...	15-12-1896
J. D. Rees (resumed) ...	17-7-1897
The Hon'ble Mr. F. A. Nicholson	
(acting) ...	22-8-1898
G. T. Mackenzie ...	11-7-1899
James Andrew ...	19-11-1904
R. C. C. Carr (acting) ...	16-3-1906
L. Davidson (acting) ...	24-5-1908
R. C. C. Carr ...	25-2-1909
A. T. Forbes ...	8-10-1910
R. A. Graham (acting) ...	11-2-1912
A. T. Forbes ...	20-3-1913
R. A. Graham ...	25-3-1915
A. R. Cumming (acting) ...	18-11-1916
H. L. Braidwood ...	15-2-1917
H. H. Burkitt ...	2-12-1920
C. W. E. Cotton, C.I.E. ...	26-6-1923

#### AGENTS TO THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL, MADRAS STATES

C. W. E. Cotton, C.I.E. ...	1-10-1923
H. A. B. Vernon (acting) ...	4-5-1926
C. W. E. Cotton, C.I.E. (resumed) ...	9-11-1926
Lt.-Col. C. G. Crosthwaite, O.B.E. ...	19-4-1928
A. N. Ley Carter, C.I.E., I.C.S. ...	14-12-1929
Lt.-Col. H. R. N. Pritchard, C.I.E., O.B.E.	21-10-1930
Lt.-Col. D. M. Field ...	21-11-1932



## APPENDIX II

### USEFUL INFORMATION

#### MALAYALAM ERA DATES

M.E. date started in August 825 A.D.

M.E. 1108 is A.D. 1932-1933

1933		1108-1109
January 1	...	... Dhanu 18, 1108
January 14	...	... Makaram 1, 1108
February 1	...	... Makaram 19, 1108
February 12	...	... Kumbham 1, 1108
March 1	...	... Kumbham 18, 1108
March 14	...	... Meenam 1, 1108
April 1	...	... Meenam 19, 1108
April 13	...	... Medam 1, 1108
May 1	...	... Medam 19, 1108
May 14	...	... Idavam 1, 1108
June 1	...	... Idavam 19, 1108
June 15	...	... Mithunam 1, 1108
July 1	...	... Mithunam 17, 1108
July 16	...	... Karkatagam 17, 1108
August 1	...	... Karkatagam 17, 1108
August 17	...	... Chingam 1, 1109
September 1	...	... Chingam 16, 1109
September 17	...	... Kanni 1, 1109
October 1	...	... Kanni 15, 1109
October 17	...	... Thulam 1, 1109
November 1	...	... Thulam 16, 1109
November 16	...	... Vrischigam 1, 1109
December 1	...	... Vrischigam 16, 1109
December 16	...	... Dhanu 1, 1109

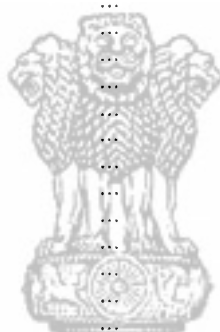
#### TIME

Travancore time is sun time and is twenty-three minutes slower than Railway and Post Office time.



## CURRENCY

British			Travancore		
RS.	A.	P.	RS.	CHS.	C.
0	1	0	...	0	1 12'50
0	2	0	...	0	3 9'00
0	3	0	...	0	5 5'50
0	4	0	...	0	7 2'00
0	5	0	...	0	8 14'50
0	6	0	...	0	10 11'00
0	7	0	...	0	12 7'50
0	8	0	...	0	14 4'00
0	9	0	...	0	16 0'50
0	10	0	...	0	17 13'00
0	11	0	...	0	19 9'50
0	12	0	...	0	21 6'00
0	13	0	...	0	23 2'50
0	14	0	...	0	24 15'00
0	15	0	...	0	26 11'50
1	0	0	...	0	28 8'00
2	0	0	...	2	1 0'00
3	0	0	...	3	1 8'00
4	0	0	...	4	2 0'00
5	0	0	...	5	2 8'00
10	0	0	...	10	5 0'00
50	0	0	...	50	25 0'00
100	0	0	...	101	22 0'00



## TRAVELLERS' BUNGALOWS AND CAMP SHEDS

Lists of Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds for the particular roads may be found at the close of each chapter.

In all first class travellers' bungalows all simple requirements of the traveller, including beds, mattresses, mosquito curtains, bedlinen, towels, etc. are provided. A cook and butler are always on hand so that if reasonable notice is given meals can be provided.

Second class travellers' bungalows, which are in charge of a watcher only, are equipped with tables, chairs, beds (no mattresses and pillows) and bathroom equipment. No meals are provided, and travellers must take with them all that they



## Travellers' Bungalows and Camp Sheds 275

require. Camp Sheds are equipped similarly to second class travellers' bungalows.

The fees for occupation of travellers' bungalows other than those supplied with electric fittings are as below :

	First Class T.B.	Second Class T.B.
	RS. A. P.	RS. A. P.
For each main room or set of rooms for the first six hours in any one day or portion thereof.	0 8 0	0 4 0
For each main room or set of rooms for a whole day or for any period longer than six hours in one day	1 0 0	0 8 0

The rates for Camp Sheds are the same as those of second class travellers' bungalows.

In the case of travellers' bungalows supplied with electric fittings, the rates are as noted below.

	First class T. B.	Second class T.B.
For each adult for periods of six hours in any one day or portion thereof ...	0 12 0	0 8 0
For each adult for a whole day of 24 hours calculated from the hour of arrival or any period longer than six hours in any one day ...	1 8 0	1 0 0

### LIST OF SATROMS OF THE STATE

Name of Satrom		Name of District
Thovala	... ..	Trivandrum Division
Bhutapandy	... ..	do.
Thiruppathisaram	... ..	do.
Suchindram	... ..	do.
Ozhuginaseri	... ..	do.
Kanniakumari (Cape)	... ..	do.
Eraniel	... ..	do.
Padmanabhapuram	... ..	do.
Tiruvattar	... ..	do.



<i>Name of Satrom</i>		<i>Name of District</i>
Neyyattinkara	...	Trivandrum Division
Ramavarmapuram (Puthen Street, Trivandrum)	...	do.
Railway (Chakkay, Trivandrum)	...	do.
Pallode	...	do.
Kallar	...	do.
Nedumangad	...	do.
Vamanapuram	...	do.
Olayil (Quilon)	...	Quilon Division
Railway (Quilon)	...	do.
Chathannoor	...	do.
Kulathupuzha	...	do.
Madathura	...	do.
Ayur	...	do.
Kottarakara (Pulamon)	...	do.
Maruthukulangara	...	do.
Aranmula	...	do.
Thiruvella	...	do.
Vallikavu	...	do.
Kottarakara Railway	...	do.
Pallathuruthi	...	do.
Alleppey	...	do.
Punalur	...	do.
Vaikom	...	Kottayam Division
Thanneerkukkam	...	do.
Kottayam	...	do.
Pambadi	...	do.
Kozha	...	do.
Ettumanur	...	do.
Kuthattukulam	...	do.
Thodupuzha	...	do.
Kudayathoor	...	do.
Kalady	...	do.
Lalam	...	do.
Ponkunnam	...	do.
Mundakayam	...	do.
Devicolam Cutcherry	...	Devicolam Division
Devicolam Old	...	do.
Azhutha	...	do.
Mannarapatti (Marayur)	...	do.



# APPENDIX III

## MILEAGES

### *Main Central Road—TRIVANDRUM TO ALWAYE*

158½ miles

	MILES
Trivandrum (T.B.)	0
Kottarakara (T.B.)	46½
Adur (T.B.)	59
Pandalam (C.S.)	67
Chengannur (C.S.)	74
Approach road to Thiruvella P. W. D. Camp Shed	79½
Changanacherry St. Berchman's College	85½
Kottayam (T.B.)	96
Ettumanur (C.S.)	103
Kuthattukulam (C.S.)	119½
Muvattupuzha (C.S.)	130½
Perumpavur Road to Alwaye branches	142½
Alwaye—9½ miles (Alwaye-Perumpavur Road)	158½

### *KOTTAYAM—MADURA—KODAIKANAL*

*Kottayam-Kumili Road, 70 miles, and thence to Madura,  
Kodaikanal or Kodaikanal Road*

Kottayam (T.B.) starts from M.C. Road 95th mile	¼
Meets Main Central Road 95½ mile	¾
Pambadi (C.S.)	11
Vazhur (C.S.)	17¼
Ponkunnam	20½
Mundakayam (C.S.)	33½
Peermade (T.B.)	46½
Periyar River bridged (Vandiperiyar)	60½
Kumili	70
Kumili-Kodaikanal Road (Ammanayanakannur)	76
Kumili-Kodaikanal	94
Kumili-Madura	101



## TINNEVELLEY—NAGERCOIL

Via Aramboly,  $51\frac{1}{2}$  miles

Tinnevelly Town	...	...	...	0
Aramboly Pass, P.W.D. Toll Gate	...	...	...	$42\frac{3}{4}$
Nagercoil (T.B.)	...	...	...	$51\frac{1}{2}$

NAGERCOIL—CAPE COMORIN,  $11\frac{1}{2}$  miles

Nagercoil (T.B.)	...	...	...	0
Cape Comorin (T.B.)	...	...	...	$11\frac{1}{2}$

## NAGERCOIL—TRIVANDRUM, 42 miles

Nagercoil (T.B.)	...	...	...	0
Udayagiri Road to Padmanabhapuram (T. B. 300 ft. from here)	...	...	...	$8\frac{1}{2}$
Thackalai	...	...	...	$9\frac{1}{2}$
Kuzhithura (T.B.)	...	...	...	$18\frac{1}{2}$
Neyyattinkara (T.B.)	...	...	...	30
Trivandrum (T.B.)	...	...	...	$42$

TRIVANDRUM—SHENCOTTAH,  $64\frac{1}{4}$  miles

Trivandrum (T.B.)	...	...	...	0
Pallode (C.S.)	...	...	...	$21\frac{3}{8}$
Tenmalai Match Factory	...	...	...	$43\frac{1}{2}$
Shencottah (T.B.), Travancore Frontier	...	...	...	$64\frac{1}{4}$
Shencottah to Tinnevelly or Madura				

TRIVANDRUM—QUILON,  $44\frac{1}{4}$  miles

Trivandrum (T.B.)	...	...	...	0
Attingal (T.B.)	...	...	...	21
Road to Varkalay joins	...	...	...	$26\frac{1}{8}$
Quilon (T.B.)	...	...	...	$44\frac{1}{4}$

QUILON—ALLEPPEY,  $53\frac{1}{4}$  miles

Quilon (T.B.)	...	...	...	0
Neendakara Bar crossing, bridged	...	...	...	$5\frac{1}{2}$
Kayemkulam (T.B.)	...	...	...	$24\frac{1}{8}$
Haripad (C.S.)	...	...	...	$32\frac{7}{8}$
Thottapally Lock (Ferry and Junghar to cross canal)	...	...	...	$39\frac{3}{4}$
Ambalapuzha	...	...	...	$45\frac{3}{8}$
Alleppey (T.B.)	...	...	...	$53\frac{1}{4}$



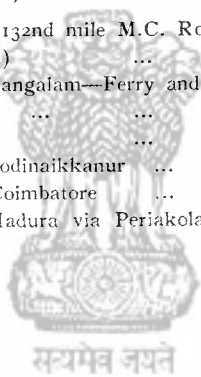
ALLEPPEY—ARUR, 29 miles

Alleppey (T.B.)	...	...	...	...	0
Sherthalai town (T.B.)	...	...	...	...	13
Thuravur	...	...	...	...	19
Arur Excise watch station (Ferry)	...	...	...	...	28
Mukam landing (Chowkey, crossing to Cochin State)	...	...	...	...	29

MUVATTUPUZHA—COIMBATORE—BODINAICKANUR  
OR MADURA

*Muvattupuzha to Munnar Road, 59 miles, and thence to  
Coimbatore, Bodinaikkanur or Madura*

Muvattupuzha (C.S.) (132nd mile M.C. Road)	...	...	...	...	0
Kothamangalam (C.S.)	...	...	...	...	7 $\frac{3}{4}$
Kuttenpuzha (Neriyamangalam—Ferry and Junghar)	...	...	...	...	19 $\frac{1}{4}$
Pallivasal	...	...	...	...	53 $\frac{1}{2}$
Munnar (T.B.)	...	...	...	...	59
Munnar to Bodinaikkanur	...	...	...	...	41 $\frac{1}{2}$
Munnar to Coimbatore	...	...	...	...	97 $\frac{3}{4}$
Munnar to Madura via Periakolam	...	...	...	...	112





## APPENDIX IV

## FAIRS AND FESTIVALS IN DEVASWOMS ATTRACTING MORE THAN 5,000 PEOPLE

Place	Name of fair or festival	Month	Particular days when a large congregation is expected
Suchindram	Margali Utsavom	Dhanu	5th, 7th and 9th days of the Utsavom
Suchindram	Chithirai Utsavom	Medam	10th day (Theppam festival)
Cape Comorin	Navaratri	Kanni	9th and 10th days
Bhuthapandi	Utsavom	Makaram	9th day
Aramboly	do.	Meenam	9th day
Mandakad	Kodai	Kumbham	On the Kodai day and the day previous
Kumaracoil	Thirukalyanam	Meenam	On the Thirukalyanam day
Neyyattinkara	Utsavom	do.	9th and 10th days
Sarkara (Warkkala)	Bharani	do.	Bharani day
Warkkala	Utsavom	do.	Vetta and Arat days
Mukhathala	do.	Medam	Arat day



Mukhathala	Oachirakali	Mithunam	Oachirakali days. This festival is not concerned with any Schedule Devaswom.
Sherthala	Utsavom	Meenam	8th day
Ambalapuzha	do.	do.	9th and 10th days
Trichattukulam	do.	Makaram	4th day
Sabarimala	Makaravilakku	do.	1st Makaram
Arammala	Utsavom	do.	9th day
Chengannur	do.	Dhanu & Makaram	28th day
Chettikulangara	Bharani	Kumbham	Bharani day
Haripad	Utsavom	Medam	Pallivetta day
Vaikom	do.	Vrischigam	Ashtami day
Ettumanur	do.	Kumbham	Arat day
Thiruvappu	do.	Medam	6th day
Thirunakkara	do.	Meenam	Arat day
Thrikkariyur	do.	do.	8th, 9th and 10th days
Alwaye	Sivaratri	Kumbham	Sivaratri day
Erumeli		Dhanu	From 25th to 27th Dhanu in connexion with the Makara-vilakku at Sabarimala



# APPENDIX V

## SOME BOOKS USED

1. Agur *Church History of Travancore*
2. Buchanan *Canara and Malabar*
3. Booth-Tucker *Muktifang*
4. *Catholic Year Book*
5. *Cochin Census Report of 1931*
6. Coleridge *Life and Letters of St. Francis Xavier (2 Vols.)*
7. Day *The Land of the Perumals*
8. Darmatheertan *Sri Narayana Gurudev*
9. Evans *Malabar Gazetteer*
10. Galletti *The Dutch in Malabar*
11. Hacker *A Hundred Years in Travancore*
12. Hatch *Up From Poverty in Rural India*
13. Iyer *Cochin Tribes and Castes (2 Vols.)*
14. Iyer *Travancore State Manual (3 Vols.)*
15. Joseph *Malabar Chronicles*
16. MacKenzie *The Periyar Project*
17. Mateer *The Land of Charity*
18. Mateer *Native Life in Travancore*
19. Menon, K.P.P. *History of Kerala (2 Vols.)*
20. Menon, S. *History of Travancore*
21. Mukerji *The Face of Silence*
22. Panikkar, S. *Malabar and Its Folk*
23. Panikkar, K.M. *Malabar and the Dutch*
24. Panikkar, K.M. *Malabar and the Portuguese*
25. Pisharoti *Kerala Theatre*
26. Ramanathan *Progressive Travancore*
27. Thurston *Castes and Tribes of Southern India*
28. Zaleski *St. Francis Xavier*
29. *The Kerala Papers, 1928-30*



30. *Travancore Administration Reports*, 1102-1106
31. *Travancore Almanac and Directory*, 1933
32. *Travancore Archæological Series*, 1910-30.
33. *Travancore Census Reports for 1891, 1901, 1931.*
34. *Treaties and Alliances*, 1925







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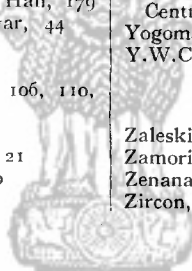
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